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Monday 17 November 2014

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Lundi 17 novembre 2014

**Standing Committee on
Social Policy**

Child Care Modernization
Act, 2014

**Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Loi de 2014 sur la modernisation
des services de garde d'enfants

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL POLICY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE
LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE**

Monday 17 November 2014

Lundi 17 novembre 2014

The committee met at 1400 in room 151.

**CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION
ACT, 2014**

**LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION
DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS**

Consideration of Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Bonjour, tout le monde. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is France Gélinas. Although I'm the Vice-Chair for this committee, I have the pleasure of being your Chair today because our official Chair, Mr. Peter Tabuns, is the critic for my party.

The Standing Committee on Social Policy will now come to order. We are here for public hearings on Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

Members of the committee, you should have received a package on your desk, which is submissions that we have received to date regarding this bill. In a few seconds I will invite the first deputants to come. Each of you will have up to five minutes for your presentation, and that will be followed by up to nine minutes for questions from committee members, which will be divided equally between the three parties. We start with the PCs, the official opposition. They will be followed by the NDP for the first time, followed by the Liberals, and then we go in rotation. Every time it will change who starts.

Bien entendu, vous êtes toujours les bienvenus de faire vos commentaires en français. Il y a de l'interprétation

simultanée qui est disponible dans les deux langues, de l'anglais vers le français et du français vers l'anglais.

Donc, sans plus tarder, I would like to invite our first deputant to come up. You will have—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Chair, just a point of order. Thanks very much. I appreciate so many people coming to this very important series of presentations on a bill that I believe the public has been shut out of.

I understand that we are, right now, in the Amethyst Room, and that this can be televised. I'd like an assurance from the Chair and from the Clerk that this is being webcast in order that parents and child care providers across Ontario are able to access these public hearings.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): That was a request that had been made to the committee, and we were able to grant this request. This committee does not usually meet in this room. The reason we are in this room is so that we can have interpretation. We have television as well as the webcast, yes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Chair.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): You're welcome.

Everybody ready? You'll have to forgive me for the French pronunciation of all the names. I will try to anglicize them as much as I can, but it's usually even worse.

**MARIA MONTESSORI
SCHOOL PARENT GROUP**

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I will ask the Maria Montessori School Parent Group and, I believe, the vice-chair, Iliana Arapis, to come. That's probably not how you pronounce your name.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: You were very close. It's Iliana.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): You have five minutes.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Iliana Arapis and I am the vice-chair of the parent group at the Maria Montessori School, which is accredited by the Association Montessori Internationale, or AMI. The school is located in Don Valley West in Toronto.

As parents, we're truly encouraged by the spirit and intent of Bill 10 to prioritize high-quality child care and early years programs for our children. On behalf of my fellow Montessori parents, many of whom are here in the gallery today, I extend my sincerest thanks to the com-

mittee for providing our parent group with the opportunity to speak with you.

Your committee is undertaking a monumental task: to strengthen early years programs in Ontario. But we are concerned that Montessori education, which is already fulfilling that vision, stands to lose in this legislation. We are requesting that Montessori education be protected, preserved and recognized within Bill 10, or, ideally, exempted from Bill 10.

Within Bill 10, this could be accomplished by adding a provision that any inconsistency between AMI Montessori pedagogy and this bill or its regulations be resolved in favour of the AMI Montessori pedagogy. As parents, we are comforted by the high standards and quality assurance set out by the AMI as they are the globally recognized training and accrediting body, and a member of the United Nations and UNESCO.

Underpinning our request is the right of all parents to choose the child care and education options that best serve our children's needs. Montessori provides one of many numerous and viable alternative pedagogies. As Bill 10 currently reads, the integrity of Montessori programming would be at risk, and therefore true parental choice eroded.

Paragraph 3 of Bill 10's preamble reads, "Research has indicated that the learning and development that occurs during a child's early years is critical. It can have a major bearing on a person's later achievements in school and in the workplace, and on overall health and well-being throughout a person's lifetime." Well, this resonates with Montessori parents because it was Dr. Maria Montessori and her predecessors who discovered this through evidence-based research and observation conducted over 100 years ago, research that is still relevant and current today. As parents, we're concerned that Bill 10 would have unintended consequences on Montessori families who have chosen this universally respected education for our children.

Montessori is not daycare. It is education that optimizes the development of children within their first plane of development, from birth to the age of six years. We worry that Montessori may be misplaced under the category of "daycare." At the Maria Montessori School, our children experience an enriching curriculum in a nurturing and stimulating environment that activates their senses and fosters their physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. This occurs because of six key factors that are important to Montessori parents, but not acknowledged in Bill 10:

- (1) The emphasis on practical life, language, culture, geography and mathematics;
- (2) A large mixed-stage environment that includes children as young as two and a half and as old as six;
- (3) Classrooms that are prepared environments;
- (4) An uninterrupted three-hour work cycle;
- (5) A full spectrum of intriguing work materials; and
- (6) Teachers and assistants that are AMI-trained and certified.

These must all work in concert, together, to set the foundation for high-quality Montessori programming, and therefore make Montessori deserving of its own place, exempt from Bill 10.

In Montessori our children are unique individuals, free to learn in accordance with their own learning style, at their own pace in a children's community. As a result, they are practical, confident, intrinsically motivated problem-solvers. They develop their independence early on and have a real thirst for learning. Parents choose Montessori because it takes into consideration the children's needs and tendencies and not the convenience of parents. Montessorians have helped to inform how we parent and how we prepare our children for life. Our kids didn't come with a manual, and we work at becoming the parents our children need. Every day, we see the benefits of Montessori to our kids.

Interruption.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: To conclude, as we applaud your efforts and, with heartfelt thanks, encourage the committee to maintain your deep concern for our children, we do ask that Montessori pedagogy be protected, preserved and recognized within Bill 10 or, ideally, exempted from Bill 10. But if within Bill 10—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): You have exhausted your five minutes. I am sorry; this is a very unpleasant part of my job. I feel like that child a little bit right now, but I can't leave. You're welcome to stay, ma'am.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: Thank you so much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): We will ask the PCs to start with the questions.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'll ask a very quick question.

First of all, I think it's really nice that babies are here today. I think that's really nice, and that really adds to this meeting. It probably brings a lot to the table—I could say other things as well.

Can you tell me quickly: How many children in Ontario do you think would be under the Montessori schools? The total number of children under the Montessori schools in what we call daycare—and not babies.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: That's an excellent question. It's my understanding that there are over 150 schools in the province of Ontario. That would likely be equivalent to several thousand parents and families.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay. Go ahead.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks, Iliana. I really appreciate your coming here today. What you spoke about today, the Montessori education and the choice parents make, really resonated with me. I'm very happy that you brought the issue of parental choice to the floor as our first speaker today, because I am concerned that Bill 10 will erode parental choice, just as you had said.

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I find it very interesting that, as a Montessori—I visited a Montessori as a result of this in Kitchener just last week, Sunshine Montessori. You're looking for an exemption, or at least some changes in this legislation, and I appreciate that. I'm just wondering if you could

give us a little bit more about what you've observed in this legislation that would inhibit you from delivering a successful education model to the students and to the parents who choose to send their children to you.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: Thank you for that comment. Within a Montessori environment—I mentioned six key factors in my deposition. One of those key factors is a large, mixed-age environment, with children as young as two and a half and as old as six. This provides for a very rich and dynamic learning environment. The young children have an opportunity every day to learn from their older peers—and for the older peers to develop their leadership skills and their empathy skills in teaching the younger ones within the classroom.

It's not just about that one component. For Montessori to really flourish and be high-fidelity Montessori, you need all six of those factors to work in concert. So it's not just about large class sizes with a mixed-age group. It's about an AMI-trained teacher, an assistant in the classroom who can help manage and navigate the class, as well as a full spectrum of really beautiful and aesthetically pleasing and useful and relevant work materials that the children engage in. What we are concerned about as Montessori parents is that the opportunities for our children to be socialized within a large environment may be eroded—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Unfortunately, I have to cut you off.

It's to the NDP: Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Chair, could we have a 30-second warning there for everyone, so they could know when to wind down?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Yes. Will do.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much, and welcome here today. If you could continue—I'd like to know what would change in the Montessori class if this bill was brought into effect as written.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: A number of things would change. Right now, the legislation does not allow for a three-hour work cycle for children. This is very critical. Children actually have an immense capacity to concentrate for long periods of time and to repeat and repeat and repeat. You may know this from many of your own children. If they are able to have that three-hour work cycle, they are able to develop their critical thinking skills and they can stay focused on task for as long a period of time as they feel they need to in order to satisfy that innate drive for them to complete that task.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Which clause or section in the act prohibits that?

Ms. Iliana Arapis: Our concern lies in schedule 1, part I, "Purposes and Interpretation," and sections 6 and 8 as defined.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. So the first problem—and I want to look at those sections—is that it doesn't allow for a full three-hour cycle to go through. What are the other things that would be changed as a result of this legislation?

Ms. Iliana Arapis: The large, mixed-age environment. In other words, children under the age of 3.8 would not be able to benefit from their Montessori pedagogy and learning.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And what section specifically addresses that?

Ms. Iliana Arapis: I'm sorry; I don't have that in front of me at the moment.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: If you could get it back to me, because, as we're going through this, it helps us if we can go to specific sections that are problematic for you.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: I would be happy to share that with you afterwards.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: That would be great. If I have any time left—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Forty seconds.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: How is Montessori regulated and monitored from the outside?

Ms. Iliana Arapis: My child is in an AMI-accredited school, and we are very happy with this because the AMI is a globally recognized training and accrediting body. So I know that the highest standards of Montessori are being maintained in that environment.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: I have an opportunity as a parent to observe at any time to actually see these factors and elements in action, to see Montessori in action.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So in general, it's the parents who are going in and making sure that things are running the way they should.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: Well, AMI, as the accrediting body for the school, does conduct their reviews of the school on a regular basis.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): We'll see on the Liberal side—go ahead.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much for your eloquent discussion today. We really appreciate hearing a lot of the details there.

I just wanted to know: Did you know that *How Does Learning Happen?*, our pedagogy document for early years, has been influenced by the Montessori pedagogy—

Ms. Iliana Arapis: Yes, I was aware of that.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: —good—and that we actually made some changes to the bill when it was first introduced, based on Montessori feedback, to ensure that *How Does Learning Happen?* does not compete with the Montessori pedagogy?

Interjection.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: And that's very helpful. I know we've had a very good relationship with the ministry and the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators, so as I said, I'm very happy to hear about that.

Are there any other issues that are unique to AMI Montessori schools that you'd like to address?

Ms. Iliana Arapis: For me, as a parent with a child in an AMI school, I have had the opportunity to participate

in many of the education sessions provided by the AMI. Because we live in Ontario—we are a multicultural society—we are open to a global and international type of pedagogy that I think will serve our children very, very well. So I'm very happy that my child is in an AMI-accredited school because I think it provides him with the broadest opportunity to enhance himself, improve his skills, and grow and learn and develop as a fantastic human being. For me, the AMI provides the highest possible quality assurance in the programming for my child.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you. What qualifications do you think a daycare program would need if they were to be exempt from the ministry's requirements? What would that look like?

Ms. Iliana Arapis: I am not sure, to be perfectly honest with you, because I'm not familiar with daycare settings. I'm not qualified to respond to that.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: As a comparative with Montessori—and I can appreciate that.

I just really wanted to ask this last thing: Did you know that the ministry does not plan to change the staff and child ratios that are currently in place if Bill 10 is passed?

Ms. Iliana Arapis: Can you elaborate on that, please?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Well, that the mixing of children between the ages of three and five would still be permitted.

Ms. Iliana Arapis: And two and a half?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Well, between the ages of three and five. Were you aware of that part of it?

Ms. Iliana Arapis: I'm not. So further, I would advocate that Montessori needs to exist and be protected in its own right, exempt from Bill 10.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Okay. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): You have a few seconds. Somebody else from the Liberal side? Mr. Crack—

Mr. Grant Crack: How much is a few seconds, Madam Chair?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Oh, you don't. Sorry. It was really few.

I thank you so much.

ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNATIONALE

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now invite Sandra Giralto, Association Montessori Internationale. You have five minutes to do a presentation.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: Thank you to the members for providing this opportunity to address the standing committee. My name is Sandra Giralto, and I'm currently the president of the Association Montessori Internationale in Canada, or AMI, as well the director of training at the Foundation for Montessori Education in Toronto. I hold a bachelor of science degree and a master's degree in education. I also hold an AMI teaching diploma as well as an AMI teacher training diploma at the primary level. I have served as an adjunct professor in education and

research at Loyola College. I'm a past member of the AMI scientific pedagogical, materials and translation committees. I've also had the very rare benefit of being trained by Renilde Montessori, Dr. Montessori's youngest granddaughter.

Today I'm representing the AMI in Canada. AMI's mission is to support the natural development of the human being, from birth to maturity. This is accomplished through international AMI teacher training programs, global school recognition and worldwide professional development for Montessori parents and educators.

We do support the intent of Bill 10. However, we're concerned that the bill, as written, would not be reflective of the holistic view of child development inherent in an AMI Montessori approach.

AMI has its mandate to work in conjunction with other organizations and governments all over the world to ensure the highest standards for the education of our children. AMI is a member of UNESCO and has a consultative status as an NGO with the UN. It's the only one.

1420

In terms of Bill 10, we know that we can find a common-ground solution that will both respect the principles of AMI Montessori pedagogy and enable the government to provide access to safe and effective programs for children in Ontario. Our concern lies in schedule 1, part I, "Purposes and Interpretation," sections 6 and 8 as defined. As currently written, we're concerned that impeding the ability for AMI Montessori to deliver its programs will be an unintended consequence, and therefore we urge this committee to provide clarity on these exemptions and ask that AMI accreditation be formally recognized in the language of this bill. In light of this, please allow me to provide some clarifying information.

As the name "Montessori" itself is in the public domain and does not carry a copyright, Dr. Maria Montessori in 1929 created the organization AMI to safeguard the integrity of her work and to ensure that quality standards and the researched scientific characteristics of the method, the materials and the preparation of teachers would be protected so as to provide this very unique education to children in response to their human development. AMI is recognized internationally as an authoritative voice regarding the unique nature of childhood, natural human development and the rights of the child. AMI is identified and sought after nationally and internationally as the custodian and cultivator of Montessori philosophy and pedagogy.

In Ontario, Dr. Maria Montessori's son, Mario, inaugurated the first AMI teacher training centre in Canada in 1971. Toronto's strong connection to the Montessori family was maintained by Renilde Montessori in founding the Foundation for Montessori Education in 1989. To this end, we have been working on behalf of the child in Ontario, uninterrupted, for 43 years.

Today, you've been provided with a package of information which contains AMI's annual report; also, a list detailing AMI's initiatives, programs and quality assurance; and a bound copy of the AMI curriculum for chil-

dren from birth to 18—and that’s a lesser version, what you’ve got in front of you, a very reduced one. We trust that this information will provide you with some insight into the scope of AMI’s work.

Adults who graduate from AMI courses are not early childhood educators, but are, in fact, teachers. They enter AMI teacher training programs having already been conferred undergraduate degrees or college diplomas. The work of the AMI teacher is to support and optimize the natural development of the human being within an educative environment.

The strong and respected presence of AMI in Toronto has gone far beyond our provincial borders, right across Canada. Considering Toronto’s very unique relationship to the Montessori family and to current scientists working on behalf of the child, like neurologists Adele Diamond and Stephen Hughes, it would be tragic if AMI-quality-assured schools and children could not benefit from this scientifically vetted, time-honoured method of education—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: —if it were to have its practices altered by legislation. As a result, Ontario would be the first province within a Commonwealth nation to set that history, while other Commonwealth countries have moved to accept AMI curriculum as a national teaching curriculum, with Australia leading the way. You’ll find a copy of that letter in our package.

In closing, I’d like to reiterate that we are concerned that impeding the ability for Montessori to deliver its programs will be an unintended consequence, I believe, of Bill 10.

Thank you for your kind attention.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Five minutes exactly. The rotation starts with Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Ms. Giralto, thank you very much for the presentation. I appreciate it.

I’m trying to understand precisely what it is that will inhibit Montessori. I’m not arguing that it won’t, just that when we work through clause-by-clause, if I’m going to address a particular section, I need to know what the section is.

You referenced schedule 1, part I, “Purposes and Interpretation.” I didn’t see what it was that would actually provide a problem.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: I think one of the main things that we’re concerned about is being regarded as child care and falling under the Day Nurseries Act. That would impede us from providing an educative environment. There are many schools in Ontario right now that fall under the Day Nurseries Act and are Montessori schools; there are other schools that fall under the Ministry of Education and are not. We want to be sure that we’re regarded as a place that offers education.

From my talk, you probably heard the fact that our teachers—we graduate teachers. The AMI program itself is a full-time program, from September till the end of May. We are 9 to 5 every day. We’re recognized as a

private career college. Our students do a certain amount of hours of practice teaching and placement and all of those things. They must come to us already with an undergraduate degree or a college diploma, in fact, and two years’ work experience associated with that college diploma. In other parts of the world, the AMI teaching credential is regarded as a master’s level—in the United States, at the University of Vic in Spain—we’re leading edge. Prague, for example, right now has recognized AMI in its holistic manner. Australia has done that. There are thousands of schools in the United States where Montessori AMI is regarded as the main teaching credential necessary in that state. Our sister office in BC is leading the charge in terms of having AMI schools recognized as teaching schools versus child care places. That’s what we’re concerned about.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I’m going to ask for something that I’d like you to submit in writing later.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: Absolutely.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: If you could detail the wording in the act in the different sections that are particularly problematic for Montessori, I think that would help all of us on this committee. I know you’ve referred to the section—if I’m hearing you right, you’re saying that if it goes through as written—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: —that part of your operation would be considered a daycare as opposed to a school.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: Right.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I may misunderstand this, but I would think that you would still be a school, you would just operate in part under this regulation.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: I’d be happy to do that, because our approach is very holistic. So we can’t take out elements and put in elements that would affect the whole program. We’re a program that’s based from birth right up to age 18, and in Europe it’s right up to age 24—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Sorry.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: —so I’d be happy to provide that information.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: That would be great. Thank you very much.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: Thank you.

Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): To the Liberals: Mr. Crack.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much for coming. The previous presenter, Ms. Arapis, had mentioned unintended consequences. Could you elaborate on exactly what you think—I mean, you’re supportive of Bill 10, yet there’s this assumption that there are unintended consequences. How does that affect your particular situation?

Ms. Sandra Giralto: I want to say fervently that the fact that Bill 10 was prioritized in response to what’s happened in terms of the deaths of the children in the illegal home daycare settings—so this is a really worthy and critical endeavour. I think what we would like to be sure of is that we’re not caught in something that doesn’t apply to us. We want to be sure that we’re recognized on

the value of what we provide and that our standards are looked at globally. We have a scientific pedagogic committee that reviews what we offer at the teacher-training level for the adults and goes into the classrooms with the children and vets what goes on with the children. We work very, very closely with neurologists, neuroscientists, pediatricians, psychologists. We gather information from all over the world to ensure that what we provide is education that's safe, accessible and benefits children. So we want to be sure that we're seen as that.

Mr. Grant Crack: Okay. Thank you. You also indicated that you're concerned that the bill, as written, is not going to be reflective of the holistic view of child development in the Montessori approach. Could you elaborate for me on how that would—

Ms. Sandra Giralto: Again, we have a very holistic view of the child. For example, when we think of the groupings of children, and we have three- to six-year-olds together—two-and-a-half-year-olds to six-year-olds together—that those are children attending in the same classroom for three years. We also have a certain set of materials that are required. We have to have an AMI-trained teacher in the classroom. We have to have certain time parameters—a three-hour work period. I think looking at any part of that and removing it really dilutes or—in fact, it is no longer a Montessori program as Dr. Montessori envisioned. One of the things, a call to charge for her, was that we don't do what she wanted us to do, but we keep doing what the child needs for us to do. That's why a scientific pedagogical committee, with members from every single continent except Antarctica—they sit on a board much like this, meet two to three times a year, Skype each other throughout the year to make sure—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: —that we are on the cutting edge of what our children need right from birth—in utero, even—right up to ages 18 to 24.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you. Would you be aware that the age mixing is something that I don't think is in this particular legislation? That would come in the regulations—that we would have other consultations in the next number of months. Were you aware of that?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Three minutes is over.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: We certainly want to be part of the process. We're happy for this opportunity. We want to be part of the discussion, and we're really glad and grateful for that.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I'm sorry to interrupt.

It's to the PCs now, three minutes.

1430

Mrs. Gila Martow: Hi. Thank you very much for your presentation. As somebody who raised four kids, I can tell you that every child is very different and their abilities are very different.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: Yes.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think that that's sort of what you and the previous presenter were trying to explain and maybe aren't quite getting through: that you can have a two-and-a-half-year-old child who's ready for school or you can have a two-and-a-half-year-old child that still needs, basically, babysitting. If a two-and-a-half-year-old child is ready for school and is stuck in a babysitting environment, they're actually not going to develop as quickly and maybe won't even catch up to what they could have been. That's why I think the Montessori program is about the kid's ability and not pigeonholing them and not putting a square peg in a round hole, but finding an environment that the kid is comfortable in and letting them grow as quickly as they want.

I think that we don't want to throw out the baby with the bathwater and I think this is a perfect example of that, where we're having unintended consequences and we're not supporting the fantastic work that the Montessori schools do in our communities.

My question to you is: Were you consulted on this piece of legislation? Did the government come to you and ask for your opinion?

Ms. Sandra Giralto: I think that having this opportunity to be here in front of the committee and in front of all of you—each one of us to have a voice and to be able to give you our point of view—is so important. I'm really grateful for this. I'm grateful that you're all taking the time to listen. I know that AMI all over the world sits at committees like this. As I say, AMI is the only Montessori organization that has a consultative status with the UN. So we do this often and we appreciate that, because I think it's important for all of us to be able to have the chance to find out about each other and for every child to have what they need and for every parent to choose exactly what that child needs. So it has to fit the child and it has to fit the family. We and AMI are concerned about the best interests of the child and we want to continue to do that.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Ms. MacLeod?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I have a quick question. Your association is sort of a late entry. Did AMI have to actually bump another Montessori in order to get on here today?

Ms. Sandra Giralto: We applied to be here and we were granted access and—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It eventually worked? Okay.

Ms. Sandra Giralto: —we were very happy.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. And then the second thing is, I guess—you were going to ask? I guess I can ask it. Do you believe that Montessori schools across the province should have an opportunity to speak to this legislation?

Ms. Sandra Giralto: I think everyone needs a voice. As I say, at least I can speak for myself and let you know that this is a very important piece of legislation and that we and AMI believe that taking care of the child to have what they need according to the high standards that are vetted, that are scientific, that are looked at by neuro-

logists, neuroscientists, child psychologists and pediatricians—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Sorry to interrupt. Thank you so much. The time is over.

Ms. Sandra Girlato: Thank you very much.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Madam Chair: Can I find out from the Clerk why Humberside Montessori School wasn't able to attend? That's on my original sheet.

Interjection: It was switched.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. I just wanted to clarify that there was a switch between Humberside Montessori so that their larger umbrella organization, the Association Montessori Internationale, came in their place. Is that correct?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Not quite. They did switch, but they switched to Tuesday.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay, so it's a different time?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): So Humberside will still be there, but they will be there tomorrow.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): You're welcome.

MS. KATE SUMMERBELL

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now call Kate Summerbell to please come forward. Please sit down. You have five minutes—I think you were there in the room. Please start.

Ms. Kate Summerbell: Thank you. I'd like to thank you for welcoming me here to share my thoughts on Bill 10. I'm an independent child care provider, with 11 years' experience in both the licensed and unlicensed sectors in Ottawa and in rural Arnprior.

My colleagues and my clients have studied Bill 10 and the Ombudsman's report, and I'm really glad that you've given us an opportunity for you to listen to our critique. We have two broad concerns with this bill: the effects of a few excessively narrow restrictions; and the critical omission of measures vital to the safe child care sector that we all desire.

I'll start with our thoughts on restrictions. We agree that it's long past time regulations came into alignment between the licensed and unlicensed home daycare sectors. What's defined as a safe and optimal environment for a child must of course be the same across all sectors of daycare.

Under the Day Nurseries Act, the licensed sector has been struggling for years under stranglehold restrictions that fail to meet the needs of families and providers. The most skilled of licensed caregivers escape in droves to the less-regulated private sector. Independent daycare is the number one choice for parents across Ontario, comprising 78% of the industry. We have to consider why that is.

The regulations that parents and providers struggle with the most in this bill are the two-under-two rule, the spaces cancelled by a provider's own children and ac-

commodating school-age children up to the age of 13. Each of these regulations will cause immediate downsizing and expulsion of existing contracted clients.

The ministry has been negligent in providing an estimate of the affected spaces, or a plan to accommodate the displaced. These are real children with working parents and real, strong emotional bonds with their care providers. The disruption to their space and to the bonds that they have formed will be immediate and devastating. In the longer term, effects of the restrictions will decimate accessibility to daycare and eliminate upwards of 140,000 or more daycare spaces.

With Ontario's groundbreaking maternity coverage and the full-day kindergarten program, 98% of applicants for any space will be for a child under the age of 2. The two-under-two rule will close 60% of home care spaces to the majority of applicants. Replacement of daycare spaces by providers' school-age children will close even more spaces.

