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Tuesday 15 September 2015

Mardi 15 septembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 15 September 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 15 septembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING
GOVERNMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT
ET L'AMÉLIORATION
DE LA GESTION PUBLIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 14, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 85, An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts / Projet de loi 85, Loi visant à renforcer et à améliorer la gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I believe we will go to the member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's my pleasure to continue the debate on Bill 85, before I was so rudely interrupted about four months ago. Of course, the bill is entitled the Strengthening and Improving Government Act, which is kind of interesting, because the one benefit that you have when the House is in recess is that there are seven days a week to actually get feedback and hear from people in your riding as opposed to, of course, when we are sitting here in the chamber four days a week and we only have the three days back in our riding. So in some ways it gave me an opportunity to hear a little more about how people in Dufferin–Caledon and across Ontario would like to see the government strengthened and improved.

As I said in my previous debate, Bill 85 is an omnibus bill that affects 15 different pieces of legislation involving eight different ministries. The majority of the measures in Bill 85 are simply housekeeping measures, but there is a particular measure that I am concerned about and would like to raise with you today.

If passed, Bill 85 would amend the Provincial Offences Act to allow municipalities to establish an end-to-end electronic court record system for the provincial offences court. This is somewhat concerning, as it sounds like a lead-up to the proposed administrative monetary penalty system, or AMPS as I will refer to it, and that is starting to be in the news since the government released a consultation paper in March of this year.

Speaker, the concern I have with the AMP system is that it could have serious repercussions for access to justice in Ontario. The proposal would replace the court procedures for resolving disputes related to charges under the Provincial Offences Act with an online dispute system, whereby an individual can pay their fine or dispute the charge. The concerning part of all this is that there is no formal hearing for an individual who would like to dispute the charges made against them. Instead, your dispute would be reviewed by an independent hearing officer, who will decide if the fine will be paid in full or reduced. Right now, of course, that individual has the right to dispute their charges in front of a justice of the peace. That will all disappear if the government goes forward with introducing the administrative monetary penalty system, or AMPS.

I'm not the only one concerned about the proposed system. Organizations, including the Ontario Trucking Association and the Ontario Paralegal Association, argue that the proposed system would lead to a deterioration of our rights to access to justice and would limit the person's legal rights. Other organizations and municipalities have argued that there is a lack of information and detail about the proposed system, such as which charges would fall under the administrative monetary penalty system. Our justice system is to protect Ontarians and ensure there is access to justice. However, an administrative monetary penalty system will deteriorate the very nature of our justice system.

Speaker, I'd like to spend the rest of my debate discussing another issue I have with Bill 85, and that is that Bill 85 doesn't actually do anything to strengthen and improve government in our province. Instead, it is in fact a housekeeping bill. For example, one of the schedules in Bill 85 would provide for a liability exemption for the Ontario Medical Association. The Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act would be amended to align with the 2012 Physician Services Agreement between the province and the Ontario Medical Association. It would provide immunity for representatives of the Ontario Medical Association, including directors and staff, but not the association itself. Individuals will be restricted from pursuing civil action regarding agreements between the OMA and the Ministry of Health in the following situations: including insured services under OHIP, amounts payable under OHIP in respect to the rendering of insured services to insured persons, and amounts payable to physicians by the minister or the crown. This would prevent legal action against representatives for acts done in good faith during negotiations with the

government related to physician agreements or payment, such as agreements that contain fee changes for certain physician groups.

This schedule of Bill 85 does not amount to strengthening or improving our health care system; rather, this schedule simply amounts to a housekeeping measure. It aims to protect the Ontario Medical Association in its capacity as the bargaining unit for Ontario's physicians and adviser to the government on health matters. To strengthen and improve our health care system, the government needs to take action to root out waste and build a more patient-centric model of health care delivery. Instead, the government seems content with this bill to simply tinker around the edges. I'm not saying that this amendment isn't needed, but it hardly falls under strengthening and improving government.

Our once-proud health care system is now floundering because of this government's poorly-thought-out decisions. Recently, the government decided to decrease the number of medical residency places by 50 over the next two years. The reason or justification for this short-sighted decision was because this government believes there will be an oversupply of doctors. I want to remind people: The last time a government actually decreased the number of residencies, it was Bob Rae's government.

Mr. Jim Wilson: A disaster.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It was. To my colleague's point, the previous Minister of Health, it was a disaster. So this is the furthest thing from strengthening and improving government.

There are over 800,000 Ontarians, many living in rural Ontario, who still do not have access to a family physician, yet the government is saying this is not important. It's as if they don't want to face the reality of our deteriorating health system and its result of their mismanagement. This government is letting our most vulnerable fall to the wayside without access to essential services that all Ontarians deserve and expect to be there when needed.

To add more fuel to the fire, the government has cut health care spending by \$54 million in this year's budget. That means there will be less money for long-term-care beds; in addition to services and positions previously offered in our hospitals, they are being eliminated or decreased.

In my riding of Dufferin-Caledon, the Central West CCAC continues to claim they have no more money to take on new clients, and as a result they have cut back or eliminated personal support worker support. Yet, the salary of the CEO, oddly enough, continues to increase. As a result of the lack of services from the CCAC, residents in Dufferin-Caledon have made some difficult decisions to ensure their health care needs are looked after, including going without the required service, paying for private care by taking on personal debt, or moving to other communities where the services have not been reduced or restricted. I think it's a terrible indictment of our Ontario health care system that a family is making a decision to leave their mother or their father four hours away because the programs and the services available for

that CCAC are better than Central West CCAC. So you're trading off access to health care for access to your family members, and it's shameful.

0910

This is proof that our once-proud health care system is going in the opposite direction of being strengthened or improved. The government is putting Ontarians in an unfair and difficult position by cutting essential services that Ontarians expect their hard-earned dollars to go towards. If the government wants to strengthen our province and make Ontario great again, then we need to ensure essential services are readily accessible when people need them.

Another important issue the government should take seriously to improve our province is the exorbitant energy rates that Ontario individuals, homeowners and businesses are facing. Time and time again, my PC caucus colleagues and the leader of the official opposition have argued that the skyrocketing energy rates in Ontario are hurting families and businesses in Ontario. It's by far the number one issue that I was hearing about during this summer recess, which in itself is rather odd because often energy rates are raised by homeowners in the winter months, but now I'm getting it year-round. This problem only gets worse if the government goes forward with their proposed sell-off of Hydro One.

Speaker, our province's energy sector has been broken for many years as a result of the mistakes made by this government, whether it is the \$2-billion smart meter scandal, the \$1-billion gas plant scandal or the over-reaching practices at Hydro One. In the Ombudsman's annual report this year, the Ombudsman noted that his office received 3,499 complaints about Hydro One in one year. That's an absurd amount. More problems will continue to come about if the government sells off Hydro One, and, of course, we've removed the ability of the Ombudsman to have any oversight. The sell-off will result in higher hydro rates for every Ontario family, when hydro rates are already unaffordable to many families and are leaving them in a state of energy poverty.

Just look at what the Ontario Chamber of Commerce said recently. In their report, they note that hydro rates in Ontario are adversely affecting families and businesses in Ontario. As a result, businesses will soon begin to leave our province—they quite frankly already have—along with jobs, unless immediate changes are made to curb the ever-increasing hydro rates in the province. Too often, I've heard from constituents and businesses in the community that exorbitant hydro rates are taking their toll on their respective budgets. Every time I meet with local manufacturers, hydro rates come up as the number one concern.

On top of that, we've already begun seeing companies closing up shop and moving to other jurisdictions because of hydro rates. They're not stopping production; they're stopping production in Ontario. The government should be looking for ways to help families and businesses and to protect Ontarians from the problems within Hydro One. Instead, they are ignoring Ontarians' concerns

and choosing to sell Hydro One behind closed doors without any independent oversight. It's why I'm so pleased that my colleague Todd Smith from—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Prince Edward–Hastings.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: —Prince Edward–Hastings has been tasked with being the critic responsible for the sell-off. It's probably the number one concern that we have to face in this fall session.

Speaker, these are some of the most critical issues that our province is facing, and it's sad to say the government is doing nothing about it. We cannot continue to expect Ontarians to pay for the mistakes of the Liberal government. Let's turn our province into what it once was: the economic engine of Canada. That starts with having competitive energy rates, so that we can attract businesses and ensure that Ontarians can afford to live in our province.

I ask that this government take a deep, hard look into coming up with a credible plan to improve our province, but that will not happen if the government continues to bring forward pieces of legislation like this, which, while it has a fabulous name, doesn't actually do much to strengthen and improve.

While we are on the topic of strengthening and improving government in the province, we should fix the issue of paint peeling off of the Ontario licence plates. Over the course of the summer I've seen licence plates that have begun to bubble and/or peel off. What you may not know is, this is an actual manufacturing defect that the government has known about for three years but done nothing to fix. The worst part is, you can be given a \$110 fine for having an unreadable licence plate. Thank you, province of Ontario. It's puzzling that we ask Ontarians to pay for a manufacturing defect that this government has known about and hasn't done anything to resolve. We expect people to take responsibility for their actions, yet this government believes this standard doesn't apply to them.

I just want to reiterate again that Ontario has bigger problems than making minor updates to pieces of legislation. Whether it is a deteriorating health care system or unaffordable energy rates, these are the issues the government should be focused on and coming up with a credible plan to fix. Instead of introducing pieces of legislation like Bill 85, which has a grab bag of things that they need to fix and tweak, maybe we could actually deal with some of the underlying, deep issues that people are raising with us and have been raising in the last number of years. We talk about hydro rates. We talk about the manufacturing base disappearing. Let's actually do something about it.

Bill 85 is an omnibus, fix-it bill that does very little to strengthen and improve government. I would like to see substantive pieces of legislation that we can debate and bring forward positive amendments to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Dufferin–Caledon, one of the newly appointed deputy leaders of the official opposition.

Questions and comments?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to stand up and join the debate on Bill 85 today. I'm going to expand on some of the comments made by the member from Dufferin–Caledon.

She touched on health care. Although I could talk for much longer than two minutes on health care, I'd like to share a story about my riding of Windsor West. We have Windsor Regional Hospital, and just four or five days ago there was an article in the paper where the CEO was talking about health care cuts—a change to the funding model that has affected one of the hospitals in my riding. These changes have resulted in our hospital having to absorb the cost of about \$20 million a year. That's a result of about 115 people who are sitting in acute care beds and who are waiting to be moved into long-term care, into rehab beds or into complex continuing care beds. The hospital is not receiving funding for those patients while they're in acute care beds. What that's costing the health care system and the hospital directly is about \$600 a day per patient. I think that what the government really needs to be looking at is how to properly fund the health care system, which means investing in long-term care and preventive measures as well.

The member also touched on hydro rates. As you know, as New Democrats, we are strongly opposed to the sell-off of the public hydro. People are already struggling to pay their bills. People have to choose between keeping the lights on or feeding their children, and certainly when the government sells off our public hydro, the rates are just going to go up, and that's going to make matters even worse.

Another issue that the member from Dufferin–Caledon touched on was smart meters. I would just bring back the fact that well over a year ago, we had raised the issue of smart meters and their safety. That was pushed aside by the government, only to find out that we do have smart meters in Ontario that are fire hazards and safety hazards. I think that if the government wants to name something “strengthening government,” they really need to look at the issues that are going on in the communities and fix them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to comment on the member from Dufferin–Caledon. I just wish once in a while they'd come up with some positive things to say about this great province—just nothing but negative comments about the wonderful people who work so hard in this province. Sure, we've got challenges, and this bill tries to take care of the small things so the big things can work.

I know in Toronto here, we just got our new regional hospital built. The new Humber River regional hospital is operating. It's state of the art. The 407 is expanding into Peterborough. We have the largest transit construction projects in North America taking place. The Eglinton Crosstown subway is being built. Tens of thousands of jobs—this is a hard-working, successful province, and I just wish we'd come up with some new ideas from the opposition, not the same old whining, griping and belly-

aching. We need to build up this province because this province has incredible potential, incredible people, incredible skills. Our construction skills—we have more cranes up in the sky building Ontario than all the other jurisdictions in North America combined—building up this province. The opposition, all they want to do—

Interjections.

0920

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order.

Mr. Mike Colle: Mr. Speaker, look, I have the floor. I have the floor.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, start by telling the truth.

Mr. Mike Colle: Look, here we go again. Mr. Speaker, you have to have some control here.

I'm saying, this is a great province—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I appreciate the comments that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence is making; however, I do not appreciate anything that may be directed towards the Speaker with regard to controlling this Legislature. I will make those decisions. Thank you for the reminder.

I would ask that you continue—actually, your time is up now. Further questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Mr. Speaker, when I heard this bill introduced, I was very, very optimistic—an act to strengthen and improve government. Then I started to read the bill and I was less optimistic. But I thought that maybe at the end I would read something that gave me some hope as well. Often, in a bill, you'll read—one of the last clauses will say, "This act comes into effect the day it receives royal assent." I thought, in order to strengthen and improve government, maybe that last line would say, "On the day this act receives royal assent, the Liberal government will resign," because that is probably the surest way of improving and strengthening Ontario.

If we look at what this government has done, particularly since Kathleen Wynne has been elected Premier—or appointed Premier, and then she went further downhill after she got elected Premier, because now she thinks she's got this massive majority and has got the support of the people of Ontario. She's dreaming in Technicolor, and we all know that. All you've got to do is look at the polls. Justin Trudeau is telling her what to say; now he's pulling the strings.

If you want to improve Ontario and improve government, you could start by sticking to what you promised you were going to do. In her first throne speech, she promised transparency and accountability to the people of Ontario, and we have got anything but transparency and accountability. Everything is under the shroud of the curtain. The Iron Curtain has descended around the cabinet table of the Liberal government. Winston Churchill said how it descended on Europe; here, it's descended around the cabinet table of the Liberal government, because there is no accountability and there is no transparency.

Let's take only the example of Hydro One, of which they never campaigned upon in any iota. They touched on the possibility of maximizing assets. You want to talk about riddles? This whole government is a riddle. They

never talked about selling Hydro One, and now all of a sudden this is their big main measure.

My gosh, I'm out of time, Speaker. I will have another chance, I'm sure. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It is a pleasure to be back. It is a pleasure to be back from the London–Fanshawe riding to hold this government accountable. There are a lot of things that we have to say on this side of the House and we hope this government's going to open their ears and listen to our suggestions. This Bill 85, which talks about strengthening and improving government—that's what we're here to do. We're here to give you suggestions on bills and on how to strengthen and improve this government. So having the member from Eglinton west—

Mr. Mike Colle: Eglinton–Lawrence.

Interjections.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Lawrence. All right, let's just keep our cool. We don't have to get all uppity about it.

The thing is, Speaker, we have to define our roles in this House, so let's be clear from this session forward: We are here to be critical of you. We are here to tell you what our constituents are telling us. And one of the things they're telling us is that if you want to improve and strengthen government, you need to be transparent, accountable and responsible to the people of Ontario and responsible to the people of London–Fanshawe with respect to the Hydro One sell-off.

I'll tell you, Speaker, a few months ago many people didn't even know what that topic entailed. Now, at other events, they're coming up to me and bringing up the subject, and they're saying that this government is wrong-headed on the sale of Hydro One. They're taking a public asset and selling it off without consultation. They're taking that revenue-generating public asset that we pay for under education and health care. That's not strengthening and improving government; that's putting us backward.

So with all due respect to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, you need to hear our voices. That's what our job is here: to make sure we drive it home to you, so that you don't think all your bills are all that and a bag of chips. They're not, Speaker. There are lots of things riddled, and we need to be critical of every bill this government puts forward. That's our job. You need to pay attention.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member for Dufferin–Caledon for final comments.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It always fascinates me when members in the Liberal caucus get so angry when what we are bringing forward is a different point of view.

I don't presume to understand what the member from Eglinton–Lawrence did for the last four months, but I know that I spent my four months in front of people, talking to people who are impacted by the policies of this government.

One of our roles as legislators is absolutely to come here and raise issues. Bill 85 has this wonderful name: Strengthening and Improving Government Act. It doesn't do that. This is an omnibus bill that tweaks things that you missed the first time. It's okay. We all make mistakes; we try to fix them. But don't put a—what's the line? A silk—

Mr. Steve Clark: Make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: A silk purse out of a pig's ear.

You cannot name a bill and suddenly make it more important than it truly is. This is a fix-it bill. I'm okay with that. I can deal with that. There are some things here that need to be tweaked. But it is not going to strengthen and improve government in the province of Ontario. So when we point that out, don't get all upset. It's just the reality.

When we are here, we are speaking on behalf of our constituents—in my case, from Dufferin–Caledon. I find it really hard to believe that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence has not heard a single negative thing from his constituents, but that may well be. I'm not going to second-guess him. What I am going to do is take my responsibilities seriously as a legislator and bring those issues to the chamber, and I've done that with Bill 85.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: This is my hour lead, so sit back and relax. We'll have an hour to enjoy some comments about this bill.

Good morning to everyone. Welcome back from the summer break. It's not much of a break, though, really—we work hard in the ridings—but I'm glad to be back.

This bill in general is not an overly controversial or contentious bill. The bill does some—

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Housekeeping.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Housekeeping.

Mr. John Yakubuski: That should be in its title, for sure.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That's what I'm going to get to. Thank you very much to my colleague.

The bill addresses certain housekeeping matters which are important and need to be addressed. I'll go over some of the points which, again, are non-contentious and are not much of a concern, and then go into some of my suggestions.

The bill modifies or looks at amending a number of—we can group it into ministries. It looks to amend issues with the Ministry of the Attorney General, specifically the Courts of Justice Act. There are issues around the Ministry of Labour and allowing for and improving the ability to collect monies owed to employees. There are also components that address the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. So there's a variety of ministries that are touched by this bill.

Let's talk about some of the issues that are non-contentious.

My previous life provided me a lens into the criminal defence world, and particularly into the—my previous

life before politics was in law. In that capacity, as a lawyer, I did acknowledge and I did realize, or I did notice, that there were considerable areas in the justice system that could be improved, that could be streamlined. This is an incremental step, but it's still a step that can be acknowledged.

The Family Court system: I've received numerous complaints, while I was a lawyer and then as an MPP, that there are certain inefficiencies. It's difficult to navigate the system, particularly in Family Court, so there are some changes here that would perhaps smooth out some of the process, maybe make it a little bit more accessible and perhaps make it somewhat smoother. But really, the Family Court and the family law system in Canada need to be seriously overhauled. There are a number of areas where people who are unrepresented can't get very simple orders, get them passed, get them made in court. There are a number of areas which would seem to be very common sense but it's very difficult, unless you're represented, to actually get anything done. So I think a lot more could be done.

0930

With respect to the Ministry of Labour, I think this is a step in the right direction. There are countless times when people are owed money but there are no significant powers to collect the money so they can pay employees. Allowing for this ability would make sense, and it aligns with the tribunal rulings on this matter.

With respect to the Ministry of Transportation, again, there are minor changes but important, I guess, in terms of allowing or improving the regulations and safety around ambulances, prescribing the inspection and maintenance standards, and ensuring that the prescribed equipment is on board.

The other change in the Ministry of Transportation is the change around notification of vehicle suspensions. I have a concern around this. It's already something that people miss in the mail, to have an over-the-counter notice provided. It should be in writing and it should be something that the individual signs off on to ensure that there is some transparency in that. So if I just say over the counter "Your vehicle is suspended"—there needs to be something more than just oral; it has to be something that's provided in writing. That's an area of concern.

But overall, my concern is this: The bill does some housekeeping matters which are, of course, important. Another overlying theme to the changes is aligning the provincial language with federal language to keep it in line, to keep things consistent, which is again something important. But my issue is that the title of the bill, Bill 85, is An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts. This is the issue. If this bill was entitled "the bill to address some minor housekeeping measures," it would be accurate and there would really be no issue. But what the title of this bill does is it opens up the discussion, which I'm now going to get into. If we really want an act to strengthen and improve government, there are some suggestions that I have.

Let's begin with the Ministry of Labour. The amendment that the government is suggesting does achieve an incremental improvement. But does it truly strengthen and improve the government? No, not really. This is what we need to see in the Ministry of Labour. If you don't have compliance and you don't have enforcement—so no compliance and no enforcement—there's really no point to any legislation. The major issue with the Ministry of Labour is that there lacks sufficient enforcement. There are a number of protections that are actually included in the Ministry of Labour, that are included in our employment act, but many of those protections become meaningless when there's no enforcement. To ensure that there's proper enforcement, the Ministry of Labour needs to have the staff to do so. There needs to be an increase in staff. There needs to be an increased and regular process for enforcement. There also needs to be a more aggressive, more transparent and more effective complaints mechanism.

There are a number of issues that come up, particularly in my riding. One of the major issues people face is precarious employment. People are finding they're no longer able to get a full-time job. So instead of a full-time job or a permanent job, what they're finding is part-time and temporary employment. Often these jobs are through temporary job agencies or temporary help agencies.

Now the problem is that when you're working in a temporary help agency, you already feel insecure because your position inherently is an insecure position. You don't know if you're going to be working tomorrow. You may be called in; you may not be called in. So someone working in that context is very unlikely to raise any concerns. They're already nervous about their job security. They don't have job security. How can we expect someone in that circumstance to then call up and complain to the ministry if there is any violation in terms of their labour rights? There needs to be a mechanism that allows for folks in those positions to very easily complain and notify the ministry of issues, and I've heard a number of issues. For example, in many cases people who are temporary workers are not given the break time that the permanent workers are given; people who are temporary workers often aren't paid appropriately or paid on time. There are a number of issues that come up, but those workers don't see a way or an avenue to complain about that. That's an area where, if we really want to improve the Ministry of Labour, as this bill proposes in its title, "to strengthen and improve government," one way would be to really strengthen and improve the complaints mechanism and then, most importantly, to have a robust system so that we make sure people are able to enforce the rights and protections that they do have. That would be an area in terms of the Ministry of Labour.

The Ministry of Transportation: There are some significant areas that, if the government really wanted to strengthen and improve the government, they could do a lot of work. In general, there's a theme that we're seeing in the Ministry of Transportation, and it's the idea of outsourcing. I'm an evidence-based kind of person. I had

a science degree before I got into law school, so I like to look at the evidence. The issue is that if our government can make the argument that outsourcing created greater efficiencies, created better service, then I would have to look at it. I still believe, on principle, that certain things should remain public because it's a public good and it's in the best interests of the public for a certain service to remain public. But I would at least look at the case if there's evidence that suggested that in some way outsourcing was beneficial.