Parents returning to work will discover an instant daycare shortage for the 12-month age group. Families will struggle to find space in the same daycare for younger siblings or multiples. Compliant caregivers will turn away applicant after applicant, while their own spaces remain unfilled. Their businesses will become financially unviable, and their strongest competitors will be the non-compliant, illegal operators who will fill the demand for accessibility of daycare space.

Daycare providers need an income just as much as the working parents we support. If all our spaces remain unfilled, we go into a financial crisis and we close our daycares to seek work in other sectors. No provider, licensed or unlicensed, can survive or feed her family with empty spaces. We simply can't be turning away applicants when our spaces are empty.

Statistics drawn from the Ombudsman's report and the coroner's office support the safety track record of the DNA-compliant unrestricted private sector as comparable or even superior to the safety of licensed, age-restricted models. I have as many arguments supporting the safety and positive development in age-grouping models as there are for mixed-age restricted models. This committee must consider alternate age restrictions, such as one under one, two under 18 months, or three under two, to better meet the needs of the market and the families.

I'll be happy to detail my supporting evidence in question period, and share some stories of my frustration working as an agency-licensed provider. For now, I have very little time left, so I will quickly address some critical omissions of Bill 10.

It provides no increased oversight to the unlicensed daycare sector, and no standard of training across the board for providers in licensed and unlicensed sectors.

The Ombudsman's report devotes four full pages and a recommendation to the success of registry and direct licensing systems across Canada and the world. Existing licensing agencies are not accessible to small-town or rural Ontario providers, and regardless would never have the capacity to take on 350,000 or more independent care

providers in the province. A universally accessible registry or direct licensing is essential to improve oversight of the private industry.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Kate Summerbell: Also missing from Bill 10 is any provision to establish industry-wide standards of child care. Requirements such as first aid and CPR, vulnerable sector checks, training in the ELECT framework and emergency preparedness are some of the standards that the best providers acquire on a voluntary basis. To make any concrete improvement to the safety and development of children, Bill 10 must require all care providers to meet a basic standard of qualification, such as the national child care certification course, which could be made available through a website or through—

Interruption.

Ms. Kate Summerbell: Sorry.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Well, the five minutes came—

Ms. Kate Summerbell: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): —so your timing was very adequate.

We now go to the Liberals. Ms. Mangat?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you for your presentation. What could be more urgent and what could be more pressing than the well-being, safety and security of our children? We have all read the Ombudsman's report, and the Ombudsman said that the legislation is extremely outdated, that it needs to be replaced immediately. Do you agree with this or not?

Ms. Kate Summerbell: The Day Nurseries Act absolutely needs to be replaced instantly—with improvements, not just more of the same complaint-based systems.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: The Ombudsman also said that Ontario parents and children have waited long enough for reform and modernized child care in Ontario. Do you not agree with this statement?

Ms. Kate Summerbell: Absolutely. That's why I'm here.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: So then what do you want to change?

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Ms. Kate Summerbell: I want to change the restrictive licensing process, the restrictions that apply to the licensed sector, because those did not work. Caregivers were leaving that sector in droves. They could not manage to work. I can actually tell you stories. I have identical twins, and when I began in the licensed sector, they took up my two-under-two spaces, which left me three spaces. My three spaces were not accessible to anyone entering the daycare system with a 12-month-old child. They were closed to those, so they were only open to people who, for some reason, changed daycare in the middle of an older age.

If my spaces were full, which they were not, I made \$26 a day in that program. It worked out to about \$7 an

hour. If my spaces were unfilled, as they were in many cases, I made about \$4 an hour for a 12-hour day.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: So do you not think that Bill 10 will increase the safety of children in unlicensed child care settings?

Ms. Kate Summerbell: I think that the restrictions will have no bearing at all on the safety of children—because they've been operating under the same safety standards, with no ratios on the age groups, for 43 years, since 1971. I don't think that the safety track record of the compliant Day Nurseries Act sector will be made any safer by the legislation of the restrictive rules. I think it will be made safer if there's more oversight and if there's a registry system.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: So how can we bring more oversight?

Ms. Kate Summerbell: A registry system and also maybe some training standards that are required by all caregivers.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Can you throw some more light on it?

Ms. Kate Summerbell: A registry system—the Ombudsman's report actually devotes four pages to this. They discuss where the systems of registry have been successful in Canada and across the States, so there's lots of information in the Ombudsman's report. Daycare providers that are independent—we're not afraid of people coming into our homes and inspecting our homes. We think that there should be a lot more funding for inspections so that we're inspected on a regular basis and not just on a complaint-based basis.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): We'll have to switch. We're now to the PCs. Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much for your presentation. We've been doing a lot of consultation ourselves on this particular bill. One of the things I've found out from the independents, as well, that are not licensed at this point—I think it's almost unanimous now that most of them would like to see a registry and/or some kind of licensing.

Ms. Kate Summerbell: Absolutely.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It ties in exactly with what you're saying. My question to you is, just looking at your sector, how many daycare spaces do you think will be lost if we go ahead with this bill in its present form, in your sector alone?

Ms. Kate Summerbell: In my sector alone, in rural Arnprior, I did a poll and I got a response from only 10 daycare providers. Two of them have already closed; they were early childhood educators. They have gone into the school system because they don't believe they'll be viable under Bill 10, so they took a job when it happened. I have three providers that will be closing two spaces because of their own children. I have one provider who will be closing three spaces and two who will be closing two spaces. I think I ended up with 14 spaces closed out of 10 daycares alone because of the three restrictions that I mentioned.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to mention that I believe you're in John Yakabuski's, our colleague's, riding, and I know he's very concerned and has expressed his concerns to us as well.

In my riding, there was, unfortunately, a very sad occurrence, a death of a little girl this past year. It was in an unlicensed daycare. I think that that's sort of what we're all hearing from your great presentation: that the problem isn't the licensed daycares, it's the unlicensed daycares. By making further restrictions on licensed daycares, we're going to actually do the opposite of what we want: We're going to have more unlicensed daycare spots. We're going to have more children in those unlicensed daycares. Why would we want to be doing that?

Can you suggest if maybe there's a point system—because I think that that's the concern. People don't want to see a licensed home daycare or an unlicensed home daycare with 10 infants. They want to see a bit of a range. Is there a way to do it without making it such a hard, fast, arbitrary kind of rule—where what we see is that for mothers, or even fathers, who have to go back to work when the child is 12 months old, the problem is going to be that a lot of daycare spots don't open until the child is older because we're restricting infant daycare spots with this legislation. How is the government going to provide for these families?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Kate Summerbell: Okay—

Mrs. Gila Martow: Sorry.

Ms. Kate Summerbell: I have a couple of places where I disagree with you. I don't believe that DNA-compliant unlicensed daycare is the problem at all. I believe it's the non-compliant, illegal daycares. They would fall under the Day Nurseries Act, whereas compliant, unlicensed care does not fall—it falls under the Day Nurseries Act with the less than five children.

I also don't agree that all parents prefer a mixed-age group. I know a number of parents who want their child—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Sorry, I have to cut you off.

Ms. Kate Summerbell: Okay.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order: I just wanted to be perfectly clear. In the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, we believe in licensed and unlicensed child care. We just believe there needs to be a registry and that the government needs to enforce its regulations.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I don't think that's a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. I just wanted to clarify—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): To the NDP: Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much for being here today. Do you want to finish the point you were just making?

Ms. Kate Summerbell: Oh, if I can even remember it. I was just saying that a lot of parents want a single age group. They feel that when their infant is in care, there shouldn't be Lego and glitter glue and a daycare provider

focusing on an advanced preschool craft when their infants are needing bottles and diaper changes and cuddles and full-on arms attention. Some parents want their little ones to grow up in a group of the same age and some parents want a mixed-age. The unlicensed sector has been self-regulating that for 43 years, and very successfully. We meet the needs of the parents. We adapt our daycares to what the parents are demanding and what the market is demanding.

Parents don't all want their children in Montessori, they don't all want their children in unlicensed care, and they don't all want their children in mixed groups. In fact, age grouping is really common in a lot of the daycare centres, so when a caregiver is free to adapt to what the parents need or to her own best skills, then I guess the market need is better and children are safer.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I've gathered from your presentation that the rule of two under two you don't think is a realistic ratio.

Ms. Kate Summerbell: I have two problems with it. It does not give the caregivers the ability to meet a parent's need for younger siblings or for their own specific age groupings, if that's what they prefer. It also will make us not viable as businesses, because 60% of our spaces will not be available to returning workforce parents.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So how many children under two should be allowed to a single caregiver?

Ms. Kate Summerbell: I think it's very subjective. Part of me wants to support a caregiver's right to have an entire infant group that they raise as a group through the ages and stages right up to kindergarten, release them to kindergarten and start with a new group. That is what I would have done when my twins were two. I didn't want to be dealing with Lego and glitter glue. I wanted to have a mix of children that were the same age as my children. Now that my children are 12 years old, I prefer a mixed group. It works well for me. But sometimes the market brings me three children under the age of two. Right now, I have three that are going to turn four next year, and all three of them will be going together to kindergarten. They were all raised together and they were fabulous.

For me, I could—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Kate Summerbell: —operate easily with two under 18 months or a three-under-two rule. I could adapt to that. But it would also be nice if providers had the freedom to self-regulate. So I support both ideas, one personally and one professionally, representing my profession.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you so much.

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS RESOURCE NETWORK

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now like to invite Brenda Burns, board president, and Doreen

Cowin, executive director, of Child Care Providers Resource Network.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Yes, point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much. My concern is that we're not informing the witnesses when we need amendments to the bill to be filed by, what the deadline is. Could you provide that at the top of every presentation, in case they have amendments they would like us to put forward?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Okay. Is there willingness within the group? Not everybody will be filing amendments, and I'm not sure everybody knows this language of filing amendments. How about we make sure that everybody who comes here will receive a communication from the Clerk advising them as to when they have to file amendments. We will do this either by email, if they have email, or by phone calls to let them know, rather than taking time this afternoon.

Did you get all that?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Valerie Quico Lim): Do they mean written submissions or when members are to file amendments?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): For the people who present.

Did you get all that?

Ms. Doreen Cowin: Yes—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): That didn't eat into your five minutes, but your five minutes starts now.

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Ms. Doreen Cowin: Good afternoon. Thank you for the invitation to speak to you today. The safety and well-being of each and every child is our primary concern and of paramount importance, regardless of where they receive their care. We have stated in the past, and I state again today, CCPRN wants to work with the government and with stakeholders to ensure that preschoolers are in the care of someone who has their best interests at heart. Those individuals should have access to the most up-to-date tools and resources so that they can provide a safe, nurturing and engaging environment.

If the priority is to prevent death and increase safety, Bill 10, in its current format, will not achieve it. This bill does not address the safety and well-being of all children in care. If it goes through without amendments, there will be significant consequences.

Bill 10 restricts independent professional caregivers, or IPCs, and will eliminate more than 140,00 daycare spaces, causing daycare shortage, and ultimately force the closure of many small businesses, as IPCs will no longer be able to afford to provide the care. Experienced and qualified IPCs will leave the profession. Close to 60% of businesses will disappear, resulting in economic losses for the province and increased rates for parents. The bill will increase the number of caregivers who go underground, and thus increase safety concerns.

Despite this bill, if it goes forward, over 800,000 children will still be in the independent sector, yet the bill

does not contribute constructively to the quality of independent home child care. In our 30 years of experience, we have seen clearly that it is not licensing that equates to quality; it is information, training, resources and support. If we invest in these for both parents and caregivers, then we would see improvements in quality and safety.

The proposed legislation offers an attempt to regulate unlicensed child care through stricter penalties and more restrictions, but Bill 10 lacks a strategy for monitoring the sector to determine when offences occur. As we have witnessed, a complaints-driven system does not work and will not signal an unsafe daycare until it's too late. Legislation needs to move away from a model of incentives and punishments and toward a model of empowerment. Incentives and voluntary registration or licensing will only appeal to those caregivers who already provide high-quality care, and punishments only work if there is sufficient oversight to ensure that violations are noticed.

Until a province-wide registry or independent licensing becomes mandatory for all child care providers, subpar child care will continue to exist. These strict, unreasonable ratios will force more caregivers underground, thus compounding the problem by even further decreasing their access to information and support.

Ms. Brenda Burns: The 6,000 new spaces will not accommodate the approximately 140,000 children who will be displaced due to the new ratios for IPCs. This will result in confused, displaced children, angry parents and a weaker economy. This bill will have a significant impact on women entrepreneurs, with parents needing to stay home with their children and caregivers closing their business. There will be a rise in unemployment and less expendable income.

In the Ombudsman's report this fall, he wrote, "It is also too early to close the door on other options such as developing a comprehensive voluntary or mandatory registry, extending the licensing scheme to informal caregivers and/or establishing universal standards for first aid and safety training, and criminal records screening." In recommendation 110, he said, "The Ministry of Education should review the existing voluntary child care registries and consider the feasibility of adopting a centralized provincial registry, with registration on either a voluntary or mandatory basis."

IPCs are not unlicensed because we want to be. On the contrary, CCPRN supports a registry for all, and CCPRN is ready to host the pilot registry and work with the government to make it happen. What we need is a list of caregivers, a registry or individual licensing so that the government has a means to pass on quality standards and best practices, as well as to monitor compliance. While we agree with the goal of safer, higher-quality child care, we do not believe the route is through affiliation with licensed agencies—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Brenda Burns: —rather it is through the development of a province-wide registry. We urge you to

consider what we are saying and to make the necessary changes to Bill 10 to keep all of Ontario children safe.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Very good. We'll start with Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I've got one quick question and then to Ms. MacLeod. Can you give us a sort of a layout of how you established the 140,000 lost daycare spaces, maybe just a sheet you could hand us and say, "This is exactly how we came up"—because the minister doesn't agree with you. We've asked that question a number of times in the Legislature and she treats us like we're idiots when we ask that.

Ms. Brenda Burns: I'd like to answer, actually, that question right now. A 2013-14 survey conducted by CCPRN, with responses from 900 IPCs currently operating in Ontario, shows that the new restrictions proposed in this bill will have a significant impact on the IPC care model and will require a majority of IPCs to terminate care for some currently served families—76%; raise daycare rates to compensate for less revenue—82%; look for alternate employment—57%; find daycare for their own children in order to secure alternate employment—49% of caregivers with two children.

There's already a shortage of daycare spaces, particularly in the 12-to-18-month age group. When we look at this new legislation, that's the age group that's going to be most affected because of the new two-under-two proposal. However, whether it's 70,000 or 140,000 spaces lost, the result is going to be the same: unhappy, displaced children and angry parents who can't get to work. This will have a grave impact on the economy, but it begs the bigger question: Where will these children go?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much. It's really nice to have Brenda and Doreen here. I think it was over a year ago when you and I—well, all of us—met about this impending bill at the time. I want to congratulate you guys for becoming so mobilized, working with the independent child care operators. We know that the Association of Day Care Operators, who are licensed, private, non-profit and for-profit, is involved in this now. We hear from Montessori. So there seems to be a growing problem with Bill 10.

You have outlined some of the changes you'd like to see. I congratulate you, by the way, for sticking to it. As I told you then, I was with you then and I'm still with you now.

I'm just wondering what you would say to the government members here today on how to make this bill less intrusive on parental choice in the province.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Doreen Cowin: Okay. I think the government needs to revise the ratios in terms of making it less intrusive. Even if you look across the country, five provinces have three under two, one of which also has two under 18 months. That's the biggest thing for independent professional caregivers, to all of a sudden have to include their

own children—and then also change the definition of a child back to 10. Having it raised to 13—all the school-age children from 10 to 13 now will count in the number of five, and that just makes it—where are those children going to go? Like, 10-to-13-year-olds need daycare.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you for coming all the way from Ottawa. I wish we would have been in Ottawa today with you and so many other parents, but again, the government has refused to travel the bill, which is unfortunate. But thank you for coming today.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much for being here today. Could we have a copy of your remarks? I got this package, but it doesn't seem to have exactly what you've—

Ms. Doreen Cowin: Can we email it to the committee?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Oh, yes. Absolutely. That works.

Ms. Doreen Cowin: Okay. We'll do that, absolutely. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The calculation of 140,000 lost spaces: You're basing that on a survey you did of 900 providers?

Ms. Brenda Burns: Well, quite frankly, we've seen so many numbers out there—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, so have I.

Ms. Brenda Burns: —so many contradictions. It's my personal belief that no one, including the government of Ontario, has any idea of how many children are in independent care, and they don't know how many spaces will be lost.

If we could establish a province-wide registry, we would be able to track caregivers and we'd be able to track children. We would know where they are and who they are. Quite frankly, how do you answer that question? I've read so many reports, I now am confused over the numbers.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Because I haven't seen any independent study, any Stats Canada assessment either. I can't figure out whether the 140,000 is a wild overstatement or simply completely off the mark. I don't know, and I don't think anyone does.

The question of mandatory registration and inspections: That is one of the positions you're putting forward, then, that every child care provider should be registered and open to inspection by the government of Ontario?

Ms. Doreen Cowin: Absolutely, and we see three really good reasons for that. The registry is not just a listing; it would require basic requirements, documentation and training, things such as first aid, CPR, police records check, home safety checks, annual professional development, annual registration with the city or whoever holds the registry—absolutely. And then the three functions: It would help the government communicate with the caregivers and provide them with information about program quality, emerging standards and best practices; it would provide parents with information on quality care and programs, and parents could use that information when they do their screening and reference

checks; and it would be an access point for unscheduled safety inspections by the ministry.

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We talked to caregivers across the province. They want a registry. They want standards, they want professionalism and to be recognized as professionals. They obviously feel they're professionals themselves.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: As professionals, do you think they also should have early childhood education certificates?

Ms. Doreen Cowin: No, I don't think so. I think they need to have some education around child development and child guidance, safety, first aid and CPR, but I think that's available over the Internet in courses. Certainly at CCPRN, I know that in Ottawa, our caregivers are very, very fortunate. We're offering workshops—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Sorry to cut you off, but the three minutes is over.

To the Liberal side—who's it going to be? Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Hi. Thank you very much for coming here this afternoon. I know how important—and how passionate you are about the bill, but you have to agree that something had to be done, given that we have lost four children in the space of a few months from unlicensed daycare providers.

Ms. Doreen Cowin: We certainly strongly believe in a registry, like I said. First of all, the issue in Vaughan as well as in Orleans is that there were way more than five daycare children. So they were not legal home child care situations. If we had a registry where all caregivers would know the law, would have to follow the law to be on the registry, then parents know what to look for and parents know that they should be going into that home. That was one of the issues in Vaughan: that the parents didn't go into the home.

Mr. Granville Anderson: MPP Dunlop had asked about the 140,000 spaces that you claim would be lost. If that were to happen, I would assume it would be two children per provider. Is there a way of really scientifically coming up with a figure, or is that just a figure that's a figment of one's imagination, as I've heard totals of 350,000 from some groups as well?

Ms. Brenda Burns: Well, we surveyed 900 caregivers across Ontario. I read you the stats; I'd be happy to repeat them. Of the 900 caregivers who answered those questions, they would terminate care for some currently served families—76%; raise daycare rates to compensate for lost revenue—82%; look for alternate employment—57%; find daycare for their own children in order to secure alternate employment—49% of those caregivers had two children of their own. I am an independent professional caregiver. I would have to terminate clients.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Doreen, you were quoted as saying that there has never been any scientific study done at one point, so I'm just wondering where this

figure came from. I hear it all over the news, but there is really no way of defining that 140,000 spaces would be lost, or 300,000 or 400,000. There's really no way of doing that; it's just—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Brenda Burns: The only way to really calculate that is to implement a province-wide registry which would track caregivers and the children in their daycare. Then you would have accurate statistics.

Mr. Granville Anderson: And also, is there a ratio that you have in mind? We're trying to make this bill better. Two under two doesn't work for you; is there something in mind? The previous speaker basically said that it could be 20, based on her conversations. What do you think would be suitable for it?

Ms. Brenda Burns: CCPRN as an organization is—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I'm sorry to say you're out of time. We'll have to move on to the next presenter. Thank you, members of the committee.

As you can tell, there's been a shift. France Gélinas has House duty. I will be here for the next hour.

QUALITY EARLY LEARNING NETWORK

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The next presenter: Quality Early Learning Network, Joan Arruda.

If you could have a seat and just identify yourselves for Hansard, I'd appreciate it. Your names, please.

Ms. Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj: I'm Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj. I'm here presenting with Joan.

Ms. Joan Arruda: I'm Joan Arruda from the Quality Early Learning Network. Just bear with me; I'm going to speed-read.

Good afternoon. I am accompanied today by Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj. On behalf of the Quality Early Learning Network, we want to thank you for the opportunity to present on this very important bill, the Child Care Modernization Act.

In our brief presentation, I would like to tell you about QELN and why we support this much-needed modernization, and provide a few important recommendations for enhancing Bill 10 to ensure safe, affordable, stable and high-quality care is available to children aged zero to 12 in Ontario.

QELN represents 17 not-for-profit early learning and family support agencies. We serve more than 58,000 children and families in southern Ontario and provide a wide range of early years services, including licensed child care programs, home care, and before- and after-school programs.

Let me be clear: QELN strongly supports Bill 10. We firmly believe the health and well-being of children must come first, so we particularly welcome the focus on safety and additional protections and enforcement across the sector.

Bill 10 outlines a bold, transformative and far-reaching framework for child care and early education in Ontario. As we have called for in the past, QELN strongly recommends that a Premier's advisory committee be

created with representation from child care, municipalities, education and other stakeholders to help guide the repeal of the Day Nurseries Act, changes to the Education Act and the establishment of new regulations for a more modern, stable and affordable child care system.

I will now turn to Bill 10 specifically.

We strongly support the requirement for unlicensed home child care providers to include their own children under the age of six toward the maximum of five children permitted in their care.

We support the position of the Home Child Care Association with respect to the new protections and child ratios for home child care, including the recommendation that Bill 10 be amended to maintain the “three children under three years of age” rule for all home child care providers. We believe this is the appropriate threshold to preserve the safety of infants.

While we understand the intention behind increasing the limit for licensed home child care providers from five children to six, we would only support this increase if specific regulations concerning space, qualifications and the age of the children are implemented.

We are also concerned about the licensing exception for child care providers where recreation or skill-building programs are provided as a complementary purpose for children aged six or older. This exception would create confusion for parents, operators and the enforcement arm of the ministry, and could allow providers to operate without appropriate oversight.

We recommend that Bill 10 be amended so that the recreation or skill-building programs exception requires that the program be operated by an authorized provider as specifically prescribed by a regulation under this section.

Based on our experience and existing research, we believe that the threshold for considering different ratios and programs for school-aged children should be raised from six to eight years old.

Our final recommendation concerns changes to the Education Act and the new requirement for all school boards to offer before- and after-school programs for children in grades 1 to 6 in their schools. This is a bold policy that we support. However, we are concerned that the bill would allow school boards to offer third-party programs that do not meet licensed child care requirements and result in unintended consequences.

The government and community have worked hard to stabilize the child care sector—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have a minute left.

Ms. Joan Arruda: —and ensure children’s safety during the implementation of full-day learning. We need to ensure that new rules for before- and after-school programs do not destabilize the sector and put access to quality child care at risk.

An integrated approach, with one third-party provider per school delivering child care for ages zero to 12, is the best approach for children, parents and school boards. We recommend that Bill 10 be amended so that the same requirements apply to third-party providers for before-

and after-school programs for all children from age four to 12. In the alternative, we are asking the ministry to work with QELN and other sector partners to develop the regulations for, and transitions to, extended day and third-party programs for grades 1 to 6 pupils.

We are also asking the ministry to delay the proclamation of schedule 4 until school boards and the child care sector are confident in their ability to implement this program.

We hope the committee supports our recommendations on how to improve Bill 10. Thank you for your time.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Boy, right on the button.

The first question is from the third party. Miss Taylor.

1510

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you so much for being here today and for being part of this process. I heard you quite clearly saying that you’re in full support of Bill 10. Was your group part of or in discussions with the government and the committee that struck these recommendations to the changes? Were you part of that process?

Ms. Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj: The Quality Early Learning Network has had a position on the education advisory committee at the Ministry of Education, so we, along with other child care sector leaders, have had an opportunity to contribute, yes.

Miss Monique Taylor: During that process, what were the considerations when it came to the unlicensed sector? What were the conversations? We know that 80%—the estimated number, I guess, is 80%—of children are in unlicensed care, so what are the thoughts and the recommendations about moving forward to making sure that all children in this province and all parents can afford safe, affordable child care?

Ms. Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj: The QELN believes that the safety of all children in care is paramount—

Miss Monique Taylor: Absolutely.

Ms. Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj: —and is encouraged by what we see in Bill 10 as far as ensuring that that happens in the licensed and unlicensed sector. There are a number of kids who are—an overwhelming number of kids—in that unlicensed sector, and we’re encouraged by the considerations of safety and some additional enforcements in that area.

Miss Monique Taylor: Right, but I’m concerned again, still, that this bill talks a lot about the licensed providers, but it does nothing to help unlicensed providers become licensed. Do you think that’s a problem?

Ms. Joan Arruda: I think that there will be opportunities within regulation to address those issues as the legislation moves forward. I would assume that as the system stabilizes, there will be individuals who may choose to join the licensed sector. There will continue to be an unregulated or independent sector that I think will continue to operate, and do so now.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Miss Monique Taylor: Here's another framework. We probably don't have enough time, but I would love to hear what your thoughts are about changing the ratios in regard to the actual safety of the children.

Ms. Joan Arruda: We are committed to maintaining the ratios for three under three now, and we are requiring that if the—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, and I'm sorry.

We'll go to the Liberals now.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Joan and Rebecca, for your presentation. I understand in your presentation you said you support the legislation and this is much-needed modernization. Can you elaborate? Why do you think this legislation is needed quickly?

Ms. Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj: Why do we think it's needed quickly?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Yes.

Ms. Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj: I think that, again, the Quality Early Learning Network believes that quality and the safety of all children are paramount, and the sooner we can ensure that's happening in all care settings, the better, and that's certainly what our priorities are.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: So how will Bill 10 improve safety in the unlicensed sector?

Ms. Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj: We are encouraged to see that there are elements of the regulation that are being applied to the independent sector, as well as some of the enforcement pieces.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: What are the risks if the existing legislation is not replaced by the current one?

Ms. Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj: Again, the Quality Early Learning Network strives for, encourages and advocates for a quality system for all children in care.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Can you tell us about how Bill 10 aligns with your organization's mandate?

Ms. Joan Arruda: We are 17 non-profit child care providers that have service multi-site, so we have many years of experience in the field and are very familiar with the current legislation. There is no doubt that it is time for transformation and change for all children. As a group network, we believe that children's safety must come first, and that's what we believe this legislation is going to address.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Mr. Crack.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks for coming, as well. You represent 58,000 children and families and 17 different agencies. Have you heard anything negative? All we hear is negative from, obviously, the opposition. We've got some reasonable positions from the NDP. But what are you hearing on the ground concerning the legislation, in your area?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Rebecca Barrows-Vrankulj: Within our sector, as the QELN's perspective—as a not-for-profit organization, multi-service, multi-sector—we are encouraged. You'll see, in the copies that you were given, areas of the

bill that we think should be considered to further extend where this bill is going, but overall we're encouraged by the steps that are taken.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. We now go to the Conservatives—the opposition. Sorry.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you. In your presentation on page 2, you say that you “support the position of the Home Child Care Association with respect to the new protections and child ratios for home care, including the recommendation that Bill 10 be amended to maintain the three-children-under-three-years-of-age rule for all home child care providers. We believe this is the appropriate threshold to preserve the safety of infants.” Can you explain that?

Ms. Joan Arruda: Currently under the Day Nurseries Act, in the licensed sector you may have only two children under two and no more than three under three. We are requesting that that regulation continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Maintain the status quo?

Ms. Joan Arruda: For the licensed home sector, yes. In the unregulated sector as well.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. I have a quick question. Do you believe in parental choice?

Ms. Joan Arruda: Yes, I do.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Do you believe in parental responsibility?

Ms. Joan Arruda: I think the Quality Early Learning Network supports many parents. We believe that they make a choice, and we'd definitely do anything to support parental choice, yes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. Bill 10 actually takes away some parental choice. In fact, the first deputant we had was actually a parents' group that spoke. They said they feel—and I'm using their words, not mine, but I will say them, and I have repeated them: “my parental choice is eroded” because of this bill.

Ms. Joan Arruda: I think this legislation is going to enhance quality in this province and will actually support choice in a very broad way. It is long overdue that child care legislation is modernized, and I think that once the regulations are finished, parents will have more choice, and they will have a choice of safe, affordable child care.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Just in my case, having put my child through an in-home child care facility, I made the choice. I'm a responsible person. I actually find that some of the discussion around this bill is quite offensive in the fact that the minister and some members of the government and some stakeholders would decide to tell me that they know how to look after my child or they can find quality care for my child better than I could. I guess at the very heart of this is an issue of parental choice and parental responsibility. I don't think anyone is arguing about the safety of children. I think that's paramount, but let's remember, we're here today because the government didn't do its job in enforcing its regulations and didn't have enough inspectors with its regulations—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —and I think that's critical and that's key. In terms of choosing quality care, I think

moms and dads are best able to do that; I don't think government bureaucrats, speaking on my behalf, are. I just wanted to leave you with that.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Do you want to comment? You have 10 seconds.

Ms. Joan Arruda: No, it's all right.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. Thank you very much.

TODAY'S FAMILY EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Today's Family Early Learning and Child Care. Welcome. Good afternoon. If you could introduce yourselves for Hansard. As you've noticed, you'll have five minutes, and I'll warn you at the one-minute mark.

Ms. Maureen Hall: My name is Maureen Hall, and this is my colleague Brenda Ferguson. We are here to express the views of Today's Family Early Learning and Child Care regarding the components of Bill 10.

Today's Family is a non-profit, multi-service, multi-site organization providing services to children and their families in Hamilton, Halton and Grand Erie. We currently provide services and support to approximately 4,000 children and their families daily through licensed home, early learning and child care programs, early learning and child care centres, before- and after-school programs, Ontario early years centres and adventure camp programs.

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We appreciate the opportunity to applaud the Ministry of Education and the Ontario government for their timely attention to this significant issue that impacts the children and the families of Ontario every day. Passing Bill 10 is the opportunity to build a better system for our children and their families.

In unison with our colleagues at the Quality Early Learning Network and the Home Child Care Association of Ontario, we support the main principles behind Bill 10 indicating that the safety, health and well-being of children must come first. The Ontario government has made a clear commitment that every child has the best start. Quality child care must be affordable and accessible for all families in Ontario. The enforcement across the sector of the proposed specific measures will ensure that Ontario's children and families are well protected and quality care is provided and accessible to all families across the province.

The licensed home early learning and child care programs should continue to operate under an agency model to ensure accountability, safety and compliance with specific measures. We support the maintenance of the standard that groups should have no more than three children under the age of three years. We support increasing the number that licensed home child care providers can care for from five to six children. We support that all child care providers include their own children under the age of six years in the ratio. We support the

provision of public clarification of the differences between licensed and unlicensed home child care. Families must be able to make informed decisions.

The Child Care and Early Years Act proposes that the complementary purpose of promoting recreational, artistic, musical and athletic skills for children six years of age and older will not be licensed. We advocate for the licensing of all programs for school-age children to ensure accountability, safety and compliance to specific measures.

The passing of Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, 2014, is a significant step in ensuring that the provision of child care in Ontario ensures quality, choice for families, accountability, safety and compliance, and the reinforcement of specific standards. The enactment of the Child Care Modernization Act impacts families, children and the economy. As the result, children of Ontario and their families will indeed have the best start.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): That's your presentation?

Ms. Maureen Hall: It is.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You come in under time. I congratulate you. Thank you.

We'll start off questioning with the government. Mrs. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much. I'd have to probably be unique in this room in that not only did I have one child in child care, I've had five children that I've raised over the last, actually, 24 years. So I have gone the gamut between licensed child care centres to considering Montessori, which I couldn't do because of my work as a nurse. I did 12-hour shifts and was unable to do Montessori because of my own time period. One of the children I raised had health issues. We were given all kinds of choices right up until my youngest, who just turned 11, who's still in an after-school program—I've had all kinds of choices as to whether I put my child in a centre, whether I do a private provider, or whether I do licensed or licensed. I don't feel, as a parent, that I've lost any choices.

But I am a critical care nurse. I am a former emergency room nurse. Safety of children is of utmost importance to me. That's one of the reasons that, when I've been able to choose my private, unlicensed provider which worked best for my family, I knew what questions to ask in terms of their qualifications: Have you done your first aid? Do you know about fire safety? Are you able to get the kids out of the house? Have you got properly installed child care seats? So I did an awful lot of that research myself. I also am aware that not everybody does that. They don't do their homework because they don't understand the consequences.

We've heard the arguments for and against in this. For me, it comes down to child safety. It comes down to the safety of each individual child. Certainly, some unlicensed providers are better than others, the same as any other organization.

What I'm really interested in hearing from your organization is why you do support this bill, but I also see, in

your recommendations, that you support a call to amend it to maintain three children under three years of age for all home care providers. Could you give me just a little insight into why you think that's a good one to follow up on?

Ms. Brenda Ferguson: Thank you for your question and your comments. We believe that the safety of children comes first. If you're looking at a home setting, we advocate maintaining the three-under-three rule and including children in that sector.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Brenda Ferguson: If you have children in your house and there is an emergency and a safety issue, you want to be able to ensure that all those children are safe, accounted for and well cared for. Increasing that ratio decreases the element of safety.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I appreciate what you have to say. In the few seconds left, do you think all child care providers should do some first aid and basic safety training?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I'm sorry to say this, but you hit your three minutes just there.

To the opposition.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much for your presentation. I made some notes. You mentioned that you believe in affordable, accessible and provided for all, when actually this legislation will make it less affordable and less accessible. We have to realize that not everybody lives in large, urban centres. In a small town where there is no large provider of daycare services, people need to have the choice to have home care for their kids.

You're talking about accountability, safety and compliance. Basically, what we're hearing from parents is that they would like to see a registry and they would like to see that when they make a call to the ministry, their complaints are acted on. I think that's the real issue that should be addressed, and it's just being completely swept under the rug. I do believe we should have a registry of child care providers that parents can go to and see what's available, even just to know what's available in their neighbourhood.

Ms. Maureen Hall: I think that one of the pieces we did mention in our presentation is that there has to be enforcement of specific measures across the sector. That's one of the things that has to happen for all children in all home child care programs. If there is a way that people can comply with specific measures, somewhat like in a restaurant—you can't go to a restaurant unless they meet specific standards; you can't open a restaurant without specific standards. People should have to comply with specific standards to open a child care business.

If we have parents who are educated, as we mentioned, there has to be some clarification about what is licensed care and what is unlicensed care. We have to have that. We also have to have that enforced across the sector.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think that part of the problem is that we all know people who have triplets plus another

kid or two. It almost sounds like the province and this government is looking to get mixed up in how they are providing for their own children. I think that most parents—the vast majority—feel very comfortable assessing on their own for a play date, for a birthday party and, yes, even for child care, and making that decision on their own, what's best for their own children.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have 40 seconds left. You're done?

Miss Monique Taylor: Can I have her 40 too?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): No. You have your three minutes. Please proceed.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you so much for being here today. I know you were a large participant in creating Bill 10.

My question is this: You talked about enforcement. One of your recommendations in here is about the ratios. This is about the safety and the well-being of children. We all know that children died in this province just shortly before this bill came to life because of unsafe conditions. And we know that those unsafe conditions were allowed to occur due to the ministry's lack of accountability, of showing up to those complaints, of doing their job—the lack of enforcement.

I also know that there are going to be six new investigators coming out of Bill 10 to make sure these kinds of things never happen again. What's your opinion? Do you think six is nearly enough?

Ms. Brenda Ferguson: I think there are two things there. Without families knowing and having a public campaign around what is licensed care, what is unregulated care and what are the signs to look for—I think the government did a great job when it came to full-day kindergarten and really campaigning, so families knew what full-day kindergarten was and what to expect.

1530

I think something similar needs to happen in the same avenue regarding licensed and unregulated care and what families need to look for so families can make an informed choice. In that, there should also be the inclusion of some standards now around a complaints-driven process on what to do if you are concerned about your child's care.

Miss Monique Taylor: So the number that is being tossed around is that 80% of our children in this province are being looked after in unlicensed child cares.

Ms. Brenda Ferguson: I don't think—

Miss Monique Taylor: Whether we disagree or not—sorry; I only have so much time—we know that really it is a very large amount of children who are in the unlicensed sector. If we don't have enforcement to keep up the rules that were in place before, how possibly are we going to be able to keep up the rules of today?

Ms. Brenda Ferguson: It's a good question. I think the one thing to address, though, when we're saying that up to 80% of children are in the unregulated sector—from studies we've read, approximately 34% are in familial care, so in the care of a relative. We're not ques-

tioning the care of a relative by any means, and that decreases the number.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Brenda Ferguson: Is six enough? Perhaps not. But I think with the campaign mounting so families do know, and there is an avenue for people to identify what the measures of quality care are, we can make a great change in our province.

Miss Monique Taylor: Would you believe that a data bank for unlicensed child care providers would be appropriate to at least allow them to be accountable to the public?

Ms. Brenda Ferguson: As a minimum standard, if it's something under the Ministry of Education, yes.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I'm sorry; your three minutes are up. Thank you very much. We appreciate your presentation.

MR. LARRY STORM

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Our next presenter is Larry Storm. Good afternoon.

Mr. Larry Storm: Good afternoon.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): If you would identify yourself for Hansard.

Mr. Larry Storm: My name is Larry Storm.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Excellent.

Mr. Larry Storm: I'm here as a father. I have a 19-month-old son; I have a 10-year-old daughter. I was fortunate with my daughter. My ex-wife's mother watched her, so I didn't have to worry about daycare. With my son, I don't have that luxury.

We looked at two daycare providers. Both were home-based. That's all we looked at. The first one—I believe it was somewhat questionable whether it was operating under legal means or not. The second one, which we chose, is quite amazing. She's awesome. She's five minutes from home, and she's quite affordable.

I believe the issue with Bill 10 isn't that child care needs to be modernized but that it is not addressing the issues. We've lost four young children in the last little while, which is why Bill 10 is being brought up. Unfortunately, anyone who is operating a daycare centre illegally right now, operating as a daycare home where you're supposed to only have five children and you have 10 or 15 or 20—whatever the case may be—will continue to do so whether Bill 10 is introduced. Unless the parents rise up and start yelling and screaming and swearing, nothing will happen until another child is seriously injured or unfortunately passes away.

I believe that what Bill 10 needs to do is—we need to go back and put the power back with the parents. Why isn't there a package included on the day of birth: "This is what you need to know, as a parent, when you go back into the workforce, whether you are using a relative, an independent child care provider or a daycare centre. This is what you need to know. This is what a good daycare centre looks like; this is what an illegal daycare looks like. This is what you need to do." A lot of people don't

know that. A lot of people don't know where to go to know that.

I have the advantage that I look at everything. I question everything. I have that advantage. My son has that advantage, my daughter—everyone in my life. Bring something up; I will question everything.

Independent home child providers, in my experience, are safe. They're passionate about what they do. They deserve to be recognized. Using an organization similar to the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario would be a great opportunity to create a framework to register them—that I, as a parent, and the government can go to to create that network where people can find out where the best of the best is and use them.

Adverse changes that I see Bill 10 bringing out is that my daycare costs—say they're \$35 a day—could easily go to \$60. I might be able to afford that; a lot of people can't. A lot of people are working part-time at \$11 an hour. I can't see them affording that.

Providers will get out of the business. I've talked to many providers in the last couple of months about this. They're like, "Do we go look for a job? Do we look at different avenues for our income?" Because these are small business people. They have the right to conduct business in a legal manner, which 90% of them do—and then the parents, at the risk of losing spaces, risk losing their income.

I have a benefit where I work weekends, so there are two days when I can actually watch my son. Since all-day kindergarten has come out, independent child cares have limited to about four years old the age of children for day-long care. They're in kindergarten all day, and they only have them for maybe an hour or two before and an hour or two after, until the parents get out, which makes me wonder if two-under-two is viable, because you're taking away the possibility for a daycare provider to have a child to take care of.

I also read that the additional child that joining an agency provides—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have one minute left.

Mr. Larry Storm: —the income raised by the sixth child will be cancelled out by the fees that an agency will charge, so there's no net benefit to going to a sixth child being unlicensed, rather than going to an agency and getting that sixth child.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Mr. Storm.

Questions go first to the opposition.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you for your presentation. I just want to ask you a quick question. Obviously, you support independent daycare providers. I've talked to a number of them, and clearly they have no problem with some kind of registry. Many of them would welcome some kind of licensing system and the oversight.

My concern is with all this talk about safety; we all know that the people in the Ministry of Education who created this bill are the same people who didn't provide

the oversight for some of the deaths that have happened, and they didn't respond to complaints. But I'd like to get clarification at some point: When we're talking about oversight, about someone going around inspecting either a home or an agency, who is paying for that?

Mr. Larry Storm: The taxpayer. But I'd like to say that I inspect it every day when I drop off my son and pick him up.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: But the government is talking about more enforcement, so they don't count you as an inspector.

Mr. Larry Storm: They should. They really should.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My personal opinion is that this is going to get downloaded to the boards of education and there won't be any more money in the budgets of the boards of education. That's how I feel, and I'd be interested in a response from anybody, either in the third party or the government, if I could have a clarification on that. Someone has to pay for the enforcement, because we certainly don't have a lot of enforcement today.

Mr. Larry Storm: At some point, money will have to come from somewhere.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Yes. That's all my comments.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Other questions from the opposition? No.

The third party: Ms. Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you so much for being here today and for being a parent getting up the nerve to come here and present today. That can't be easy for you to do, and I congratulate you. I think it's a wonderful thing that you're here today on behalf of parents in this province.

Mr. Larry Storm: Thank you.

Miss Monique Taylor: When I hear you speak, I'm thinking about affordable child care; that every family should be able to afford child care. Do you believe it should be right across the board for everybody to be able to afford child care?

Mr. Larry Storm: In what regard? I know that I'm paying \$35 a day, which my wife and I can afford. I understand that there are programs, like the YMCA, that have affordable child care; that there are not-for-profit and charitable organizations that provide it. I didn't need to go and look for that. I'm lucky in that regard.

Miss Monique Taylor: So you're fortunate.

Mr. Larry Storm: But I'm sure that with the right direction, a parent can definitely find it.

Miss Monique Taylor: Well, yes. There are only so many spaces, though. Right? There are wait-lists—very long wait-lists—for affordable child care, which becomes a major problem for families.

If you were to be looking for child care in the future, would you think of looking to a registry, so that you could see whether that child care, unlicensed obviously, somebody in the neighbourhood—would you look there and say, "Who is there? Who can I count on? Do they have other things against them?" Would you use a tool like that?

Mr. Larry Storm: I was very lucky in finding the daycare provider we found. We will go and use her again, if space is available, when we have another child. I personally wouldn't need a registry, because going long-term, we will probably be able to use the same provider we have.

Miss Monique Taylor: Right. Would you be interested, though? You have this child care provider and you know she's great, but, "Hey, I wonder if there have ever been any complaints about that person." Would you be interested in looking at a registry to see if that person has marks against them previously or if people put great comments on about them? What would you think about a registry like that?

1540

Mr. Larry Storm: We did a Google search, and we found a lot. And a Facebook search—it all worked. We found stuff about both providers. We went with the one we did, and we were very fortunate with the one that we found.

Miss Monique Taylor: So I'm definitely hearing some great things that you and your family are doing. Do you think all families are doing these things, or do you think there needs to be—

Mr. Larry Storm: Of course not. I really believe that I'm unique.

Miss Monique Taylor: Do you think there need to be more tools for families to be able to use for good, safe child care?

Mr. Larry Storm: Like I said in my presentation, I believe that a package should be presented when the child is born: "Here's what you need to know. Hold onto it. Here are the resources you need. You are the parent."

Miss Monique Taylor: It sounds like a great idea. I doubt it's going to happen, but it sounds like a great idea. Hopefully they'll come on board with you. Thanks for coming today.

Mr. Larry Storm: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. To the government: Mrs. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much. When you get that package, right away, would you also get them to write a chapbook on how to look after children and what each cry means without speaking English?

Mr. Larry Storm: You know—

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I am teasing.

Mr. Larry Storm: —I've been very lucky. Do you know what? I'll be honest with you: I was terrified when my daughter was born.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Oh, yes.

Mr. Larry Storm: But there's nothing better than being a parent.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I hear your passion, and I just so relate. Thank you so much for bringing that to the table today. But I've always wanted that playbook that says, "What does that mean?"

Anyway, I just wanted to address a couple of things, if you don't mind. I did hear the member opposite thinking that any complaints that come in about Bill 10, if it's

enacted, will go through a board of education. I just really wanted to be clear that this is Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, 2014, and that is under the Ministry of Education, but it's not part of the boards of education. I just want you to be clear on that one.

I also just wanted to relate: I agree with you that the safety of the children is paramount. Some parents are better than others at asking questions and figuring out the credentials of the unlicensed providers that they're getting involved with. I've had superb luck with unlicensed, and hold to that. I just wanted you to be aware that the complaint system is already in place, and that's the Ombudsman of Ontario. Part of what Bill 10 is all about has been responding to the Ombudsman's report.

I also wanted you to be very clear that yes, we've had some recent deaths, but when we started to embark on the Child Care Modernization Act, we actually began this process early in 2012, before some of these issues had arisen most recently. Our government has always been very supportive of good child care and safe child care.

So I guess my question to you, just in the few moments that we have to wrap up, is: With the Ombudsman's report, do you believe that the Ombudsman and Bill 10 will increase child safety in licensed as well as unlicensed providers?

Mr. Larry Storm: In regard to a person like me who will continue to use an independent child care provider—

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I think any parent.

Mr. Larry Storm: —or any person?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Yes.

Mr. Larry Storm: I believe that there is going to be a real risk regardless of whether a law comes out or not. There will be another tragedy. A person is going to operate an illegal child care centre whether or not this law is provided. They're doing it right now. Nothing has stopped them, and I do not think this legislation—what I have read—will satisfy that problem.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: What do you think would?

Mr. Larry Storm: Make it a criminal act to have more beyond what is required in a home-based daycare centre. There should be five children: two under two or three under three. If you have more than five, then the parent has to start asking questions: "Is it there just for a couple of hours"—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Mr. Storm? I'm sorry. Thank you for your comments. We have to go on to the next person.

Mr. Larry Storm: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you very much for coming down today.

ONTARIO COALITION FOR BETTER CHILD CARE

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The next presenter was going to be Kawartha Child Care Services; they weren't able to make it.

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care: if you'd have a seat and introduce yourself for Hansard.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Hello. It's a pleasure to be here to speak with you today. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with the committee on this important bill.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Your name, please?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: My name is Carolyn Ferns, and I'm speaking on behalf of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and our nearly 700 members.

Like some of my colleagues here today who have already spoken, I have just returned from the ChildCare 2020 national conference in Winnipeg, aimed at putting child care back on the national agenda. While at the conference, I seized upon the opportunity to discuss Bill 10 with scores of Ontarians attending the conference: researchers, policy experts, parents, child care providers, politicians and trade unionists.

While I cannot say that we saw eye to eye on every aspect of this complex bill, there were several areas of broad consensus. It is four of those that I would like to highlight for you today.

Number one is protective measures. The Ombudsman's recent report, *Careless About Child Care*, makes clear the need for concerted action to address issues related to unregulated care. There is broad support among our members and the child care community for the many protective measures provided for in Bill 10. We would also urge the government to go further in some areas, including enshrining the government's new dedicated enforcement unit into the legislation.

There also remain exemptions around the care provided for school-aged children. We ask that the government remove these exemptions and recognize the important role that before- and after-school programs play in the life of a child who may spend as many hours in these programs as they do in school.

Number two is children with disabilities. It is our position that there needs to be a strong equity statement that particularly pertains to children with disabilities. Sadly, we know that children are too often turned away from child care programs that cannot or do not think they can accommodate these children's extra support needs. The Ontario Human Rights Code does not, in practice, protect these children and their families and guarantee them access to regulated child care. This legislation provides a monumental opportunity to mandate the inclusion of young children with disabilities in regulated child care. We, therefore, recommend that the Ontario government craft a strong and inclusive equity statement, similar to that in the Education Act, that enshrines the inclusion and acceptance of all children.

A third point is on the charging of fees by school boards. Schedule 4, number 2, begins to address issues around overcharging by school boards to child care programs located in schools. This has been a major concern for some small, non-profit programs in schools, a concern that threatens the viability of those programs. It is our position that the legislation should go further to stop charges to non-profit centres located in schools.

Number four moves beyond Bill 10. Everybody I've spoken to about this bill says that Bill 10 must be the

beginning and not the end of the government's work on child care. We support the call from our friends at QELN that there needs to be a minister's round table on the regulations that follow this bill. As we saw last year, there was deep and widespread concern in the child care community that last year's one-way comment process on the proposed changes to regulation 262 was inadequate. We believe that convening a minister's round table that provides broad representation from the child care community would fulfill the open government approach this government has committed itself to, and it would ensure the full consultation with the child care community that is needed.

We support the call for a workforce strategy by the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario and others to address the long-standing issues of recruitment, retention and compensation facing the Ontario child care workforce.

We call for a moratorium on the licensing of for-profit child care, a position we have long held, as a first step to moving toward a more publicly managed system with public and not-for-profit delivery.

Finally, we urge the Ontario government to move immediately to the development of a comprehensive child care system in this province. As Martha Friendly and I wrote in an article, which you should have before you, in the Toronto Star, "Ontario desperately needs a comprehensive system based on the principles of universal entitlement, high quality and comprehensiveness. It will require not only vision and a well-designed policy framework with long-term goals, targets and timetables, but also political will and ongoing sustained funding. And now is the time to start..."

"With child care finally back on the national agenda, there's no time like the present for the Ontario government to regain its leadership to move toward a real system of quality child care."

Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you very much. I believe we start with the NDP on this round.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you for being here with us today. Bill 10 includes a provision to permit two providers to care for up to 12 children, including four infants. Reducing quality seems like the wrong way to increase child care spaces. In your view, should the committee remove that provision from this bill?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: I believe that that provision—the language in it says, "if the regulations so provide." I believe that it may have been around circumstances such as rural child care, where more flexibility may be needed.

I think that it's not something that I would want—the group family child care model to be allowed blanket across the province. It could be strengthened to make it clear in what situations that might be appropriate. But, overall, I wouldn't support the group family child care model.

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Miss Monique Taylor: Okay. You talked about full consultation with all people in this province who deal in

the child care sector. What are your feelings over the folks who are unlicensed and them not being at the table when producing this bill?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: I think the debate around this bill has been framed in such a way that pits regulated and unregulated child care providers against one another, and I really dispute that. I do not see unregulated providers as my enemies, certainly, or those of families. I think this is about doing what is fair and what is best for our children.