In this case, the case that I'm going to bring up, the evidence is incontrovertible. It's very clear that the outsourcing that the Ministry of Transportation has conducted has in fact put the lives of Ontarians at risk. It has been inefficient. It has not provided a better service; in fact, it has provided a much worse service. Specifically, there are two areas in the Ministry of Transportation that I want to touch on in terms of outsourcing, because the bill purports to amend certain acts that impact the Ministry of Transportation with the purported purpose to improve government. I'm suggesting that it's not doing enough. There are some glaring holes or gaping holes where the government could actually step in and improve. One is Serco, as the outsourced licensing and testing provider for commercial vehicles and testing in general for drivers, and the other one is snow removal.

The Auditor General of Ontario released a very scathing report that went into detail and looked at the snow removal process and the fact that it has been outsourced. They compared when it was not outsourced to when it was outsourced. What is very troubling is the Auditor General came out with the report that conclusively stated that lives were lost because of this outsourcing; that the Ministry of Transportation is essentially responsible for roads that were not cleaned properly because of this outsourcing: roads where snow removal was not conducted in a proper manner, in an efficient manner. It left people driving on roads that were in terrible condition and resulted in accidents, and some of those resulted in fatalities. These fatalities were avoidable, if the government had not outsourced its snow removal duties.

It's very troubling that the government decided to go down this route, and the evidence all points to the fact that this route was not the right way to go. In fact, it put lives at risk, and it's something that must be changed. I'm hoping the government listened to that report and plans to—for this upcoming winter—change the process, come up with an alternative, perhaps go back to the public snow removal system they had before, because the system is broken and is clearly not working.

With respect to Serco, a number of issues come up. We've seen complaints about the commercial licensing process in general. I met with a number of concerned constituents who raised issues around the licensing process. One of the things they raised is that there are limited facilities and the facilities aren't able to cope with the demand. We've seen, in certain areas, particularly in the Peel region, that there used to be two facilities that were accessible in the Peel region. One of them was shut

down. The only remaining system is so clogged and so backlogged with folks who are going there to get their testing done, to get their licensing done, that it takes hours and hours for anything to be processed. The service is slow. That's one of the major issues.

The second thing is that we've seen inconsistencies with examination. There have been problems raised. The Toronto Star did a very outstanding job in looking at some of the problems around that licensing process. Again, these are problems because it has been outsourced to Serco.

Another area of concern that has been raised is that there is an unfair system based on the fees that are applied to schools. If you're part of a school that provides education in driving, particularly in the commercial field, there are unfair fees that are applied to those schools. Again, this is a system that, since Serco has been initiated, that's when this problem arose.

There are a number of areas where Serco is simply not providing a good service, an efficient service and an adequate service to the people that it's trying to serve. Again, this is another example where the Ministry of Transportation, if they really wanted to do as the bill says, if they really wanted to strengthen and improve the government, could start by addressing those two areas of concern in the Ministry of Transportation file, one being the snow removal and the second being the outsourcing of the licensing under Serco.

0940

So we've addressed now the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Transportation. The bill also looks at, to a smaller degree, addressing some issues around the Ministry of Health. Again, while the changes in this bill are non-controversial—there's really no issue at this point in time—there is an issue with the Ministry of Health, broadly speaking. If, again, this bill purports to strengthen and improve the government, well, this bill is falling short of that lofty goal.

In the Ministry of Health—a local issue I can point to is Brampton. Brampton is a city of 500,000—a city of over 500,000, in fact. In a city of that size, it needs at least two hospitals to service it. Brampton is somewhat of a sprawling suburb. Getting from one end to the other end of the city does take a lot of time, particularly with traffic and gridlock, which is another issue that we'll get into later on in this speech. Because of the size of the city, there's one hospital, Brampton Civic Hospital, that is overburdened. There had been numerous promises made by this government to not close the other facility, the Peel Memorial Hospital site, and then they closed it. Then they indicated that they would renovate it and not actually demolish it. They broke that promise; instead of renovating, they actually demolished it. Then they promised to again rebuild, and they have not rebuilt it. It has been years and years of broken promises with respect to that hospital.

So if the Ministry of Health really wanted to strengthen and improve government, they would improve the accountability on these types of promises. When they

promise to build something or promise not to demolish something, they would follow through on their promises and be more transparent with those decisions. Right now, Brampton is suffering because there aren't two hospitals, and it's an underserved region because of that. If the Ministry of Health really wanted to see a bill that strengthens the government, it would actually improve accountability, broadly speaking, but specifically in my region and in my area, it would make sure that we actually see the second hospital, Peel Memorial Hospital, built and established.

In addition to these areas, there's a particular area where I think there's going to be some lengthy discussion, and I think I'll move into that area now: It's the Ministry of the Attorney General. In the Ministry of the Attorney General, we spoke about one of the changes, which is on the Family Court side, and that's fine. Again, that's an incremental change but addressing an outstanding concern around Family Courts. I think a lot more can be done to speed up the efficiency of Family Courts, but beyond that, there is a system that the government is proposing that is very, very troublesome. In fact, instead of strengthening the government, it weakens the government and it weakens other services we receive as citizens. What I'm talking about is the system that was brought up earlier by a previous colleague in her speech, the administrative monetary penalty system. Its short form is AMPS.

To break down AMPS and what AMPS is: In certain cases, it makes sense to have an administrative system where, if you park your car in the wrong space at the wrong time, you get a ticket, and there's no court date for that. You have a payment system where you can go and pay the ticket. There is a mechanism to allow for perhaps a reduction in payment, and that's about it. You have a payment system. You get a parking ticket. You can either pay the ticket or there's a mechanism by which you can perhaps apply for a reduction in the ticket. When it comes to things like parking tickets, perhaps we can understand it. There isn't an impact on our driving record; there isn't an impact on our insurance rating. So there isn't a significant impact with parking tickets. But the problem arises when you apply an AMP system to something where there are bigger or larger implications. So, again, with parking tickets, there was a consultation process, there was a recommendation, and it indicated—in the Provincial Offences Act, we refer to certain offences under part I or part II or part III. Part II offences are parking tickets. That makes sense; I can see that. There is still a reduction in our access to justice any time you remove the right to go to trial, so there is a concern with that, but if you balance the pros and cons, in a parking ticket scenario, I can see why there is greater efficiency in perhaps bringing in an AMP system.

But let's look at the other scenarios: With serious driving offences, with things like speeding tickets, running through a red light, careless driving, in those circumstances, they are potential findings of guilt—if you're found guilty of them—which can have severe impacts on

your driving. Now, the AMP system might claim that they're not going to impact your demerit points and they're not going to impact your personal record. The other question that arises, then, is: How would you deter someone? If I've driven and I've speeded and there's no demerit point system, or if I've driven carelessly and there's no demerit point system, how can we discourage that type of driving? That question arises. So folks have posited or speculated that it's unlikely that the Ministry of the Attorney General or the Ministry of Transportation will do away with the demerit system.

Now, potentially, we have an AMP system where you don't have a right to go to a trial and you are going to potentially suffer from significant demerit points and this might significantly impact your insurance. Broadly speaking, what it does is, it takes away your right to a trial. Why is the right to a trial so important? This is why I think the government is actually—if they do implement this system that they're proposing to do, that the Ministry of the Attorney General is looking at doing—it's actually going to weaken the government, and, perhaps more so, weaken the rights of the citizens. This is the reason why: Our right to a trial is, broadly speaking, our chance to establish or protect this principle that we deem all people innocent until proven guilty. In fact, this presumption is enshrined in our charter. Section 11(d) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms enshrines this principle, that we, as a society, are held to or bound by this principle that people are to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. That principle is an overarching principle of law. It's something that is very tied into the principles of rule of law, and it creates a more just and fair society when people are presumed to be innocent unless there's sufficient evidence to prove their guilt. That's the way lawful societies work. That's the way free and just societies work.

Doing away with the right to go to trial will seriously infringe on that principle. If you are immediately deemed to have been guilty just because you're clocked at a speed or just because an officer sees a vehicle drive through an intersection, it immediately gets rid of that presumption. There are numerous cases where there is misidentification of a car—a police officer saw one car but it very closely matched the description of another. There are various scenarios that can happen. Ridding the citizens of that right to be able to challenge the evidence in court is a serious infringement on our charter-protected right of being presumed innocent.

Beyond that, going to trial provides a check and balance, and in society—particularly in the context of a growing tension between the police and the public—having the ability to go to trial and test evidence gives the public a check and balance to ensure that they're being treated fairly, that they are not having their rights infringed. Once that right is removed, once the right to go to trial has been removed, it removes entirely a check and balance.

I'll give you a specific example. One of the issues coming up time and time again, particularly in Toronto

but something that's an issue broadly speaking across all of Ontario, is the issue of carding. To make it very clear, carding is the process by where—and the issue that's been of concern is when people are stopped for no specific reason, they are asked a series of questions and then their information is recorded in a database. When carding is arbitrary, it's something that violates the charter. If there's any reason provided—if there's any reasonable grounds, if there's any suspicion, if there's been a tip—then it no longer is arbitrary. What our position is as New Democrats and my position personally is that arbitrary detention is something very clearly outlined in our charter as something that is not acceptable. We are protected from arbitrary detention under section 9 of the charter. So where we have arbitrary carding or arbitrary street checks—that's where there's no reason provided, there's no reasonable grounds, there's no connection between any sort of evidence and the actual act of stopping someone and requesting or demanding information and then recording that information. When there's no connection between any evidence or any reasons or any suspicion and the act of stopping someone, then that's an arbitrary detention, that's an arbitrary carding or an arbitrary street check, and that has no place in Ontario.

0950

Discriminatory detention or discriminatory street checks also have no place in Ontario. Where someone is discriminated against not because they're the subject of an investigation, not because there's any clear evidence that links that person to some sort of suspicious behaviour and when it's simply the case where someone is stopped because of the colour of their skin, because of their age, because of certain discriminatory features, that is something that has no place in Ontario. It has no place in our province; in fact, no place in Canada.

Arbitrary detention through arbitrary carding and arbitrary street checks: They have no place in Ontario. In addition, discriminatory carding and discriminatory street checks have no place in Ontario. If we do away with the right to trial and implement an AMP system, one of the mechanisms, one of the tools that people have to challenge these types of discriminatory stops or discriminatory street checks or arbitrary stops, is removed entirely.

I can give you an example. I'll withhold the name. There was an individual that I provided some legal advice to who was stopped when walking into a juice store. His ID was requested by the police officer, who said, "I would like to see ID. I need to see your driver's licence." At that time the individual said, "I don't want to provide my driver's licence." They're walking into a juice store, and it's their right not to have to provide ID at that point—identification in terms of an actual physical driver's licence. The officer indicated that, "I saw you driving earlier and you had committed an offence while driving." The individual said, "That's fine," and then the officer again requested, "I need to see your driver's licence right now."

To put this into context, what if the individual did not have his driver's licence? What if the individual had left a wallet back in the car, or whatever the reason was? The individual said, "No; I don't want to provide my driver's licence." The officer then cautioned the individual and said, "If you don't provide your driver's licence now, I'm going to arrest you."

The individual was then arrested. This individual was a lawyer in good standing with the law society. He was arrested and put into the back of a police car. This entire scenario could have been avoided. The individual was put in the back of a police car. The police officer asked, "What's your name?" A name was provided right away and a date of birth was provided right away and the officer was able to ascertain the identity.

This case was taken to court. The case was a simple Provincial Offences Act, it was a violation of the Highway Traffic Act, but the greater problem was the fact that the police officer infringed on this individual's Charter of Rights by demanding a driver's licence and then arresting the individual for not providing a driver's licence and not simply asking for the ID and saying, "I need to identify you because I want to lay a charge under the Highway Traffic Act. What's your name? Can you please identify yourself?" That question was never asked.

If there had been an administrative monetary penalty system, there would be no remedy in this situation. There would be no way to say, "I was treated unfairly. I was put in the back of a police car. I was wrongfully arrested, and there was really no reason to do so." There would be no way to challenge it. Because there is a right to go to trial, the individual, who is a lawyer as well, took this case to trial and put before the justice of the peace the evidence and said, "The officer at no point in time asked me to identify myself; at no point in time asked me to provide my name; at no point in time said, 'I would like to lay an offence or a charge or a ticket against you and I need to know your name so I can lay that ticket.'" At no point in time was that ever provided. The issue that the police officer stuck by was, "I want to see your driver's licence."

Under law, you don't have to provide your driver's licence when you're not in a car. You do have to identify yourself when you're being provided a ticket. To take away someone's liberty, to handcuff them, put them in the back of a police car because the police officer didn't have the training to know that they should have asked for the identity—as in, asked for the name—as opposed to asking for the driver's licence, was a serious infringement of that individual's rights.

In this case, the individual was a lawyer, who was able to defend himself, who was able to go to court and make the arguments. What if the individual didn't know his or her rights? What if they weren't someone who was proficient in the law? There would be a serious infringement of their Charter of Rights. They would have been placed in the back of a police car for no reason, for not doing anything wrong, and there would be no remedy.

Because of this ability to go to court, the justice of the peace issued a very stern decision and said that the police—maybe this particular police officer was not at fault, but there's clearly a lack of training that existed here, where the individual didn't know that the law is very clear that it should have been a demand for the person's name or identity instead of a demand for the driver's licence. In this circumstance, there was no need to arrest this individual, to put them in the back of a police car. To subject him to that sort of humiliation and that sort of public shaming was completely inappropriate.

Because of the inappropriateness and the lack of training and the infringement of charter rights, the justice of the peace withdrew all charges against the individual. That was a great remedy, not just for the individual but because it sent a message that police officers should receive appropriate training. We respect the front-line officers that do a great job, great work in our community, but there are incidents where there is a lack of training and there are violations that occur. We want those to be addressed in a systemic way. That could never have been addressed but for the fact that there was an avenue, a tool, a remedy to go to court and to challenge it. That's one of the reasons why it's so important to maintain this right to go to trial.

Again, going back to the idea of carding and street checks, when this is such a glaring concern that many people in our communities, particularly racialized communities, particularly young people, are being discriminated and being stopped unfairly without any reason, without having done anything wrong, without being the subject of any investigation—when they're being stopped in this manner, some of the stops might be simply walking on the street; some of them might result in a provincial offence. It might be a Highway Traffic Act or some other sort of event.

If you've been unfairly stopped and if there has been some discriminatory practice involved, that's not going to show up in an administrative monetary penalty system. The AMP system is simply going to say that you crossed the street or your light was out or whatever the situation is, and here's a fine; pay the fine. If you want to challenge that and say, "I was discriminated against," or, "This is arbitrary," or, "There's no fairness here," there's no way to do that. It would actually exacerbate an already major concern, the concern around unfair treatment by, again, people based on various discriminatory factors. That is already something that happens. On top of that, now there's one less remedy to address that. That's completely unfair and the wrong direction for our society, but particularly for this government to go into.

Other areas: While this bill looks to amend a number of ministries, again, it doesn't really strengthen the government. I'll give one example. If the government really truly believed in its bill's name, which is to strengthen and improve the government, then let's look at the Ministry of Energy. This bill does amend a series of acts that impact various ministries. One area where they have not brought in an amendment, where they should

have brought in an amendment and we would have applauded them for doing so, is in the Ministry of Energy. In that file, the government has again, instead of moving to improve or strengthen government, weakened government and in fact weakened accountability and transparency. By legally, in legislation, doing away with, in the previous budget that was passed before we rose for the summer break—the government passed legislation that removed the Ombudsman from providing accountability and oversight to the energy file.

The Ministry of Energy, particularly Hydro One, the energy file, was one of the most complained-about areas of our government—one of the most complained about. It received one of the highest number of complaints around energy, and particularly around billing. This is still a public system. Under the public system and under auditor oversight, the public was able to complain about issues around billing. That issue made it to the Ombudsman's office. The Ombudsman was then able to conduct a very extensive investigation, one of the largest investigations they've ever conducted, into that. They were to find that there were significant systemic problems around billing. People were being overbilled, and it wasn't just a one-off situation; it was systemic.

The Ombudsman was able to isolate that problem, identify that problem and then provide a report to the government. That is something that strengthens our government. That's something that strengthens the oversight of a very integral system, the electricity system. It's something that's essential, very important to us. The government is now removing that accountability mechanism. It's removing that ability for the Ombudsman to provide that oversight. That doesn't strengthen our government. That doesn't strengthen oversight; in fact, it weakens it. This was an opportunity where the government could have introduced legislation to rectify that mistake, that very serious mistake, and make sure that the Ombudsman does have oversight, does have a mandate to look into and investigate issues around energy, but they've removed that. So they've removed that independence and, broadly speaking, if the government truly wanted to make improvements or make itself stronger, then they wouldn't be selling off Hydro One. Hydro One is something that provides the province with a significant source of revenue. It's something that's very sustainable. It's something that's not going to go away at any point in time—we're always going to need electricity—and it's something that's not a luxury. It's an essential need.

1000

Electricity in our society is increasingly becoming something that we need in order to do our jobs, to engage in higher learning or education. It's dependent on access to computers and having the ability to access the Internet, all of which require electricity. More and more we're seeing, in terms of sustainable transportation, a shift towards more electric-powered vehicles, whether it's infrastructure like subways and streetcars that are run by electricity or even personal vehicles. We're now seeing a

trend towards greater use of and more opportunities for and more options for electric-propulsion vehicles.

Given the trend where electricity is becoming more and more important, it's a sustainable option. It's something that is the future. The future will have a greater reliance on electricity, hopefully with a principle around reducing our consumption and making sure we have higher efficiency, but our society is geared towards more and more use of electricity.

In light of that, it makes no sense at all to me that our government would sell off something that's such a vital, essential piece of infrastructure, something that's so important to our future of growth, something that's so important not only to things like transportation and education but also manufacturing. Many of the manufacturing bases that we look to in terms of good-paying jobs and to build up our economy, to make sure our economy is diversified—manufacturers need a steady supply of affordable electricity. And selling off this electricity, making it private, removing accountability mechanisms, removing the government's ability to have more control over it—these are all steps in the wrong direction. These are all going to weaken our government, weaken our protection as citizens, and are clearly the wrong decisions. Again, if the government truly wanted to follow through on what the bill's title is, which is to strengthen and improve the government, then on this file specifically, they could be going in the opposite direction. What they're doing is actually something contrary to the title of this bill. They're actually weakening our position.

Overall we have a bill which seeks to address some housekeeping measures to fix certain things that need to be fixed and to move things along with the times, which is appropriate. But again, this is a greater theme of missed opportunities. The government, if they wanted to strengthen and improve the government, could do a lot more. And there are serious issues that are impacting people.

Another area that's impacting people very significantly, and it intersects with consumer services and government services, as well as, to a lesser degree, the Ministry of Finance, is an issue of the cost of living. The government has a role to play in the cost of living. There are certain issues that the government has a direct impact on. One of the areas that constituents have spoken to me about and that the government can do a lot more to strengthen and improve our lives if they were to take steps on is auto insurance, for example.

Auto insurance is something that we mandate. The province has said very clearly that people must have auto insurance. Now, as soon as the government mandates something and says you have to have something—you have to have auto insurance. If the government on one hand says you must have something, the government also has a responsibility and an obligation to make sure that that product is affordable. So if the government on one hand says that you must purchase something but on the other hand doesn't provide the appropriate regulations, the appropriate oversight, the appropriate mechanism to

ensure that that product is affordable, then the government is failing to do their job. With respect to auto insurance, it's very clear that the government has made decision after decision which certainly improves the conditions for insurers, the insurance companies, but does very little to improve the circumstances for the consumer. That's another area where the government could strengthen and could improve, but they're not.

I'll give you a concrete example: While the government has reduced the costs for insurance companies by implementing severe limitations in terms of caps for what people can claim when they are injured—so they implemented a series of caps. These caps significantly reduced the amount of coverage that we receive. By reducing the coverage we receive, the government has benefited the insurance companies. They've reduced their costs as well. They don't have to pay out as much. But as a result, we haven't seen any significant reduction in auto insurance premiums.

We put a lot of pressure on this government back in 2013 and said very clearly that the people in this province are paying the highest auto insurance premiums. People are very upset about the fact that they're paying such high auto insurance premiums, and something needs to be done. We started off and provided one solution. We said, "Listen, one solution is, why don't you get rid of the postal code criteria? Instead of having insurance rates set by where you live in one broad region, have it set by the way you drive."

So we proposed Bill 45. Bill 45 would have seen, in census metropolitan areas like the GTA, that people all be treated the same in one broad area. People in northern Ontario could be treated differently. People in southern Ontario could be treated differently. People in rural Ontario could be treated differently. But in one similar area, like Ottawa or the GTA or the greater Hamilton area, there shouldn't be a 100% or a 200% difference in premiums from one region to another region—which is perhaps one area in the same city, or the same GTA—that are only 10 or 20 kilometres apart from each other. That seems to be absolutely unfair. The government voted against that. Both the Conservatives and the Liberals voted against that.

We said, "Fine. There is another option for you to strengthen and improve the government with respect to this issue. If you're not willing to get rid of the unfairness of discriminatory practices when it comes to where you live and how much you're being charged in insurance, then why don't you just reduce insurance, broadly speaking?" We've seen such a reduction in our benefits, but we haven't seen any reduction in our premiums. We put forward a motion. It was a motion that I was proud to introduce. It was an opposition day motion, and it said that we call on this government to reduce auto insurance by 15%.

We were very encouraged by the fact that the government, after our hard work and after all the work we did around raising this issue, all the work we did in terms of submitting petitions—we were able to submit 10,000

petitions on the issue that auto insurance rates were too high. We were happy to see that after we introduced this motion, the government then agreed to this motion. It's quite rare for a government to support an opposition motion, and I applaud the government for doing that. That was a good step. They said, "Yes, we agree that auto insurance should be reduced by 15%." The NDP and myself were able to raise this issue. I presented this issue in this House, and the government supported the motion.

Then we said, "The government has now indicated that they're willing to move on this idea of reducing auto insurance by 15%," so we put that forward as a budget demand. In the budget demand—there were a number of demands that we put forward, and of those five demands, one of the major demands was the fact that auto insurance premiums were too high and we wanted to see a 15% reduction.