As you might see in the article that I wrote, I think that if the government wants to encourage unregulated providers to join the regulated sector, they could do things to make that work—better compensated and better for the people providing it. That's the way I think it should really go. Make family child care a job worth doing, and worth doing well.

Miss Monique Taylor: Very good. Federal New Democrats have proposed a \$15 all-day child care. What are your thoughts on that?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Absolutely. There was strong support, I've got to say—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: —on that move. We saw that from everybody, and we're certainly looking forward to see what the other parties might put forward on that.

Miss Monique Taylor: Well, let's hope they support it and that it moves forward.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Absolutely.

Miss Monique Taylor: All families, I'm sure, in this province would appreciate it. Thanks so much.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. Thank you. The government: Mr. Crack?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much for coming. Do you have extra copies of your remarks or could you leave them for us?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Of my remarks? No. But I can certainly leave them, and I gave the Clerk a copy of the article that I was referring to.

Mr. Grant Crack: I know they're going to be in Hansard, but I just thought you'd made some interesting points.

You talked about a moratorium. Could you explain a little bit what you mean by that?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: The coalition's position is that, moving forward, there should not be licensing of for-profit child care. This is an issue to address quality. I think research as long as our arm has shown that high-quality child care is most often provided in public and not-for-profit services. Our position is that we could grandfather existing for-profit services, but that moving forward, all licensing should be to public and not-for-profit child care.

Mr. Grant Crack: Okay. Thank you. Also, you mentioned a minister's round table. I'm sure you're well aware that as this bill moves forward, and if it passes in the House and the regulations are created, there's going to be a series of consultations across the province and with different stakeholders. You mentioned broad

representation. What do you hope to accomplish with another minister's round table?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: That recommendation came out, as I mentioned briefly, of last year's one-way comment process on regulation 262. The regulation was posted online and we had a 30-day comment process to get submissions in and we weren't going to hear back about what might be happening there. That caused, I would say, pandemonium in the child care community, and we all got our submissions in as quickly as we could. But there was definitely the thought that there needs to be more than that. So the thought came forward that we should have a minister's round table, where there is representation from child care, child care workers, organizations, researchers, parents, certainly, on how best to move those regulations forward and how to shape them.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Mr. Grant Crack: So you're saying that the round table could be part of—

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: It certainly should be part of a larger process. We think that Bill 10, as I said, should be the beginning, not the end, of the government's work on child care, and that putting forward a real policy framework that sets out the principles of universal entitlement, of high-quality provision—things like these are really where we need to be going.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you very much. To the opposition. Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much. I was happy to hear you say that the unregulated are not the enemy, that we're all in this for the good of the children, which is really the top priority. They're our most precious resource.

But I picked up on the comment made by the parliamentary assistant, in that there would be round tables on regulations. I will be very interested to see how that would actually—because this bill is being rushed through now. Obviously, the government wants this passed, probably by the end of this month, not even at the time we recess. But I'll be very interested to see who's invited to participate in those round tables as we create regulations. I would hope, and I want to put it on the record here today, that all the stakeholders that have shown an interest in coming to these meetings—because they haven't had a chance to travel this bill anywhere else in the province, except here today and tomorrow—I would hope that all stakeholders would have an opportunity to be part of those regulatory changes and the drafting of those regulations. I don't know if you have any comments on that. I hope it's not a one-sided type of round table and everyone would be included.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: No, certainly not. I think people that I know in the regulated child care community share exactly the thought that I expressed to you: that unregulated caregivers are not our enemy and that we're interested in seeking common ground. But I think the Ombudsman's report makes clear the need in the bill to have these strong enforcement measures. I think that it should be a conversation that's ongoing, going forward.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: If I could, just another quick question: With the enforcement measures, I'm curious as to what kind of a system would be set up, because clearly there's not enough enforcement now, according to what I'm hearing across the province. What type of agency or enforcement department would you see, and what part of—would it be run by the ministry?

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Well, we're calling for the dedicated enforcement units that the government has introduced to be legislated so that it could not be removed on the whim of a future government. But I think that the Ombudsman's report makes clear that the Ministry of Education really did, I believe his word was, inherit a morass—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: —from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and has been working, I believe—honestly, I do believe—quite hard to clean up that mess. The Ombudsman agrees in that. He made 113 recommendations. The government has already addressed 95 and has committed to addressing the rest. I think that it's an excellent bill in that way. We have strong support for it.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you very much.

Ms. Carolyn Ferns: Thank you very much.

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS OF CANADA

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Our next presenter, then: Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada. Good afternoon. If you could introduce yourself for Hansard.

Mr. Duane Dahl: Thank you. It's great to be here. My name is Duane Dahl, and I'm a regional director with Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada. As some of you know—and some of you actually have Boys and Girls Clubs in your communities as well—we're actually one of the largest operators and providers of programs for children and youth. We're also somewhat distinctly situated because we're a very large provider of both child care in the licensed sector as well as recreation programs.

What I'm here to talk to you about today is that we have tremendous support for an awful lot that's in Bill 10, but we also are very interested in some of the follow-up in terms of what's going to come out in regulation, and what some of the future along this path is going to be for the current government with regard to six- to 12-year-olds.

A lot of what has gone into the bill before you and a lot of what the previous legislation is based on is really grounded on a lot of the research on zero to six-year-olds. We provide services for zero to six in pretty much every location for Boys and Girls Clubs across the province and across the country. We have 23 different Boys and Girls Clubs in the province of Ontario right now. We serve more than 160 communities and over 110,000 children and youth every year. But we also see an awful lot of the six- to 12-year-olds in our populations. In some cases, that falls under the licensing regime, but in many other cases, we're providing programs sponsored by the Min-

istry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, in the case of the after-school program, as well as many other recreation programs.

We strongly believe, in addition to the legislation that's going forward, that we need to be moving a little further along the journey around what's developmentally appropriate for those ages. We also really strongly believe that, in addition to school-based programming—and school-based, whether it's child care or recreation—that programs that are offered for children and youth need to meet community needs, as well as tap into the assets and the strengths of individual communities. Boys and Girls Clubs operate in both of those spheres and domains in a variety of different settings.

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We strongly believe in high-quality programs, as you're hearing from many of our colleagues and counterparts and you'll continue to hear tomorrow. We use third-party standards such as High Five, who are also going to be making a deputation here tomorrow, as well as a very stringent set of internal operating standards that have third-party validation as well.

But we also believe that we need to be providing choice and opportunities for parents as well as for the children themselves. We need to be having the voice of those young people heard in terms of the structure of the program so that this is not just seen as a full extension of something similar to what they're doing during the day-time.

We really hang our hat on participant voice and participant choice. We believe that families need to be afforded that opportunity, and we need to make sure that these services are not priced out of the market so that they can remain available, affordable and accessible for families right across the province of Ontario.

I've brought along a copy—I believe it's been distributed. You can take a look to see the model of success that we use for Boys and Girls Clubs here in the province of Ontario and right across Canada. There are some common features that, again, are not unique to Boys and Girls Clubs, but that I think are crucially important to take into consideration through all programs and services that are being offered for young people in this province. So you look at respectful, inclusive and engaging environments. We really believe strongly in relationship building and mentoring at every step along the way and that that's something that agencies and staff people need to model, as well as community and family engagement.

This government has taken a very major step within the past number of years in extensive research on what is appropriate for the youth population in this province, and has developed reports such as Stepping Stones, which is an excellent developmental framework for youth going all the way up to the age of 25, as well as a follow-up piece, Stepping Up. You can sort of describe them as the ingredients list and the recipe in terms of what we need to do to create healthy, well-adjusted young people.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have one minute left.

Mr. Duane Dahl: One minute? There's also been similar work done over the years by this government and previous governments in the early years side of the equation. What's missing, however, and what we would like to call the government to action on, is a follow-up to this piece: a developmental framework for the six- to 12-year-olds, something that we can agree on as a community, as a province, as a government and as partners in this service delivery that's going to inform not only this bill and not only the work of the Ministry of Education, but similar to how the Stepping Up document cuts right across all ministries and all departments of government. We need that same degree of framework and that same degree of accountability to the best practices and the research that exists for six- to 12-year-olds.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Our first questions, then, go to the government. Mr. Crack, you look like you're ready to ask.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thanks for coming—a very articulate presentation, and quite meaningful.

The Boys and Girls Clubs: Would I be correct in assuming they're mostly urban-centric?

Mr. Duane Dahl: No, not completely. We actually operate programs throughout Kawartha Lakes, in Pembroke and a number of different rural settings. Historically, they've tended to be located or have tended to be started in neighbourhoods that have either a lack of service or more complex needs and challenges, but those complex needs and challenges could also be people living in a rural community that don't have services as well.

Mr. Grant Crack: Okay. So how does Bill 10 play into the Boys and Girls Clubs? I'm a big supporter of recreational programs and that type of thing. I've always played sports all my life. It kept me out of trouble once in a while. Maybe you could just talk about the effect or the impact that Bill 10 is going to have on Boys and Girls Clubs.

Mr. Duane Dahl: Absolutely. So what we're really hoping comes out of this—that's clear in the report that you have in front of you—is some clarity and consistency. I will give an example that we—again, as operators of both licensed programs as well as authorized recreation programs, which will continue in the proposed bill—we are in some cases dealing with agents of the government that are having trouble distinguishing which is which. We're hearing different interpretations in different communities. So it may look different in Pembroke as opposed to in Regent Park, Toronto. What we really need is to have that playing field level, to know what's what in advance. We actually have it sometimes from one individual to the next. So clarity and consistency are important to us, as well as having the high-quality standards articulated.

For us, that inclusion and continued flexibility for authorized recreation providers is quite key and quite important. We would be very interested in continuing to work with the government beyond this, whether it's in terms of developing regulations or working with partners

such as Parks and Recreation Ontario and High Five, which we reference quite frequently in here, around some of those third-party standards for what that would look like.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you. Anyone else? Granville?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Granville Anderson: The Boys and Girls Clubs: You're referring to an age group that's generally six to 12? Or do you have kids under that age?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Mr. Duane Dahl: We definitely have children under that age in our programs. Boys and Girls Clubs, in many communities, are the operators of Ontario Early Years Centres as well as licensed child care.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Is there a ratio within the club? Do you have your own ratio?

Mr. Duane Dahl: Absolutely. We go with the established best standards and best practices, and it's based on the ages of those young people. What we're trying to bring attention to is that just as there's a distinction between a one-and-a-half-year-old or 18-month-old and a four-year-old in a program, there's a strong distinction between a six-year-old, an eight-year-old, a 10-year-old and a 12-year-old. There are appropriate standards that do exist within that field.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. To the opposition.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: A quick question, if I could just follow up on the Boys and Girls Clubs and the six- to 12-year-olds: How does that tie into other sporting organizations, like minor hockey or minor baseball, where you have thousands of children between the ages of six and 12 years of age?

Mr. Duane Dahl: Absolutely. Many of those programs that you're describing, or that come to mind there, are in fact, in many communities, operated by Boys and Girls Clubs. In a number of communities, in Hamilton and in Kingston, Boys and Girls Clubs operate learn-to-skate and versions of minor hockey programs as well as other sports leagues. But we also operate programs that look a bit different than that. An example that I use is the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's after-school program, where kids are involved in after-school activities around physical activity, healthy eating, academic success and learning engagement. That will take place on a daily basis for a limited number of hours every day.

We work quite closely with those other sports providers in some cases. We really believe that our expertise is relationships and environments. We may not necessarily always have the expertise for a particular sport or program, so we bring in or partner with groups that have that expertise so that we can leverage what we do best.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Are you saying that this bill is going to dramatically impact what you're doing? Or are you just here to keep an eye on it?

Mr. Duane Dahl: What we're suggesting is that we believe that this will—and we've had conversations with various folks in government as this has moved along. We

believe that the potential is there, based on the interpretation of what "authorized recreation provider" looks like, that that could change the playing field for what this does. We've received some assurances, informally, that that wouldn't, but we're really keen to make sure that continues to exist, as well as continues to have a high-quality moniker attached to it. We believe we can be part of the solution to that.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: So you'd better be at that round table.

Mr. Duane Dahl: Thanks for the invitation.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further questions? Ms. Martow?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'll just quickly remind everybody that you said that we need to provide choice—I'm quoting you—and that you believe in community and family engagement as well as flexibility. What I would remind everybody is that child care doesn't just start when a child is dropped off at a babysitter or daycare facility, whether it's regulated or not. It starts the moment that child leaves its home. If a child has to be driven in a car for an hour rather than walk five minutes a block away, I think that that greatly diminishes the community engagement—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Mrs. Gila Martow: —as well as safety for the child. Would you agree? What are your thoughts?

Mr. Duane Dahl: We definitely agree that neighbourhood-based solutions and providing those choices and options in the community are key. That's going to look different in various communities, but we really believe that both the communities, as well as the parents and the child themselves, need to have some input.

Mrs. Gila Martow: So I repeat: neighbourhood-based. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: Hi, Duane. How are you doing?

Mr. Duane Dahl: Nice to see you.

Miss Monique Taylor: Nice to see you too. Thanks for being here. Your being here has raised flags in my head, and questions, because I know the great work that goes on at our Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club in Hamilton. It may not be in my riding, but it's in my city. I know it well. I know the benefits that children get from your program.

Are there impacts in this bill that will affect the numbers of children that could come to your program? What's going to happen? What are you concerned about?

Mr. Duane Dahl: First, I just want to add that we do have a number of locations in your riding, so we'll have to get you out to visit. We're growing and expanding in Hamilton all the time.

Again, it comes back to the definition and interpretation—and that's why we want clarity and consistency—of that "authorized recreation provider" component.

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Our last recommendation that was in here is, again, around continuation—ideally, some permanent funding

for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's after-school program, which we recognize in some communities looks to people like what, maybe, licensed child care would. So we appreciate the distinction and the goals and outcomes that we're trying to achieve within that program.

There are similar programs, which may not be funded through a ministry mechanism but are funded locally or through other manners, where we have experienced some conflicts—not in Hamilton, specifically, but in other jurisdictions—where, potentially, an overzealous licensing agent is looking at this to say, "Well, maybe this actually should be licensed child care." The challenge for us with that is, the regulations make an awful lot of sense when you're dealing with four-year-olds and two-year-olds and are very well thought out but may not necessarily be the most developmentally appropriate component for a 10-year-old or even an eight-year-old in a lot of cases. So we're trying to maintain the definition of quality, looking at it from a developmental lens, as well as the flexibility provided within authorized provider status.

Miss Monique Taylor: Okay. You'll have to excuse me, because when I think of Boys and Girls Clubs, my brain goes to Kiwanis automatically.

Do you have wait-lists for your programming now?

Mr. Duane Dahl: We do, at just about every Boys and Girls Club right across the province as well. The challenge sometimes can be financial in terms of providing that capacity, because again, we try to provide the programs either at no cost or low cost in all of those communities, so that cost is never a barrier, but also sometimes—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have 30 seconds left.

Mr. Duane Dahl: —it is access to space and access to appropriate space based on that activity level, which, again, is different than what may be included in a licensing definition, because if we're doing physical activity or those types of programs, we may need a different type of space that's not as dependent on the ratio of window size to square footage.

Miss Monique Taylor: Great. Thanks again for being here today and for the clarification.

Mr. Duane Dahl: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you very much. Our next—

Mr. Grant Crack: Chair, a point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Yes, Mr. Crack.

Mr. Grant Crack: I just want to clarify—I know that my good friend from Simcoe North was indicating that perhaps the minister would be going on tour with round tables, but I was actually just asking the question—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): That actually doesn't sound like a point of order.

Mr. Grant Crack: I just want to clarify the record so that it's not presumed that—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): But it's not—

Mr. Grant Crack: —things are being said by me that weren't. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Crack, it's not a point of order.

ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Our next presenter: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. You have five minutes. If you'd introduce yourself for Hansard.

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the committee. I'm Kerry McCuaig. I am a policy fellow at the Atkinson Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (U of T). It's one of 20 centres at the university. Our goal is to provide the best available research to inform public policy and educator practice.

Overall, we support the direction of this legislation. We think that it moves in some very important ways. We're encouraged by the swift action to curtail illegal child care provision. We note the enhanced role for the local service managers, but that could be heightened with some additional tools with not much effort. We're very pleased to see the expanded role of school boards in ensuring that children from the ages of six to 12 receive after-school programming.

We note with disappointment that there's nothing in the legislation around children with special needs, and we think that that should be addressed.

There are many parts of the bill that deal with ratios and staffing. We think that these more properly belong under a regulatory review—so holding off on passing those until there could be a regulatory review looking at the impact of what those might be.

In terms of changes to the Education Act, we would like to see the changes in this act that refer to education embedded in the Education Act in order that it recognizes the role that education is going to be playing in this area. We note that there is the same problem as there is in providing care for four- and five-year-olds: that school boards are not obligated to provide that care on non-school days. That does not make a child care program for parents who must work through the summer and during school holidays, so that should be addressed. We should note that that's really the way that it is in practice, that when boards provide before- and after-school programs for four- and five-year-olds, they do tend to operate on those non-school days. So it would be just a matter of putting that into legislation.

We are doing a major study right now on the impact of direct school board-delivered programs for children four and up, and what we find is that when school boards do this, because of the economy of scale, they are able to deliver more programming for less cost than what can be done in the community sector. The added advantage is that early childhood educators have stable jobs.

We do note around the area, around the provision of—the need to curtail the illegal child care operations, that what is in place is not onerous, that when you look at the number of children who can be in care in unlicensed

facilities, Ontario, next to Alberta, is the highest in the country. Every other jurisdiction has tighter controls on what happens there.

Ontario also has some of the loosest legislation when it comes to licensed family child care. Again, the numbers of children who can be in care are high. There aren't legislated requirements for training for staff. Again, that speaks to quality of what the programming is.

When we move into looking at the regional municipal service managers, most of that has been covered quite well—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have one minute left.

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: —in the act. We do note, however, that the Ontario Early Years Centres and the Parenting and Family Literacy Centres are still outside the mandate of the municipal management and planning, and that should be addressed.

Finally, as part of the review of regulations for staff training and ratios, we should be looking to that with a view that there should be minimum training standards for everybody who works in early childhood education, as a starting point to any discussions that will take place.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. The first questions go to the opposition.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much for your presentation. So the summary of the recommendations you have—there are about 13 recommendations here altogether.

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: That's right.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Based on your studies, these are the recommendations that you would like to see implemented in Bill 10.

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: That's right.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay. So it will take a number of amendments at this point to do that.

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: These are small amendments. Many of them are in place. Like you said, we agree with the general direction that the act is going in, adding the DACs and the OEYCs to—really, it's a matter of clarifying who the municipalities should be responsible for in their planning. Making the changes around the education system would really be just putting in place things that are already taking place in practice.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Yes. I'm going back to something I've been mentioning a few times today. I'm concerned about when changes like you have asked for in some of your recommendations, like who's looking after—what part of the municipality or what division. I'm concerned about who is going to be expected to pay for the enforcement. We understand it won't be the school boards. That was made clear a little earlier by one of the members of the government. But there will be a fairly substantial increase in the number of enforcement people required to enforce Bill 10 the way the government is mentioning. I'm saying, who will that—would you be able to tell me, would that be a municipal responsibility that will be sort of downloaded to them, or will that be people from the Ministry of Children and Youth

Services? I'm just trying to get a clarification around that: Who will actually cover that? I'd also like to know what the estimated cost of that is. Because it's easy to pass all these bills, but someone has got to pay for the enforcement.

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: I think that the way that the bill is written, it increases the penalties for the illegal operation of child care. It's not calling for more people out in the field to enforce it. The penalties themselves become the enforcement. And the penalties need to be heavy in order so that they do act as an enforcement. Right now, the penalties are so minor that it's the cost of doing business for people who want to run programs this way.

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In terms of enforcement, that now sits with the Ministry of Education. The idea of giving the municipalities broader powers in order to plan and manage, though, provides an oversight which is involved in what they are already doing.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'll just comment. I just want to say that it's a big enough penalty when a child dies in somebody's home and all the other providers see that, and I don't think there is any sum of money that could possibly deter people more than that. So think that sort of speaks to penalties.

I think that we need to have enforcement of any bill that goes through. There's no point having all this time and effort and all these wonderful people come out if, then, they see the legislation isn't enforced.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Martow. Next—

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: Just to point out that there is more enforcement of a hot dog stand than there is of unlicensed child care.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Excuse me, Ms. McCuaig. You're out of order.

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: Sorry.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Ms. Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you. I might as well go on the same line of questioning when it comes to enforcement and regulation. You're absolutely right. I believe there was \$1,500, maybe—I wish I could find the notes to have the exact numbers—yes, there it is. There were 289 complaints in the year of the death of Eva Ravikovich and only one fine of \$1,500. I concur that if we had larger fines and penalties, we would have more money in the fund, but the reality of the fact is that the ministry didn't do their job, and they didn't adhere and inspect into the complaints that were already there.

The new enforcement officers that are going to be hired are a total of six. Do you believe that's going to be enough to enforce all of the new regulations?

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: It's not enough; it's a good start. But let's remember that this last inquest is the fourth inquest in 30 years, and as many deaths have taken place in illegal child care programs, so this is something that needs some urgency behind it.

I think that what you'll see is that if there was knowledge that the penalties were very great for running

the kinds of programs where an inspector comes around and you hide the kids in the basement—

Miss Monique Taylor: For sure, if there was teeth—which hopefully there will be enough teeth in this. But regardless of the fact, there are still going to be unscrupulous people in this province, in this country, that are going to try to beat the system, and without enough enforcement and without a government that's going to be accountable to making sure that the enforcement is done, we're going to be doing all of this work for naught, because we will still have illegal child care providers happening.

I see here that one of your recommendations—I circled it—I believe it was recommendation number 9, “Maintain the number of children cared for by a provider with a licensed home child care agency to five.”

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: Right.

Miss Monique Taylor: Right, because really, increasing the number of children is not going to be to the safety of our children. Do you believe it is?

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: I think that it's a major health and safety problem.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have 30 seconds left.

Miss Monique Taylor: You can finish. Go ahead, use my time.

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: It's a major health and safety problem. It, again, puts Ontario at the high end of children that are allowed even in regulated child care. It's not an incentive for providers to move out of the illegal underground system into the current system. I think if we wanted to do that, we would fund the child care agencies, because right now, family daycare providers are the only providers that have to pay for their own oversight.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): We have to go on to the government. Sorry.

Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Kerry, for being here. The legislation addresses concerns that affect every working parent in Ontario. I hear from the parents in my riding, and I'm sure all members on this committee hear about this.

My question is about the safety and security of children, because I believe that one death is one too many. This bill is about increasing safety and oversight. Can you tell us how this bill increases and enhances and improves the safety of our children?

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: It gives enforcement a big stick to go after illegal providers with, so that provides a chill factor in the community. By increasing the number of inspectors, that provides some care, but it's not enough.

It's unlikely that we're going to be able to modify this sort of behaviour simply through inspection. We're going to have to have some sort of public education campaign which lets both parents and the public know that it's not okay to have 17 kids in somebody's basement, even if their teenaged daughter is helping them out, right? It's

those kinds of things where we'll begin to see a difference.

But all the penalties in the world, we have to note, don't make any difference if there's not enough regulated child care. There has been one death in regulated child care. That was one death too many, but in comparison, child care is one of the safest places for a kid to be. By actually bumping up the numbers of regulated child care spaces, that's really what's going to benefit our children. We have to think of benefiting our children more than just keeping them safe. This is supposed to be a developmental program; it's supposed to really change their life outcomes. It's more than just a safe place to put kids. That's the other part of the legislation that's being looked at, where those real quality factors are being looked at, which I think is important.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Earlier you made a comment about hot dogs. I didn't get it.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have 30 seconds left.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: What do you mean by that?

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: That there are more regulations for a hot dog vendor than there are for the thousands of places that small children spend their days.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any other questions? No? Thank you very much for the presentation. I appreciate it.

Ms. Kerry McCuaig: Thank you.

HOME CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Our next presenter, then: Home Child Care Association of Ontario. You've been sitting here long enough; you know you—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Welcome to our world. Yes, you have five minutes. Please introduce yourself for Hansard.

Ms. Marni Flaherty: Absolutely. Good afternoon, my name is Marni Flaherty and this is my colleague Ann Craig-Howarth. We're here today on behalf of the Home Child Care Association of Ontario. We appreciate the opportunity to speak to you about the vital piece of proposed legislation, the Child Care Modernization Act.

In the five minutes I have to address you, I'd like to tell you about the role of the association, which is also known as HCCAO, why we enthusiastically support Bill 10, and suggest a few key recommendations for enhancing Bill 10 to address our specific concerns around home child care.

HCCAO was formed in 1983 to support caregivers and agencies which provide licensed home child care to families in this province. Our membership currently includes more than 70 agencies that care for more than 80,000 children in homes across Ontario.

I'd like to take one moment to explain to the committee the background for our specific focus in regard to Bill

10. There are two types of home child care in Ontario: unregulated child care and regulated home child care.

Firstly, I'm going to speak to you about regulated home child care, which is part of the licensed child care system under the old Day Nurseries Act. Under this system, home child care providers are affiliated with an agency in their community which holds the licence. The agency professionals oversee home child care by providing education, training as well as regular, unannounced visits to the home, to ensure that quality care is being provided and that health and safety are being met.

The agency also works with parents to ensure access to subsidies through municipal programs to ensure all families, regardless of financial status, have access to safe, quality, licensed child care.

I'm sure that the committee members are well aware, as we know today, that there have been four recent tragic deaths of children in unlicensed home child care in Ontario. The Ombudsman recently released his report urging the government to replace outdated legislation with new, more robust rules regarding the care of children. That legislation is Bill 10, and I'm pleased to say that the association strongly supports the new bill that will provide greater protection for children, particularly in unlicensed care.

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While we support Bill 10, we strongly urge the committee to implement two key changes: Number one, amend Bill 10 to limit home child care providers to care for no more than three children under the age of three. Today in Ontario, unregulated caregivers can have five babies plus any number of their own children to care for in their homes, and we feel this is wrong. This new bill would limit unregulated caregivers who call themselves independents to a maximum of five children, including their own children, under the age of six.

But the association is concerned that the bill, as currently written, would allow, for example, a caregiver to have two children under the age of two, like toddlers, and potentially three more children who are two years of age. Imagine, if you would, trying to safely care for five small children under the age of three. Now imagine if a fire broke out. We believe that Bill 10 must be amended to limit the number of children in home child care under the age of three. We urge you to consider what we are calling "three under three"; that is, no more than three children under the age of three.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have one minute left.

Ms. Marni Flaherty: Additionally, we recommend an amendment to Bill 10 that would ensure high-quality home child care to all children. We are recommending that the regulations specifically address qualifications and age ratios for licensed home child care providers to be permitted to care for more than five children.

In the upcoming days, you will hear from critics that this excellent new legislation will result in the loss of child care spaces, leaving families without care. That's simply not true, and I would urge the members of the

committee to focus on the benefits of modernization of child care and on the provision of high-quality and safe care for all children. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Questions start with the third party. Miss Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you. Hi, Marni.

Ms. Marni Flaherty: Hi, Monique.

Miss Monique Taylor: Nice to see you.

Ms. Marni Flaherty: Thank you. Nice to see you.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm seeing your recommendation here, "three under three." Is that for licensed and unlicensed?

Ms. Marni Flaherty: Yes.

Miss Monique Taylor: So across the board. I'm concerned about how a licensed provider can provide for six children and yet an unlicensed can only provide for six. Can you explain the rationale behind that, please?

Ms. Marni Flaherty: You mean for five?

Miss Monique Taylor: For five, sorry. So one can have six and one can have five because one has a licence and one doesn't, right?

Ms. Marni Flaherty: Well, one's under the licensed system, which is different than having a licence themselves. Further in our recommendations, you'll see that the only way they could have a sixth is if there were particular standards, qualifications. So we would have a caveat. It wouldn't be like a blanket; it would depend on the situation.

Miss Monique Taylor: Okay. So the numbers that have been tossed around for quite some time since Bill 10 came to life are that 80% of our children are in an unlicensed setting. You say that we wouldn't lose any spots in the child care sector. How is that possible?

Ms. Marni Flaherty: I didn't say any spots. I was referring to the 140,000 spots.

I think if you look at our system from Best Start for the last 10 years, we have developed more spaces throughout the last years. We've had extended care. We've got kids in JK and SK programs. So things are shifting. I think it's safe to say that when this bill goes through, we'll be able to strengthen the licensed system in order to accommodate spaces.

Miss Monique Taylor: So is there a plan in the works to help the unlicensed sector get licensed?

Ms. Marni Flaherty: I would imagine the 70 agencies that are our members—we know that the Day Nurseries Act is archaic and we understand the problems of joining an agency, but we hope with modernization that we can create a system that's more flexible, where independent caregivers will feel comfortable coming on board.

Miss Monique Taylor: I know that you're in full support of Bill 10. Are there other things other than the three under three that you think would strengthen this bill?

Ms. Marni Flaherty: We're really looking forward to the opportunity to sit and hammer out regulations—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Marni Flaherty: Regulations are going to be the key to this bill. Let's get the legislation through and then let's talk about regulations.

Miss Monique Taylor: Great. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Now to the government. Ms. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much for your presentation—very well thought out. You speak well for a lot of the issues that have been debated back and forth.

You've been in the room long enough to hear that there's a number of differences in terms of numbers of child care spaces, the number that is going to be lost, that 80% are unlicensed, those kinds of things.

I know that our government started on this bill back in 2012. The 80%, I'm just guessing, is also including a large number of children who are actually cared for not by unlicensed providers per se but by family—nannies, parents, cousins, sisters, that kind of thing—that really aren't included. So I'm not sure that 80% is really accurate when we're looking at spaces.

It interests me that you don't feel there is a huge loss of child care spaces, like the 140,000 that's being bandied about. Could you explain where you feel your numbers come from on that?

Ms. Marni Flaherty: Well, in the organization that I run, we also run child care centres, and there has been a huge expansion of before- and after-school programs. Through the four- and five-year-old rollout for kindergarten, there has just been this evolution of more spaces in schools for before- and after-school programs. So that's one thing.

In the child care licence system, we have lost those four- and five-year-olds, so we're now retrofitting our programs to accommodate infants and toddlers. It's not perfect and we're not done, but there's an opportunity for us to get this right. If we put this bill together, I think the entire bill will speak to a lot of the stuff that's quite frustrating, to ensure that we have more spaces in this province.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I think you speak to a transition that we've had to undergo as full-day junior and kindergarten has been rolled out across the province. Now that it is out there, we can certainly complete, I would hope, the kind of program changes that you need to occur.

The other thing that I was interested in was that there has been a lot of discussion about two under two being cared for in a home versus three under three. I think that's kind of an area where people tend to disagree. Can you explain why three under three might be better than two under two?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have 30 seconds left.

Ms. Marni Flaherty: The association believes we should have two kids under two, three under three, and the other two or three would be older than the age of three.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Okay. And you can see that working in both licensed and unlicensed providers?

Ms. Marni Flaherty: Yes.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: And you also feel that unlicensed providers should have some qualifications like first aid and safety training for infants and toddlers as well?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. McGarry. We have to go to the opposition now. Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you for your comments here today.

Look, we've got a real conflict going on here with those 140,000 spaces. People have spoken on that on a number of occasions—and I've been at a number of rallies etc.—and that seems to be a fairly consistent number they're using.

I asked the minister in the House, if that's the wrong number, then what is the right number? How many child care spaces will actually be lost? You said there would be some loss. If it's not 140,000 lost child care spaces, how many would you say will be lost?

Ms. Marni Flaherty: The unregulated sector, hence unregulated, is pretty hard to count. Right? That's the short form.

When it comes to the stabilization and transformation of our licence system in Ontario, we're experiencing significant changes. So the rollout of kindergarten, the four- and five-year-olds all in full-day care, has really changed the face of child care.

It's too early to tell, but I think if we work together and strengthen this system, it's going to be a better system: community use of schools, community use of rec centres, putting licensed programs in them. Public and not-for-profit growth makes good sense to me, anyway.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: If I can, Mr. Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Yes, you have time.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: What I've been told by a number of people, maybe a couple of hundred, just in conversations and piles of letters I've got here, is that the independent child care providers have no problem with oversight. They have no problem with some type of a registry. Some of them will say they have no problem with an actual licence.

I just hope that the numerous organizations that never got an opportunity to be here representing associations will be part of those round tables actually setting the regulations. I'd hate to see it all be your opinion and not have some—because you agree with the minister—

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Ms. Marni Flaherty: But I actually represent 70 agencies across the province. I am the president of the Home Child Care Association of Ontario; we're a not-for-profit charitable organization. They've asked me to come here today and have agreed on everything I've said.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: And I agree, but I was with a group this morning that is saying that it's actually 140,000, and it could even be more spaces lost than that. So I just want to make sure that we are drafting these regulations—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds remaining.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It's a point I want to make clear because the parliamentary assistant said there would be minister's round tables on the drafting of the regulations.

Mr. Grant Crack: No.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Well, you said that. You're in Hansard saying that. I want to make sure that all the organizations that represent child care providers in Ontario get an opportunity to be part of the drafting of those regulations.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you for your presentation.

Our next presenter is Jane Bertrand. Jane, are you here? No.

COLLEGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay, we have the College of Early Childhood Educators present. If you'd like to come forward, identify yourselves for Hansard, and you have five minutes, as you've seen.

Ms. Lois Mahon: Good afternoon. I'm Lois Mahon, the president of the council of the College of Early Childhood Educators, and this is Debbie Tarshis with me.

Bill 10 has a number of components. The College of ECE will restrict its comments to schedule 3, which is within our regulatory scope.

Schedule 3 contains amendments to our act, the ECE Act of 2007 governing our college, and those amendments are part of the statutory review required after five years. The council is generally very pleased with schedule 3 and we urge the committee to send it on to third reading with very limited changes.

Our college was created by that ECE Act. It's a young regulatory college, which came into being after years and years of advocacy from our profession for legislative recognition. Originally, we anticipated 25,000; we are happy to say we have recently achieved 52,000 certificates of registration.

The college, like many other regulatory colleges in Ontario, keeps a public register of registered early childhood educators, holds discipline hearings, and in some cases revokes membership where serious allegations are proven. The profession has ethical and professional standards enshrined in the bylaw of the college, and recently we've launched continuous professional learning for all of our members.

Schedule 3 has some very important amendments which the council of the College of ECE supports wholeheartedly. It will give the college authority through regulation to accredit post-secondary ECE programs. This is important. In most cases, eligibility for membership in the college rests on the completion of an ECE diploma. Having the authority, then, to accredit strengthens the consistent quality of education and training.

The schedule also gives clarity on the authority to mandate continuous professional learning through regulation. At the moment, our CPL program has been

launched with expectation only. Other professions have mandatory requirements for continuing competency. It's important for public confidence in our profession, as in any profession, to be assured that registered early childhood educators are staying current in their practice.

We are particularly pleased that the schedule closes loopholes and makes it clear that qualified persons working within the scope of practice must be registered. While employers are increasingly requiring their employees to register, there has been some misunderstanding about who must register to work and scope. It's important that qualified persons who work within the scope are accountable.

The college has a prosecutorial policy on mandatory revocation for sexual misconduct. We are very pleased to see that this is strengthened in this schedule.

There remain two areas of concern: first, a requirement in the schedule that our complaints committee decisions be made available to present and past employers. As I am sure you are aware, the complaints committee is a screening committee whose purpose is to review and investigate complaints and decide whether to refer allegations to discipline hearings. It's the council's view that dispositions of the complaints committee should be provided to employers when the committee makes a referral to a hearing of the discipline committee.

Secondly, the schedule includes a mandatory reporting requirement for employers to report anything to the college that they feel we should know. This opens the door for reports outside of our regulatory scope, which is restricted to professional misconduct, incompetence and incapacity. For example, employer-employee issues such as collective bargaining would not be the mandate of the college to consider. We suggest that these amendments be clarified.

The council of the college is generally very pleased with the amendments proposed in schedule 3. We have provided the committee with a written submission, which includes some suggested technical amendments. We urge the committee to send—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have one minute left.

Ms. Lois Mahon: —it to third reading with limited changes.

Thank you for your time today.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you very much. The questions go to the government. Ms. McGarry?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much for your presentation. In terms of the overall impression of the bill, it seems to me that you're fairly supportive. Are there any amendments that we could make to Bill 10 that would strengthen the oversight and the safety of our children?

Ms. Lois Mahon: We would restrict, probably, our comments today to that which is within our mandate or our scope, except to say that we believe that a child care early learning system that's stable and regulated would

help our members and would help in achieving regulatory compliance all the way around.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I know that there's been a lot of discussion in here and throughout the province about looking at the age of children who are being cared for by licensed and unlicensed folks. The two-under-two, three-under-three numbers are bandied about. Do you have any comment about what your preference would be or what you feel, as an organization, would be best—

Ms. Lois Mahon: While I can't speak to that specifically, I can tell you that we hold all of our members to a very high standard. That standard requires them to not only be cognizant of best practice, but also to ensure the health and safety of children. We would suggest that regulation that moves toward safety of children is something that we would be supportive of.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: When it comes to your members having to update and recertify and that kind of thing, can you speak to some of the things that you like your members to have in terms of certification and how often those certificates or that training has to be updated?

Ms. Lois Mahon: We are just in the process of implementing a continuous professional learning program, and we are happy about schedule 3 that will make that regulated. That continuous professional learning program is based on individual assessment of each of our members to our standards of practice. They would look through all of our standards in terms of their own practice, their own knowledge, their own skills, their own understanding. We would expect them to do an assessment of that practice and set subsequent goals—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have 30 seconds remaining.

Ms. Lois Mahon: —and any number of educational requirements to meet those.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Okay, so do you have any core programs—out of all the certification you would like to see for child care providers, what would be your top two or three priorities to make sure they have before they can care for our young children?

Ms. Lois Mahon: For those who are working within our scope of practice, we would want them to have a full diploma in early childhood education and all of the competencies that come with that.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. I'm sorry to say you're out of time. We'll go to the opposition now. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think what concerns a lot of people is that it sounds like we're just mandating things, sort of like machines. I think we all know that sometimes it's easier to take care of three two-year-olds than one four-year-old if that four-year-old is a difficult child—this sort of fixation on the ages of the children when here we've rolled out all-day kindergarten, which, really, has made it more difficult for people to find older children for their daycare spots because the older children are now in all-day kindergarten.

If we're making it so strict, that lack of flexibility really makes it tough for a lot of parents. Here there's a

nice daycare a block from their home which has room now for one of their children but doesn't have room for both of their children because they have twin two-year-olds and this daycare already has one two-year-old who lives with the family and can't be booted out.

I'm just wondering if you could suggest any room for flexibility in this program. I think we all want children to be happy, close to home, and we want parents to feel that they have the flexibility. Maybe even there's some room for flexibility if there's one child who has to be dropped off early but is being picked up early, and then they're able to take an extra child whose parents maybe work afternoon and evening, and there's only going to be an overlap of an hour or two.

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You seem very knowledgeable. I just wonder if you could make any suggestions.

Ms. Lois Mahon: Well, within the scope of our regulatory college, we license or grant opportunity for individual registered early childhood educators to work within this scope. We have no authority or mandate over individual programs, whether they be licensed or not. Our scope is directed to the individual. We would expect those individuals, within our standards, to work collaboratively with parents and other professionals, providing holistic, seamless care for those children.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Yes. What I'm just suggesting is, within this bill, if you could suggest any room for flexibility or maneuvering in terms of your experience of managing child care.

Ms. Lois Mahon: I probably could, as a registered early childhood educator, but as I am here as the president of the College of Early Childhood Educators, I must restrict my answers, I think, to within our scope.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have 30 seconds left.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Okay. Well, I just want it to be on the record that I think it makes for a very long day if a child is turned away from a daycare spot near their home. We've all heard of kids who have to be put on buses because the school in their neighbourhood is full. We're hearing more of that in my riding since we brought out all-day kindergarten, because the kindergarten spots are taking away spots from grades 2 and 3, so now children in grades 2 and 3 are going on long bus rides to move further. What concerns me is the consequences.

Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Third party: Miss Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: Good afternoon. Thank you for being here with us today.

I've been here for a few hours now. I've heard a few presenters, and I'm hearing about the lack of tools, of requirements for extra wording, maybe, for children with special needs. What are the requirements of the ECE workers? What's going on for children with special needs? From your side, what's happening?

Ms. Lois Mahon: We take very seriously the importance of including all children, regardless of their

ability, within the scope of practice of any registered early childhood educators. We would expect that every RECE who is working with a child would be familiar with that child's development, would be familiar with screening tools that would identify if there had to be an interprofessional or interdisciplinary collaboration. We would expect that the early childhood educator would prescribe, in her practice, a program that would maximize the development of each and every child.

We certainly take an inclusive look and a holistic look at children, and we would want to be sure that no child would be left behind.

Miss Monique Taylor: But is there anything regulating them so that they have to have these courses, these educational tools to help them with children?

Ms. Lois Mahon: If you are going to be a member of our college, you must have, at minimum, a diploma from an Ontario community college in early childhood education or a degree from the recognized universities that we identify.

Miss Monique Taylor: How many of those diplomas include tools for children with disabilities?

Ms. Lois Mahon: We've been working with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities about our standards and our expectations and building those standards and expectations into the competencies that are required for students who graduate from a two-year diploma. I think the other important thing is that we recognize and hold our members accountable to inter-collaboration—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Lois Mahon: —professional activities, so I think we're moving in the right direction.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you. It was stated here on the first page of your presentation that you hope that Bill 10 passes quickly into law. I can assure you that the government has time-allocated this entire bill and has stopped a lot of the province from being able to be a part of this process, so it is going to move fairly quickly. Hopefully we get it right.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Time is up on this. Thank you very much for your presentation today.

Ms. Lois Mahon: Thank you.

MS. JANE BERTRAND

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Our next presenter is Jane Bertrand. Jane, you are ahead of time. You have five minutes. Please introduce yourself for Hansard.

Ms. Jane Bertrand: Okay. I'm Jane Bertrand. I'm an early childhood educator and have been for a few decades, and formerly was a professor in the early childhood education program at George Brown College. I'm now a sessional faculty member at OISE and attached to the Atkinson Centre there.

I do not have a formal presentation, and I'm probably going to be very brief. I have about three things to say.

First of all, I want to applaud this bill for the strength it puts in around bringing some level of safety to young

children who are in underground care across much of this province. I think this is badly needed, and the tragic events of a year ago certainly pointed to it and brought it to a head. I think there is some good infrastructure in place in this legislation that will take us a long way to ensuring that children are at least relatively safe and alive at the end of the day, and we really need to move in this direction. That's point number 1.

Point number 2: The other strength I see in this legislation is the requirement that school boards ensure that children up to age 12 have access to programs—out-of-school, after-school child care programs—and that the programs be provided. I think those are essential, and it makes sense to put the onus on the school boards to ensure that is happening.

Third, in terms of regulations: There is much to be talked about, about regulations, ratios, numbers of kids. I'd recommend getting the planks of the legislation in place and then have a regulatory review across the board. There needs to be work done in regulations and centre-based programs. The world has changed. Full-day kindergarten, as you pointed out, is now in place. We also have one-year parental leave. Neither of those was in place the last time anybody had any kind of serious look at regulations.

I will stop there.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): We have three minutes of questions from each party, and we start with the opposition.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much. I appreciate your coming in today.

I'm aware that you're a member of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Is that true?

Ms. Jane Bertrand: Well, I was an adjunct faculty member, and I have a relationship with the Atkinson Centre; that's correct.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. When they appeared before this committee, do you agree with what they had to say?

Ms. Jane Bertrand: You know, I have to be completely honest with you. I do not know what they said. It is not a full-time occupation for me. I'm teaching in the PhD early childhood cohort program and—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Would it be fair to say that what they said represents their organization and you would be part of that organization?

Ms. Jane Bertrand: Sorry, I am not—I have no idea.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay. The reason I bring this up is that we're now in time-allocated hearings. We, in the official opposition, have asked for public, province-wide hearings so there will be greater accessibility, given that child care is an emotional debate—trust me; I'm a mother, and I know—it is one that parents take very personally, and this will bring significant changes to child care in the province of Ontario.

That said, what is happening over the next two days is that many voices in child care have been eliminated from having their say on this bill. I'm going to mention three specifically: the Canadian Council of Montessori Admin-

istrators, the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Independent Schools. Those are quite significant voices. All will be impacted by this legislation and have not been able to attend here today, yet we see multiple voices from one organization appear before the committee.

That really concerns me, because we have three massive organizations in the province that have been shut out of the debate—they have been shut out of the hearings—and we are now time-allocating this so that it makes it almost impossible for people who don't live in downtown Toronto to appear before this committee—or if they are part of a lobby group, it makes it much easier. But certainly independent voices and those from organizations haven't been able to appear.

I just wanted to raise that, because I appreciate that you're here today, but I know that Kerry and Zeenat had spoken, and it just seems to me that if we're going to talk about child care in Ontario, every voice should be included. I'm happy to hear your response. I have nothing further to add.

1700

Ms. Jane Bertrand: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Jane Bertrand: I am only here representing myself. I was probably ill-advised to attach a relationship I have. I'm here because I've been in the field for 40 years, have worked in several major centres in child care and have taught in the program, and thought that, in and of itself, was of value.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you.

Third party, Miss Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: Hi. How are you?

Ms. Jane Bertrand: Fine, thanks.

Miss Monique Taylor: Good. Thank you for being here. Thank you for bringing your voice to this table.

You said that you applaud the level of safety measures that are going to be implemented in Bill 10 and how that will stop the underground child care system. What exactly do you mean by that? What measures are you happy to see?

Ms. Jane Bertrand: Well, I'm probably being overly optimistic about the power of it, but I think putting some parameters around what babysitters, home care providers who are unassociated with a regulated agency, can do is a first step, to put some limits on numbers and put some requirements in place, just as we do for all kinds of other services. I think that's a starting point of putting some—and I think that was the opinion of the recent review that came out, the report that came out that looked at what had happened and was quite damning but also recognized that there were some good steps forward.

Miss Monique Taylor: Right. I'm actually the MPP who called for the Ombudsman to do that report—

Ms. Jane Bertrand: Thank you.

Miss Monique Taylor: —because of the safety measures that weren't being followed. There was one rule for the government to follow when it came to unlicensed

child care, and they failed to do it. Now they have implemented an extra six inspectors across the province to be able to make up for what wasn't able to be done.

There were actually quotes from inspectors in the Ombudsman's report that said, "Please don't go looking for work because we already have too much that we can't do now." Right? They were inundated with just getting to licences, to be able to license already licensed providers. We had providers who hadn't been relicensed in over a year because of the lack of people to be able to do this job.

Do you think that an extra six inspectors is going to save children?

Ms. Jane Bertrand: No, but I think that's not the only measure that's proposed in the act. I think there are a number of others in the process around it, around what happens when there's a complaint. Those sorts of things, I think, will start to make a difference.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have 30 seconds left.

Miss Monique Taylor: We're still going to have unlicensed child care providers in this province. Even after this bill, we are still going to have those people. If we don't have the inspection, if we don't have the teeth and if we don't have the government to implement what's being put in front of them, we're still going to be put in the same position.

Ms. Jane Bertrand: I think this has to be one of several pieces. I agree with the comment made earlier: What we need is a full-fledged early childhood system with lots of options for families etc. I think this legislation is a strong step forward—

Miss Monique Taylor: Absolutely.

Ms. Jane Bertrand: —to put some boundaries on it, and that's what I—

Miss Monique Taylor: And 1946 was the last time—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Three minutes are over. Sorry. I came in the nick of time, didn't I?

Interjections.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): All right. Thank you. I guess it will be Mrs. McGarry. Go ahead.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much for your submission, Jane.

As you're probably aware, the government started to look at modernizing child care back in 2012. There has been opportunity for hundreds of submissions that are still pouring in that are sitting over here that we've been inundated with, all of our offices, and we've been able to read through those submissions. It has been said that we're not consulting as a government throughout the province, but indeed there's still the opportunity for anybody to weigh in and call and write and email regarding this bill. So it's very important.

As a matter of fact, the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario actually met with our government about the former bill, which was Bill 143, back on February 28 of this particular year to start discussing it. They've actually sat on our ministry's provincial and municipal working group which was created, really, to receive any advice and input on the now current Bill 10.

I know that child care has changed dramatically in the last three to four decades that we've been talking about. I started looking for daycare back in 1986, and I still have my child in daycare today, so I've sort of spanned those decades.

From your perspective as a researcher in child care and early years, can you tell us if this Bill 10 reflects up-to-date evidence and research on early childhood education?

Ms. Jane Bertrand: Broadly speaking, yes. There are limitations to how far you can go in legislation. You're putting the broad planks around. Then when you get into what's going to go on inside of programs, it's really the regulations that have to live within the structure you put in place, and that's why I think a regulatory review would be in order, looking at current research and taking into account full-day kindergarten here for four-year-olds and five-year-olds, one-year parental leave here for many. Not all, but many families are using it, and we've seen a shift on the ground when babies are coming into centres. All of that needs to be taken into account with a really good look at the regulations.

But regulations can change. They're much easier to adapt to current contexts and changing lives—what happens next with parental leave and all of that. Legislation is there for a long time. Somebody just pointed out 1946, which is absolutely accurate.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's time for that update, isn't it?

Do you have any comments about when all our regulations should be in place while we're going through Bill 10?

Ms. Jane Bertrand: I like everything to happen right away, so I'm very happy to see this legislation getting in place. The day after that, I think there should be an announcement about a process that involves government officials, people from the municipalities and experts—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I'm sorry, we'll have to leave it at that. Thank you.

MS. CYNTHIA CHESTER

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now like to call Cynthia Chester. Ms. Chester, you know that you have five minutes to present. Then there will be questions, starting with the NDP.

Ms. Cynthia Chester: Good afternoon. My name is Cynthia Chester. I'm a mother of three adult children, a grandparent of six, and I'm a taxpayer, a homeowner, a concerned citizen and a small business operator.

I started my home daycare with five full-time children 35 years ago. I've been working as an independent home daycare provider with all the necessary requirements, such as first aid, CPR, police clearance and home fire safety inspection, and I am continuously updating and attending various workshops, such as anaphylaxis and the food safety handler certificate to name a few.

I'm a member of various child care provider networks, including the Halton Child Care Providers Association, which meets monthly for the benefit of sharing information. HCCPA promotes and supports in-home daycares.