We were again encouraged because the government, through our pressure, through putting some attention on this issue, through applying pressure on the government in a minority situation—we put pressure and said, "We need this reduction." The government agreed, and they promised an 8% reduction in one year and a 7% reduction in the following year.

We waited one year, from 2013 to 2014. We spoke to people in our ridings, spoke to people in the Peel region, spoke to people in the GTA, and said, "Have your premiums increased or decreased? The government has promised to reduce it by 8%." People resoundingly said that their premiums, instead of going down, went up.

We said, "Well, the government has now broken their promise. They supported a motion to reduce 15%. They supported a budget where we asked for this. They passed laws. Now they've broken, essentially, their own law. They've broken their promise, and we're left with a situation where people are seeing their insurance premiums going up instead of going down."

We asked people about this. They said, "The rates are going up." We said, "If rates are going up, the government has broken its promise. We can no longer support the government." We took this issue and said, "We will fight an election on the fact that this government broke their promise to reduce auto insurance rates."

The community supported certain areas, and we were thankful for that, but broadly speaking, the community then decided to vote the Liberals back into power, even though they had broken their promise. We respect the decision of the community.

But now we're left with a situation where the government has broken their promise. They haven't met the deadline of reducing insurance rates in the first year by 8%. Now we're into the second year, and they're certainly not on any track to meet the second deadline of an additional 7%. So we don't see the 15% reduction happening.

This bill could have implemented some changes, if they wanted to strengthen and improve the government. This is a major concern. This was a promise made. They could have implemented legislation that would have

strengthened the public's trust in the government by saying, "Listen, we acknowledge that we broke our promise, and we are going to implement certain steps to make sure that insurance rates do come down." Again, they missed that opportunity here. They amended various acts—various ministries are impacted by this—but a serious area where they've broken a promise is that the government has not implemented any changes or any legislation that would actually rectify that situation. This is a lost opportunity.

We've hit a number of areas where I've provided suggestions. If this bill is to be approved, it can be improved by strengthening, really, in a substantial way, various ministries. We can look at the Ministry of the Attorney General. There are ways to strengthen what's an incremental change in this bill, but we can make it a significant change.

We could protect the right to a trial and enshrine that protection. Where there's a serious impact, perhaps, on your driving record or on your insurance liability, these are serious matters, and you deserve a right to a trial. Broader than just protection of the individual when it comes to your personal demerit points and perhaps implications to your insurance, but broadly speaking, the right to a trial provides an accountability mechanism. It's a check and balance. Removing the right to a trial would weaken a check and balance, would weaken our society. This is an opportunity for the government to strengthen and improve the government by saying, "Listen, we will enshrine the right to a trial. You do have a right to a trial in these circumstances. We will not implement an AMP system, particularly in areas where there are serious implications in terms of your rights."

A parking ticket scenario is very different. I wouldn't be overly opposed to the parking ticket scenario where an AMP system is implemented, where if there is clear evidence that you violated a parking bylaw and you're provided a ticket, you don't have a right to go to a trial. In that circumstance, I think that's something that many folks can support.

In fact, the Ontario Paralegal Association released a position paper on this issue and said that, with part II offences—parking ticket offences—maybe that's something where the AMPs might be an efficient system, and there's no major concern in that area. But they did raise concerns around the impact to access to justice on implementing an AMP system for part I or part III offences, offences that have a broader impact on your driving record and, broadly speaking, what I had said earlier, have an impact on that check and balance when it comes to your interaction with the police.

I spoke about the Ministry of Labour and the fact that in the Ministry of Labour, if we really want to implement some serious changes while allowing for the collection of monies owed to employees, this is a good step. I support that step.

There's a lot more that can be done in terms of really looking at how we can implement a complaints mechanism so people can complain and raise issues about the

workplace without any fear of repercussion, without any fear of losing a job. In my region, when they're already so precarious in terms of their employment, they're not faced with the fear of losing something that's already so insecure, something that's already so unstable.

Beyond that—and I really want to reiterate this point—if you don't have compliance, if you have no enforcement, there's really no point. So if employers are not complying with the labour act and the Ministry of Labour does not have the appropriate enforcement in place, then the laws that we have literally become meaningless. They're just words on paper. The only way that those words on paper become meaningful in people's lives is when there is enforcement, when the enforcement protects the rights of workers. That's something that the Ministry of Labour could do. It could take this opportunity to strengthen the Ministry of Labour more so than in just this one area.

I notice that I'm getting close to my time to end. Maybe I'll just leave it at that, Mr. Speaker. If you're happy with the time at this point, I can wrap up here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the member from Brampton–Gore–Malton. Additional time will be granted at a later point in time.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is close to 10:15 right now, this Legislature stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Steve Clark: Today is the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation's fourth annual awareness day at Queen's Park. I see my constituents are up there: Jacqui Bowick-Sandor and her husband, Bruce. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: On behalf of the member from York Centre, who unfortunately is not here today, I would like to welcome Robert Davidson, the president of the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation and a constituent from Markham–Unionville, who is here for the fourth annual IPF Awareness Day.

The CPFF will also be hosting a reception this evening in the dining room, from 5 till 7 p.m., and all are invited.

Mr. Patrick Brown: It's my pleasure to recognize Wendy Johnston, who is the grandmother of Calvin Kudar, who is beginning as a page here at Queen's Park.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: It's my pleasure to introduce the Honourable Drew Caldwell, Manitoba's Minister of Municipal Government and responsible for the energy portfolio, who is visiting with us today in the east lobby.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Member for Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce in your gallery today an individual who used to work here for the former leader of

the official opposition, our friend Jacqui Delaney. It's good to see you, Jacqui.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want all the members of the House to greet my long-time executive assistant in my Thunder Bay–Superior North constituency office, the hard-working and devoted Larry Joy.

Hon. Mario Sergio: From the riding of York West, I have 105 wonderful ladies belonging to the Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women visiting Queen's Park. I wish them a wonderful stay and hope that they enjoy question period here in the House.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It's my pleasure to introduce the mother of page Krishaj Rajbhandari. The mother is Jasmine Rajbhandari, and she's here with us today.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My comment today is not to introduce anybody but to acknowledge the loss of a great friend of this place. Last night at about 10:30, former member and cabinet minister Hugh O'Neil, from the riding of Quinte, passed away in his 79th year. My condolences go to Donna, his wife, and his family. It's a sad loss for here and a sad loss for the community.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to introduce the parent and grandparent of page Alexander Ce Wang. They're in the gallery today. The father is Pike Ge Wang; the grandmother is Yuelian Li. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I want to welcome some visitors from the great riding of Scarborough–Rouge River, in the east gallery. Some of them are here and some are coming in. They are from the Taibu Community Health Centre in my riding. These are participants in the Ubuntu project out of the community health centre, and I want to welcome them to Queen's Park today.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe that you will find that we have unanimous consent for all members to be permitted to wear gold ribbon pins in recognition of the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation's IPF Awareness Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Halton is seeking unanimous consent to wear the ribbon pins in recognition of the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation's IPF Awareness Day. Do we agree? Agreed.

We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the Honourable Leo Housakos, the Speaker of the Senate of Canada. Please join me in welcoming the Speaker of the Senate.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would now ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving the first session of the 41st Parliament. Would you please assemble?

They are Nuh Abdul Nur Ali from Durham; Jaleelah Ammar from St. Paul's; Sameer Bapat from Willowdale; Wendy Cao from Trinity–Spadina; David Fan from Markham–Unionville; Anna Farley from Eglinton–Lawrence; Sydney Groskleg from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke; Matthew Keon Hartford from Timiskaming–

Cochrane; Kelly Hu from Oak Ridges–Markham; Eastyn Klages from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound; Calvin Kudar from Simcoe North; Gabriel LiVolsi from Davenport; Duha Muhammad from Mississauga South; Siena Pacheco from Chatham–Kent–Essex; Laura Page from Scarborough Centre; Krishaj Daibagya Rajbhandari from Scarborough Southwest; Jacob Raponi De Roia from Ottawa South; Grace Maili Sengfah from Bramalea–Gore–Malton; Angelica Voutsinas from Toronto–Danforth; and Alexander Ce Wang from Welland. These are our pages for this session.

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY OMBUDSMAN

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I rise to give you notice that I will be filing a point of privilege with regard to the government's decision to violate the Ombudsman Act and use the order in council to appoint an interim Ombudsman.

Two points very quickly: Section 7 of the Ombudsman Act is clear that cabinet can only seek an order in council in the event that the House is not in session, not because the government couldn't get their way. This sets a dangerous precedent for the government to circumvent the House, especially when there are other legal avenues available to the House in order to deal with this matter.

Secondly, section 26 of the Ombudsman Act also allows for the office of the Ombudsman to continue to function, with the exception of issuing reports. Section 26 makes it clear that the Ombudsman office would still be able to act on behalf of Ontarians when it comes to investigating complaints.

It is our hope that you will rule on this expeditiously. We will ensure that our submission is filed with you at the quickest—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member. I was giving him some leeway. This is an announcement of your intent, and that's all it should be, but I gave you some room to say something.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TEACHERS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Public elementary and French teachers are still without a contract, and this government has walked away from the table. Yesterday it became clear that the government has made no progress in the ending the education chaos they've created.

1040

Parents of young children are left in the dark. Five days isn't enough time to make different child care arrangements, to find a daycare space. Parents deserve

certainty; children do not deserve this uncertainty, and that is exactly what the Liberal government is giving them.

Mr. Speaker, after a year without a contract, how can the Premier—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And that will end it. Thank you.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, after a year without a contract, how can the Premier continue to leave parents wondering if their children will be in the classroom?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think that everyone in this House knows that we were all pleased that all of our students, our teachers and support staff were in school the day after Labour Day, Mr. Speaker. We worked very, very hard to find agreements with all of the federations. We are in a situation where there are tentative agreements with OECTA and with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, and that is a very, very good thing.

We have worked hard to negotiate with the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. There are dates that have been set for the French teachers' negotiations to continue. We will continue to work hard to find those agreements within the parameters of what has been put in place for the other teachers. I think that that's reasonable. That is exactly what we said. We said there was a difficult fiscal situation. We have been able to find agreements with the secondary teachers and OECTA—

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The government walked away from the table. We don't know how long before a full-blown strike. We don't know how long before extracurriculars are cancelled. The Liberals continue to use students and parents as their pawns. It won't be long before elementary schools will cancel services the kids cherish, like sports clubs, plays and field trips. All will be gone—all gone—because the government is not in it for the students.

Mr. Speaker, we don't need a part-time Premier. Instead of spending her time being distracted by partisan federal campaign activities, when will the Premier do her job and get a deal done?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will just—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. It goes both ways.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will say to the Leader of the Opposition that I think he will know that I had a meeting in the middle of the summer with all of the components, with all of the—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: With Justin Trudeau?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, Mr. Speaker, the heckling from across the way about the federal election—I just want to be perfectly clear: This has absolutely nothing to do with the federal election.

Our children being in school is about our kids having the opportunity to learn. The education system in this province is one of the most important things that this government has responsibility for. I will remind the member opposite that the reason that I and many of my colleagues in this caucus are involved in provincial politics is because of the turmoil that was in place when my children were in school. That's what compelled me to get involved in provincial politics.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Opposition House leader, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You could get one too. That would be two.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: The Liberal government is responsible for the longest strike in over 25 years. Before that, just two years ago, thousands of students lost their extracurricular activities. Now parents and children are left wondering what other hardships the Liberal government—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The Liberal government has slashed thousands of daycare spots, leaving parents with nowhere to turn if classes are indeed cancelled. Ontario families deserve certainty. The part-time Premier should stop being distracted and focus on doing her job. Why does the Premier care so little about parents who are scrambling to find daycare spots?

Interjections.

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

My attempts have been to try to ask for quiet, in a very quiet way. So from now on, I am going to move immediately into warnings of individuals. That's it. You asked for it, and you're getting it.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think my helpful team told me that I misspoke—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton is warned.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: When I said that this issue had nothing to do with the provincial election, I meant with the federal election, Mr. Speaker.

This has to do with children being in school. I have a granddaughter who started grade 1 this year, and I have a granddaughter who started junior kindergarten, full-day kindergarten. This is her first week of full-day kindergarten. There's nothing dearer to my heart than making sure that our publicly funded education system is working—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That means having all of our kids in school. It means having all of our teachers and all of our support staff in school, which is why I was so pleased that we were able to come to tentative agreements with OECTA and OSSTF. We'll get there with the—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin-Caledon is warned.

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Across the province, and at doors in Simcoe North, I heard a common theme: trust. The Premier has lost the trust of families in Ontario because of her fire sale of Hydro One. By turning her back on independent oversight, the Premier has lost the province's trust. The Premier barred eight independent officers from doing their jobs, before the Hydro One fire sale even began.

The Premier isn't in this deal for taxpayers. The Premier has turned the lights off on accountability. Will the Premier restore independent oversight to her fire sale of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just go through the ways that this has been a transparent process and that oversight is in place.

I would say to the member opposite, as I said yesterday, that the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One is about finding a way to invest in the infrastructure that we know we need across this province. I understand that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't support the investment in infrastructure, but we know it's necessary, whether it's roads, bridges or transit across the province.

Throughout this entire process, we have been open and transparent—

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just start. The plan was included in our 2014 budget and in the 2014 Liberal platform. The advisory council that we asked to give us advice on this issued an interim report and a final report—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party is warned.

Finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Both were publicly available. We held a technical briefing for both opposition parties and for the media to give them the technical information about this process.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The people of Ontario should be able to trust their government. Sadly, that trust has been eroded by years of shady deals: gas plants, Ornge, eHealth. In fact, I don't think the Premier even has the trust of her own cabinet, especially when hearing the words of the chair of cabinet, the deputy House leader, the member from St. Catharines, who said, "anyone who looks ... at Hydro One ... would recognize ... that is best kept in public ownership and public hands." Anyone who sells one of their largest revenue tools is headed toward bankruptcy.

Mr. Speaker, if the Premier can't gain the confidence of her own cabinet, how can the people of Ontario expect her to manage this fire sale?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I think I said to the leader of the third party at one point, I think we should all just deal with our own teams; we have a very cohesive team.

I want to talk a little bit more about the transparency and oversight that we've put in place. We brought in Denis Desautels, who is the former Auditor General of Canada, to oversee the IPO. The member opposite knows that publicly traded companies are subject to different oversight mechanisms than crown corporations. I think he knows that full well because he in the past has been very supportive of the private sector, Mr. Speaker. In fact, he has said that he believes that the private sector often works better than government and knows how to run business.

Hydro One will be regulated by the Ontario Business Corporations Act, the Ontario Securities Act and the Ontario Energy Board. They will have to file information with the Ontario Securities Commission and disclose the compensation of top executives.

Mr. Speaker, there are oversight provisions in place. They are solid. They will provide the information that the people of Ontario need.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: It's not just the independent officers who are concerned; over 70% of the people of the province have made it clear they don't welcome the Hydro One fire sale. The people of Ontario do not approve of a deal being done in secret while you delay the prospectus.

The people of Ontario deserve to have their government watchdogs at work. The protection the watchdogs offered in the past found millions in overbillings and discovered the billions squandered with the smart meters. Those same watchdogs deserve to be able to do their job to protect taxpayers under this fire sale.

Mr. Speaker, when will the Premier return oversight—real oversight—by the independent officers of Parliament to her fire sale?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Leader of the Opposition uses an interesting term when he talks about a “fire sale.” I will just say that one of the guiding principles that we held onto as we went into this process was that we would not do what had been done by that party with the 407.

We made it very clear that it was extremely important for the government and the people of Ontario to retain 40% ownership, making sure we retained control of the board in terms of being able to remove the board, being able to remove the CEO and making sure that no entity could own more than 10%. None of those provisions were in place when the 407 deal was put in place—none of those protections.

The regulation of the sector in terms of the OEB setting rates: That remains in place. I’m not going to take lessons from the opposition, Mr. Speaker, about fire sales.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The time does not arrest my original words.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier has promised again and again to be open and transparent with the people of Ontario, but the sale of Hydro One is shrouded in secrecy. Only the Premier and her powerful friends know the details behind this sale, and only the Premier and her powerful friends know how fast hydro rates will skyrocket.

Why is this Premier breaking her promise to be open, transparent and accountable to the people of Ontario, the very people who own Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, let me just address the two parts of that question. First of all, the leader of the third party knows full well that the way electricity rates are set now is the way electricity rates will be set in the future, and that is that the Ontario Energy Board sets those rates. She knows full well that the Ontario Energy Board has received applications for rate reductions, has received applications for rate increases, and the Ontario Energy Board makes those decisions.

But on the transparency of this process, let me just again go through what we have done to ensure that there

is transparency, that there is openness. We have put in place Denis Desautels, who was the former AG of Canada, to oversee the IPO.

Hydro One will be regulated—and I know the leader of the third party knows this—by the Ontario Business Corporations Act, the Ontario Securities Act and the Ontario Energy Board. They will have to file information with the Ontario Securities Commission.

There are protections in place, there is oversight in place, and that is as it should be.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier “has pulled an iron curtain over Hydro One.” Those aren’t my words, Speaker. Those are not my words. That is how the Globe and Mail described it on June 2.

In fact, the Premier has gone so far to undermine accountability that all of the independent officers of this Legislature, save for the electoral officer, stood up to her move and said that this was the wrong thing to do. They said this was an unprecedented plan and that it was the wrong thing to do.

Now she’s refusing to listen to the chamber of commerce and provide concrete evidence that hydro rates will not rise as a result of this sell-off scheme.

Why is the Premier doing everything that she can to avoid transparency and accountability when it comes to the privatization of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We are broadening the ownership of Hydro One. The people of Ontario and the government will retain 40% ownership. No entity will be able to own more than 10%. We are doing that because we know that it is critical at this point in our history in this province to invest in infrastructure around the province. It is critical that we invest in the roads and the bridges and the other large infrastructure across the province that is needed by communities in order for them to be able to thrive.

The leader of the third party doesn’t like that investment. She has not been supportive of the transit investments; she has not been supportive of the infrastructure investments across the province. But the fact is that we know those are needed. We know that the Hamilton LRT, and roads and bridges in Kenora, Thunder Bay and in Sudbury are all needed if those communities are going to thrive. We’re going to make those investments. That’s what this is about.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In the last election, the Premier’s platform said, “Strong leadership means making Ontario more open and democratic,” but the Premier’s leadership has meant breaking promises and ignoring Ontarians, who overwhelmingly reject this scheme to sell off Hydro One.

This is the Premier who stripped Hydro One of public oversight. This is the Premier who removed the Ombudsman’s power to help consumers at Hydro One. This is the Premier who refuses to fully co-operate with the Financial Accountability Officer.

Will this Premier admit that accountability and transparency are only the first things that Ontarians are going to lose with the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party understands—I know, because she supported the legislation when we talked about the Financial Accountability Officer. She supported the legislation that gave the Financial Accountability Officer authority, within parameters, and we're operating within those parameters. We are following all of the rules around that accountability to the Financial Accountability Officer. When he has asked for information, we have given him the information within those parameters. She knows that full well.

I know she doesn't like the idea of broadening the ownership of Hydro One. I get that; I absolutely get that. But the fact is that we, as government, had to make a choice. We had to make a choice about whether we were going to go ahead and make investments in infrastructure or not. We know that for the economic well-being of this province, we need to make those investments. They need to be made across the country, but we are going ahead—

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Public opposition—not just my opposition, but public opposition—to Hydro One is growing by the day in this province. People are disappointed by this Premier's broken promises and frustrated by her refusal to hear what Ontarians have to say.

1100

The prospectus was supposed to be released within this month, but so far it's nowhere to be seen. The owners of Hydro One, the actual people of Ontario who own Hydro One, still have no idea what they're going to find when that prospectus is finally released.

Why does this Premier think that the owners of Hydro One should be in that position? Why does she think that the owners of Hydro One should be left in the dark?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: They won't be. Again, we've always said that the Hydro One prospectus would be filed with the OSC this fiscal year and it will be. That was our commitment and it will be filed.

I guess the question I would want to ask the leader of the third party is why she doesn't support the investment of infrastructure, why she doesn't understand that if we don't take this opportunity right now to have a vision for the economic viability, competitiveness and prosperity of this province—why she doesn't understand that that will short-change our children and our grandchildren. That will not set us up to be competitive globally.

When I travelled to China last year, I heard, over and over again, concerns about our investments in infrastructure: Were we going to be able to compete and were we going to be able to continue to draw foreign direct investment if we didn't make those investments? We're going

to make those investments. Part of that was reviewing our assets, and that's what we did.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It must be so embarrassing to be the only Premier in the history of this province who can't keep Hydro One public while at the same time investing in infrastructure for the people of Ontario.

This Premier has promised that the government will retain de facto control over a privatized Hydro One, but Ed Clark promised private investors that they will be in control. The Premier says one thing; her special adviser says exactly the opposite.

When will the Premier finally show us, in writing, who it is we should believe?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, the leader of the third party ran pretty much on our fiscal plan in the last election. She actually said, on May 7 of this year, and I quote Andrea Horwath, "There's no doubt we did talk in our platform about looking at some of the physical assets that the province owns. I mean, you can never be closed-minded about that."

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will let history judge our government on our investments. When the historians look back and see that we electrified the Barrie line, the Kitchener line, the Lakeshore East line, that we built the Hamilton LRT, that we built the new alignment of Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph, that we put improvements in place for Highway 417 in Ottawa and in London, that we built the Maley Drive extension in Sudbury, that we four-laned the highways between Thunder Bay and Nipigon, and we put the second phase of the—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontarians overwhelmingly reject the Premier's sell-off of Hydro One. That is the fact. That is a fact. They want to be listened to, they want information, and they want the Premier to stop this \$9-billion privatization scheme.

This morning, I agreed that I would meet with the Premier to talk about these concerns and explore how, together, we can actually ensure that this is a fully informed public debate on the sale of Hydro One, including public hearings and independent analysis of the government's decision. That's what I would like to see. I'm hoping that we can have that meeting to discuss those very things. That's what Ontarians expect. They expect to be heard. They expect public processes. They deserve that.