During this time, I have helped to co-parent hundreds of families, several of which I still keep in contact with today. I'd like to share a comment one of my daycare children made on my Facebook page when she learned I was here today. She is now 22 years of age. Victoria writes, "I want to be there! This is so amazing.... Love you! I spent 14 years in your care and I am so grateful for how you raised me." This is a powerful statement that explains the relationships and benefits of home daycares.

We daycare providers are smart, caring, educated women, some with ECE training, who want to give back to our communities by providing parents with options. My home is clean, organized, and safety is my number one concern. I am fortunate to have a designated daycare space which is bright, colourful and full of educational tools and learning opportunities to help entice their imagination. My program is play-based. A typical day can include music, storytime, age-appropriate crafts and lots of outdoor play in a large, wide-open space where they can run and explore.

At my daycare, parents have an open-door policy. They are my inspectors. They are accountable for their decisions and it's their duty to parent their children. My parents come from an array of professional careers. They are involved, smart, and very particular as to where they place their toddlers.

My clients are happy with no age restrictions because they want their children to grow within the same age group so that they can bond, make friendships, and become polite and smart little people.

As an independent daycare provider, I care for those children ages one through three and a half. As you know, we live in a grow-up-fast society, pushing our children to kindergarten at age four.

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It's my belief that a child's job is play, so let's do our job and make that happen, providing the opportunity for parents to have care when their mat leave is over at one year. That's where I come in. I'm a second home to bond and to nurture that child like my own. I am passionate about this and find it a privilege.

I oppose the bill as it's currently written because by reducing the ratios we will not ensure safety. This will cause a major daycare crisis for Ontario families and the ICP's market of two under two. Eighty percent of our children are with independent home daycare providers, and this will cut 140,000 daycare spaces. Bill 10 will drive the cost up by 40% with the restriction of two under two. Some providers may even have to close their doors. Furthermore, the Ombudsman's recommendation, in his report, had no restriction to age ratios for the independent daycare providers.

Bill 10 strips away parental choice and has a negative impact on our precious resources, our children.

I'm here today to ask the Liberal government to make this right. Amend Bill 10 as it is: five children under the

age of 10 with no age restrictions. These ratios have been shown, through research, to be perfectly safe. Further limiting numbers will not ensure safety, and yet cause a shortage of daycare spaces for toddlers and have a negative impact on women wishing to return to their careers.

Secondly, create a registry allowing parents to have that resource tool for independent licensing. This will allow the Minister of Education to monitor ICPs and limit unnecessary third-party involvement.

Lastly, health and safety standards across the board: mandatory first aid and CPR, vulnerable police check and fire home safety.

Let's all work together for the benefit of Ontario families and get this bill right.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thank you. You were right at five minutes.

Ms. Cynthia Chester: Thank you. I tried my best.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): You did very well. I think we're starting with the PCs.

Interjections.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Oh, sorry, with the NDP.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you for coming here this afternoon. I appreciate it.

Ms. Cynthia Chester: You're very welcome.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The research that you noted that showed that setting aside those age ratios would be perfectly safe—which research is this?

Ms. Cynthia Chester: The research that the CCPRN has done, the research that the Ombudsman has done—the deaths that have happened in home daycare were not, to my knowledge, more than one or two in an independent home daycare provider's home.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay, so that's what you're citing. I'm a bit worried about the thought that there would be no age ratios. If you had five children under the age of one—

Ms. Cynthia Chester: I would never have five children under the age of one. The daycare children come to independent caregivers at approximately one year. That's when moms get off their mat leave and go back to work. Some of those moms have a lot of stress leaving their toddler and they don't want added stress by not having a space available to that child. That's where we come in. We fill the gap between the one-year-old and the three-year-old group, because not every family wants to go to centre care. That doesn't fit everybody.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Would you say that five under the age of two would be a good ratio, would be an acceptable amount?

Ms. Cynthia Chester: Five under the age of two? I have worked for 35 years in a system that has worked. I am a professional caregiver and I take seriously the safety issues first. Generally speaking, in my home, I have somewhere between two or three children that are under two, and then those ones that I had that were one will graduate to their second birthday and oftentimes will stay on.

But restricting the age ratios does not ensure safety. What ensures safety is a registry letting us become independently licensed and having us monitored, having spot checks. We are all following the rules.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. I don't have further questions.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Mr. Crack?

Mr. Grant Crack: Ms. Chester, thank you very much for coming and thank you for being a great advocate on providing safe facilities and home care for our children.

I just wanted to make a few points. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education and the National Fire Protection Association are all saying that two under two is the way to go. And you're obviously opposed to that.

Ms. Cynthia Chester: Well, I have five families in my daycare currently who do not agree with that. Mr. Barrett has written a letter; I have attached that. It's parental choice. Parents have to be accountable for where they put their children.

Mr. Grant Crack: Okay. We've seen some instances where there are numerous children in different facilities. I think it is incumbent on the government to come up with something that's workable, in order to protect those who aren't able to find an appropriate daycare facility, such as yours, across the province. There are a number of them; we hear numbers of 17 to 24. How do you propose that we regulate those if you're saying there should be no restrictions?

Ms. Cynthia Chester: I'm saying that you let us become independently licensed. That way, we follow the guidelines and we have our safety checks and all of the qualifications you set forth for us by allowing us to become licensed.

Mr. Grant Crack: So you're saying that the government should be hands-off when it comes to child care?

Ms. Cynthia Chester: No, I'm not saying that. I've worked 35 years in this business, and I've never had one accident.

Mr. Grant Crack: Okay, but there have been other instances where there have been accidents.

Ms. Cynthia Chester: There have been in licensed care as well.

Mr. Grant Crack: Absolutely.

Ms. Cynthia Chester: The parents have to be accountable for where they drop their children off. If a home is not safe, I would know that in five minutes by entering that home. And I'm a parent. I've raised three children, and I've got six grandchildren. I have counselled all three of my adult kids on the facts about where to put their children. So I have no problem figuring out what is a safe environment. And any one of you here would know immediately, when you walked into a home, if the home was safe. You check the lady out; you look at her credentials.

Mr. Grant Crack: I appreciate what you're saying, but I think there are occasions, perhaps, when a parent

places a child in a certain facility and/or home thinking that it's going to be fine, and it doesn't end up that way. I think that we, as a government, are trying to take the steps and put in the necessary measures—

Ms. Cynthia Chester: Well, you're taking away parental choice is what you're doing.

Mr. Grant Crack: Well, okay. Thank you.

Ms. Cynthia Chester: You're welcome.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Sorry, I'm going to have to interrupt.

Mr. Dunlop?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much. If changes aren't made to this bill, do you see businesses being driven underground?

Ms. Cynthia Chester: Absolutely.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: That's what I see happening here. I think you've made a lot of really good points here this afternoon, and you've zeroed in on some of the numbers—140,000—which have become very controversial between the minister's office and some of the other stakeholders. But I see an opportunity here. If the government would make some amendments and listen to the ICPs, I think there's some real opportunities to get a registry put in place, a small licensing system put in place.

My problem now is that I keep hearing that only six people are going to be added to do the enforcement, and I just can't understand how they can possibly expect six people to enforce all the daycare spaces in Ontario. My God, they've got 100 people already at the College of Trades enforcing the tradespeople, and I'm not sure what they're even doing.

But I'm curious: Have you got any problem at all with someone coming to your place and looking at enforcement?

Ms. Cynthia Chester: Absolutely not.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: And do your colleagues?

Ms. Cynthia Chester: None of them do. I don't know one poor provider. I live in Halton, and I belong to an association. They're fantastic ladies. They're smart, they're educated, and they want safety.

Not every parent thinks that centre care is fit for them. Personally, as a parent of 35 years—my oldest son is 35; he's a police officer in Toronto—I do not believe that all children at one year need to go to a centre that's licensed. There are lots of poor licensed daycares around. I've had letters—Mr. Barrett's letter. He put his oldest son in a centre. His youngest son is with me now. He said it's a night-and-day difference. I am not for that.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

HALTON CHILD CARE PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I will now call Tracy Skelton and Joanne Hoole, executive committee member and chair, of the Halton Child Care Providers Association, Oakville chapter.

You have five minutes to present, and there will be a series of questions, starting with the Liberals.

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Ms. Tracy Skelton: Hello, my name is Tracy Skelton. I've been an independent child care provider for eight years. I'm on the executive committee of the HCCPA, Oakville chapter. Previously, I had a career as an executive assistant at a major media corporation. After I had my second child, I decided to change my career path and work with children, to become a child care provider. This gave me the additional benefit of being home to raise my own children as well as helping to raise others while earning an income and providing a much-needed service to the community.

The HCCPA Oakville is a support group for ICPs. We have monthly workshops related to child care and promote best practices in child care.

I have my police clearance, CPR and first aid training and food handler's certificate. I have had my home inspected by the health department and the fire department. I attend workshops regularly. I have a written contract for each client, and I keep up-to-date health records for each. I provide receipts, and I am insured. I take my job seriously, and so do the other members of the HCCPA, as well as ICPs across the province. I offer as much or more in my home-based child care as a provider would who is with an agency.

Home child care is about relationships, a bond between the provider, the child and the parents. In most cases, it is safe, high-quality care. All of the wonderful ICPs who comply with the rules should not be penalized with new restrictions because of the noncompliance of others.

The tragedies that have occurred have received widespread media attention. However, two children have died in licensed care and that has gone unnoticed by the media. None of the tragedies that occurred took place in the home of an ICP following the rule of no more than five children under the age of 10. They happened in situations operating blatantly outside of the law, and we agree that lawbreakers should be penalized. Those who abide by the law should not, however. Bill 10 will penalize complying ICPs.

The HCCPA Oakville proposes that the current rule of allowing five children under the age of 10 years old remain as it is, without the two-under-two age restriction or counting the provider's own children under age six, as Bill 10 currently proposes. The existing ratios are not the problem; the lack of oversight is. Further limiting the ages and number of children we can care for will not address the lack of oversight.

ICPs should be given the opportunity to be on a registry supported by the government, a registry which would require proof of police clearance as well as CPR and first aid training. This registry should also require the provider to open her home to regular inspections. Alternatively, licensing independent of a third-party agency would also be a solution, if the licensing was possible with the numbers ICPs are currently allowed: five children under age 10.

We would further suggest that agency providers be given the same number allowance to bring both agency providers and ICPs in alignment. The Ombudsman has made no recommendation in his report to further restrict the ratios of children in independent care. He has, however, recommended a registry of which HCCPA is in full support.

We would also suggest municipal support for the creation of community child care associations or networks. The HCCPA, for example, offers a referral service, a monthly newsletter, workshops and ongoing training and support for providers.

In addition, the clause in Bill 10 allowing for the government to modify age and number restrictions at any time should be removed, as the public should always be consulted when amendments to law occur.

ICPs have worked hard to develop the reputation within their community based on high standards of care and relationships with clients. We each offer a personalized service. This is often what is so appealing to parents. The ICP works closely with the parent in helping to raise their child.

Bill 10, while endeavouring to make child care safer, is still only relying on a report-based system, just as in the past. It does not propose any safety-strengthening measures or oversight, nor does it create a database of providers. There will be many providers who will have to terminate existing clients or not be able to fill spots due to age restrictions in Bill 10. This will create a child care shortage.

In addition, I would like to say that we would like Bill 10 to be able to travel, as requested by MPP Dunlop. In the end, we all want what is best for Ontario's children. Let's work together to make this happen—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Tracy Skelton: —by amending Bill 10.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Did you want to add a few comments? You still have a few seconds on the clock.

Ms. Joanne Hoole: What she said.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): We're good? All right. I think we start with the Liberals.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much. I appreciate your coming today and speaking so passionately. As you are aware, there have been some differing viewpoints on Bill 10, but basically speaking, this bill is really about increasing safety and oversight for our young children. That's key and paramount here. We've heard other submissions that said this bill actually does address that, and we are responding to some of the Ombudsman reports.

But I also want to address the figure of 140,000 where unlicensed child care spaces will be lost. It's interesting that today Brian Platt is here from QP Briefing, reporting on this. He's here today and he did a bit of research regarding that loss of 140,000 spaces that we're hearing about. He stated that on news releases from the CICIP and other groups opposing Bill 10, the 350,000 number is

sourced from the CCPRN. And yet Doreen Cowin, the CCPRN's CEO, who was here earlier, said that it has never done any studies to come up with that statistic. I think it's true: It's very difficult to try and figure out how many unlicensed providers we have.

He also goes on to say that at a basic level, to accept the 140,000 claim, you have to actually just accept the rough guess of two day care spaces lost per provider, but there's no realistic way to verify this estimate.

So I think it's very difficult to come up with that space. There have also been other changes—we've got the one-year mat leave; we've got junior and senior kindergarten now—that do some of the child care service provision that we didn't have a few years back. So it's difficult to come up with that.

I guess my question to you is this: If this bill is really about safety and protection of children and we're trying to address the Ombudsman's recommendations, where do you think this bill falls short of achieving that?

Ms. Tracy Skelton: Well, it's still relying on the neighbour to call in a complaint. In the case of—I don't want to mispronounce her last name—Eva from Vaughan, I've read two different numbers, but that was reported four or five times and the ministry went once.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Tracy Skelton: So I think there is a lack of oversight, and adding six new inspectors is not going to address that issue. I think we need a registry, and that would be a starting ground.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I can certainly recognize that, but I also think it is incumbent upon us as parents, as neighbours, as folks in the community, to report the folks who have 17 to 20 children, which I've seen myself. I also have an emerg nurse and pediatric nurse background and I used to see some of those kids come in.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thank you. Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much. It's great that you were able to attend here today.

I want to say thank you to the independent child care providers of Ontario for showing up on their own dime from across Ontario with little resources. You're not government-funded. The ministry doesn't give you money. The Ministry of Children and Youth doesn't give you money. You came here all on your own with your own research and your own facts, your passion, and the parents who support you backing you up.

It's a bit rich for the member opposite from Cambridge to stand there and get notes from a ministry staffer about what a reporter from a small briefing unit here at Queen's Park is suggesting, so let me just tell them where these numbers come from.

The information that's provided suggests that there are 350,000 children in ICP care in Ontario, and that's ministry data; you can check it out yourself, Kathryn. Given that ICPs can care for up to five children, simple division calculates that there are approximately 70,000 ICPs in Ontario. If we assume an average loss of two

spaces per provider due to the inclusion of the provider's own children and the two-under-two ratio, guess what? It's simple math, and I know this government isn't big on it. That's 140,000 spaces. Don't take my word for it on the mathematical problems of your government: We've seen your budget. We've also seen the fact that your curriculum doesn't quite add up.

I'm going to defend some of these parents who have shown up here today who don't have big government lobby budgets, who are independent, who have taken time today to travel to downtown Toronto because this government refuses to travel.

I just wanted to be your defender here today, because I believe in choice in child care, I believe in the responsibility of parents, and I believe that you coming down here today showed an awful lot of courage. I'll stand up for you, and so will my colleague Garfield Dunlop. I think the next time the Liberals decide, when independent folks come in, that they need an armful of advisers passing them notes on how to respond on points of order or what have you—that's fine. We'll wait for this one to occur. But I just want to tell you to keep doing what you're doing. You've arranged a lot of rallies across the province. You have defended people who don't have a voice here today, and I want to say thank you for that, and just simply say, with the seconds we have left: What do you think the impact of this bill will be and where do you think the government is going with this bill?

Ms. Tracy Skelton: I think the impact is definitely going to be a shortage. There will be caregivers that are going to have to terminate spaces. There will be providers that will have to close their daycares. I think it's a shame that the majority of the population doesn't even know this is happening. There are parents out there that have no idea.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Do you think this is going towards a universal child care system?

Ms. Tracy Skelton: Yes, most definitely. I think the government wants to tell us how to look after our children. I think parents need to take accountability and do that for themselves.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: In a growing place like Halton, where you have high growth and many demands, that's going to impact you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

Ms. Tracy Skelton: Thank you very much, Lisa.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you both for coming in today. I know that getting in and out of Toronto at the best of times isn't great, so I appreciate you coming here.

I'm concerned about the number of children under age two and your rejection of that as a standard. How many children under the age of two should a provider be able to look after?

Ms. Tracy Skelton: I don't think there should be a specific limit. I think in many cases it's up to the provider and what they feel comfortable caring for. Everyone is different. The reality of running a home daycare is that your children are not going to all be five

children under two. That's just the reality. They don't all come in your door at the same time; there is a slight staggering. But the reality of care today is that mothers are looking for daycare when their child is one, and at age 3.8 to four years old they're off to kindergarten, so most of the children in care are fairly young, but they aren't all going to be under two. But we do need to make sure that we have some flexibility so that we can care for those children under two.

Most daycare centres don't even look at accepting children under 18 months, so when a mother is looking for daycare for their one-year-old and the child care centre down the street doesn't take a child until they're 18 months, where are they supposed to go?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I think that's a very substantive question, but I'm also concerned about a caregiver in a situation where, let's say, something catches fire on the stove and they've got five kids under two—getting them out in time.

Ms. Tracy Skelton: I think it would be a lot more challenging to get 30 children out of a daycare centre when you've got two caregivers responsible for—I'm not even sure what the number is; 12? I don't know how many children. They've got to make sure that they've counted child A, B, C and D, and did somebody get the child out of the bathroom? We're looking after a much smaller ratio of children. We know where they are and we can get them out. We're not in a big facility.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you. I have no further questions.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): That concludes all of the list of deputants that we had for this afternoon. Thank you very much for being here, ladies.

For the members of the committee, we will now recess till 6:30.

I have to tell you that the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario, which was scheduled for 6:30, has had to cancel. I suggest that we get back here at 6:30 anyway because there's a good chance that some of the other deputants that were scheduled for 6:45, 7 etc. will be here early.

We have half an hour to grab some supper. I can invite you to room 195 for supper, if you're interested. Otherwise, you're on your own.

The committee recessed from 1734 to 1830.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Good evening, everyone. Bonsoir, tout le monde. My name is France Gélinas, and I will be your Chair for tonight's session. I thank you for coming to Queen's Park at these funny hours of business, but I thank you nevertheless. We are about to resume the deputations on Bill 10, regarding child care in early years.

ANDREW FLECK CHILD CARE SERVICES

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): The first group to come this morning—and I understand that they are in the room. So I would call—you'll have to excuse me if your name sounds a little a bit French—Kim

Hiscott, Neeka Barnes and Cheryl Nolan, the executive director, manager of home child care and supervisor for home child care at Andrew Fleck Child Care Services.

Si vous aimeriez vous exprimer en français, il y a de l'interprétation simultanée. Vous êtes certainement les bienvenues de le faire. Lorsque vous vous exprimez en français, c'est traduit vers l'anglais, et vice versa.

Good evening, ladies. You will have five minutes to present. Once you finish your five minutes—about four and a half minutes into it, I will say “30 seconds left.” That’s to let you know that there are only 30 seconds. Then it will go on rotation for three minutes with representatives from all three caucuses.

Are you ready to start?

Ms. Kim Hiscott: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Go ahead.

Ms. Kim Hiscott: Good evening. My name is Kim Hiscott. I am the executive director of Andrew Fleck Child Care Services. I thank you for allowing me to present our thoughts on Bill 10.

Andrew Fleck Child Care Services is a large multi-service, non-profit organization located in Ottawa. We have been providing direct services and support for children and families for over 100 years and our licensed home child care program was established in 1969.

I'd like to introduce you to my colleagues: Neeka Barnes, manager of home child care, and Cheryl Nolan, supervisor of home child care.

Our presentation this evening is dedicated to the memory of Jérémie Audette. In 2010, Jérémie drowned in a backyard pool while in the care of an independent provider in Orleans.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Turn the mike up.

Ms. Kim Hiscott: Sorry? Turn the mike down?

Interjections.

Ms. Kim Hiscott: Okay. Does that count as my time? Did I get a pause?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Yes, unfortunately. We could still hear you, but not very well.

Ms. Kim Hiscott: Okay. There were several caregivers and 31 children all visiting at one house and Jérémie's parents did not know he was going on a field trip that day.

While I believe that all care provided outside a child's home for remuneration should be within a licensed system, I wish to acknowledge that Bill 10 is an important piece of legislation that will increase the safety and quality of care. It is a starting point for building a comprehensive, licensed, non-profit system of early learning and care for all of Ontario's children.

In partnership with parents, our licensed home child care program provides consistent monitoring, support and resources for self-employed providers. We have set expectations developed to ensure our agency's compliance with the current Day Nurseries Act. Our consultants, experienced early child educators, visit the providers monthly, sometimes planned but often for unannounced visits to review standards and offer guidance. We also complete comprehensive quarterly safety checks.

The licensed home agency structure has proven to be able to provide effective monitoring, support, coaching, mentoring and training for the self-employed provider. The licensed agency structure currently exists throughout Ontario and can be efficiently expanded.

It has always concerned and confused us that ratios and age restrictions for independent providers are less strict than for those affiliated with a licensed agency. Providers have been motivated away from the agency model by the lure of increased earning potential at the expense of the safety of children.

We have heard from others today that the proposed legislative changes will impact their ability to be financially viable and increase costs to parents. While the cost of delivery and providing care is an important conversation, and one we need to have, this legislation is about the safety and quality of care being provided. At this time, this needs to be our focus.

But you should be aware that 38% of the self-employed providers affiliated with our agency earned between \$30,000 and \$40,000 last year, and 7% earned over \$40,000. Remember, when affiliated with an agency, the self-employed provider chooses which families they work with and the hours in which they want to provide care.

Our application process for potential home child care providers is appropriately comprehensive. It includes an interview where we assess why the individual is interested in providing care, and their skills and experience. After completing our due diligence, including a home inspection, police record checks and references, we determine which individuals we wish to affiliate with: those that we are confident will be able to provide safe, quality care. What is worrisome is that others, having not passed our screening process, are still able to provide care on their own.

Once opened, then parents, with the support of the agency, interview and choose which provider they feel will be most suitable for their own children. In some communities around Ottawa, the prevalence of independent providers not affiliated with an agency is so high that parents do not actually have choice. The standard of care being offered is set by the independent providers, and this confuses parents. They do not know what licensed, agency-supported home child care looks like; they have no comparison.

Research has demonstrated that parents often rate the quality of their child care higher than it actually is. This makes sense: Parents want to trust and believe in the choice they have made, making it very hard for them to be objective.

We are confident that the new legislation will increase access to home child care offered by providers choosing to affiliate within a licensed agency. This will be positive for children, parents and providers. It will increase safety and quality.

At our agency we have taken some important steps to motivate independent providers to affiliate with the licensed system. We have held focus groups and have

implemented the option for providers to set their own rates as part of their contract for service. We are also investigating how providers can maintain responsibility for specific components of their home business that they have expressed to us are important to them, allowing for independence. These would be the components that do not impact—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Kim Hiscott:—safety, quality or our role as a licensed agency.

Just last week we posted a survey on our website, and so far we've received 23 responses. Only four independent providers have indicated that they would not be interested in affiliating with a licensed home child care agency under a fee-for-service model.

I remember Jérémie's dad sharing with us that he felt they treated their provider like a princess. Even when they had questions, they were hesitant to raise them out of fear that she would choose to not provide care, and they knew their options were limited.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. It goes to Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much. Thank you for coming out on a Monday night in November weather to make a presentation at this committee. It's a very important piece of legislation, as you're aware.

One of the things I wanted to ask you is that because the association of childhood educators—if we move towards a system where we bring in independent child care providers—because we're hearing from a lot of those folks that they have no problem with licensing, oversight and registry. We've heard that over and over again, and as a critic I've been working with a number of them.

Do you have suggestions for—not all of them have their diplomas etc. We had one girl here today. She has been in the business for 35 years and I'm not sure she has actually got a licence or any kind of background with a diploma. But have you got any ideas on how we could include everyone and yet at the same time phase in or bring in some kind of a diploma or a program that would allow everyone to be on the same page?

Ms. Kim Hiscott: First I need to be clear that a majority of our providers that are affiliated with our agency do not have their early childhood education diploma. We have providers that have also been providing care with us for 35 years—many, many providers, actually, that are long-standing providers.

Our agency provides regular training that the providers find very supportive and helpful. Some of that training is professional development outside the home on the weekends or evenings, but there's also a lot of training that happens in their home with the consultant who comes to visit. There's monitoring, support and resources directly in their homes.

We also have some providers, for sure, that are early childhood educators and we have some that are completing their training while they're having their self-

employed business. It doesn't mean that every provider needs to have their early child education diploma, but every provider does need to be monitored and supported by a licensed agency.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Can I ask you this: Could you believe in a system like some kind of a registry?

Ms. Kim Hiscott: No, I do not, because a registry is going to give parents very false hope. What the licensed agency does is prevent risk, so, by the consultants who are following very strict regulations as a licensed agency—they're going into homes and they're providing regular support and monitoring.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Kim Hiscott: A registry says that a provider is registered, but there's no ongoing third-party support. It opens up too much risk that provides a false sense of security to parents.

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Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

We move on to the NDP: Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for coming here this evening. The first question I have is about the potential for two licensed providers to have up to 12 children in a home. I'm concerned about that ratio. I think that's a lot of children in one spot. Do you support this, and if you do, can you give me a rationale?

Ms. Kim Hiscott: I have limited support for this. We do believe that two providers can be reasonably supportive of 12 children in very specific situations. First of all, partially for visits, so they might get together on occasion, with some very set expectations that are supported by the agency. So they'll have their own little play group because maybe it makes more sense for them to do that during the winter rather than travel to an outside play group. But it's not for all day; it's for a specific period of time.