Will the Premier agree to meet with me to talk about this issue before this sale goes any further?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Since I sent the leader of the third party the letter asking for the meeting, yes, I will meet with her. I got your response. I'm happy to meet with you. And at that meeting, I'm happy to talk about Hydro One, and I'm also happy to talk about the investments that we are making in infrastructure. I hope that the leader of the third party will be willing to talk to me about her vision for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and for investing in transit and transportation infrastructure that will help us along that way and will allow for the economic prosperity of communities around the province. Those are very important parts of our plan, and I'd be interested to hear her perspective on those.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. All summer long, fiscal alarm bells were ringing. Here is a sample of media headlines from over just a one-week period in July:

—Maclean's magazine: "S&P Downgrades Ontario" credit rating;

—Financial Post: "Ontario's Job Killer: Business Sounds Alarm Over Soaring Electricity Prices";

—Globe and Mail: "Fiat Chrysler CEO Fires Warning Shot at Ontario";

—Toronto Sun: "Hydro One Goes Dark";

—Toronto Star: Ontario falls "Short on Auto Insurance."

That was a heck of a week, Premier. You put business, family and seniors in jeopardy. Why can everyone see this but you?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question, because the member opposite is talking about where Ontario is going, recognizing the challenges that Ontario and Canada, and the world, have faced over the last number of years through the global recession.

And yet, economists now predict that Ontario will lead Canada. Economists recognize that Ontario has done a tremendous job of increasing employment—over 555,000 net new jobs since the recession—and Canada recognizes that we must stimulate growth. The federal government and the Leader of the Opposition weren't there for us when we needed that stimulus. Ontario did stand up, Ontario did invest and now we have the lowest unemployment in relation to the rest of Canada. We will continue to lead. We recognize more needs to be done and we will do so.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: On your fifth downgrade, S&P warned, "Ontario is a sustained and projected underperformer." The Ontario chamber cautioned that "soaring electricity prices have reached a crisis point." One in—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Trinity-Spadina is warned.

Finish.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: The chamber said that one in 20 businesses is expected to shut their doors. The CEO of Fiat Chrysler told you that Ontario risks further reducing its competitive position with your pension tax and your cap-and-trade tax, and instead of achieving a 15% insurance rate reduction, you failed to even hit 7%.

Ontario was once the economic engine of Confederation, but Liberal bungling of every single financial issue has reduced us to a have-not province. When are you going to stop driving business out of Ontario and start listening to the experts?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Well, here's what some experts have to say—and the most important experts of all are the investors. Ontario has become the top destination anywhere in North America for foreign direct investment, beating out California, Texas, New York and every other province.

Here is what some of the rating agencies do have to say: Fitch stated that Ontario has demonstrated "the ability to exert considerable, ongoing expenditure restraint while instituting revenue changes as necessary to achieve its deficit reduction objectives."

Moody's noted our prudent debt management, large diversified economy and significant flexibility in financial management.

DBRS said our rating affirmation is supported by Ontario's "continued adherence to its fiscal recovery plan targets and DBRS's belief that it is increasingly likely fiscal balance will be restored as planned."

Ontario will continue to address the deficit, we'll continue to stimulate the economy and we will balance by 2017-18, because the people of Ontario expect their government to be there with them as we proceed going forward.

TEACHERS

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. For over a year, this Liberal government has failed to reach new collective agreements with thousands of teachers and education workers across Ontario. Now the Liberals have failed again by allowing talks with elementary teachers to collapse.

Real negotiating means being at the table; it means working in a genuine and meaningful way to reach a deal. It doesn't mean that a government tries to impose deals, and it doesn't mean that a government walks away from bargaining. Will the Premier instruct her Minister of Education to get back to the table and get back to meaningful negotiations before the end of today?

1110

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Let me tell you what's been going on over the last year. In fact, over the last year, we've spent well over 1,000 hours negotiating with OECTA,

the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, and we have a tentative agreement. We've spent well over 1,000 hours negotiating with OSSTF, and we have a tentative agreement as a result of those negotiations. So I totally reject the notion that we haven't been negotiating. We have been negotiating, and we have got tentative agreements.

We also will be resuming our negotiations tomorrow with our francophone teachers. We've spent hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of hours with our francophone teachers. We have been working with anybody who wanted to come to the table to make sure that we have agreement.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'd like to note that the education minister has also neglected 55,000 education workers with CUPE this last year.

Back to the Premier: Parents and students are frustrated and disappointed with the Premier. For over a year this Liberal government has failed to reach agreements that will protect the quality of our children's education and respect all of our teachers and education workers. The only way to reach those agreements is to show leadership. Get back to the bargaining table and negotiate in a genuine and meaningful way. Why won't the Premier do the right thing, restart negotiations, and send her minister back to the bargaining table today?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I do want to note that we do value our relationship with our education workers. We in fact have been actively negotiating with CUPE, which represents a number of the education workers. We continue to negotiate with CUPE. We've had a lot of hours, a lot of days with CUPE over the last several weeks, so we are actively negotiating with our education workers.

But we are concerned, in the case of the elementary teachers in the English public system, that they did leave the table last May 11. They have come back recently. They came back September 1, and when we had the chance to talk to them, we wanted to expedite the process to make sure we protect our students' education. We did offer them a settlement similar—

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

BEAR CONTROL

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: My question this morning is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. This summer my riding of Sudbury and the surrounding area has seen a significant increase in black bear sightings. Already this year there have been over 2,000 calls to the ministry's bear reporting line. This is an increase from the 1,400 calls reported in 2014. Last week, I organized a meeting with the local municipal leaders, the police service, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to discuss black bear management.

Constituents in my riding are concerned about the increase in bear sightings in the community and want to know what is being done to ensure public safety. So, Mr.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry: Can the minister please explain what is your ministry's role when it comes to managing black bear encounters?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for his question. I know that this has been a difficult summer for him and for his community of Sudbury in regard to this particular issue, and I want to thank the member for his advocacy on this particular file.

Speaker, on this issue, of course, public safety is the number one priority for our government when it comes to black bear management in the province of Ontario. You, your family, your property—in any circumstance where you feel threatened—the first and appropriate response is 911. There's been no equivocation from our government under any circumstances; that is absolutely the first thing that you should do.

Once they're on the scene, the police have the ability, where they feel it's necessary in certain circumstances, to call the MNRF for further support on this file. That happens on occasion. But we want to be clear: The police agency is absolutely the appropriate response, as a first responder, in any emergency situation, including black bears.

I want to thank the member for his advocacy on this issue—

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

Hon. Bill Mauro: —and there's more to say in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'd like to thank the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry for that answer.

Recent meetings with municipal leaders and the local police service and the MNRF representatives are a positive step in coordinating our response efforts to bear encounters in my community. Constituents in my riding have asked what options are available to address bear encounters. Some have suggested that trapping is an option. Others claim that MNRF needs more resources.

I understand that our government has invested over \$35.3 million to educate Ontarians on ways to prevent bear encounters, and no other jurisdiction has invested as much as Ontario in teaching people about how to prevent bear encounters.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can the minister please explain what his ministry is doing to address all of these bear encounters?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again, I thank the member for the question. I want to start by addressing the resourcing issue.

I know that the third party has been in northern Ontario this summer, suggesting that the issue related to black bears is a result of the planning resources from our ministry. I would remind especially northern Ontarians that it was the NDP, when in government, that cut the MNRF budget by some 21%. I would further remind people that when the Conservatives came into power, they additionally cut a further 21% from the MNRF budget.

Since 2003 or 2004, our Liberal government has increased the budget of MNRF by some \$200 million, so I think it's important for people to know that.

Obviously, I would add, in terms of the member's question, on the trapping issue, some see this as a response. The science has been pretty clear: It is not an effective bear management tool. Oftentimes, when the animals are trapped and relocated, they return to the area from which they came. Quite frankly, trapping does not deal with the emergent situation when people feel they're threatened and that their health and safety is threatened—

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

Hon. Bill Mauro: Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I entertain the next question—the bantering that's going on is disruptive, and somebody has a W, so I don't think I would want to continue.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, on October 1, the ministry will slash another \$235 million from physician services, at a time when Ontario's population is growing and struggling to find a doctor; at a time when our aging population requires more help, more time with front-line services, and more complex care.

Minister, you're turning your back on doctors and the patients they care for. How can you continue to insist you're fully funding health care when you continue to make cuts to doctors, nurses and pharmacists?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the first question coming from my new PC Party health critic. I welcome the question, and I welcome the ones to come.

I think the member opposite knows—because he's from the health sector himself—that we negotiated with our doctors for more than a year, and we used a framework, in fact, for those negotiations that was agreed to by both parties.

We brought in a facilitator, Dr. David Naylor, to try and bring the two parties together. We brought in retired judge Warren Winkler as a conciliator, to try to reach an agreement. In fact, it was Warren Winkler's recommendation to the government and to the OMA that the OMA accept the government's reasonable offer. Unfortunately, the OMA decided not to accept that offer.

As the framework—that both parties had agreed to—provides for, we continue to implement that framework and made the changes that Warren Winkler had actually recommended to both parties.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the minister: Minister, you're asking doctors to foot the bill for medical care your government should be covering. We know you tried to hide the \$54-million cut in the health care budget. The deal you forced on Ontario's doctors is restricting access to care for those in need.

Doctors know how much their patients need them, and you aren't allowing them to do their job. These cuts will

impact care in the future, as doctors will retire or leave the province instead of continuing to work in Ontario.

Minister, how can you justify these cuts when so many patients are in need?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: As this Legislature knows, not only am I a physician, but I have nothing but the greatest respect for the doctors that practise in this province. They are the best in Canada, and they are among the best, in terms of compensation, in Canada, as well they should be.

What I think disturbs me a little bit is that the OMA has characterized this as about the provision of health services to Ontarians, that somehow we're cutting services that are available to Ontarians. Nothing could be further from the truth.

1120

In fact, these negotiations have only been about one thing: They've been about compensation to physicians; over the past 10 years roughly we've seen an increase in physician compensation from the government of roughly 70%. So we're asking our physicians to take a pause in that. We've had to make a modest reduction to the compensation that they receive, but it enables us to continue to fund and indeed expand our funding to areas like home care, our personal support workers and others.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. Today The Globe and Mail reported that an Infrastructure Ontario executive had admitted in February 2011 to taking part in a \$1.2-million kickback scheme, and at least one senior official executive at Infrastructure Ontario knew about this admission. Despite this, the executive was later hired to oversee St. Michael's Hospital's \$300-million patient centre construction project. Apparently the hospital was unaware of this executive's admitted role and involvement in the kickback scheme.

Why didn't the Infrastructure Ontario executives let anybody know that one of their top executives had admitted to fraud?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the member for the question. It is a question, I think, that is a very serious one and one that we take very seriously. I can assure you that Infrastructure Ontario also shares those concerns. They've taken action right from learning of this particular challenge.

The first thing they did is retain an external law firm to review the procurement process with that St. Michael's Hospital project, which is important. They immediately informed the chair and vice-chair of their board of directors, which was important. They immediately informed my ministry, which was also an important act for them to take. They've written to the CEO of St. Michael's Hospital requesting that the employee in question be removed from the project, which has since been done. Just as importantly, IO has also just initiated a process to retain an independent firm to investigate the

employment and the departure of this employee. I thank the member for the question. It's a serious issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It seems that unfortunately Infrastructure Ontario has taken action immediately four years after the fact, which is a serious problem. The Globe investigation revealed that Infrastructure Ontario's chief risk officer knew about the kickback scheme as early as January 2012. The risk officer reported directly to the CEO of Infrastructure Ontario, David Livingston.

In May 2012, Mr. Livingston left Infrastructure Ontario to become Dalton McGuinty's chief of staff. Did Mr. Livingston or anybody else in Infrastructure Ontario know anything about this kickback scheme and did they inform anybody within the ministry?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think the questions raised by the member are legitimate questions. I think that's why it's important that Infrastructure Ontario has brought forward an independent adviser, an independent firm, to investigate the issue. They are serious issues here. To the best of our knowledge, the board had not been informed of the particular circumstances around this individual, which is something that I think is open to question.

So I take the matter seriously. Infrastructure Ontario takes the matters seriously. Indeed, we look forward to determining—while the actions taken by this individual, the alleged actions, were outside of his capacity as an employee of IO, the fact is, he was an employee of IO at the time, and we want to make sure there are no discrepancies during his time employed by IO.

POVERTY

Mr. Mike Colle: My question is for the minister responsible for poverty reduction. This morning, Minister, you made an important announcement at FoodShare, a non-profit that works with communities and schools to deliver healthy food and food education as part of the local poverty reduction fund.

Minister, you announced that the fund will help FoodShare evaluate two existing programs, the Good Food program and the Urban Agriculture program, and measure their success in improving the quality of life for those living in poverty. It would also help FoodShare determine how it can expand its program and bring good, healthy food to more communities in need. I know that the fund is an important part of our second poverty reduction program that will make sure programs improve people's lives and better focus our poverty reduction targets.

Speaker, could the minister please tell the House about this new Local Poverty Reduction Fund?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: That is an excellent question, and I do want to thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for his ongoing commitment to improving the lives of people in his community and well beyond.

I was delighted this morning to be in the riding of Davenport with the member for Davenport at FoodShare

to announce one of the successful projects in our Local Poverty Reduction Fund.

Speaker, the Local Poverty Reduction Fund was established as part of our second Poverty Reduction Strategy. It's a \$50-million investment over six years in innovative community-based projects that measurably improve the lives of people. We announced the fund in April with an initial expression of interest, followed by a formal call for proposals in May. We've made quick progress: 233 applications were received, and we are now starting to announce the successful 41 projects.

These community-based projects, we have heard, are strong, and we want to measure—

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

Mr. Mike Colle: With this Local Poverty Reduction Fund, it seems it will help non-profits like FoodShare make a significant difference in people's lives across Ontario, with this fund offering help for people living in poverty.

You emphasize evaluation and gathering of evidence about poverty reduction strategies. The fund emphasizes the importance of reviewing and focusing our poverty programs, which will help us deliver results in our communities.

Minister, why is it so important that the Local Poverty Reduction Fund focus on results and outcomes?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member from Eglinton–Lawrence is correct. This fund is unique. With this fund, we will do things differently. We want to tap into innovative local solutions. We want to build unlikely community partnerships, and ultimately establish a new way of tackling poverty, one that's rooted in investment. In short, Speaker, this is about impact investing. It's about spending our precious dollars where they make the difference—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Deb, is there more coming for the 1%?

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

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews:—where those investments will make the biggest difference in the lives of individuals.

Reducing poverty means investing in the right supports. It's more important than ever to make sure that our dollars are getting measurable results and to focus on evidence-based funding for initiatives that work. That's why we're placing a strong emphasis on evaluation and evidence with this fund. Many studies have been conducted on poverty, Speaker, but what we're lacking is evaluation—

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

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, you are the chief law officer of the province of Ontario, responsible for the administration of

justice in all our courts. Your ministry is spending millions on programs to improve access and efficiency, such as the Better Justice Together program.

Last week the city of Toronto dismissed over 800,000 provincial offences dating back to 2002. Another reason these cases were dismissed was that it would cost \$23 million to collect the outstanding \$20 million in fines. Municipalities require these revenues to pay for needed services to the public. These cases demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that the administration of justice, your responsibility, is failing.

Minister, will you correct these failings, or can we expect more provincial offences to be dismissed to meet your efficiency targets?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, I wanted to thank my friend for being appointed as my critic, and I hope that I will make your job easy.

This is a very important matter that my friend is raising. This is a process that is administered by the municipality. The municipality took the decision to not proceed with those because they made an administrative decision that it was more costly for them to pursue these parking tickets. They decided to just write it off. It's their decision.

But access to justice is very important. I want to make sure that we make it easy for people to access justice, and I am going to continue to work with municipalities to do exactly that.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Again to the Attorney General: Minister, the administration of justice is being brought into disrepute. It is clear that either we have too few courts or far too many laws for your ministry to administer in a competent and able fashion.

Earlier this year, your ministry proposed creating an administrative monetary penalty system, AMPS for short, which would deny people access to the courts and prevent them from defending themselves when charged with a provincial offence. Minister, is this how you intend to solve the problem of costly administration and lack of court space—by eroding and removing the hallmark of our justice system, the right to defend oneself before an impartial judge?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The member is raising a good question, but I can assure you—we, first of all, just launched a consultation. We have received numerous opinions on it. We are reviewing all of these comments, and I want to thank all of those who participated.

One thing I want to assure you is that everybody will be treated fairly, and if they wanted to challenge the decision of this tribunal—we have not decided where we are moving forward, but I can assure them that they will be able to appeal the decision.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. Twelve thousand pensioners of US Steel—formerly

Stelco—and their families, who have been building lives and communities for decades in Hamilton, Stoney Creek, Welland and Nanticoke, are under threat. They have been told by the judge overseeing the credit protection process that the court has no ability to ensure that the pensioners will get what's owed to them ahead of the US parent company, which, in a terrible situation, as predicted, is raiding the corporation, removing parts, heading back to the States and scrapping the parts in Hamilton—outrageous.

Many of these pensioners may not outlive this process, and are living in fear for their retirement security. What is this government doing to stop the further raid of US Steel's Canadian operations?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I sincerely appreciate the question coming from the member, who I know has intimate relations with those affected by this situation. It is a tragedy, and it is why the government of Ontario has stepped forward to protect the interests of the workers and the pensioners from the very beginning. We'll continue to do so.

As the member obviously knows, the government has been working with the company. We know that what we want to achieve is the best possible outcome for the pensioners. It is before the courts, there are procedures that are taking place, and we're going to work towards doing everything possible to support the people of Hamilton and, more importantly, the pensioners and those we know that are being affected. We are arm in arm to try to do everything we can to protect their interests.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Minister, through the Speaker to you, the pensioners who put in 30 to 40 years of their lives deserve every penny of what US Steel owes them. These employees agreed in good faith that part of their compensation would be in form of company pension contributions; that is, Minister, deferred wages, which they negotiated. They accepted lower wages then as part of their deal, and now US Steel is effectively trying to steal the remainder of their wages and their benefits and their retirement security. This is theft, Minister.

How is this government going to protect those pensioners? I'm not sure. And what is this government doing to ensure that any future foreign owner guarantees that pension funds will be there when needed for the people of Ontario, for the people of Canada, that they'll be protected in their retirement?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member I believe knows that Ontario is the only province in Canada that actually has a pension guarantee fund to protect those are affected in the case of bankruptcies, which is what's occurring here today. It is before the courts. Processes are under way.

He should also know, and I think the people of Ontario know, that the government of Ontario also provided support by way of loans to enable that company to continue to provide its services for the benefit of the pensioners. That's also a question.

We're all at the table. We all recognize that everyone is being affected, and we're trying to minimize the adverse effects of that process. Please stay in touch with us. I appreciate the ongoing discussions that we've had over the last number of months on this issue. We want to support the pensioners and the people of Ontario who are affected by this.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, post-secondary education is a big investment for Ontario families. With the start of the new school year, many students in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore and throughout the province want to know about the different financial aid programs that are available to them to complete their studies.

I understand that Ontario has one of the most generous student financial assistance programs in Canada. When we entered office in 2003, almost zero grant programs were in place for students, but we've worked hard to make the financial aid system more progressive. Now, low- and middle-income students pay substantially less than they did just 10 years ago.

Minister, can you please inform the members of the House on how our government is making post-secondary education more affordable and accessible for students across Ontario?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that question. Our government is committed to ensuring that our students in Ontario have access to the best quality of post-secondary education and that post-secondary education is accessible and affordable, and based on their ability to learn, not on their ability to pay. That's why we have made a number of key investments to help make our post-secondary education more accessible and affordable to our young people.

Last year, we invested \$1.3 billion in grants and loans for our students across the province of Ontario; 70% of that funding was non-repayable by the students. We capped tuition fee increases at 3%, which saves students about \$1,200 over four years. And this year, the 30% Off Ontario Tuition Grant will help students save up to \$1,000 in tuition fees. When you count—

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

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you to the minister for that answer. It's reassuring to know that our government remains committed to supporting students across post-secondary education on the basis of their ability to learn, not to pay.

Many students in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore heavily rely on the Ontario student aid program to cover the costs of their post-secondary tuition, and I understand that more than 380,000—more than half of all full-time students—received financial aid last year alone.

Minister, when our government passed the 2015 budget, I was happy to learn that we were in fact

announcing several changes to OSAP that will provide additional financial support to students attending college or university. Minister, can you please inform the members of the House about the most recent changes to the Ontario student aid program that were announced in the 2015 budget?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Again, I want to thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that question. We are modernizing OSAP by indexing the maximum student loan limit to inflation, helping students save up to \$1,000. We are launching the Ontario Student Loan Rehabilitation Program. We are also capping student debt to not more than \$7,400 per two-term year.

We are also making the OSAP assessment process more transparent and easier for our students by exempting vehicles as an asset and also giving students the option to not take out the full, maximum loan. Also, we're exempting the first \$3,000 of a student's assets.

Mr. Speaker, when you take into account the tuition fees in Ontario and the financial assistance which students receive from the government, the cost of post-secondary education in Ontario is one of the lowest in this country, and we are very proud of that. We have learned and listened to our students, and we have acted based on their recommendations. That's why we are modernizing—

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

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is for the Minister of Health. A constituent in my riding needs two surgeries, but neither surgery can be done unless she receives physiotherapy treatment first to regain mobility.

Minister, your rules say that because she is 53 years old and not on ODSP, she does not qualify and has to wait 12 years before she can access physiotherapy. Will you address this concern and be straight with the people of Ontario, and tell them why there is money for Liberal friends and scandals but no money for the many Ontarians who need access to rehabilitation services?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I would certainly hope the member knows that the changes we made recently, a couple of years back—the result of that was it doubled the number of publicly funded physiotherapy clinics in the province.

In addition to that, we expanded the coverage, not simply to include those clinics but to specifically target our seniors—I think the member opposite would appreciate the importance of that—to where 200,000 additional seniors in this province are receiving publicly funded physiotherapy services as a result of those changes that we made.

Mr. Speaker, as well, we rely on our CCACs to make that determination, to be the single point, if you will, of access and determination with regard to a patient's needs, including for physiotherapy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Minister of Health: What we do know is that lots of people are going without care. Here is the truth: You've been laying off nurses, you're axing medical residency spaces, and you're cutting funding for surgeries, diabetic strips and physiotherapy treatments.

Minister, will you stand up today and give Ontarians an honest answer? Will you say why you're denying my constituent and many others access to physio and surgery across this great province?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I think the member opposite knows that his constituents, for example, in Owen Sound, up until a couple of years ago, had to travel to London for their physiotherapy services. As a result of the changes that we made, there are now publicly funded physiotherapy services existing in Owen Sound. These are the types of changes that we've made to benefit the people, not just his constituents, not just of his riding, but across the province.

We've increased the funding to physiotherapy by \$156 million—or we're investing, rather, \$156 million annually, to expand those services to those who need them. But again, we rely on our CCACs to make that individual determination with regard to an individual's need for physiotherapy services, services now that are publicly available in Owen Sound.

VISITORS

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

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you, Speaker. I wanted to introduce a couple of guests today in the members' gallery. They are the mother and grandmother of my great legislative assistant, Leo Lehman. We've got Debby Lehman and Penny Wray in the gallery with us. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in welcoming page captain Grace Maili Sengfah's mother, Ja Kai Shwe, who is in the gallery today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

DEFERRED VOTES

PROTECTION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DU DROIT À LA PARTICIPATION AUX AFFAIRES PUBLIQUES

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

Bill 52, An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act, the Libel and Slander Act and the Statutory Powers Procedure Act in order to protect expression on matters of public interest / Projet de loi 52, Loi modifiant la Loi

sur les tribunaux judiciaires, la Loi sur la diffamation et la Loi sur l'exercice des compétences légales afin de protéger l'expression sur les affaires d'intérêt public.

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

The division bells rang from 1143 to 1148.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members please take their seats?

On December 10, 2014, Madame Meilleur moved second reading of Bill 52. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Hillier, Randy	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Natyshak, Taras
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Horwath, Andrea	Nicholls, Rick
Bisson, Gilles	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzi	Pettapiece, Randy
Campbell, Sarah	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Jones, Sylvia	Qaadri, Shafiq
Clark, Steve	Kiwala, Sophie	Rinaldi, Lou
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Smith, Todd
Damerla, Dipika	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Dei Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Thibeault, Glenn
DiNovo, Cheri	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dong, Han	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
Duguid, Brad	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Fife, Catherine	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McDonell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Forster, Cindy	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Fraser, John	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
French, Jennifer K.	McNaughton, Monte	Yurek, Jeff
Gates, Wayne	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	MacLaren, Jack	Yakabuski, John
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norm	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 87; the nays are 8.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2015, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

INVASIVE SPECIES ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 SUR LES ESPÈCES ENVAHISSANTES

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

Bill 37, An Act respecting Invasive Species / Projet de loi 37, Loi concernant les espèces envahissantes.

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

The division bells rang from 1152 to 1153.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Hillier, Randy	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Natyshak, Taras
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Nicholls, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Orazietti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Brown, Patrick	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Campbell, Sarah	Jones, Sylvia	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Clark, Steve	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Smith, Todd
Crack, Grant	MacLaren, Jack	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	MacLeod, Lisa	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Thibeault, Glenn
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Thompson, Lisa M.
DiNovo, Cheri	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Dong, Han	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiene
Duguid, Brad	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Fife, Catherine	McDonell, Jim	Wong, Soo
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Forster, Cindy	McMeekin, Ted	Yakabuski, John
Fraser, John	McNaughton, Monte	Yurek, Jeff
French, Jennifer K.	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David
Gates, Wayne	Milczyn, Peter Z.	

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 95; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2015, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

There are no further deferred votes.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, I want to correct my record. In my remarks, I mentioned that our 30% Off Ontario Tuition Grant saves students up to \$1,000. In fact, it saves students up to \$1,830.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As we all know, members are allowed to correct their own record, and that is appropriate.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1156 to 1500.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, on a point of order: I just want to rise and give notice to you, Speaker, that I will be providing arguments to you regarding the House leader from the third party's point of privilege that he gave notice of this morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You were quick enough for me not to have to interrupt. I will explain here, for the sake of everyone, that there are no vehicles for notices of notices. That's how it works. That is, when you submit them to the table, they get submitted to the table and we deal with them. Just so that everyone is aware, from this morning and this afternoon, there is no notice-to-give-notice process.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You know, he's always here with me. It's my executive assistant, Merv Richards from Amherstburg. I want to welcome him, of course, to a new session here, but I also want to wish him a very happy 65th birthday today. He said he's definitely voting NDP in the federal election because Tom Mulcair is going to lower the rate of retirement down to 65 and he can finally get out, finally retire.

Thank you very much, Speaker. Thank you, Merv. Happy birthday.

Hon. David Orazietti: It's my pleasure to introduce a number of folks who are in the gallery here: Julia Jankowski, ministry staff of MGCS, Shane Carry and Dimitar Dimeski; as well as Mario Deo, who represents the Canadian Condominium Institute, and Stephen Hamilton from the Ontario Home Builders' Association, who are here for the second reading of Bill 106, Protecting Condominium Owners Act.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Further introductions? Last call for introductions.

Happy birthday.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I say enough is enough. Now, you may think that I'm referencing the Liberals' mismanagement in the financial world that has led to an S&P downgrade, or you may also think of a number of OPP investigations and scandals. But I am not.

The fact of the matter is, I'm speaking about the seemingly growing disrespect and carelessness we're witnessing on our roads. This past summer, Huron-Bruce residents experienced too many needless, tragic, life-changing accidents on the road. I'm using my first statement of this session to appeal to Ontarians to slow down and share the road.

I must admit, Speaker, that I became very angry when former neighbours of my parents lost their lives in a senseless accident because someone was rushing to pass a transport truck. I became angry when I learned that a favourite high school teacher was struck by a vehicle when training for a triathlon. Sadly, there were more. That's when I said enough is enough.

At AMO, I spoke to the member for Burlington about her share-the-road legislation, now known as Greg's Law, and I asked for her advice as to how to increase awareness. I have also spoken of sharing the road in my most recent householder. And today, I ask all members in this House to work together with me to unite in sharing the message that driving is a privilege not to be taken for granted.

Please, everyone, slow down and share the road.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: In June, the NDP called on the Liberal government to give Ontarians input on its climate action plan, including their cap-and-trade program. The only way to move forward on a fair and effective climate change policy is to make it fundamentally transparent and open for public input.

Climate change is already costing Ontarians hundreds of millions of dollars from extreme weather damage. The 2013 ice storm alone showed how profound weather-related disruptions can be.

A serious response to the challenge of climate change requires leadership by the government, public support and public trust. We asked before and we ask again that the whole climate change program, including cap and trade, be brought to the Legislature for review by an all-party committee and proper public consultation when the plans are introduced.

Ontario's New Democrats believe that climate change policy must deliver real, measurable reductions in carbon pollution and must be transparent, allowing everyone to see the costs, the benefits and the effects. We also believe that low-income and middle-class Ontarians, who are already struggling to get by, shouldn't bear an unfair burden in our response to climate change.

Lacking those key elements, the Liberals' proposed climate action plan and carbon pricing cannot succeed.

EVENTS IN HALTON

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today and talk about the event-filled summer we had in Halton. It's no secret that the face of Halton is changing. We're one of the most rapidly growing regions in the entire country, and with this growth comes exciting new changes.

Over the summer I had the pleasure of attending a number of special community picnics that really showed what makes our region so great. The Italian Canadian, Tamil, Hindu, Filipino and Muslim communities, among others, held family picnics all through the summer. It was

a pleasure to get out and experience these special cultural celebrations and to see and taste all that Halton has to offer, and Halton has a lot to offer: everything from samosas and spring rolls to fantastic pizza and barbecue chicken. We had some great local talent too: bhangra dancers, singers, dragon dancers and so much more.

Each one of these events had their own unique charm, but they all shared a common thread: They all demonstrated the strength of Halton's growing diversity. We have a rapidly growing and changing community, and Halton residents are welcoming others with open arms, sharing their traditions, their food and their art. Diversity and acceptance are what make Halton so special.

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day is marked on the ninth day of the ninth month of each year. FASD Awareness Day reminds the world that, during the nine months of pregnancy, women are to abstain from alcohol consumption. This important day was first celebrated in 1999.

It is estimated that nine out of 1,000 babies that are born in Canada suffer from fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. FASD Awareness Day reminds the world of the dangers of drinking during pregnancy. Across the globe, bells are rung at 9:09 a.m. throughout every time zone.

Back home in my constituency of Elgin-Middlesex-London, in St. Thomas, we have started our own awareness demonstration that occurs every year at city hall. It celebrated its 10th anniversary this past year and has been led by a great constituent of mine, Ethel de la Penotiere. I want to take this opportunity to thank Ethel and all the dedicated volunteers in my riding and across this province for their efforts to raise awareness of this important issue.

We need this government to officially recognize the prevalence of FASD so that these individuals are no longer neglected by our health and education system.

BAPU SURAT SINGH KHALSA

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Today, I rise to raise awareness of the plight of Bapu Surat Singh Khalsa. He is an 82-year-old man who has now endured 243 days of a peaceful hunger strike. He is protesting the unfair treatment of minority communities being detained as political prisoners in India. He is raising awareness on their plight. They are being treated disproportionately unfairly compared to other prisoners. These prisoners have spent considerable time in custody and are eligible to be released under government discretion; however, they are being denied this release.

On February 26, 2015, Bapu Surat Singh was arrested along with his son Ravinder Jeet simply for engaging in this peaceful protest to raise awareness of the plight of political prisoners.

I call on the international community to stand in solidarity with political prisoners across the world to ensure that they are treated with the dignity, respect and justice that they deserve.

MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, the Premier and members of this Legislature joined with the GTA's Mexican community to raise the Mexican flag and celebrate the 205th anniversary of Mexican independence, on the lawn of the Ontario Legislature. Ontario is home to more than 30,000 people of Mexican origin. They're an educated and growing community, devoted to building a prosperous Ontario.

Mexico's consul general Mauricio Toussaint has worked with the province to develop the many shared opportunities Mexico and Ontario have together as NAFTA partners. The Premier has pledged to visit Mexico.

1510

Mexico is, of course, a tourism and vacation destination of choice for sun-starved Ontario residents during our long, cold and grey winter months. Equally importantly, Ontario firms in Mexico are building and expanding that nation's industrial and transportation infrastructure. Ontario's high-value and high-skill businesses specializing in planning, engineering, finance, consulting, construction and manufacturing are helping build challenging and rewarding careers in both Ontario and Mexico as Mexico builds modern cities, airports, roads and civil infrastructure.

Mexico and Ontario have an opportunity to bring Ontario's expertise in electricity generation and transmission to Mexico. Working together, Mexico and Ontario can reduce Mexico's carbon footprint in energy generation and transmission. We can expand and diversify electricity generation and transmission and bring clean, green, sustainable electricity to Mexico's 124 million people.

MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Steve Clark: On behalf of the leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, Patrick Brown, and all of our caucus members, I want to, as well as the honourable member prior, extend my warmest congratulations to all Mexican Canadians celebrating Mexico's 205th independence day today. I'd also like to join with all members in thanking the consul general of Mexico in Toronto, Mauricio Toussaint, for organizing the wonderful event that we had, both on the lawn and in this building, as a reception.

On September 15, 1810, Miguel Hidalgo made the cry for Mexico's independence in the town of Dolores. The Cry of Dolores is what helped to initiate the movement for Mexico's independence, which culminated in Mexico officially achieving its independence in 1825. Today, we are here to celebrate the 205th year of the Cry of Dolores, also known as "el Grito de Dolores."

Ontarians of Mexican descent have left and continue to leave a historic mark on the province of Ontario. Your welcome contributions span communities across Ontario and are reflected in our economic, political, social and cultural life, for which I think all members extend their thanks.

On behalf of my leader, I look forward to working with your community in the years to come as we move toward our shared journey to build a better Ontario. Gracias, and have a great independence.

EYE EXAMINATIONS

Mr. John Fraser: Students and families in Ottawa South and all over our province headed back to school earlier this month. I can still remember the hope and excitement in our household when our three children were younger, and it was always a very busy time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to remind parents of the importance of having their children's vision tested. In Ontario, routine eye examinations for children younger than 20, provided by an optometrist or a physician, are covered by OHIP.

We know that 80% of learning is visual, and vision problems create obstacles for children to achieve their full learning potential. One in six children has a vision problem, yet most children do not get an eye examination before the age of five. Since vision plays an essential part in a child's ability to learn, excellent sight and eye health are critical in their development.

I encourage all parents to have their children's vision tested so they can be confident and fully able learners. I would also like to encourage all of my colleagues to use their householders and other communications to share this important information with families in their ridings.

HISPANIC COMMUNITY

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to extend my best wishes to all the Guatemalans, Salvadorians, Hondurans, Nicaraguans, Costa Ricans and Chileans as they get set for their independence day celebrations.

Our province is so fortunate that many of our neighbours from Central America and Chile have called Ontario home for a number of decades now. I'm privileged to represent the great riding of Davenport, which has such an active and engaged Central American and Chilean community, and I'm truly humbled that I have the opportunity to recognize them here today in the House.

It gives me great pride to know that my first private member's bill, which received royal assent on May 5 earlier this year, was to declare October Hispanic Heritage Month. For the first time, this October we as a province will recognize the important contributions that Guatemalan, Salvadorian, Honduran, Nicaraguan, Costa Rican, Chilean and all Hispanic and Latino Canadians have made and continue to make to our province's social, economic and multicultural fabric through Hispanic Heritage Month.

Last week I attended Viva Mexico festivities in my riding of Davenport and told them about Hispanic Heritage Month. When I shared with them that next month would be about them, they were proud—proud not only that Ontario was recognizing their contributions to Ontario but proud to share in the spirit of diversity, multiculturalism and coexistence that personifies this great province of ours.

Remarks in Spanish.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mrs. Albanese assumes ballot item number 65 and Ms. Hoggarth assumes ballot item number 67.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated September 15, 2015, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GREAT LAKES SHORELINE RIGHT OF PASSAGE ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE DROIT DE PASSAGE SUR LE LITTORAL DES GRANDS LACS

Mr. Gates moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 118, An Act to create a right of passage along the shoreline of the Great Lakes / Projet de loi 118, Loi créant un droit de passage le long du littoral des Grands Lacs.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: The bill creates a right of passage along the shoreline of the Great Lakes between the water's edge and the high-water mark. The right is limited, as specified in the bill.

THE GAGE RESEARCH INSTITUTE ACT, 2015

Mr. Dong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr24, An Act to revive The Gage Research Institute.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following changes be made to the ballot list: Mrs. Albanese and Mr. Thibeault exchange places in order of precedence such that Mrs. Albanese assumes ballot item number 78 and Mr. Thibeault assumes ballot item number 65; and that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice of ballot items 65, 68 and 69 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Leal moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following changes be made to the ballot list: Mrs. Albanese and Mr. Thibeault exchange places in order of precedence such that Mrs. Albanese assumes ballot item number 78 and Mr. Thibeault assumes ballot item number 65; and that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice of ballot items 65, 68 and 69 be waived.

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

1520

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Motions? The Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Jeff Leal: A bill that's getting great discussion in the great riding of Peterborough every day—I move government order G106, Protecting Condominium Owners Act, second reading.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm just going to remind the minister that we're not at that order in orders of the day. You're a little early, so I'm going to ask the page to return his motion.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Okay, can I give the Peterborough—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No.

Motions? Last call for motions, I believe.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, on a point of order, I suspect.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, on a motion.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You don't present motions for unanimous consent.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I believe I have unanimous consent.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay, so I will recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on a point of order, seeking unanimous consent.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the House schedule.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the schedule. Do we agree? Agreed.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, you have the floor.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 6(a), when the House adjourns on Thursday, September 17, 2015, it shall stand adjourned until Wednesday, September 23, 2015.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Yakabuski moves that, notwithstanding standing order 6(a), when the House adjourns on Thursday, September 17, 2015, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, September 23, 2015. Do we agree? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO FARMERS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario farmers were prevented from meaningfully participating in government consultations around changes to allowable crop protection tools during the spring of 2015 due to the government scheduling consultations during prime planting season;

“Whereas the regulations the government of Ontario passed on Canada Day severely restrict the use of treated seeds that are of critical importance for grain farmers in preserving their crop yields and these changes are expected to cost Ontario's economy over \$600 million a year;

“Whereas it will be virtually impossible for farmers to access these necessary treated seeds for the 2016 planting season due to the bureaucratic hurdles being put in place by the province;

“We, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the government of Ontario to suspend the class 12 regulations that were passed on

July 1, 2015, to allow for farmers to plant in 2016, as they did in 2015; to allow for meaningful dialogue on the regulations, their intent and other approaches to achieving the same end, that won't devastate farmers in the province.”

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Catherine Fife: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another wrong choice.

“Whereas once you privatize Hydro One, there's no return; and

“We'll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“We'll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“We'll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what's happened elsewhere” in other jurisdictions;

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

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

It's my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a petition here that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children. Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, the Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Matthew.

CONCUSSION

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the rate of concussions among children and youth has increased significantly from 2003 to 2011, from 466 to 754 per 100,000 for boys, and from 208 to 440 per 100,000 for girls; and

“Whereas hard falls and the use of force, often found in full-contact sports, have been found to be the cause of over half of all hospital visits for pediatric concussions; and

“Whereas the signs and symptoms of concussions can be difficult to identify unless coaches, mentors, youth and parents have been educated to recognize them; and

“Whereas preventative measures, such as rules around return-to-play for young athletes who have suspected concussions, as well as preventative education and awareness have been found to significantly decrease the danger of serious or fatal injuries; and

“Whereas Bill 39, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to concussions, was introduced in 2012 but never passed; and

“Whereas 49 recommendations to increase awareness, training and education around concussions were made by a jury after the coroner’s inquest into the concussion death of Rowan Stringer;

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

“That the Ontario government review and adopt Rowan’s Law to ensure the safety and health of children and young athletes across the province.”

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Mrs. Tania McCaffrey, from my riding of Nickel Belt. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government has made ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients” under certain conditions; and

“Whereas, since October 2009”—that’s six years ago—“insured PET scans are performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay,” but not in Sudbury; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with Health Sciences North, its regional cancer program, and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine”;

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to make PET scans available through Health Sciences North, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens” of the northeast.

There is a fundraiser for the PET scan on October 22, and the tickets are on sale.

I’ll ask Siena to bring the petition to the Clerk after I sign it.

1530

PERSONAL-INJURY LAWYERS

Ms. Soo Wong: I’m pleased to send a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas personal-injury lawyers often charge contingency fees of up to 45% of a settlement;

“Whereas it is in the public interest for reasons of transparency, consumer protection and public accountability that the Ontario superintendent of insurance be authorized to collect from personal-injury lawyers and paralegals representing claimants on tort and accident benefits claims, information on case-specific fee arrangements, costs, disbursements and referral fees to determine the impact of such fee arrangements on the cost of auto insurance in Ontario;

“Whereas consumers do not understand how these fees are calculated;

“Whereas the high costs of hiring a lawyer are preventing Ontarians from accessing justice;

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

“That the government introduce legislation to cap the maximum rates that personal-injury lawyers charge injured motorists;

“That personal-injury lawyers be required to submit to the superintendent of insurance information on fees, disbursements and referral arrangements;

“That the superintendent publicly publish an annual report on the information collected;

“That the superintendent develop a consumer-friendly fee disclosure statement that must be used by personal-injury lawyers.”

I support this petition and I will give my petition to page Duha.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s lack of leadership is forcing the closure of the South Bruce Grey Health Centre restorative care Chesley site; and

“Whereas it is ignoring evidence that the restorative care program has had major successes since its inception three years ago; and

“Whereas it has helped over 300 patients to increase their quality of life by helping them regain strength, balance and independence; and

“Whereas it has improved patient outcomes for over 80% of patients who returned home feeling confident of their recovery; and

“Whereas the loss of this critical care will see patients readmitted to hospitals, to emergency room visits or

having to stay in acute care beds longer, representing the costliest options in our health care system; and

“Whereas vulnerable seniors in our communities take the position that there is evidence of funding cuts for home care services; and

“Whereas our senior and all other vulnerable patients deserve access to compassionate care and treatment as close to home as possible;

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

“To provide the necessary base funding to keep the South Bruce Grey Health Centre restorative care Chesley site in operation so that the health and welfare of our most vulnerable patients remains intact.”

I fully support it, will affix my seal and send it with page Grace.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to introduce a petition on behalf of residents of my community of Essex that reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Highway 3 from Windsor to Leamington has long been identified as dangerous and unable to meet growing traffic volumes; and

“Whereas the widening of this highway passed its environmental assessment in 2006; and

“Whereas the portion of this project from Windsor to west of the town of Essex has been completed, but the remainder of the project remains stalled; and

“Whereas there has been a recent announcement of plans to rebuild the roadway, culverts, lighting and signals along the portion of Highway 3 that has not yet been widened;

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

“To revisit plans to rebuild Highway 3 from Essex to Leamington and direct those funds to the timely completion of the already approved widening of this important roadway in Essex county.”

I couldn't agree more, Speaker. I will affix my name to the petition and send it to the Clerk's table via page Jacob.

CONCUSSION

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the rate of concussions among children and youth has increased significantly from 2003 to 2011, from 466 to 754 per 100,000 for boys, and from 208 to 440 per 100,000 for girls; and

“Whereas hard falls and the use of force, often found in full-contact sports, have been found to be the cause of over half of all hospital visits for pediatric concussions; and

“Whereas the signs and symptoms of concussions can be difficult to identify unless coaches, mentors, youth and parents have been educated to recognize them; and

“Whereas preventative measures, such as rules around return-to-play for young athletes who have suspected concussions, as well as preventative education and awareness have been found to significantly decrease the danger of serious or fatal injuries; and

“Whereas Bill 39, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to concussions, was introduced in 2012 but never passed; and

“Whereas 49 recommendations to increase awareness, training and education around concussions were made by a jury after the coroner's inquest into the concussion death of Rowan Stringer;

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

“That the Ontario government review and adopt Rowan's Law to ensure the safety and health of children and young athletes across the province.”

I agree with this petition.