In other situations, we have considered maybe 12 children and two providers, only under the agency model, for sure; so only within the licensed agency model, and only when the licensed agency has been able to demonstrate, based on the size of the home, the qualifications of the providers—one would definitely need to be a childhood educator—could it work. But what we would want is the agency to have the authority to make some very clear distinctions on who and why and when the two model would work. Because we recognize that in some communities across Ontario, particularly in rural communities, that might be the most effective support of child care, but in other communities, it would not be the most effective support.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Going to six children to one caregiver: I have talked to a number of child care workers in my riding who work in centres now, and they think that one adult to five children is tough. One to six seems to really press the envelope. What's your position on that ratio?

Ms. Kim Hiscott: I'm glad you asked me that question, because part of what I didn't get to say earlier is that our agency is urging that this legislation be amended so that the three-under-three regulation is retained, so three children under the age of three would be a very appropriate, effective addition to this piece of legislation.

The six children, again, under the agency model only, will work in some situations.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thirty seconds left.

Ms. Kim Hiscott: We want an opportunity to contribute to the regulations that are pending. So the six children would only happen in situations where we could deem, as an agency, that it would be very effective and safe.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. I heard you mention the fee-for-service model. Can you just enlarge on that?

Ms. Kim Hiscott: Sure. We've had a number of independent providers say to us that they want to be able to set their own rates, collect their own fees from parents and manage those parts of their self-employment business. Those are not pieces that are embedded in legislation.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): I'm sorry.

Mrs. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much for your submission. I'm very interested in the fact that you were a founding member of the Child Care Providers Resource Network and that that organization is not responsible for monitoring homes but purely there to offer information to business owners. I think that's an important distinction.

You've probably been in the room long enough and heard enough of the discussion—that there's a fair bit of discussion back and forth as to regulated versus unregulated or licensed versus unlicensed numbers being bandied about, so it's interesting, because I think that sometimes when numbers have come from organizations such as this, they're not necessarily accurate.

I just wanted to know about the numbers. I know we've been talking about two children under two years old and three under three. I know you've just mentioned it, but could you elaborate a little bit more? Because there is a fair bit of consternation among unlicensed providers who feel they'll lose their daycare spots and not be able to stay in business. I really want to know your take on what that means to child safety in the home.

Ms. Kim Hiscott: I think it's really important to acknowledge that in the licensed agency system, those rules have been in effect for as long as I've been an early childhood educator. So our providers are already earning a very viable living wage—I'm not going to say great, because we also know that early childhood educators and people who provide care for our youngest children are underpaid, but they are earning a reasonable income. They're already following those rules, and they're already following the rule where their own children count in the number of children they can care for. So the fact that somebody can do this outside of the licensed system without monitoring, without support, without obligatory

training, without other guidance, is just illogical, and it's the fastest way that our province can make a big difference for the safety and quality of children. Expanding the licensed home child care agency model approach is also the fastest way.

We've heard lots of conversations and comments tonight about only six more advisers to manage complaints. We will only need six more if you use the agency structure because the agency holds the responsibility for monitoring those providers. We won't see a big loss of care for children because there will be an opportunity for those providers to continue to be effective and to provide care, but under the licensed structure.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Okay. A little bit more on that when it comes to, again, the organization: Do you think that there's a role for maybe a co-op kind of set-up for more of those home providers that are in smaller rural areas?

Ms. Kim Hiscott: I guess I do not understand why we would invest any time in creating another structure when there already is a licensed agency structure in Ontario.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thank you very much for presenting, ladies.

THE LEARNING ENRICHMENT FOUNDATION

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): I would ask Mr. Peter Frampton, the executive director of the Learning Enrichment Foundation, to please come up. Mr. Frampton, you have five minutes to present. Are you ready?

Mr. Peter Frampton: I am.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Go ahead.

Mr. Peter Frampton: Thank you for the opportunity.

A lot has changed since 1938. Child care as we know it is, in fact, only about 35 years old. It was in the early 1980s that it finally grew to be something that parents could count on. Over that period, it has woven together desperate strands of funding to, beyond all odds, become a cornerstone with society, a cornerstone with remarkable economic impact, a cornerstone with beyond-remarkable child development impacts. From those two facts come incredible community impacts.

My message today is very simple: Let's get on with it. The proposed legislation is long overdue, remarkably complicated as it is, because it weaves together so much. But the time has come, and to delay based on fears of unlicensed providers is to ignore the facts. The devil is in the detail. The legislation is sound and needed. Together we can work through the devilish details, through the regulations, and that will take time. You certainly have our commitment to work through those regulations over the next little while, as you do the entire sector. From my perspective, there is very little reason to delay.

I work for the Learning Enrichment Foundation. For the past 35 years, we have focused our work on the needs of this province's second-poorest riding, York South-Weston, in the heart of the city. In doing so, people from

across the GTA come to us for support. Some 35 years ago, child care in schools was our mantra. Schools are the centre of communities. In our local high schools, we ensured there was infant and toddler care so that single moms could continue their education.

Our operation, over the years, has grown. Now with 30 locations and over 50 programs serving about 1,500 children and families, we continue to expand. We expand because we see the benefit; because we welcome the regulations—they underscore quality; because the most effective way to enable a family to participate in society is child care; and because it is the best way to prepare children for school.

Unlicensed care in poor communities—and I'm not speaking across the board here. Let's just say it doesn't follow best practice as a rule. The proposed legislation reserves the right to use "child care" for only licensed care, and this is appropriate. How else is a parent to understand the difference? Who amongst us would be able to tell the signs of quality care, be able to interpret program plans and see that they were indeed being implemented, be able to judge interactions and see if they were indeed reinforcing learning and development? When you're living in poverty and struggling to survive, labels matter. You rely upon them and you trust them. With this legislation, child care can be trusted.

It may not have occurred to many of you, although I think I've heard it already today, but child care is actually hardwired for there to be little or no accountability. A parent who, maybe out of desperation, has chosen care that might not be up to par cannot admit that to themselves. None of us could, and none of us should be expected to. The accountability must come from legislation and regulation.

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In the same vein, a neighbour who offers care in their home, when approached by another neighbour to care for just one more child, with all the good intentions—it's hard for them to say no. This legislation ensures that that wonderful neighbour does not overstretch themselves.

There is a lot of work to do. There are a number of details to be worked through. I echo many of the recommendations of the QELN, the Quality Early Learning Network, but for now, I'd just like to say that I hope this moves forward and that many of these details can be worked out over time. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): We will start with Mr. Tabuns from the NDP.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Chair. Mr. Frampton, thanks for being here. First of all, talking about ratios—and I raised this with the previous presenters—I'm concerned about a rule that would allow two care providers to have 12 children in their centre at any one time. Do you have a position on that ratio?

Mr. Peter Frampton: Our experience is with licensed care and not home care. I think the changes that are being proposed for three under three, two under two, one under one go a long way. I know enough that there may be some exceptions in rural areas that were spoken to earlier today, but I would share that concern.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Six children to one provider: Do you have concern with that change in ratio?

Mr. Peter Frampton: With the three under three, two under two and one under one, then that could work, but five to one is fine, too.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. The registry idea, because we've been getting pretty strong representation on that: Would you enlarge on your comments about that?

Mr. Peter Frampton: I would defer to the speakers before me. I think a registry without oversight and without supports is not the way to go. The interactions required to ensure ongoing quality to ongoing training are absolutely essential, and the registry runs the risk of giving that sort of false sense of security.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I don't have any further questions. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Very good. The Liberals—Mr. Crack? Oh, no, Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thanks for the presentation. You support that that registry doesn't work to the benefit of children. It's a sense of false hope. As you've said, apparently it's registered, but they don't know the nature of the service being provided. Could you elaborate on that a bit for me?

Mr. Peter Frampton: The way the legislation stands right now, child care would be protected for the use of licensed care. That licensed care in group settings has a number of regulations that go with it that help to ensure quality, and those are regulations that we embrace and work with. In each and every case, there are additional supports that can and should be offered and ensure that quality is ongoing.

Mr. Granville Anderson: You also made a very valid point about—throughout the course of this afternoon we heard presenters saying parents should know best. Even members of the opposition concur with that. Yes, parents should know best in certain circumstances, but, say, a 17-year-old mother who's desperate to find babysitting—I'm not sure she's going to be diligent in finding the best care possible. Even somebody who has to return to work within a certain time frame is going to take the closest available babysitting service that's available. Would you concur with that assessment?

Mr. Peter Frampton: I think we should be talking about basic safety and we should be talking about quality.

Mr. Granville Anderson: That's right. That's a good point.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much. I am a big fan of the other Peter Frampton, by the way, so I love your name.

Mr. Peter Frampton: I'm always a bit of a disappointment when I show up.

Mr. Grant Crack: I'm so happy to meet you. You said the legislation is sound and needed, and then you said we've got to work through the regulations. Can you just elaborate on what you'd like to see in the regulations that you haven't mentioned?

Mr. Peter Frampton: I think a lot of what I've heard are things that we can work out over time. With any change, there are issues. As a sector, we have gone through massive change with the introduction of all-day kindergarten, and that is still ongoing.

We can work through the regulatory process to deal with a lot of the nitty-gritty that's coming up today, so my concern would be that this is delayed, and that we do not have that opportunity to just get on with it, quite frankly.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Grant Crack: You mentioned the nitty-gritty. Are there any specifics that you could talk about other than the three/three, two/two?

Mr. Peter Frampton: I think that, as one looks at the needs of different communities and the needs of rural communities, one thing that we know for sure is that there's always an exception to the rule. How do we build in that kind of flexibility that ensures quality—not just safety, but quality—and works within a community context?

Mr. Grant Crack: Okay; thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Frampton. I would now ask Mr. James Brand, the principal of Maria Montessori—

Interjections.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Oh, I forgot about the PCs. Come back, Mr. Frampton. Come back.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: We're going to talk about your round tables.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Sorry, Mr. Dunlop. My mistake.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to mention that you mentioned that the devil is in the details, that we have to get to the nitty-gritty, that it needs flexibility and that there are exceptions to every rule. I think that that's what we're all here about. We're all here about where the exceptions to the rule are. Once this rule is put into law, there are no exceptions, and we can't say that the devil is in the details, because then it's put into law and we can't deal with the details.

That's why we want to go around the province and we want to hear from the people who will be impacted, who are the parents and the caregivers. I wish that the kids could speak up and talk about what a great time they're having in their local neighbourhood daycares, where they're meeting kids from their own neighbourhoods, because a lot of times the parents that I used to hear from were upset because their kids had to be bused to another school, and their number-one complaint is that they won't have friends in the community. That's why I like community child care whenever it's possible.

What I wanted to ask you is that there seems to be this big rush to put this through. What I'm wondering about is: Do you feel that part of this rush could possibly be that all-day kindergarten, because it has moved so many of the older—that was the bread and butter of a lot of the daycare centres; because those children were taken into

all-day kindergarten, the daycare centres, the large stakeholders for child care in the province, are losing out on this revenue, there is some kind of pressure on the government to somehow move kids from the smaller centres into these large centres?

Mr. Peter Frampton: I would actually disagree with that. Our focus has always been zero to four. Our centres are community-based; even though we're a larger organization, they're very much a part of the fabric of individual neighbourhoods.

I agree with you completely that those local relationships are absolutely critical, and I would argue that the new legislation gives us a framework to start talking about how to invest, how to make that more possible and how to raise quality as we're doing so, so I think there's a balance—

Mrs. Gila Martow: And do you think that six inspectors is sufficient to address the safety concerns, which is what we're hearing? It's being touted in all this new legislation for safety concerns: six inspectors. There are more than six inspectors for a lot of the trades in some of the ridings. Maybe the focus should be on training and a registry. How do you feel about a registry?

Mr. Peter Frampton: I would hope that six inspectors are enough. If not, they can be added to later down the road. We can add to professional development. We can add to having more staff through the apprenticeship program become ECEs. There's an enormous amount that can be done.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thank you. Now you are free to go. I'm sorry about the false start there.

MARIA MONTESSORI SCHOOL

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): I would like to call James Brand, the principal of Maria Montessori School. Mr. Brand, you will have five minutes to do your presentation; then we will be on rotation, starting with the Liberals. Are you ready?

Mr. James Brand: Thank you. Yes.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Please start.

Mr. James Brand: Good evening. I'd like to first commend the government on bringing forward this important legislation, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to address it. My name is James Brand. I'm a Montessori teacher and the principal of Maria Montessori School in Toronto. I'm appearing before you to urge revisions to Bill 10 and to ask that you ensure that it is written in such a way as to reflect and preserve the holistic view of child development inherent in a Montessori approach to education.

Maria Montessori School is a private school that was founded in 1975 and for more than 40 years has operated at the same location in Leaside, north Toronto.

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Our school currently has an enrolment of about 115 children aged from 18 months to 12 years of age. We

employ a full-time staff of 18. As you can see, we're not a large school, but I believe, as do our parents—from whom you have heard earlier today—we're an exceptional one. We have been accredited by the Association Montessori Internationale since the early 1980s.

I have been the principal at Maria Montessori School for the past 28 years. In addition to my work with the school, I have also worked on behalf of a number of Montessori organizations. I was a founding member and chair of the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators, CCMA, an organization established to provide business support for Montessori administrators and school owners. During part of my tenure with this organization, I also acted as liaison to the Canadian Association of Montessori Teachers, I have served on the board of the Montessori Society of Canada, and I'm currently on the board of directors of the Association Montessori Internationale Canada.

Maria Montessori School is an excellent school. However, excellence in education can take many forms. For this reason, in Canada, as in many other countries, parents have the opportunity and the right to choose alternate education methodologies for their children.

So why do parents choose to pay for their children to attend our school? There are certainly more prestigious schools around. We don't even have uniforms. There are less costly alternatives, many of them Montessori, and there is an infinite number of more convenient solutions if parents are simply seeking child care. Our program operates on the same academic calendar as most other private schools in Toronto.

Parents come to our school based on educated choice and knowledge. They choose Montessori, specifically AMI-accredited Montessori, for their child. Our school is one of only two schools in Ontario currently accredited by AMI. If Bill 10 is enacted in its current form, we will be forced to adopt practices that will not simply be an inconvenience, but essentially remove Montessori as an educational choice for the families of Ontario.

As a parent and educator, I applaud and welcome the Ontario government's resolve to ensure that children in Ontario have access to safe and effective programs. We are not trying to avoid regulation. On the contrary, over the years, we have subjected ourselves voluntarily to regulation of the highest standards. We do, however, know that to be effective, regulation—government or otherwise—must be judicious, relevant and appropriate, overseen by those with the knowledge, training and experience to do so effectively.

We ask that the government recognize that AMI Montessori schools are not daycares. AMI teachers are educated to the same standard as traditional teachers, requiring a university degree in addition to the specialized Montessori training in child development. We further ask that AMI accreditation be formally recognized within the bill.

A search of the term "Montessori" renders various results. However, the one constant is that the methodology is defined as an educational approach. Montessori

programs worldwide are referred to as schools, not daycares or nurseries. Why? Because the world recognizes that, agree with the methodology or not, good Montessori is not child care but a legitimate and viable educational alternative with a scientifically based pedagogy that is validated by leading contemporary research.

Maria Montessori held the belief, one shared by the Ontario government, that one of the most significant periods of human education takes place between the ages of zero to seven. Not only did she believe this fact—one that has since been scientifically supported by research the world over—she devised a practical pedagogy that has stood the global test of time, place and culture. Montessori is modern education.

I know by the government's own account of their early education program that we have much common ground. I urge them to craft this bill in such a way as to take advantage of what Montessori has to offer and be careful not to inadvertently impede or dismantle it. Unrevised, this legislation will—albeit inadvertently—have negative consequences for Montessori in Ontario.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. We'll start with Mrs. Mangat. Go ahead.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Mr. Brand, for your presentation. In your presentation, you said that as a parent and educator, you applaud this proposed legislation so that children in Ontario have access to safe and effective programs.

My question is that ever since 1993, when a number of private schools, including Montessori schools, were grandfathered and allowed to continue operating without meeting many of the requirements of the Day Nurseries Act—how do you think the safety concerns of parents have changed in the past 20 years? Can you elaborate on this, please?

Mr. James Brand: I can't speak on behalf of all parents; I can speak on behalf of the way we're structured right now. You're referring to the grandfathered schools? We're certainly not, and I'm not, advocating for no regulation. I think we already adhere to local health, safety, fire code, specific first aid training, background checks; we already adhere to that. As far as health and safety, I'm afraid I can't really speak to other programs that exist.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Okay. In your presentation, you spoke about the language in that act—that it should be written in such a way to reflect and preserve the holistic view of child development. Can you elaborate on that?

Mr. James Brand: Yes. I think I'm not the first person to speak to this committee on Montessori today. They've covered some of the main pillars of Montessori. The issue that really concerns me is that if it's being regulated, it needs to be regulated by people who know the intricacies of Montessori. Simply taking care of those main pillars that are being talked about a bit today really doesn't take care of the whole issue.

The best way I could describe it is if maybe you consider Montessori to be a tapestry. Every part plays an important role. It's why we need regulation from know-

ledgeable bodies, such as AMI. Pulling at any thread of that tapestry starts to destabilize the whole thing.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thirty seconds.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Mr. Crack.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you for coming. Very quickly: You're also indicating that if Bill 10 is enacted in its current form, you will be forced to adopt policies that will not simply be an inconvenience. What policies? Can you enlighten as to what policies—

Mr. James Brand: Probably one of the most obvious for us is an arbitrary age restriction at a chronological age. Montessori, fundamentally, is an approach to child development—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thank you. Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much for being here and thank you for being a principal for 28 years. You've got to get an award for that.

Mr. James Brand: I can honestly say it's been my pleasure.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you. I want to know this: If Bill 10 is not amended, what will happen to the Montessori school system in the province of Ontario?

Mr. James Brand: For our school to be able to follow regulation and come under the regulation as far as we know it right now, because we don't know the whole thing, we would have to do things that would fundamentally affect our programming—something like mixed age groups, if we had to look at age four as being the point where we could start our classrooms. That fundamentally affects our view of the developmental cycle.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I can say this: In my years around Ontario and the provincial Legislature, I've never had a negative thing said about a Montessori school. I would hope that we get it right here with this bill. If you are prepared to hand us the amendments you'd like to see, I can tell you that the PC caucus will be happy to present them at the committee in clause-by-clause.

Mr. James Brand: Certainly.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Yes, I'd just like to comment and to make it absolutely clear that there are two-year-olds who are more mature and more advanced than some three-year-olds; they may change a year or two later on. I think that's a bit about what the philosophy here has to be today, to address the fact that not all two-year-olds and not all three-year-olds behave the same as each other. I think it's up to the parents, the caregivers and the schools, like Montessori, to assess the children and decide what is the best fit for the child. I think that's why we're all here: We're all concerned.

Thank you for speaking to us today.

Mr. James Brand: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Brand, thanks for coming this evening and making the presentation. It's very clear that

Montessori educators and Montessori parents are profoundly attached to the model that's been developed over the decades. Certainly parents who speak about it speak about it with great happiness as to how their children have been educated.

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What I've asked earlier presenters to do, and I know that they will get back to me, is what I'd like to ask you. I haven't seen in this bill where—something that was referred to earlier—a three-hour continuous cycle of teaching would be interrupted by this bill, or where it would prevent age groups from mixing. If you can tell me where in the bill those problems are, it would help me.

Mr. James Brand: You would like me to get back to you on those?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I would appreciate that.

Mr. James Brand: Yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Until I can see that, it's very hard for me to be concrete about exactly what it is that causes problems. When the bill presents you with difficulties in pulling together the whole system, I need to know exactly, concretely, what the change would be. Would you then have to segregate children under four from the children who are age four? Would you have to change the whole schedule with the way the day runs? I think we all need more concrete identification of the problematic elements.

Mr. James Brand: Absolutely.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: With that, I have no further questions, Chair.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thank you. You are excused, Mr. Brand.

Mr. James Brand: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thank you for coming.

SCHOOLHOUSE PLAYCARE CENTRES OF DURHAM

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): I would now ask Ms. Denise Gilbert, the executive director, and Chris Turpin, a director from the board of directors, of Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham—you know that you have five minutes to present, and the questions will start with a representative from the PCs. Are you ready?

Ms. Denise Gilbert: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Go ahead.

Ms. Denise Gilbert: Good evening. My name is Denise Gilbert and I am here today with Chris Turpin. I am the executive director of Schoolhouse Playcare Centres and Chris is a parent and a director on our board of directors. Thank you for this opportunity to present our feedback on Bill 10. In our written report, it does provide you with some background information on our organization and the children and families we serve, which I will not get into right now.

First, we would like to preface our statements by saying that Schoolhouse Playcare Centres supports the

government's vision of modernizing the Day Nurseries Act, and we recognize the initiatives that have taken place with respect to early learning. The Day Nurseries Act is long overdue for revisions, and we applaud the government for taking the initiative to address this issue. We feel strongly about the safety and security of all children, and we recognize the government's effort to increase accountability in this area.

Although we support the overall vision and the initiatives that have been taken, we believe that the following three areas need additional consideration. One is with regard to regulated care. In order to truly ensure the quality and accountability of service delivery and the safety of children, and as we move forward in improving early learning and child care services, we believe that child care services, regardless of who delivers those services, need to be regulated.

Schoolhouse Playcare Centres currently offers licensed centre-based child care for children from zero to 12, and would be willing to consider expansion to licensed home care as a means of better meeting the needs of our communities. In saying that, we question why unregulated services are acceptable and why all children are not provided with the same protection when it comes to safety and program quality.

Research demonstrates that a child's learning environment in the first five years of life is critical to future learning success and well-being, and yet unregulated care continues to be supported within the existing system. In a province and society where regulations are required for everything from education to pet care, why does unregulated child care still exist, and what does that say about the value that we place on our most vulnerable citizens?

The second area that we would like to discuss are the exemptions, and I refer to schedule 1, subsection 4(1)7. We believe that allowing for an exemption of recreation programs will compromise the accountability of school-age care. Although we recognize that there is a place for recreation within our system, to exempt this group and enable them to deliver child care services without calling it child care is confusing to families, it undermines the existing system, and it foregoes the need for service planning.

The ministry's goal has been to provide clarification to families around the difference between licensed and unlicensed care, and yet, this exemption acts in contradiction to this goal. Parents, families and the public need to be well-informed about what constitutes licensed care, and this exemption will serve only to confuse the issue.

Based on the current system, recreation programs and child care programs are not required to meet the same criteria and guidelines when it comes to safety, quality, staff qualifications, ratios and program delivery. As such, we are not equal when it comes to funding or service delivery. To create this exemption for recreation programs will reinforce an uneven playing field within the same system, and will compromise the financial viability of the licensed child care sector that has already taken a

significant hit with the recent transformation of our system as it relates to full-day kindergarten.

The child care sector is in a state of transition and is still trying to recover from the recent changes. To implement this exemption will create one more threat that will compromise the ongoing sustainability of a sector that is in recovery. Many organizations like ours are financially dependent on their FDK and school-age care components while their early years programs have time to grow and become more self-sufficient.

Every community has different needs and, therefore, requires a range of services to support families and children. As such, there needs to be extensive thought put into proper service planning that will adequately address those needs. The exemption clause in Bill 10 will not facilitate that service planning, but will more likely perpetuate the current flaw in our system in that programs will be established based more on the organization's growth than in response to community needs.

There is also no clarity provided on what constitutes a recreation program. Although we appreciate that this exemption clause will be subject to regulations, more time and consideration needs to be given to this area in order to ensure the safety of our children and the quality of program delivery.

The third area is with respect to the amendment of the Education Act, schedule 4, section 259.1. We believe that allowing school boards to offer before- and after-school programs—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Denise Gilbert: —for children from ages 6 to 12 through the use of a third party that is not a licensed child care provider will have negative impacts on children's safety and the stability of the child care sector.

Although we welcome the requirement for all boards to offer before- and after-school programs, we believe that an integrated service approach fits better within the government's vision as stated in the Ontario early years framework.

We have a few recommendations which are included in the written reports. I also wanted to add that we are affiliated with the Quality Early Learning Network sector and support theirs.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): The questions start with Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to really thank you for your very thorough presentation, and I think most people were able to sort of read between the lines that you can have government legislation, but as soon as you start to have exemptions, and as soon as you start to make changes, there are consequences. I think that this rush to put through this legislation without looking at what those consequences are—which is that all of a sudden we're going to have either some child care spaces that are going to be lost and the parents are going to be left looking for spaces, or there are going to be some child care providers who are going to lose out to other types of programming because of exemptions. That's certainly not what I want to see, and that's not what my party wants to see.

What I would say to you is, do you feel that there are certain groups that are given special consideration, in terms of this government that's sitting across from me, in terms of their business model versus other business models? It's not necessarily what's in the best interests of children, families, employers and not making people have to drive further to find daycare for their children.

Ms. Denise Gilbert: I don't know that I would agree that that's currently the situation. I think that the intentions of the bill are good, but I believe that there needs to be more consideration put into those exemptions and what that means, and what level of criteria and guidelines need to be established to make that even and good for children and families.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Can you suggest to me, because I'm trying to wrack my brain, why there should a different set of rules for child care in a school setting that is before and after, say, all-day kindergarten—why they should be allowed to follow a different set of rules? Have you asked for input, have you asked this government why there should be a different set of criteria?

Ms. Denise Gilbert: I think that's what we're trying to put forward, to look at that criteria, that it is in some ways consistent. Part of that is based on the current Day Nurseries Act, which creates some differences. I think the modernization of the act will eventually put those more even.