HEALTH CARE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? I recognize the newly appointed deputy leader of the official opposition, the member from Leeds-Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for those kind words.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas providing patients with access to information about their medical doctor's treatment history is fundamental to regulating the medical profession and ensuring Ontario's health-care system is accountable and transparent;

“Whereas currently, Ontario patients do not have access to this information, which is also an important measure to improve patient safety and empower them when making decisions about medical treatment;

“Whereas making public all information about complaints, cautions and remedial action taken against a physician does not diminish the College of Physicians and Surgeons' ability to self-regulate, but rather brings balance to the relationship between doctors and patients;

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

“That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care act immediately to implement the transparency and accountability measures contained in Bill 29, An Act to amend the Medicine Act, 1991.”

It's my bill, Speaker, so I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition and send it to the table with my page whose name, I'm sorry, I can't pronounce.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Cindy Forster: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Sciences North is facing major budget shortfalls leading to a decrease of 87,000 hours of nursing care in psychiatry, day surgery, the surgical unit, obstetrics, mental health services, oncology, critical care, and the emergency department, the closure of beds on the surgical unit, as well as cuts to support services including cleaning;

“Whereas Ontario’s provincial government has cut hospital funding in real dollar terms for the last eight years in a row; and

“Whereas these cuts will risk higher medical accident rates as nursing and direct patient care hours are reduced all across the hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Stop the proposed cuts to Health Sciences North and protect beds and services.

“Increase overall hospital funding in Ontario with a plan to increase funding at least to the average of other provinces.”

I support this petition, affix my signature and give it to page Siena.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition in support of GO train access for Cambridge, Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily; and

“Whereas the current options available to travel into the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging; and

“Whereas the residents of Cambridge believe that they would be well-served by rail transit that connects this city to the rail station in Milton, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

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

“Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge.”

I support this petition, affix my signature and give it to page Jacob to take to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for petitions has expired.

Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, this is the second time for me to get this right. I know I was a little enthusiastic the last time I got up. We’re moving forward this afternoon with government order G106, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, something that has tremendous support right across every part of Ontario.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECTING CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE CONDOMINIUMS

Mr. Orazietti moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 106, An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998, to enact the Condominium Management Services Act, 2015 and to amend other Acts with respect to condominiums / Projet de loi 106, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums, édictant la Loi de 2015 sur les services de gestion de condominiums et modifiant d’autres lois en ce qui concerne les condominiums.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Orazietti has moved second reading of Bill 106. Please continue.

1540

Hon. David Orazietti: Thank you, Speaker. I’m certainly honoured today to rise for second reading of Bill 106, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015. I want you to know, Speaker, that I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, Chris Ballard, the MPP for Newmarket–Aurora, who will also participate in this part of the debate.

Ontario continues to be at the centre of North America’s condominium boom. This success has been a double-edged sword. Condominiums, which were not so long ago considered a niche form of ownership, have grown to play a major role in providing a housing option of choice for millions of Ontarians. Condo communities offer convenient, accessible and affordable living that caters to a wide range of different lifestyles.

Many condominiums are clearly well-managed and maintained and meet the expectations of owners and residents. However, the rapid growth of the condo sector has also led to challenges and conflicts that threaten the well-being and investment of condo owners.

The Protecting Condominium Owners Act, if passed, will introduce much-needed measures to strengthen protection for those who buy and live in condos. This is a critical step forward to ensure that we are meeting the needs of an ever-growing market.

The existing Condominium Act was passed in 1998, at a time when fewer people lived in condos, and when the issues revolving around day-to-day life in condos were far less complex.

Today Ontario has about 700,000 condo units and 10,000 condo corporations, with approximately 1.3 million condo residents in the province. This means that approximately one in 10 Ontarians lives in a condominium.

Condos also represent about half of all the new homes being built in this province, in a housing sector worth almost \$45 billion and employing more than 300,000 Ontarians.

It's important to keep in mind that as the market goes through growth and transformation, the province must also grow and adapt to ensure that we meet the needs of this large and ever-changing housing sector. The huge growth in condominium development occurring in our province means that we need new, updated laws now more than ever.

It has become clear what is likely to happen if we do not reform the existing condo laws. We have every reason to expect:

- a further deterioration of condominium living, with increased potential for fraud and mismanagement;
- a continued rise in the number of very expensive, court-appointed administrators taking over the control of condos from boards and managers;
- more and more costly disputes between owners, and between owners and boards; and
- desperate condo owners experiencing significant losses to the value of their homes.

These are all obviously things that we are trying to avoid by introducing this legislation.

During the extensive consultation process which preceded the drafting of the proposed legislation, we heard from condo owners and residents who were worried that their quality of life and significant monetary investments were in jeopardy.

It's imperative to overhaul the existing condo laws to better meet the needs of the province's transformed condominium landscape.

The proposed new legislation marks the first significant change to the condo legislation in about 17 years.

Speaker, the proposed legislation would address these concerns by improving protections for condo owners. It would create clear rules to protect buyers and prevent surprises over unexpected costs after purchasing a newly built condo. I'm confident that, if passed, it will truly modernize Ontario's condominium sector.

We embarked upon a review of the act and, as I touched on earlier, the size and complexity of Ontario's condo market has changed dramatically since the last amendments were made to the current Condominium Act. To address the vast growth and change in the condo sector, Ontario conducted a review of the current Condominium Act using an innovative and collaborative public engagement process, where we received over 2,200 submissions with suggestions on how to improve the current legislation. The review clearly revealed that Ontario requires:

- new laws and tools to increase consumer protection for condo owners and buyers;
- improvements to how condominiums are run and managed;
- new mechanisms for dispute resolution, and
- the means to strengthen the financial sustainability of condominium buildings.

The proposed legislation is based on over 200 specific recommendations that came from condo owners, residents, developers, managers and industry experts through this comprehensive public review.

The Condominium Act review marks a truly collaborative approach to consultation and is a prime example of open government—government that engages its citizens to improve outcomes. And it's a way of boosting public confidence in government and of building a stronger province. I'm proud of the innovative methods used to create this proposed legislation and truly believe that it has led to an act that, if passed, will provide a framework to address the needs of today's condo owners and residents now and into the future.

I'd like to use this opportunity to provide you with the details on this review process and highlight the steps taken to ensure that input was collected from many diverse groups of people, representing a broad range of experience and expertise within the condo sector.

The review was completed in three stages using multiple methods to gather feedback from condo owners, residents, managers, boards, developers and experts within the condo community.

Stage one, which we launched in September 2012, involved four types of engagement sessions, which included, first of all, a set of public information sessions that provided information about the review as well as town hall forums for over 500 participants in five different communities across the province. It also included a residents' panel of 36 representative condominium residents from across the province, which met for three full-day sessions to learn more about condominiums, discuss those very specific issues and propose solutions.

It also included stakeholder round tables, bringing together 25 stakeholders from across the condominium community for four full days to identify issues and discuss solutions. As well, it involved inviting the entire condominium community in Ontario to provide input, resulting in over 400 emails, letters, and approximately 180 additional formal submissions.

The four sessions contained participants from diverse groups within the condo community. Yet each engagement session saw similar issues emerging, which we then used to create a framework for stage two discussions.

In the second stage of the review process, which was launched in March 2013, we had approximately 40 experts gather for an additional one-day session. This stage involved five working groups, comprised of people that represented a broad cross-section of the condo industry. The participants in stage two were chosen to ensure that voices from all parts of the condo sector were represented in the discussions and have impressive experience in the field.

Each working group reviewed one of the five key areas that were raised during stage one consultations, including consumer protection, financial management, dispute resolution, governance and condominium management. The recommendations that were generated by stage two working groups were then reviewed by a panel of 12 experts from across the condo community. The stage two process resulted in an additional 200 recommendations.

Moving to stage three, the final stage of the consultation process began in the fall of 2013 when the residents' panel reviewed the recommendations generated during stage two. In addition, five round table sessions were held across the province which provided a forum for condo residents and stakeholders to give their feedback on recommendations. These sessions also provided an opportunity to further explore the idea of establishing a condo authority and asked participants to comment on the proposed funding models.

The general public also had 45 days to provide additional feedback on the recommendations through various channels, including an online feedback forum, email and other submissions to the ministry. We received more than 1,400 responses, providing us with valuable input that was considered when drafting the bill. This final stage was completed in early 2014.

Another important mechanism used to obtain suggestions on updating Ontario's current condo laws was the creation of an advisory group. This group was comprised of experts in the condominium sector who helped the ministry better understand the issues that arose during the review. While not a decision-making body, the advisory group provided feedback and advice on the review process, insight into the issues and recommendations raised and information about the project to interested parties. Their expertise was invaluable to the review, as these individuals deal with condo-related issues on a daily basis.

Let me highlight some of the key features of the legislation. The proposed legislation was informed by the input and recommendations we received during an extensive consultation process. I think that's evident. It reflects the needs and aspirations of condo owners and residents for their communities, to which they are deeply committed. The bill embodies the expertise and vision of many within the condominium sector. It underscores our government's commitment to strengthen current and future condominium communities across the province. The proposed legislation would help provide greater confidence and security for condo owners in their investment and in their day-to-day lives in their chosen communities.

1550

The legislation consists of two key parts. The first part would make sweeping reforms to the Condominium Act and would also make a series of changes to the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, as well as other statutes. The second part would establish a new act: the Condominium Management Services Act, 2015. If passed, it would regulate the province's 2,500 condo managers. The act would require managers and management providers to be licensed and meet certain qualification and training requirements.

This proposed legislation has five key aspects. My colleague and parliamentary assistant in the ministry, the MPP for Newmarket–Aurora, will expand in a few minutes on some of the important details about the proposed act. But I'd first like to provide an overview of the impact that this legislation would have, if passed.

First of all, it would improve dispute resolution for condo owners and boards. Consumer protection would be enhanced by creating clearer rules to protect buyers and eliminate surprises over unexpected costs after purchasing a newly built condo. The proposed legislation would introduce more stringent financial management rules for condo corporations and help ensure their financial sustainability. It would create stronger condo communities with transparent and accountable board governance, including training requirements for condo directors. It would enable the establishment of a new organization to oversee the licensing and regulation of Ontario's 2,500 condo managers. Again, these are important initiatives as part of the legislation that stem from the broad consultations that we held.

We also intend to create two new bodies as a result of the proposed legislative changes. The first is a condo authority. This authority would provide reliable education and awareness to the condo community. It would serve as a registry of information about condo corporations, and it would create an expedited, low-cost condo dispute resolution centre to help resolve the most common issues. We believe that this condo authority could divert approximately 75% of all cases from costly court litigation, mediation and arbitration, saving residents and condo corporations tens of thousands of dollars each year, as well as saving them a tremendous amount of time and stress.

The second body is a manager licensing authority to administer the licensing and regulation of condo managers and establish minimum qualifications and mandatory training standards.

To conclude, Speaker: Addressing the needs of the fast-growing condominium community and supporting the long-term sustainability of condo living is an important initiative for my ministry and our government. The needs of Ontario's condo community and the importance of updating the act were highlighted in our government's 2015 budget, in which this reform is a key commitment.

Ontarians need and deserve modern and effective condo legislation that can stand the test of time. The legislation must be able to adapt to changes in the rapidly growing sector and grow to meet new challenges. I'm extremely proud of the work that has been completed to date, and the collaborative approach that was used to get us to this point.

As I've outlined, Bill 106 would bring much-needed changes to Ontario's current Condominium Act. With the proposed changes we are debating today, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, if passed, will offer much greater protection to Ontario's 1.3 million and growing condo residents. They deserve nothing less.

Speaker, I want to thank you for the time and the opportunity to debate this bill. I ask for the support of the House in passing this into legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the Minister of Government and Consumer Services for his contribution to the debate. Continuing along with debate, I recognize the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about the key features of Bill 106, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015.

Buying a condo is one of the most significant purchases in a person's life. We're taking action to not only protect this important investment for owners, but for all those who call a condominium their home. The tremendous increase in condominiums across the province, including my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, which the minister spoke about, has been accompanied by a number of issues that need to be addressed on behalf of owners, residents, managers, boards and many others. The current Condominium Act was passed in 1998. Ontario is now at a crucial stage where we need updated legislation to respond to the issues that condo owners are facing today.

The bill we're discussing is based on over 200 specific recommendations that came as a result of extensive consultation. Condo owners, residents, developers, experts and other stakeholders within the sector have all provided meaningful input. Again, I want to thank everyone who has contributed as we worked toward the pivotal point we've reached today.

I'm very pleased to be able to speak to you today about the key features of Bill 106. Mr. Speaker, the first important proposed change will enhance consumer protection by creating clear rules to protect buyers and eliminate unexpected costs after purchasing a newly built condo. Purchasing a condo is a major investment, and it's important that we provide consumers with the appropriate mechanisms to protect their interests. A key part of the proposed act is the introduction of additional safeguards to protect condo buyers and help them make informed choices.

The proposed legislation would also enhance consumer protection by enabling the government to create regulations for standard condominium disclosure statements and other documents, such as declarations. These documents provide prospective condo buyers with important information about the condo property and corporation. They would set out matters pertaining to condo ownership, such as unit boundaries and fundamental rules of condo property.

Along the same line, the proposed act would also introduce new requirements that expand the information to be included in a condo status certificate. This additional information would enable purchasers of resale condos to better understand the financial health of their condo corporation. Standardizing these documents would help ensure consistency with the information provided by condo purchasers, so they're able to make informed decisions.

The final key feature that will strengthen consumer protection is the proposed amendments to the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act. The Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act does not currently extend to condo conversion projects, creating inequities for consumers and exposing them to risks. The proposed amendments

would ensure that most of the warranty protections available to buyers of new condos would also apply to certain condo conversion projects.

Through our comprehensive review process, we learned that condo owners need timely and reliable information and direct access to their condo corporation's financial records. Clear and consistent rules are needed to ensure condo reserve funds are properly funded, and clearer rules are also needed to ensure appropriate financial controls are in place when condo corporations spend the owners' money.

The proposed legislation fulfills all of these requirements. If passed, the legislation would strengthen financial management requirements for condo corporations and help prevent fraud and mismanagement. For example, it would forbid condo corporations from finalizing some contracts until they had fulfilled certain procurement rules, ensuring better management in the interests of condo owners. Participants in the Condominium Act review agreed that owners should be encouraged to gain a better understanding of how their condo corporation's reserve funds operate.

The proposed legislation would give owners more information about their condo corporation's financial matters and provide more control over important changes. Regulations under the act would also clarify rules by detailing how condo corporations can determine if the reserve funds are adequate. Additionally, the proposed act, if passed, would update rules and requirements relating to insurance when damage occurs to a unit or the building. Creating a definition of a standard unit would help to clarify insurance obligations for condo owners.

The bill would also clarify and standardize the circumstances when an owner would be required to pay an amount up to the corporation's deductible with respect to property damage.

All of these features that I've just highlighted would strengthen the management of a condo corporation's finances and provide owners with clearer guidelines as to their roles and responsibilities.

1600

The Condominium Act review also raised several issues regarding condo governance. The condominium owners expressed the need for more transparency and accountability from their condominium boards, and many condominium owners and residents raised concerns that they felt disconnected from their condominium boards and building managers. They indicated that they didn't know enough about the decisions that were being made by their condominium corporation or how these decisions were impacting them.

This proposed legislation seeks to address these concerns and improve communication with residents by requiring condominium boards to issue information to owners on a regular basis on topics such as the corporation's insurance, or legal proceedings involving the corporation. It would also ensure that condo directors complete training requirements.

The proposed legislation would make it easier for condominium owners and boards to participate and vote at meetings. For example, a condo board would no longer have to pass a bylaw in order to hold a meeting through conference calls or similar off-site meeting technologies.

Proper management of a condominium building is crucial to protect condominium owners and their investments. Currently Ontario has no minimum requirements governing condominium management firms or for an individual working as a manager of a condominium. The responsibilities of condominium management include property maintenance; ensuring repairs are carried out in a timely manner; providing advice and carrying out the decisions of the board; and monitoring financial reporting and overseeing financial operations.

During the review process, participants urged the province to set clear, mandatory standards for condo managers to ensure integrity and consistency. The proposed new Condominium Management Services Act, and regulations under the proposed act, would respond to these concerns.

Under this proposed act, a new administrative authority would regulate condo managers and management providers by establishing a compulsory licensing system. Regulations under the act would set training and education requirements for condo managers and establish a code of ethics.

Another important measure proposed by Bill 106 would correct the power imbalance during dispute resolution processes by providing a faster, cost-effective and fairer process. Under the current Condominium Act, disputes are resolved through either mandatory private mediation and arbitration or the court system. This can be a time-consuming, frustrating experience for the parties involved, and the associated legal costs can be quite expensive.

If passed, the act would enable the creation of the condominium authority and tribunal that would provide quicker, lower-cost dispute resolution than what is available today. It would also help prevent disputes between condo owners and boards by offering clearer information on condo owners' rights and responsibilities.

Key features of the tribunal would include mediation and case management processes; the ability to issue binding decisions that would be enforceable, similar to a court order; maintaining online resources and self-help tools; and limited appeals to Divisional Court on questions of law.

As noted earlier, the proposed legislation would enable the establishment of two new administrative authorities. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to provide you with important details on these authorities.

The first is the condo authority. This authority would provide reliable education and build awareness within the condominium community. It would also serve as a registry of information about condominium corporations, and it would serve as a quick, low-cost condominium dispute resolution centre, as mentioned earlier. It could save both residents and condominium corporations tens

of thousands of dollars on dispute resolution, as well as a tremendous amount of time and stress. If the legislation is passed, the province would provide start-up funding for the condominium authority.

Going forward, the authority would set its own fees that would include a user fee for dispute resolution services and fees collected from condo corporations. In order to ensure the fees remain cost-effective for condo owners, the fees would be set in accordance with processes and criteria that will be approved by the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

There's still a lot of work to be done in order to finalize the details of this authority, but it's estimated that the fee collected through condo corporations would be approximately \$1 per unit per month. This is a minimal cost when you consider the amount of money that is spent on dispute resolution through private arbitration and the court system. It's also important to note that the condo authority would not start charging these fees until the dispute resolution process is in place and condo owners and residents could start using this important mechanism.

The second body that the passing of this act would allow the province to establish would be a licensing authority designed to administer the licensing and regulation of condominium managers. Similar to the condo authority, this new licensing authority would be an independent, self-funded, not-for-profit corporation. The initial funding for this proposed authority would be provided by the province. The licensing authority would then be responsible for raising revenue through fees collected from managers and management firms.

To ensure accountability and transparency, both of these administrative authorities would have an administrative agreement with the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, be required to publicly disclose information, and be subject to oversight by the Auditor General.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to reiterate Minister Oraziotti's closing statement by thanking you for the opportunity to speak about the benefits of Bill 106. Addressing the needs of the fast-growing condominium communities across this province and supporting the long-term sustainability of condominium living are key to the government's mandate.

This bill would bring much-needed change to Ontario's condominium laws and regulations. There's still work to be done before this legislation can improve Ontario's condominium communities and provide Ontarians with the help I have outlined for you today. Passing this legislation would be a step forward to strengthening the protection and well-being of condominium owners and residents. This is why I'm asking for the support of the House in passing this bill, which will do so much for so many who call a condominium home.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for his contribution to the debate.

Questions and comments.

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a pleasure to get up today and respond to the Condominium Act. We see that it's been years that we've been looking for some of these changes. I know that the different associations have been asking for them and are glad to see something finally come through.

We're a little worried about what's in the meat of the legislation versus what's in the regulations. Of course, the regulations will be coming afterwards, so we'll be working with the government, with some potential amendments that we think are necessary. But I think, as I say, we're supporting this bill and we want to see it go through.

The debate will be interesting. I'm waiting to hear my colleague get up and talk about it today. I know we had a meeting with Armand Conant, who is in the gallery here today. He's from the Canadian Condominium Institute. He's in here today to listen to some of the issues in the new legislation. They were working hand in hand with the government and ourselves to bring this legislation about. We were kind of waiting to see it go through and looking forward to working with them over the next upcoming month or so, as we come through this legislation. I'll end it with that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: A bit of history is in order, I believe, this afternoon. I think it was eight years ago. The former member of Trinity–Spadina, Rosario Marchese, tried to get such a bill introduced in the House, repeatedly, over eight years. The Liberals were never interested—never interested. Then the glass panels in the shoddily built condos in downtown Toronto started flying off, down onto the street below. All of a sudden, they got a little bit interested. So they went out and talked to their developer buddies, their banker buddies, their lawyer buddies. They didn't talk to too many tenants; they didn't talk to too many owners. They put them on all these advisory committees—very few tenants and owners, a lot of developers, a lot of lawyers—and they came up with this bill.

I say it's a good first step, but it doesn't go far enough. They're so far behind the times. They have a cookie cutter.

1610

In my part of Ontario, they're not building condos anymore. They took apartment buildings and converted them to condos just for a tax relief structure. "God bless," as the former member from Trinity–Spadina would say. It's all within the law; they can do that. The rest of us have to make up the tax that the new condo-registered apartment buildings aren't paying any more. But that aside, what they're building in my part of the province are townhomes, townhouses. We don't shovel the snow and we don't mow the lawn. It's like a condo, but there's nothing in here to say, "By the way, if you're in a townhouse or a townhome under similar situations, you will also have these protections." That's what could improve this bill. That's what's needed in this bill. Don't

think of it as Toronto-centric, much like the Liberal government; think of it as a province-wide bill that can be improved if you put townhome and townhouse associations in there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I was in opposition at the time in 1998 when the then Conservative government brought in the first Condominium Act. Let me tell you, it was a lot of work that the government of the day did because it's an extremely complex piece of legislation. I remember the committee sat for months and months and months, so it is not a simple process. Going forward, this is a very complex bill because we're dealing with some of the most complex issues of landholding and property rights that you could never believe, Mr. Speaker.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, this is critically important because there are over 1.3 million Ontarians who live in condos. It's a huge reality. Fifty per cent of new homes being built in Ontario are condos. There are 700,000 condo homes in this province and another 50,000 on stream. So it is critical that we tackle this issue, that we modernize the good work that was done in 1998 and bring it up to speed because of the complexities and the different issues that have been brought forward.

We've had this review. I know that in my own riding of Eglinton–Lawrence we had meetings with condo owners, with their suggestions. There has been a lot of dialogue and discussion, and there will be more because this is extremely important, crucial work. It is, as I said, very demanding, and it will be very demanding work on this Legislature to get it right with the help of the meetings, the committee work and the submissions from the opposition. We've got a lot of work ahead of us, and I hope, together, we can come up with some good legislation protecting people who live in condominium homes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's an honour for me to provide just a couple of minutes of comments on Bill 106, Protecting Condominium Owners Act. In fact, Mr. Colle just finished speaking—and I have to admit that it's not often I say this, but many of the points you just made I was going to make as well. We have an opportunity to put some legislation forward that will provide some protection.

Over the years, at least as a legislator for five and a half years and working for my predecessor for three years, there were a lot of good points brought forward by condominium owners in terms of registration, licensing and protection, and some of the concepts to establish the authority, some of the opportunities that we have—this is pretty unique.

What I hope is that, as a former House leader—

Hon. James J. Bradley: You're not the House leader now?

Mr. Steve Clark: No, I'm not, Jim, and neither are you; I know we both had that position before—that with

some of these bills that we do seem to have general consent for, perhaps we can work together and get some of these bills into committee. The member notes that there were a number of hearings that took place. I know that the normal legislative process will allow at least a couple of days of hearings where we can have submissions from folks. I guess it's our hope that we'll move the bill forward and allow it to get into committee, and allow some of that meaningful debate to happen, but in terms of dispute resolution, in terms of some of the condo owner education, the fact that the registry would move forward and the authority would be established—I can't argue with those on a conceptual basis.

I think that now the challenge for all three parties will be how quick we get the job done. I look forward to this bill being debated today and I look forward to the hearings that are going to take place to deal with it. Thanks for giving me the chance to provide my two minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Newmarket–Aurora for final comments.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'd like to thank the members from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Windsor–Tecumseh, Eglinton–Lawrence and Leeds–Grenville for their comments on the proposed Bill 106. I know that we certainly look forward to the input from all parties in order to make sure that this important piece of legislation is the right piece of legislation for condominium owners in the province.

I can say that in my previous life in consumer advocacy, I was impressed by the amount of consultation with consumers, with owners and with consumer advocates on this bill, and I know that that will continue going forward. We have listened to people from across the province and incorporated a lot of what they've told us into this proposed Bill 106, and I know that, working with members opposite, we will be able to make this bill even stronger.

In my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, which is very much an urban and formerly rural area—it's certainly not downtown Toronto, with condominiums and glass towers everywhere, but there is a considerable amount of development going on, and I'm surprised, frankly, at how much of it is condominium development. It is the way of the future, especially as we intensify. I know that as an MPP I get telephone calls consistently from condominium owners who have questions about what their rights and responsibilities are, so I know the need for this bill and I know the need for what it puts in place and I look forward to seeing it move ahead.

As I said earlier, I look forward to working with all parties to make sure that the legislation meets the needs of a very growing industry, a form of housing, and really help to build and strengthen condominium ownership in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 106, the Protecting Condominium Owners

Act. That, in title, is what it is. It's the Protecting Condominium Owners Act. I will be splitting my time with my colleague the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

To see why this issue is important, all we have to do is look to the south from Queen's Park at the skyline. The number of condo owners has multiplied. Even in smaller communities and towns like the ones I'm privileged to represent, many people are choosing to live in condos. It's not a new trend; it has been happening for many years. Certainly, since this government was elected in 2003—that's almost 12 years ago, though it sometimes feels much, much longer—so it's disappointing that it has taken this government this long to introduce new legislation to protect condo owners. In fact, the most recent condo legislation is from 1998.

Today, 1.3 million Ontarians live in condos. There are currently 700,000 condo units in Ontario, with another 51,000 units under construction. That's up from 270,000 units in 2001.

Some 50% of new homes being built in Ontario are condos. A lot of that growth is in the GTA but, as I said, there are also condo units being built in Perth–Wellington and across the province.

We in the PC caucus know that home ownership is one of the best investments a family can make. Families need to know that they will be protected once they have made this substantial financial commitment.

Condominiums have a unique set of challenges, as they differ from both apartments and homes. Each unit is individually owned, with a board of directors governing the building as a whole and a third-party property management company responsible for the maintenance of the building. This creates a network of relationships, each of which must be managed responsibly, transparently and in an accountable manner. For years, condominium owners have been contacting this government to share their concerns and recommendations. Finally, in 2013, the government launched a consultation which brought together condo owners, developers, managers and industry experts. I understand that this review generated over 200 recommendations, many of which suggested reforms to strengthen consumer protection and support the needs of current and future condo owners.

1620

Having spoken with condo owners and managers, I know there has been a need for reform for many years. Condo owners have had difficulties dealing with building boards; managers are dealing with the lack of formal training; and issues often have little recourse other than the legal system. I have heard many common concerns from the condominium industry. In particular, condominium owners have been seeking enhanced consumer protection for years.

While I served as critic, I met with many condo owners. I heard horror stories from condo owners about the lack of protection and the lengths they have gone to in order to protect their financial investment. One family in particular lost their condominium after a prolonged

legal battle with the condominium management company and board. Those kinds of cases are simply unacceptable.

There is no doubt that condominium owners need and deserve greater consumer protection. That's why I'm encouraged by measures such as the proposed requirement for developers to give condo buyers a copy of an easy-to-read guide to condominium living at the time of sale. This kind of information is imperative for prospective buyers, to help them make informed decisions, especially when compared with the legalistic contracts currently in existence, which I have heard are commonly hard to understand.

This act proposes a number of changes geared towards increasing consumer protection. The act is set to provide more comprehensive rules, to prevent any buyer surprises after a condo purchase. It will also enable the government to create regulations for standard condominium disclosure statements. I think these are positive measures that will benefit condo owners.

The other primary areas of change in this bill raise a few more issues. Let's start with how condominiums are run.

As I discussed earlier, each condominium unit is individually owned, with a board of directors governing the building as a whole and a third-party property management company responsible for the maintenance of the building. The relationships boil down to a host of government issues. The condominium corporations themselves are self-governing communities. Unit owners elect their own government, commonly known as the board of directors. This board is responsible for the condominium community and makes decisions on its behalf.

This act would like to change the mechanisms of the condo board processes. For example, one section would make it easier for condo boards to hold a meeting through conference calls or other off-site meeting technology. On the surface, this seems like a straightforward change. However, I would caution that it's important these new permissions be open and transparent. For responsible condominium boards, these will no doubt be positive changes. However, for some condo boards, changing the style of meetings and certain processes may leave the door open to additional mismanagement, which I've heard is already an extremely serious issue.

Becoming a condo board member is not particularly difficult. These boards are given significant responsibility, but there are few checks on who can become a board member and the power they hold once elected. I have been contacted by many condo owners who have had many legitimate and serious concerns with their condo's board of directors. I know this issue was also raised during the government's review, with many condo owners reporting abuses of power, including bullying, cronyism and kickbacks. Some proposed solutions to address these governance issues have been left out of this bill, and I believe they require further consideration.

During the condo act review, participants suggested instituting a system of penalties for noncompliance. If condo board members were failing to comply with legal

obligations, it should follow that there is some type of consequence. I hope that during committee review, issues of enforcement will receive a greater deal of scrutiny.

Another identified concern is owner disengagement. I have had worries that fewer owners are turning out for meetings and annual general meetings, which not only means that it's difficult to meet quorum but that it can be difficult to find new recruits for board positions. While I understand that this act will require condo boards to issue regular updates to owners on issues, including the corporation's insurance or legal proceedings, I'm not convinced that the government has done enough investigation into the underlying issues of owner disengagement.

Condo owners certainly deserve regular updates about the status of condo businesses, and I'm sure it will be helpful to have this requirement in writing. However, written updates do not do enough to give owners more voice. Owners need to be provided with opportunities to provide input at board meetings. They need clear information about their rights and responsibilities, and they need open communication strategies when it comes to their condo corporation. I hope that this act is a first step to providing these rights, and I hope that when it comes before a committee, these governance concerns will be given their due consideration.

The third main issue that this bill addresses is financial management rules for condominium corporations. As anyone who has lived in a condo knows, a reserve fund is necessary for a condo corporation to ensure that repairs and upgrades can be made to the building as it ages. With many condo buildings being developed, it is important to address this issue now so that there are adequate reserve funds for future needs. Existing condo buildings share many lessons about how reserve funds should be structured. There need to be standardized requirements for a reserve fund study and these requirements must specify what exactly is to be included in the study. There needs to be clarity about reserve funding requirements and how they are met. The word "adequate" is not enough; the government needs to tell us how they define "adequate." We know, Mr. Speaker, that the government has had a tough time with that particular definition over the years, but here's a chance to give it one more shot.

Finally, we need to ensure that reserve funds meet each individual corporation's needs. I have heard from those affected in cases where the corporation has required significant contributions for repairs that the owners were not prepared for. This is unacceptable and defeats the purpose of reserve funds and reserve fund studies. Financial management issues surrounding reserve funds are already issues for many condo buildings, and they must be addressed to keep pace with the current condo boom.

I'd now like to discuss some of the more contentious measures of this bill. I'm very concerned about the increased red tape and the additional levels of bureaucracy contained in this bill. Let's start with the licensing of condominium managers. I must start out by saying that

there are many well-trained professional managers with exceptional integrity. This should be the standard for all condo managers, but the current reality is that it's not. Right now, there are no requirements to become a condo property manager. How the government has allowed that to be the case for so many years I simply do not understand. There are many demands on a condominium manager. He or she must have a strong understanding of the Condominium Act and must be fluent in the bylaws of the individual community they manage. Many condo managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of a condo building, which can mean responsibility for millions of dollars. I would love to hear the government explain why it has never before mandated training for individuals who are tasked with the responsibility for the contracting, building maintenance, and financial management of a condo building.

This act plans to introduce a new Condominium Management Services Act and regulations that would address this inadequacy. It's my understanding that the new act would set out a compulsory licensing system for condo managers and management firms, training and education for managers, and a code of ethics for condo managers. I think, in theory, this is a great first step to improving condo governance. Where I strongly disagree with the government is how this licensing is to be implemented. The government, through this act, plans to create yet another new administrative authority, which will administer the licensing and training to be set out under the Condominium Management Services Act. This means we can expect to see a new licensing authority, which will be an independent, self-funded, not-for-profit corporation. This should raise many red flags.

1630

We've seen all too often how well this government's administrative authorities and independent agencies function. We think of eHealth, we think of the Ornge scandal, we think of the serious accountability issues that plague the agencies that are supposedly overseen by this government. Do we really expect that this government, which is currently under four OPP investigations, will take issues of accountability and integrity seriously?

The government has left so many unanswered questions when it comes to this proposed licensing authority; here are just a few.

What will the operating expenses be for the authority? How much is this new bureaucracy going to cost condo owners, managers and management firms? How much will a licence cost?

What kind of training and education will the manager have to complete? How long will it take to complete the training and education necessary to become a licensed manager? Will current managers be grandfathered into the system?

What specific qualifications will an individual need to become a licensed manager? How often will these licences have to be renewed? How long will it take to get this new system up and running?

These are important questions that deserve answers. Condo managers and owners need to know whether these

new requirements will actually be in their best interests or whether this is simply another government tax grab. My money is on another government tax grab.

I also have to wonder why the government is trying to reinvent the wheel when it comes to condo manager education. I know there are already outstanding training programs for condo managers. I think the government should be doing more to support these already developed courses. Why not invest in an organization like the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario which already has a program in place to provide a registered condominium manager designation? The Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario has an established partnership with Humber College. The college provides a part-time program with evening and weekend courses for prospective condo managers. Once an individual completes their Humber certificate, they can then write the ACMO's comprehensive registered condominium manager exam. This is a proven system with a high set of standards for condo managers.

Instead of reaching out and working to expand this program across the province, the government plans to introduce more bureaucracy. We all know how well that went over with the creation of the Ontario College of Trades. Licence fees skyrocketed with no apparent benefits to tradespeople. Using the old standby excuse of "increasing consumer protection," the government instead made it harder for tradespeople to maintain their livelihoods. Over and over, I have said that the government needs to get out of businesses' way and let them do what they do best. This situation demands the same: Let these experts do what they do best, and support them in that goal. Don't set up a new bureaucracy with more red tape and exorbitant expenses to recreate what's already being done, and being done well, I might add.

I am now going to move to arguably the most important and most controversial part of this bill: the condo authority. The condo authority will be responsible for administering condo owner education, dispute resolution and a condo corporation registry. In particular, it will provide a registry for all condo corporations in Ontario, including their board of directors and contact information. It will provide a guide for condo buyers, setting out unit owners' roles and responsibilities. Most notably, it will provide dispute resolution services, including mediation and a tribunal.

As with the licensing authority, the condo authority will be an independent body operating as an administrative authority. From what we have gleaned from the act, the government will provide all the start-up funding for the condo authority and it will then be up to the condo owners to finance its operations. Not only will users of its service be paying; a fee will also be levied on all condo corporations across the province. The condo corporations would collect the fees to run the condo authority from owners as part of monthly common expenses. Figures on the proposed monthly levy range from \$1 to \$3 a month per owner. It's cited that this will give the condo authority an annual budget of \$10 million to \$20 million.

Comparatively, it is estimated that the annual operating cost of the Ontario Municipal Board is \$7.6 million and the annual cost of the Landlord and Tenant Board is \$21.6 million.

The condo authority will be delegated to administer the Condominium Authority Tribunal. The tribunal's objective would be to resolve disputes through case management, mediation and adjudication. The tribunal's discussions would be binding and enforceable, as if they were a court order.

The government claims that with the creation of the condo authority and the Condominium Authority Tribunal, condo owners will have a cheaper and faster way to resolve disputes. I absolutely agree that those services should be available to condo owners; however, I very much doubt that the government will be able to follow through on those promises. After all, when's the last time this government did much of anything cheap or quick?

In my constituency office, we frequently receive calls from constituents who are dealing with the Landlord and Tenant Board, the WSIB or the Social Benefits Tribunal. All these agencies provide an avenue of last resort for people to deal with their disputes or appeals. Based on anecdotal evidence, nothing about these dispute resolution agencies is quick and easy. Constituents are easily waiting six months to a year for their cases to be heard and for a decision to be rendered.

In the case of the WSIB, there is a separate body, the Office of the Worker Adviser, that is designed to assist workers with the appeals process. Not only is the WSIB's appeals system backlogged, but I've heard that, based on an overwhelming number of cases received by the Office of the Worker Adviser, they now have to prioritize cases and put others on waiting lists.

These examples can be extended to almost every government agency and program. Families in Perth-Wellington and across the province are in desperate need of developmental services funding for their children. Despite the government's promise in 2014 to invest \$810 million in developmental services, families and community organizations have yet to see or benefit from that money. Children, young adults and their families are waiting for funding to pay support workers, provide respite or find appropriate housing to suit their needs. I speak to families on a regular basis who have been on waiting lists with Developmental Services Ontario for years and have yet to receive the support they need.

My office works with commercial drivers who are waiting for over a month to have their licences reinstated by the Ministry of Transportation after a medical suspension. The physician records get sent in, and then it takes around a month for these records to actually be reviewed.

I have received calls from social assistance recipients asking us to speed up their tribunal hearing because they have been without benefits for months and cannot afford their bills. I work with seniors waiting to move into a long-term-care home, but there are no beds available. I

hear from constituents who have been waiting for months for important surgery to improve their quality of life.

The overarching theme here is that this government makes big promises but does not follow through. They're doing a great job of writing press releases, which they always send to the media and, on increasingly rare occasions, to opposition MPPs, but when it comes to actually following through on their promises, they fall short—way short.

Telling condo owners that they are now going to have access to a fast and easy dispute resolution system does not ring true when we hear every day from those waiting months and years to access the services they need from already-existing government agencies.

The government's track record on sourcing work to agencies and authorities should also serve as a warning sign about the effectiveness of a condo authority. Let's look at Hydro One: Not only has this government caused hydro rates to skyrocket; it has let Hydro One run completely out of control. Whether it's bloated executive salaries, expensive and unsustainable hydro pensions or poor customer service, Hydro One, as confirmed by the Ombudsman of Ontario, has lost sight of its public interest purpose. My office has been inundated with calls over about the last two years because of hydro bill issues. I cannot tell you how many calls we received from people who went months without ever receiving a bill and from those who received incorrect bills.

1640

We used to send those complaints to Hydro One, never to hear back. It was quite common for constituents to wait up to six months to hear from Hydro One to discuss their concerns. That kind of service—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order: I recognize the member from Barrie.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I was wondering if we were going to talk about the bill that is on the floor.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I believe he is.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I've been hearing all sorts of talk about Hydro and other things.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I've been listening intently and he is addressing the bill.

Please continue.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: That kind of service from a government agency is appalling. The fact that this government chose to bury its head in the sand instead of addressing the serious issues at Hydro One gives me reason to believe they are afraid of tackling the hard issues. Even now, instead of dealing with the ongoing Hydro issues, the Premier's plan is to sell off the agencies.

We on the other side of this House don't think that the government is taking into consideration the best interests of the people of Ontario. The decision to sell Hydro One was made without public input, and the sale will be done in complete secrecy. That's not to mention the issues surrounding the loss of majority ownership and the loss

of independent consumer protection. It's ironic that at the same time this government is removing Ombudsman and Auditor General oversight over Hydro One, it's introducing a bill entitled the Protecting Condominium Owners Act.

While the government will try to convince us that the condo authority and the condo authority tribunal are being created in the name of consumer protection, I find it interesting that these new authorities, in fact, reduce consumer rights. As you look closely at the bill, you will find that any disputes that are eligible to be referred to the tribunal would have to take that route. That seems to mean that condo owners will not have the option of seeking outside mediation or taking their cases before the court, even if they believe that's the best course of action for their individual situation. Interestingly enough, we will not find out which disputes are eligible and therefore forced to go through the condo authority tribunal until after this legislation is passed.

This is not the only example of this government limiting people's rights to due process. Right now the government is considering introducing an online dispute system called an administrative monetary penalty system for offences such as traffic tickets. Instead of allowing people to appear in court to dispute a traffic ticket, the government wants to force people to go through a resolution process online.

In court, a case is heard by a judge or a judicial officer trained in the law. With the AMP system, we don't know who will be deciding the outcome of the case; we only know there are independent hearing officers. This is a definite reason to be concerned that this government is limiting our legal and appeal options. Modernizing the system to keep pace with the 21st century is important, but that should never mean that a government can eliminate a person's right to bring a case before the traditional legal system.

With the proposed introduction of the condo authority and condo authority tribunal, I also hold concerns about the accountability of these authorities. For a year, I worked on consumer concerns with the Tarion Warranty Corp., which administers the warranties for new homes built in Ontario. The accountability of this delegated administrative authority was one of the top complaints by consumers trying to access Tarion services. They did not feel that they received the answers or action they needed from Tarion. After escalating their concerns to this government, consumers were told that the minister could not look into their concerns because Tarion is an arm's-length agency.

I expect that anyone with concerns about the condo authority and the condo authority tribunal will hear exactly the same message from this government. When consumers cannot go to the government to address their concerns with government agencies, then we have a serious breach of accountability.

As with most government legislation, we have only the bare bones. We know the high-level goals this bill wants to achieve, but we don't know how that will be

accomplished or how much all of this will cost. And that concerns me.

This is exactly the same issue we ran into with the government's Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. The ORPP is set to begin taking peoples' money in 2017 and we still don't have all the details on its implementation.

Our party fought tooth and nail to stop this misguided plan from being introduced. We know that it's going to hurt businesses and employees by requiring contributions of up to 1.9% in annual earnings. What we don't know is how much the ORPP will cost to administer, how many jobs it's going to cost the economy, how the funds will be invested and many other important aspects that the government has failed to address.

As in the situation with this condo act, the government passed a bare-bones bill giving it permission to create the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. Let me be clear: The PC Party voted against this tax grab and has stood up for the best interests of businesses and employees since the government floated the idea.

However, most of the specifics of the Ontario pension plan have never and will never come up for debate or vote in this Legislature, and that is because the decisions will have been made through regulation, which is at the sole discretion of the government.

That is what the government is doing with the Protecting Condominium Owners Act as well: It's giving itself permission to create these bureaucratic bodies without telling us what they look like and exactly how much they will cost to run. All we know is that the initial start-up capital will be funded by all taxpayers and, moving forward, costs will likely be shouldered by condo owners.

In my final thoughts, I would like to address the issues that this legislation has failed to address. One particularly pressing issue with the increase in condo development is phantom rent. I was recently made aware of a family who has been living in a new condo building for two years and is still paying occupancy fees to the developer. Occupancy fees are not uncommon and are fees paid to the developer before a condo building is registered and the buyer has taken official ownership. However, two years after moving in, paying occupancy fees is extreme, particularly as it means that not a penny of your payments is going towards your mortgage. As we are still in the midst of a condo boom, it is a glaring omission that this legislation does not address these pressing consumer and financial protection issues.

From my work with Tarion, I also know that this bill does little to tackle builder and developer accountability. We have all heard the stories about falling glass windows and flooding condos. Some of these cases come down to building deficiencies. In tandem with Tarion, I believe the condo authority should be tasked with addressing builder and developer accountability.

With the influx of condominium development and the trend towards urban condo living, there is no doubt that stronger and clearer rules and processes are needed. This bill addresses many of the issues that were raised by the

condo industry during the review process, and for that reason I plan to support this bill so that it can be considered in detail by an all-party committee.

It is my hope that, during the committee process, many of the shortcomings of this bill can be addressed and that condo owners get an opportunity to voice their feedback on the proposed legislation. I know when I contacted the minister months ago about a group wanting to make a delegation during debate on this bill, he was not open to the idea. That is not how our democratic process should work. Those who followed and participated in the condo review should have the opportunity to share their thoughts on the way the government has issued that information.

Moreover, all of those who have recently bought or moved into a condominium should be allowed to provide input on the legislation that governs their new home. We should be hearing directly from those affected by this legislation about whether it addresses their needs and how it could be improved.

Therefore, I am imploring the government to hold consultations during the committee process. As legislators, we should strive for the strongest legislation, and that cannot be done without consultation.

I will now turn it over to my accomplished colleague the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for his comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing along with debate, I recognize now the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

1650

Mr. Jim McDonell: I will be challenged to follow my esteemed colleague from Perth–Wellington, as he did a great job of pointing out some of the issues and some of the benefits of the legislation.

First and foremost, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate our new leader, Patrick Brown, in his bye-election just two weeks ago. His huge gain in popularity over the previous election shows the willingness or the desire, or maybe the urgency, in this province to have a change of government. We unfortunately have to wait a couple of years for that.