Mrs. Gila Martow: How many children are you caring for right now?

Ms. Denise Gilbert: We have an organization with 24 locations and about 1,675 children.

Mrs. Gila Martow: And if the legislation passed exactly the way it is right now, would you have to cut any spots, and how many would you have to cut?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Denise Gilbert: It would depend on how many of those recreation programs came in in the absence of some service planning, which I think is the key here.

Mrs. Gila Martow: But you would expect that you would have to cut some child care spots. It's possible.

Ms. Denise Gilbert: It could happen. It's possible.

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Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Chair, and thank you very much for being here this evening. You are the first people to talk really extensively about this section, about the shift away from the direction set out in the early years' best practices. I'm sure you've had discussions with the government about this. What have they said about this shift to you?

Ms. Denise Gilbert: I've not had direct discussion with the government on this, so this is my first opportunity to respond to this issue.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Currently, your organization and other before- and after-school organizations provide this coverage for children from grades 1 to 6. Who would be replacing you if this were to go through as written?

Ms. Denise Gilbert: There's the potential for boards of ed to be able to bring in recreation programs that are unlicensed. In some places, recreation is a valuable part of our system. Overall, recreation needs to be a part of it, but there needs to be further consideration in terms of where that fits and how the overall planning gets in place.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Although I know it would vary from grade to grade, let's say for grades 4 and 5, what would your before- and after-school care look like that you provide now?

Ms. Denise Gilbert: We currently have programs that take them right up to grade 5. They're 12 years of age. Our programs vary based on the developmental needs of the children. It is an emergent program. There is a pedagogical foundation for the work that is done in the centre and it's based on those children's interests, those children's needs, and their individual levels of development, including children who have special needs.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So what you run in the after-school programs and the before-school programs is not simply supervising children at play.

Ms. Denise Gilbert: No.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Can you give us more detail on what exactly is in those programs? I know you've set out a pretty broad range there, but if you can tell us some major elements.

Ms. Denise Gilbert: There are components for good nutrition in all of those programs in terms of snacks and food that they have. There are opportunities for the children to look at various areas, be it science, reading, outdoor play. There is physical activity involved in all of the components to those programs. It really is a broad range of services that are provided. It's not just a single—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Denise Gilbert: We don't just do yoga.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I believe you. Do you do home-work support as well?

Ms. Denise Gilbert: We do as much as we can with the children. That is not the primary focus, but we do encourage the centres to have an area where the kids can do that.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Thank you. I have no further questions.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Mrs. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much for your presentation. There's been a lot of discussion today, and you've heard some of it, regarding ages of children and what stages they're at, and Montessori schools looking for an exemption for their age-based program. A couple of the members opposite have been saying that a two-year-old might be behaving like a four-year-old etc., etc. Certainly the reality of our education system is that it is age-based. At the end of—you know, December 31st is the cut-off for the next particular grade in school, and this is part of what Bill 10 is trying to identify, I think, some

of the programs, what age and stage, what programming is available for those particular ages.

I do like some of your discussions regarding the choices that you have from zero to age 12, and I want to reiterate that Bill 10 isn't taking choice away from parents. There are still all of those choices available for parents with their young ones to decide that if their child needs a more regulated program, they can find that. If they want a home daycare, they can do that as well.

When it comes to looking at ages, I recognize that there will be a lot of further discussions regarding the older children, which we haven't really identified that much in this bill. But this government has been consulting. I was actually looking through several hundred submissions over on this table. We're still accepting submissions about Bill 10 and all the offshoots. So I like what you have to say.

That being said, do you have any comment regarding the two-under-two or three-under-three ratio that we're looking at in Bill 10?

Ms. Denise Gilbert: I would support the three under three. I believe that there is research that supports the numbers of young children in home care. We don't have any home care currently, but I do believe that it should not be any greater than that three under three.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you. I appreciate that. But I also wanted to reiterate—and this really hasn't come up a lot today—that I think a lot of parents and daycare providers feel that on January 1, Bill 10 will come into enactment and it'll be done. But there is a transition period over a period of months, if not into 2016, where things will be rolled out.

One of the things you were talking about was regulations and having it regulated. You may have heard the previous submission that was really talking about a false sense of security if we do have a registry—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Twenty seconds.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Beyond having somebody registered, what do you have to say about registered versus unregistered?

Ms. Denise Gilbert: I think registries are different than regulations. I think adhering to regulations and having centres visited, having to meet certain criteria: that's regulation. That's not necessarily a registry.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. I'm sorry that I had to cut you off. It's part of my ungrateful job. You did a great job, though.

LANARK COUNTY INDEPENDENT CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now ask if the people from the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario have arrived. Identify yourself if you're here.

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: I'm from the Lanark chapter.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Yes, the Lanark county chapter. Are you Sarah-Jane Laberge?

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Okay. Please come up. You will have five minutes to present, and then there will be three minutes' worth of questions from all three parties, starting with the NDP.

Are you ready to start? Ready?

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Yes, I am.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Go.

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: My name is Sarah-Jane Laberge, and I'm speaking on behalf of the Lanark County Independent Childcare Providers about our concerns regarding Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act.

The proposed changes for ICPs to include their own children in their quota of children under the age of six and to allow no more than two children under the age of two will cause a child care crisis of enormous proportions.

Rural Ontario has unique needs. People know each other. They know their neighbours, went to school together, go to the same church and attend the same playgroups. That's the real strength for rural Ontario. In many cases, communities are stronger. You can't just have a one-size-fits-all policy.

Currently in Lanark county, there are 3,090 children between the ages of zero and four. However, there are only 711 licensed child care spaces. Two hundred and fifteen of those are home-based care, however, only 63 are being used. Clearly, the licensed sector does not have the capacity to meet the needs of our community. Almost all of the spaces that are home-based are subsidized because full-fee parents refuse to pay agency prices.

Lanark county is fortunate to have an estimated 65 independent child care providers to compensate for the lack of licensed spaces. These dedicated women provide care for roughly 325 children.

With the proposed changes, Lanark county alone will lose, at best, 65 child care spaces and, at worst, over 130. Our community cannot afford to lose one.

If the Ministry of Education insists on including our own children in our numbers, then at the very least children 3.8 years and older who attend full-day kindergarten should not be counted in our numbers for the same reason that a six-year-old shouldn't: They will be in school all day.

Secondly, Bill 10 does not increase safety. Frankly, you can have as many rules as you like, but if you don't have the people to inspect and determine whether people are respecting those laws, then the bill is pointless.

Bill 10 should address individual licensing or registry of ICPs. We want to be licensed, and we embrace oversight. No individual home daycare provider can obtain a licence in Ontario. Those providers affiliated with an agency are working under their agency's licence, not their own.

Affiliated ICPs also incur a 20% loss of income. However, instituting a registry or licensing of all ICPs

would ensure that all child care settings meet universal standards of health, safety and quality of care. In addition to having current CPR, first aid and criminal record check, all child care settings would be subject to yearly and impromptu inspections, as well as having to adhere to the health departments' regulations. Licensing or a registry would allow for 100% government oversight, rather than relying on the public to report noncompliance, and here is one other very significant benefit: ICPs would be able to provide care for the thousands of children currently on subsidized waiting lists.

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The real issue is not the existing ratios, but the lack of oversight that allows unscrupulous people to put their profit margin over health, safety and quality of care. The promise that Bill 10 will ensure that illegal daycares will be shut down is an empty one. You can't shut down what you can't find.

It is extremely important that we actually accomplish the goal of this bill, which is to ensure that all Ontario families have access to healthy, safe, affordable, quality care throughout the province. As long as this government refuses to facilitate a registry or licencing system for ICPs, there will never be effective oversight.

In closing, I ask that you listen to the collective voices of the concerned independent childcare providers of Ontario, as well as rural Ontario as a whole, and the community we serve.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Very well. We start with Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Chair. Ms. Laberge, thank you for coming in this evening, and for speaking.

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: My pleasure.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I was talking to one of the earlier presenters from Ottawa, and apparently they're looking at a system whereby a child care agency would provide a fee-for-service to individual home providers; they wouldn't handle all their business affairs, but for a regular fee they would conduct inspections and monitor, so that people could say that they were being monitored. Is that something that independent child care providers would be open to?

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: To be frank, an agency is basically after—their bottom line is their profit margin. If they have a member of that agency inspecting, it is in their best interests to just kind of turn a blind eye to minor infractions, or ones that could eventually turn into bigger ones, for the sake of their profit margin.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: If they're operating on a non-profit basis, does that still apply?

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: I guess it would have to depend. I know that our local agency, CROW, is in it for the profit, honestly.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So you wouldn't see a fee-for-service relationship with an agency as one that would work for you? You would prefer to see government of Ontario staff inspecting? Is that correct?

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: In order to have it be objective, I think that's necessary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. The ratios—I'm a bit concerned. I'll tell you, just from my personal experience: My mom had three of us under the age of five, and I find it hard to imagine her taking in four or five more kids with the three of us running rampant around the house; no offence, Mom, if you're watching.

I'm worried that, if we don't have ratios and limits, you could be in a situation where you would have a mom with three kids under the age of five and five other kids—eight children. I can't see how that would work.

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: First—I'll make three statements.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Sure.

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: The claim is that two-under-two is for health and safety reasons, as well as in case of fire, or that it's better for brain development. However, the contradiction is that with a ratio of one-to-three infants in a child care setting, your argument regarding ratios, safety, brain development and fire hazards are negated due to that.

My reality is that, for the last 60-plus years, we have been operating with a very low incident rate. However, in the last six years we have had four deaths, three of which were deemed suspicious and are still under investigation, while the only one that was deemed accidental—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. I will ask Mr. Crack.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you, Ms. Laberge, for coming. You have indicated that Bill 10 does not increase safety, yet the Ombudsman has made a number of recommendations, and I know that this bill encompasses about 35 of those recommendations. Could you please explain to me why you would make such a claim, that it's not going to increase safety?

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Due to the fact that the system is still going to be a complaint-based system. It goes back to the statement I said during my address: If you don't know what exists, then how can you properly oversee them?

Mr. Grant Crack: You're aware, though, that there are about 66 program advisers out there—they can also be called inspectors. They currently inspect licensed care facilities—

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Again, it's on complaint-based.

Mr. Grant Crack: —and they also deal with the unlicensed as well—

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Which is complaint-based.

Mr. Grant Crack: —so we're saying that we're going to be adding another six—yes. I just want to reiterate that there is enforcement out there.

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: As I recall, it's only an additional six, which are currently unable to manage the licensed sector as is.

Mr. Grant Crack: All right. I don't know if any of my colleagues have any other questions.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Ms. McGarry? No. Mr. Anderson?

Mr. Grant Crack: Okay, we're good.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): We're good? We go to Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much. I just want to congratulate you, Sarah, on your presentation. I know you're nervous, and you read it quickly—

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Yes.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: —but I think you summed up everything perfectly. You summed up even with the questions from the government that it's only on complaint-based, and we know that the Ministry of Education was not responding to complaints on what happened in some of those deaths.

But the whole idea of licensing and/or registry, is it safe to say that the association you represent in Lanark county—I think you summed up the numbers very well, and I appreciate that—are the providers in favour of a registry and licensing?

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Yes. I was able to get my numbers because people are more than willing to admit that they are an independent child care provider, and they feel that they have absolutely nothing to hide. The ones who do not admit, unfortunately, are the ones that have an issue to hide, so our area is very much in favour.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: So it's safe to say that that's the position of the people in Lanark county?

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Yes.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: That's what we're hearing from ICPs across the province, and maybe some of my colleagues might want to add to that—Ms. MacLeod—but I don't see the problem here with licensing ICP and/or a registry or both, and let's get on with it. If that's not something that would pass as an amendment, I don't know what would be wrong with this committee.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think because it's not about—if I could jump in—it's not about licensing and it's not about registry. What I'm hearing today is that it's about numbers. It's about clients, it's about customers, and it's about who gets those customers. The attitude seems to be that the independent child care providers don't deserve to be taking care of our children. I feel the complete opposite. I like community-based child care where your kids are meeting kids from the neighbourhood, are walking over to the caregiver's house, not driving in the car for half an hour in bad weather like we saw this morning.

I salute you for coming down—I know it was hard for you to come down—and thanks for sharing your thoughts with us.

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: My pleasure.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Ms. MacLeod?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much. Sarah-Jane, I mentioned you in question period today because I think it's important that people recognize the sacrifice you made today to come to Queen's Park and have your say. You spent a lot of money on a train, a lot of money—

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Plane.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You took the plane, so you drove into Ottawa.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm just trying to make the point here that because we did not have province-wide hearings, Sarah-Jane and others had to travel a long way in order to come here and ensure that they had their say. She stood up for people from all of eastern Ontario, and I appreciate that. I wanted to say thank you for doing that, and I know there are people from as far away as Sudbury, Guelph, London, Barrie and elsewhere across this province who were crowd-funding for you so that you could be here today. I think that's a great statement for you.

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Thank you.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thanks for coming, Sarah-Jane. It was a pleasure to have you here.

Ms. Sarah-Jane Laberge: Did I use up the full nine minutes?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): You did. It goes by fast, eh? I'm always surprised how fast it goes. You did very well. Thank you.

I would ask if Holly Marsh is in the crowd. Is Holly Marsh here yet? I know we're running a little bit early, which very seldom happens in this place.

MONTESSORI QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would then ask Anne Laws, coordinator of the Montessori Quality Assurance, Association Montessori Internationale Consultation Group, to please come forward. Ms. Laws, you've been here for a little while; you've seen that you have five minutes to present. I will let you know when you have 30 seconds. Then we will go in rotation, and it starts with the Liberals. Ready?

Ms. Anne Laws: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Go.

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Ms. Anne Laws: Good evening. Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Anne Laws, and I'm the coordinator of Montessori Quality Assurance, which is the Canadian arm of the Association Montessori Internationale's worldwide quality assurance program. I hold a master of education degree, a teaching diploma from the Association Montessori Internationale, and I am an auxiliary teacher trainer and trained consultant for the AMI, or Association Montessori Internationale. I am speaking today on behalf of the international standards of the AMI and the Montessori schools in Ontario participating in Montessori Quality Assurance.

Montessori Quality Assurance provides objective quality control to Montessori schools in Ontario, and across Canada, adhering to the international standards of the AMI. These standards have been determined by the scientific pedagogical committee of the AMI and are deemed to be essential characteristics of authentic Montessori programs. Schools participating in Montessori Quality Assurance are consulted by independent, highly trained consultants. These consultants are either Montes-

sori teacher trainers or are trained consultants, both of whom have gone through additional rigorous training for their roles.

As you have heard earlier today, the AMI was founded in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori and is highly regarded as a leading, worldwide authority on Montessori education. Montessori Quality Assurance serves parents seeking high-quality, authentic Montessori programs. Our office has received emails and phone calls from parents from the United States of America, from South America and from Europe who are seeking these recognized standards of Montessori education. Much like the International Baccalaureate program, the international standards of the AMI give parents consistency of program as they move between countries around the world or within the provinces of Canada.

Several neuroscientists have researched the benefits of high-quality Montessori education. Dr. Adele Diamond from the University of British Columbia, Dr. Steve Hughes, pediatric neuropsychologist, and Dr. Angeline Lillard, author of a book entitled *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*, all cite benefits such as higher executive brain functions, better outcomes from peer teaching, greater creative expression, greater academic achievement, greater self-control, all as outcomes of Montessori education. It is interesting to note that when they talk about these benefits, they qualify their remarks with the fact that these outcomes are observed in schools adhering to the international standards of the AMI.

Montessori Quality Assurance serves children by ensuring that its schools offer the complete holistic developmental program outlined by Dr. Maria Montessori, a program that meets the physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs of the developing child. When Dr. Montessori observed children 100 years ago, she identified then that education begins at birth. It's now widely accepted that the early years of a child's life will impact his overall development and his future. The educational environments she designed begin in the early years and build through adolescence. Montessori schools offer academic, educational programs and do not belong in a category with child care centres or nursery schools. The age groupings are identified in the document you will find in your background information, the attached document entitled "Essential characteristics of Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) environments in support of the full development of the human being."

Mixed age groups, then, are one of the essential characteristics of AMI environments. The other essential characteristics relate to group sizes, highly qualified Montessori teachers, the complete range of Montessori materials, the full-time program and the defined uninterrupted work cycle. More detail regarding these key principles can also be found in background documentation submitted to this committee.

The government of Ontario has strived to ensure the safety and well-being of young children by introducing Bill 10. Our concern lies in schedule 1, part I, purposes

and interpretation, sections 6 and 8 as defined. The concern exists around the likelihood that, as an unintended consequence of this bill, the implementation of high-quality Montessori programs will be impeded.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Anne Laws: In order to preserve and protect these high-quality programs, we urge this committee to provide clarity on these exemptions and ask that AMI recognition offered to Montessori schools through Montessori Quality Assurance in Canada be recognized in the language of this bill. This will respect and preserve the principles of the Montessori pedagogy and enable the government to provide access to safe and effective programs for children in Ontario.

Thank you very much for your attention.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Five minutes exactly to the second. That was impressive.

We start with the Liberals. Mrs. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much. We've had several that are bang on today. This is a day you buy a lottery ticket when you get to that.

Ms. Anne Laws: I'll remember that.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much.

We've heard a fair bit from Montessori folks today, and I do want to reiterate that this government has reached out. We're still accepting a lot of submissions—written, email, letters, phone calls—and we have several hundred over here on the table that I invite the members opposite to go through at some point, if they feel we don't have enough submissions coming in. Some of them that I've been getting into my office are from some of the Montessori parents in my riding of Cambridge.

What I'd like to ask you is: When you have had discussions with the Ontario government, you may have noted that there have been some changes in our own pedagogy to sort of fall in line with the Montessori pedagogy. Do you think that's gone far enough for your members?

Ms. Anne Laws: Because our program belongs to an international body—and this is the group we work with, the AMI head office in Holland, the group we must work with, and the scientific pedagogy to ensure that we're meeting that standard, not just within Canada or Ontario but worldwide. As such, by meeting certain aspects, it's not enough. From an AMI perspective, it must meet the complete criteria that are set out in the documentation in terms of the various key principles for AMI Montessori or quality Montessori.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you. I wasn't aware that Holland was the head office.

Ms. Anne Laws: Yes.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I know it was in there in my head somewhere, but I'd forgotten that.

Can you give us a little bit of an idea, then, of other jurisdictions—not just in Ontario—about some of the age-related concerns that we're talking about in Bill 10?

Ms. Anne Laws: Are you asking about other provinces in Canada or—

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Yes, other provinces, other countries or any other issues that have run into some of the changes that we're trying to make in the Child Care Modernization Act, in Bill 10.

Ms. Anne Laws: I don't feel I could address that knowledgeable, to be accurate with you today. I do know that each province differs, as it does for education. There are these provincial—they're different in each province. Unfortunately, I'm sorry, I can't—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Anne Laws: —respond to that in depth knowledgeably.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Okay. Thank you. I was just wondering—you are aware, I would imagine, that there would be no changes in the age group from three to five onwards?

Ms. Anne Laws: I think I heard that earlier today.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: So your concern would be from the 2.5—sort of that six-month time period, from two and a half to age three. That's the particular age group that your organization is more focused on in Bill 10?

Ms. Anne Laws: Again, we—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Unfortunately, we have to wrap it up here. I would ask Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much for your presentation. Obviously, the Montessori programs and the school system have gone over very well here today, because I think you made some clear points about the clarity you need around the legislation.

I just want to point out to MPP McGarry that I'll be happy to pick up the extra documents there. You have the ability, as the government, to have the whole Ministry of Education photocopy all you want over there on that side. I have hundreds of letters as well from ICPs. Maybe the Ministry of Education would copy those for all the people who are in this room. You know what? They're not the same letters. These are people who are opposed to what you're doing. This government has the money to photocopy that—

Mr. Grant Crack: A point of order, Chair.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: —but not the money to travel this bill. That's what makes me sick.

Mr. Grant Crack: A point of order, Chair.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Oh, a point of order? You finally woke up, eh—to the parliamentary assistant. Good for you.

Mr. Grant Crack: Isn't that something?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Good for you. You woke up finally.

Mr. Grant Crack: Isn't that something? You should be proud of yourself.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: You should be proud of yourself for the way you've handled this bill.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): A point of order, Mr. Crack.

Mr. Grant Crack: I think—

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Crack.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you. The point of order is, I think the member from Simcoe North should have the respect for the presenter and actually ask some questions.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I do have the respect for the presenter. It's you I don't have respect for.

Interjection.

Mr. Grant Crack: Unreal.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: You woke up too, Mr. Dhillon. You've never asked one question all day.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I read through all the submissions.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Not one question have you asked today. You're a real—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Dunlop, did you want to ask a question of our deputant?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: No. I'm just congratulating her for a job well done. She's got the point across. I'm just condemning this bunch.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Okay—

Mrs. Gila Martow: Okay. I would like to speak to the speaker if we have a few seconds left.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mrs. Martow, go ahead.

Mrs. Gila Martow: What I've been trying to present today—I have four kids, and I can tell you that a two-year-old isn't a two-year-old isn't a two-year-old. There are some two- and three-year-olds who are starting to learn their alphabet and even starting to read and do some simple math, and then there are some four- and five-year-olds who are struggling—

Interjections.

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The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Sorry, Ms. Martow.

Mr. Dunlop and Mr. Crack, please take your argument outside. We have a deputant who has travelled here late at night, and she deserves to have her time with the committee.

Mrs. Gila Martow: So, as somebody who is so knowledgeable, I would just want you to explain that. To pick an arbitrary number like a two-year-old, when a two-and-a-half-year-old isn't allowed into the Montessori school because they're not three—that's what I'm struggling with.

Ms. Anne Laws: I think Montessori has always excelled at observing the needs of individual children and recognizing that children are each different and individual, which is why the whole approach to education is very much based on allowing children to progress at their own pace. They're often taught or presented to aspects within the environment on an individual basis. As you said, if a child chooses to learn their sounds and begin to read and write very quickly, that child is not held back because of the group. It's a different approach to education in that way and, as I started my remarks by saying, has always excelled at observing the individual need of each child and allowing that full potential to be realized.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Exactly. I think that that's what concerns me and a lot of people here today—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Fifteen seconds.

Mrs. Gila Martow: —that children will be held back. It was mentioned by the members opposite that before children can enter the school system, the cut-off is January 1. A lot of people know that that can be a problem; there's a child who is born a week too late, in early January, who's very advanced and should have been allowed in. Just because we have this arbitrary sort of age with schools—we know there's always a line that is tough to cross—doesn't mean we have to bring that over into child care, where there's that strict cut-off and kids lose out. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Ms. Laws, thank you for coming this evening and presenting. I appreciate it.

I've asked other Montessori presenters today for details about what the difficulties are with the act, and I won't repeat that with you. You've noted in here which sections are of concern to you, and I note that they will provide me with more backup information. So I'm happy; I'll get that.

Can you tell me how you provide quality assurance? In our public schools, we have superintendents who oversee principals. We have a core of people whose job is to see that the schools are following the rules and the children are getting the training they're supposed to get. I don't understand precisely how Montessori is structured. I'm assuming each school is independent, that they are certified by your central body. How is quality assurance continued, say, through a school year?

Ms. Anne Laws: Each school, as you said, is independent, usually operates independently—owned and operates that way. The way Montessori Quality Assurance works is that it's an annual process, so each year a school must reapply, must go through that process of application, must show that according to these essential characteristics, they meet the requirements. They must outline them in their application and go through that review process again each year, must show that their teachers meet the qualifications that are specified, in terms of each one, that they meet each of these characteristics. They are also visited by, as I mentioned, an objective person, someone who is not connected to their school or any other school, an objective, highly qualified Montessori either teacher-trainer or consultant who knows what to look for when she or he is looking at a classroom, based on the work of the children and the way the adult is functioning in that environment. Are they functioning in a way that enhances the independence and

discovery-based approach of the children? Those consultants are trained to know what to observe, and that consultant will spend a full day in each environment, to sit and observe the way that full day unfolds for those children: how they're greeted, how the work cycle is fulfilled, how they transition to either outdoor or lunch—everything, the whole day.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Anne Laws: And then they're provided with written comments. They're provided with one-on-one consultation with the consultant and the teacher and the assistants who work with those children and the administration, and often with the parent board, if there is one, as well. There's this very holistic approach to the whole school so that they can receive feedback and continue to grow to really offer the best quality they can.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I think I've got a sense of it. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. That was a good thing, because your time was up.

Interjections.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you for your comments and to Ms. Laws.

Ms. Anne Laws: Thank you all very much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would ask again if Ms. Holly Marsh is in the room. If she's not, she was scheduled to present at 8; it is four minutes to. You get a four-minute break. Be back in here at 8, or you can just hang around.

The committee recessed from 1955 to 2001.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I thank you so much for coming back to order, especially since I haven't seen any new people coming in. But just to be polite, is there somebody from CUPE Local 2484? We were expecting Holly Marsh, the vice-president, to come up, but I don't see her here, so that would conclude our meeting.

I just want to remind all the MPPs that we have until noon on Thursday this week to file our amendments to the bill. People have till tomorrow night for the written submissions, but the MPPs have till Thursday at noon for any amendments, so those have to be submitted to the Clerk by then.

Tomorrow, we start back in this room at 4 o'clock sharp. We have a long day. There will be supper provided, given that we go till 8:30 again tomorrow night.

I thank you for your patience and indulgence, and we will see all of you tomorrow at 4.

The committee adjourned at 2003.

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