Ontario residents have access to a growing choice of consumer products and services. This, however, comes with the added cost of increasing complexity. The consumer's ability to understand a contract's terms and all the attached conditions becomes the basis for making a fully informed choice beyond basic factors such as price, quality and guarantees. Condominiums are a good example of how Ontario's consumer market has evolved and how our laws need to take these rapid changes into account.

In 2001, there were 270,000 condo units; now, there are over 700,000, with another 51,000 under construction, so we can see that the market is exploding. An Ontarian who purchases a property in a condominium becomes more than just a homeowner; they join a community of shareholders in a condo corporation responsible for managing a significant reserve fund and

maintaining the value of what is, for many families, their single largest investment: their home.

Unlike a rental unit, where most responsibilities are clearly defined between the tenant and the landlord, in a condominium environment, property ownership has to coexist with the responsibility towards fellow owners in the same building and communal expenses. Communal elements paid for by all unit owners in the building—such as lobbies, gardens, exercise rooms, pools and outdoor decks—contribute significantly to a building's attractiveness to prospective buyers and consequently the value of each unit. Condominium owners are, therefore, essentially co-signatories to each other's property investment.

In this context, disagreements on various issues are inevitable. The current system of dispute resolution does not work in the owner's best interests. Retaining an appropriately skilled lawyer to represent you in court over a condominium dispute is expensive and is, today, a significant cost concern for prospective condo owners. The proposed reform addresses this by transferring dispute resolution in condominiums to a separate tribunal similar to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

The proposed reform states that matters such as liens for non-payment of dues to the condo corporation, purchase interest, determining liability in common areas, dangerous activity in the unit, corporation amalgamations and terminations, and property titles will automatically be excluded from the tribunal's jurisdiction and will therefore have to be settled in the courts.

We've been told that the new condominium authority, including the tribunal, will cost the average condominium corporation approximately \$12 per unit per year. With 700,000 estimated condominiums in Ontario, the total budget of the authority is expected to be \$8.4 million annually.

If we compare this to the Landlord and Tenant Board's budget and the client market size for 2010-11, the last year before the financial consolidation of all Social Justice Tribunals Ontario accounts in the province of Ontario, we see that the board had approximately \$30 million in expenditures for a rental market of about 1.4 million units, or \$21 per unit per year.

The condo authority will have a broader mandate than the Landlord and Tenant Board. It will include duties such as condo owners' education, the production of information materials such as a condo guide, and the maintenance of a registry of all condominium corporations in Ontario.

I would like to expand on this mandate in particular. The government's record with information technology is far from stellar. On-time and on-budget performance is the exception rather than the rule. We only need to look at the most recent efforts to introduce new computer systems in the health, justice, social assistance and child services to see the evidence of poor design, poor contracting and definitely poor oversight over projects. We remember calamities in eHealth and SAMS, just to mention a few.

We welcome the government's guarantee that the authority will be subject to the Auditor General's oversight, yet we must also point out that preventing bad management and bad accounting is better than finding about it months after the investigation is completed.

Bill 106 creates a potential significant caseload for the tribunal by addressing—rightly—condominium owners' concerns about noise from other units. While disputes referred to the condominium tribunal under this new provision and other existing ones may be fewer than those presented to the Landlord and Tenant Board, we are concerned that the government's total cost estimate of \$12 per unit is far too optimistic.

An individual's household budget would not be significantly impacted by cost overruns in the authority, since we are talking about a few dollars a year. This would, however, join a string of hidden increases in the cost of living in Ontario that cannot be allowed to continue.

Back in 2013, our caucus obtained plans by this government to levy new and higher user fees on Ontarians in order to increase this government's revenues. Some of these increases, such as the rising cost of vehicle registration, are already causing many of my constituents concern.

The Ministry of Consumer Services oversees several authorities that it defines as self-funding, meaning they collect for the operations directly from their clients in the form of licence fees, inspection fees and similar revenue-collection initiatives. Collectively known as delegated administrative authorities, they act at arm's length from the government while being the sole makers and enforcers of the rules in their respective spheres of influence. They include the Technical Standards and Safety Authority and the Electrical Safety Authority, amongst others.

I have advocated on behalf of several law-abiding, experienced business owners and contractors whose compliance and inspection costs were driving their enterprises into the ground. When you include the hydro costs and massive regulation, you can see why businesses are leaving Ontario in droves.

The model of agency funding that is proposed for the condominium authority is far from perfect. There is a need to have strong safeguards against escalating costs. The act, as written, does not contain such guarantees. We look forward to hearing from condominium owners and consumer groups regarding this issue and ways to improve consumer protection from a less-than-accountable arm's-length agency.

It is important to point out that the authority may not decrease the legal costs associated with resolving condominium disputes. A court case could be expensive. However, many constituents bringing their cases to administrative tribunals will feel the need to retain qualified legal counsel in order to make their case. My constituency office regularly refers clients to our community legal clinic on matters related to landlord and tenant proceedings, the Social Benefits Tribunal and other adjudicative bodies.

Building a strong case in any adjudicative setting is a time-consuming task that requires good knowledge of the law being enforced and awareness of the evidence and standards being used. The closest example is the Licence Appeal Tribunal, where homeowners facing difficulties with builders and the Tarion corporation feel that retaining a lawyer is an essential prerequisite to any chance of success because of the complexity of the building code and the other acts pertaining to new homes.

The length of a proceeding before the condominium tribunal is also not guaranteed. Taking a proceeding out of the court system will not guarantee a speedy resolution unless the government appoints a sufficient number of adjudicators to deal with the caseload as it grows, which it will inevitably do.

I will cite two examples. The Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal saw a doubling of its caseload between 2010 and 2014, resulting in significant processing delays for workers seeking WSIB compensation. The Social Benefits Tribunal has a nine-month wait period for a decision. Over half the appeals in the Social Benefits Tribunal regarding disability support are granted, meaning that a large number of disabled Ontarians, whose finances are already strained by a loss of income and medical costs, have to wait nine months in order to receive assistance that they are entitled to.

1700

The main goal of Ontario's condominium owners should be swifter and more affordable justice. If it doesn't deliver these two objective, measurable outcomes, the authority will deliver no value for money.

Simply delegating the dispute resolution process is not the answer. Once established, the tribunal must be given the resources to operate effectively and transparently. We will continue to monitor the development of the tribunal and will take consumer feedback into consideration for possible amendments.

The complexity of condominium ownership begins even before the owner moves in. The declaration, arguably the fundamental document for the condominium, sets out important criteria, such as the unit limit and defining the common areas of the building. To some, this may appear to be a mere technicality. Different declarations may mean that owners are responsible for the plumbing and electrical components in the walls, or the maintenance, upkeep and repair of exterior walls of the unit and other structural parts of the building.

The declaration could also contain fundamental aesthetic provisions, such as the style and colour of visible decorations, including blinds and balcony furniture. Consumer opinions may differ on whether such limitations on freedoms of property ownership are necessary. However, it is undeniable that the content of a declaration, when explained plainly and clearly, should be a contributing factor to the decision whether or not to purchase a unit in a specific building. For instance, a consumer could choose to take a higher condominium fee to live in a building where plumbing and electrical work are the corporation's responsibility, more akin to a rental

situation. Others may prioritize a building with plenty of resident amenities which may command a higher fee and a higher purchase price regardless of the unit limit.

The government's reform begins to address the complexity of condominium ownership by creating the condominium guide, a document to be published by the condominium authority outlining the rights and responsibility of ownership, as well as how condominium corporations are governed and how owners may request information and meetings. The proposed act allows government to make regulations regarding the form and content of declarations and disclosure statements.

As with previous efforts by this government to delegate a certain aspect of the legislation entirely, the PC caucus intends to consult with the consumers and stakeholders in order to identify the key components of a declaration and the means by which such a disclosure should be enshrined in the act.

The most significant innovation in the proposed reform is the requirement for licensing condominium managers. The profession is currently self-regulated on a voluntary basis through the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario. Except for ACMO standards, there is no universal standard for training for managers, or a unified code of conduct. In the growing condominium market, this may be a significant problem.

There are over 9,000 condominiums in Ontario. Only a fraction of managers in those condominiums have completed ACMO's training and certification program and abide by the association's codes. We recognize that most condominium managers act in good faith. However, the financial repercussions of inefficient management are severe for a condominium corporation and the unit holders.

There is no prohibition in today's Condominium Act against an unqualified individual becoming the manager of a condominium. Unit owners are, therefore, taking a potential gamble when the corporation chooses a manager to administer the building's day-to-day operations. ACMO helps condo boards in this task. However, the shortage of certified managers and the voluntary nature of many condo boards increases the chance of recruiting a well-meaning but less-than-qualified manager.

On the furthest end of the scale, we have seen episodes of managers defrauding condominium owners with badly executed or overbilled contracting work. One recent case is under police investigation: the charging of a manager in the Hamilton-Burlington area, the charges against whom include fraud and embezzlement. A high-profile case in 2011 involved a manager borrowing \$20 million against several condominium corporations and then fleeing. Something has to be done.

Volunteer condominium boards need the reassurance of a management profession consistently subject to oversight and discipline. The government's reform includes stronger education and qualification requirements for condominium boards, as well as restricting the practices of the condominium management profession.

We must, however, temper our enthusiasm. Several professions in Ontario are regulated, and their practice

outside of the registered professional bodies is forbidden. These include accountants, teachers, surveyors, engineers, social workers, architects, lawyers and medical professionals. The common thread linking these professions is the high level of trust placed in these professionals by the public and the high stakes involved in their practice.

Given the immense value of the home investment to an average Ontario family, the mandatory regulation of condo managers is in the public interest. Bad condo management damages families' economic prospects and reduces the value of our economy.

Regulation, however, is no substitute for uprightness and morality. Regulating condo managers will not abolish bad faith or fraudulent intent in those determined to pursue them. Regulation will, however, bring qualified managers under the same umbrella and train those well-meaning managers whose skills need to be upgraded in order to best serve their board, establishing a common set of professional measures by which a good manager may be assessed.

For the condominium boards, this will mean greater efficiency in choosing a manager. The fact remains, however, that condominium owners and boards need to be given tools, authority and knowledge to proactively scrutinize the work of their management company.

One of the greatest sources of owner concern and frustration is the lack of transparency in certain procurement processes. The act does not create the criteria for transparent procurement; it merely creates the power for the minister to make regulations defining those criteria. Although the government committed publicly to creating a sealed-bid, competitive procurement process, we are unable to judge whether this will deliver any greater guarantees to the homeowner.

The only mention of procurement in this bill is the new section 39.1, which states: "A corporation shall not enter into a prescribed contract or transaction unless the procurement process and other contracts or arrangements that the corporation entered into in relation to the contract or transaction meet the prescribed requirements." The minister retains the power to define what contracts should follow this new, more transparent procurement process and what the actual process should be. We believe this section could be improved by making certain competitive procurement practices mandatory, such as sealed bids and multiple quotations.

Right now, we are unable to foresee what the condo authority or the licensing authority will do in regard to regulating condominium procurement conflict of interest. A more transparent, sealed-bid process is not immune from influence by the minority of managers and contractors who act in bad faith. For condominium owners, this results in the condo fee and reserve fund being depleted, while the value of a home in their building is potentially under threat.

Letters cited by several condominium information resources highlight the fact that bad managers often have inappropriate financial interests or relations with the contracting company, and resist scrutiny by being unresponsive to owners' concerns or resort to intimidating tactics.

Regulating condominium managers will make it easier for owners and corporations to take action, should such a situation arise. However, it will not prevent it. It will fall to the licensing authority, then, to define the conflict-of-interest framework in condominium management, if it chooses to do so. Nothing in the proposed act sets out an obligation for the new managers' regulatory body to address conflict of interest.

1710

The province already regulates conflict of interest in other areas of public life. The PC caucus believes that incorporating a legislative mandate for the new licensing authority to regulate professional conflicts of interest for condo managers will give Ontario's homeowners greater confidence in this new agency.

I would like to take a few minutes to highlight the oversight mechanisms for the new condo authority and the licensing authority for condominium managers. For both agencies, the appointment process is detailed in schedule 1, section 1.10, and schedule 2, section 11, stating that the appointment of certain directors of each authority is by minister's letter, similar to the appointment process for the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, the Tarion Warranty Corp. and other agencies.

Without any cabinet appointments or provincial share capital, both the condo authority and the managers' regulatory body would be outside of the reviewing powers of the government agencies committee.

Most regulated professionals in Ontario, where practising is forbidden unless one is licensed by an authorized body, are overseen by a college or association that contains at least one appointment by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Just a couple of weeks ago, the members from Perth-Wellington, Huron-Bruce and I conducted a two-day marathon of committee hearings in order to interview public appointees, including candidates for professional association council positions.

We shouldn't legislate to create a professional monopoly without retaining direct legislative oversight over its operations. The PC caucus will submit an amendment to ensure that at least one member of the board of directors of the condo authority and the managers' licensing authority is appointed through a certificate by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It is a minor change that will not delay any appointments while ensuring public accountability for both of these regulatory bodies.

This concern extends further to the appointment of the members of the Condominium Authority Tribunal. As the bill is written, the tribunal would be composed of members appointed by the authority, which would in turn be appointed by the minister. This arrangement takes the tribunal, empowered to make adjudicative decisions, out of the realm of legislative oversight altogether. The public would not tolerate such an arrangement for any other adjudicative body. It should not be expected to tolerate it for the condominium tribunal either.

We can trust the condominium authority to recommend the most outstanding adjudicators for appointment. Vesting them with the power to make potentially life-

changing decisions for homeowners, however, should only be done through an appointment by the Lieutenant Governor, as is done for members of the Landlord and Tenant Board and other dispute resolution bodies.

The Ontario PC caucus will propose an amendment that will ensure members of the tribunal will be appointed with legislative oversight. Section 169 of the Residential Tenancies Act serves as a good model for this, and it states very simply that the members of the Landlord and Tenant Board shall be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

We have new legislation before us that is long overdue and has been asked for by the industry, an industry that has swelled in numbers over the last number of years. We look forward to the passing of this legislation, and we will be working with stakeholders to ensure that they have ample time to be at committee, to view concerns with the legislation. We will be proposing amendments based on that review, and we hope the government works with us as we listen to these stakeholders.

The legislation is long overdue. People have been asking for it. In my former role as critic, I met with many groups that were pushing the government and ourselves, as the loyal opposition, to help ensure that this legislation went through. When we're doing it, let's hope that it's really there to solve an issue that has been created over the years. We look forward to getting it to committee, and we want to see this legislation passed as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I look forward to having longer than two minutes to actually talk about this bill. The former member from Trinity-Spadina, Rosario Marchese, four times in five years brought forward a bill, and he would be happy that this bill is here today, but it is lacking in many areas. There is no Tarion reform. There are no protections against shoddy construction. There needs to be a comprehensive and affordable dispute resolution that includes condo managers and developers, not just condo owners and boards, and the bill still needs to rein in unethical developer behaviour, including their habit of promising one thing when you buy your condo and later delivering something else.

I have personal experience, having bought a condo six or seven years ago in Welland, one of the first condos built. An unscrupulous developer-builder named Pointe of View at the time left town after they built bad condos both in Welland and in Brampton. Six or seven years later, we're still on the hook. They come in, they promise you all kinds of things, and then they close up shop and leave town. They then resurface under another name in another province, and they leave the condo board and the condo owners holding the bag not only for repairing their units but for paying huge engineering fees to engineering companies, so that they can then move on to their next fight with Tarion.

I can tell you that in my experience the fight is still on six years later. Those things need to be addressed in this

bill, as well. They're not, and you can be sure that the NDP will be tabling amendments to make sure that they are.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm pleased to be given an opportunity to add a few comments to the two speakers on the other side. Originally, I was going to comment on the bill, but I listened carefully to both of them, and I just want to respond quickly to some of the comments made, because I think it struck a little bit of a chord in some of the stuff I've been involved with over the years.

The member said that the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario exists today. I just want to remind him that it exists as a voluntary organization, and the bad apples we have out there who are condo managers, the ones who create the fraud and everything else that has been going on that condo owners have been complaining about, are not members of that organization. This act makes it mandatory—

Interjection: As it should be.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: As it should be. This act also mandates the type of training they have to have. This is a big improvement to what we have out there. I know that the association exists today, but I can assure you that the association worked with the ministry on this particular issue, and they are supportive of this.

The other thing that the members across the way, both of them, mentioned is that they don't have confidence in the condo authority and the tribunal, and they're not sure that this government will follow through. I would remind everybody—because I've had a lot of experience, both personally and on behalf of my constituents—of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. It was backlogged. It would take you six to seven years to get your cases through.

It was this Liberal government that split up that commission, and we now have the Ontario Human Rights Commission, which does the work of human rights, and we have the tribunal. And since the tribunal was created, there are no more complaints out there in the community. People are happy they are getting their cases heard, and they can get to the front of the line.

I thank you very much. I had a lot more to say, but maybe I'll come back.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

1720

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to join debate today for Bill 106. I want to congratulate my colleague Mr. Pettapiece from Perth–Wellington, as well as my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. I think they had an easy transition between the two of them from former critic to current critic.

I'd be remiss not to congratulate—in my first opportunity to speak since he has been elected leader—Patrick Brown for coming into the Legislature, joining this assembly, and providing strong and stable leadership

that will eventually topple this Liberal government in 2018.

To that end, in terms of Bill 106, I think it's important to know that this bill—or bills like it—have been before this House several times since I was initially elected nine years ago. I must say to my friend Armand Conant, who has been here time and time again, and who was here earlier today, that it's important that we all do support this government initiative, given the fact that it did take a number of cries and calls from the opposition.

My colleague from Welland actually mentioned a good friend of this House, someone who was here yesterday—Rosario Marchese—and his advocacy on behalf of those who live in condominiums and who have condominiums across the province.

I think that this is a piece of legislation that we can all support. It's one that has taken members of this assembly a great deal of time in order to get this far. We're looking forward to seeing this bill pass in a timely and expedient manner, so that stakeholders like Armand can feel that the amount of hours and time and meetings that they have spent here at Queen's Park have been successful and have been worth it.

Speaker, I want to say thank you for allowing me this opportunity to rise in debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I too was very interested in what the two speakers had to say, and I agree with big parts of it. Since Rosario first brought the need to update the condo act to this House—in 2007, Rosario Marchese put his first bill to reform the act. It has been a long time coming, and finally, part of it is here.

Why did he do this? For many, many reasons, such as: Did you know that right here, right now in Ontario, throughout our province, 45% of the people who buy condos are single women? They sometimes have a really tough time getting their voices heard. Rosario wanted to give those women a voice.

Why did he want to do this? Because a lot of people were having a tough time with the developers. But the developers are completely—or almost completely—out of this bill. They should be in. Why should they be in? Because right now, if you look, there are seven class action lawsuits from condo owners against developers. Why, after eight years, are we finally doing a little bit of updating on this condo act, but we don't even look at the elephant in the room, which is the developers?

I have a smidgen of an idea for this. If you look at the donations that the developers give to some of the political parties in this room—not the NDP, I can guarantee you that—that may explain some of the reasons why there is no protection against the developers, although so many condo owners want that protection. It's our responsibility to give it to them, like Rosario Marchese wanted us to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for final comments.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'd like to thank the members from Welland, Scarborough–Rouge River—although misdirected—Nepean–Carleton and Nickel Belt for their comments.

I do feel for people like Armand Conant and Rosario Marchese and the years that they spent trying to get this government to move on something that should have been straightforward. I think everybody agrees; I think, from my understanding, all three sides of the House agree that the legislation was required, and now we're seeing something that's eight years. It's too bad we couldn't spend eight years on putting the sale of Hydro One on the board because maybe then we could cancel it before it goes through. Unfortunately, bad legislation goes through in a hurry but good legislation takes a long time.

We have a lot of issues here that we've talked about. We're looking forward to hearing in committee some of the concerns. I know, in meeting today with representatives from the condo associations, that they do have some concerns. So we'll be looking for that.

When we talk about the common theme for all the messages around here—and from the comments, it was about the length of time to get this legislation through. Certainly, eight years is a long time. We should be thankful the government is finally moving on it. It's not done yet. They have to call it up and then finally get it through second and third reading and call for royal assent. We're hopeful because it's a good start. There's some good legislation here that we'll be working through. The condo owners and managers have certainly been waiting for this for a long time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It feels a bit like *déjà vu*; I feel like I got up earlier on something similar.

This is a great honour, because I follow in the footsteps of a legendary member of provincial Parliament who has done tremendous work on this issue. So before I begin, I feel like it's appropriate, though I'm the critic for consumer services to give a salute to the former member from our caucus who has done tremendous work on this file, Rosario Marchese, the previous member from Trinity–Spadina. I want to recognize that.

This area of law, or this area of protection, is new because the development of condominiums is something that has happened very recently. While it expanded, the previous member, Mr. Marchese, realized that it was expanding at a great rate, particularly in his riding. Trinity–Spadina was, at the time, one of the most concentrated areas for condominiums. He noticed that there was a great boom in terms of condominiums but there was very little protection when it came to the condominium owners. So he raised significant issues.

One of the issues that I really want to focus in on is that many of the complaints that people have when it comes to their condominiums—those complaints are against the developers and condo managers. Those are the two individuals that people have the most complaints with, but very curiously, those are the two people that the

tribunal that's created by this legislation does not in any way cover. Those two individuals are exempt. The tribunal, the way it's structured, only reflects disputes, or only allows for an avenue to resolve disputes, between the condominium owner and the condominium board. While that's an important step—it's absolutely important; condominium boards and consumers and owners of condominiums certainly have a number of issues that arise, and having a mechanism to resolve that is important—the fact remains that many, and perhaps far more, complaints arise with the developer and with the actual condominium manager, and why that was left out of this tribunal process is something that is quite troubling.

The other area that is tremendously important—and we have to look at what goes on: When someone goes to a condominium and makes a decision to purchase a condominium, the actual unit itself is obviously quite important. You want to make sure that if you purchase a unit with granite, in terms of the kitchen, or if you purchase a unit with certain flooring, you get those items. You've paid for them; you expect to receive them. The developer or the individual who's responsible for building and selling the unit has a responsibility to say, "This is what you're going to get," or "This is what you're paying for," and then that's what you actually get.

What's particularly important is, when you get a condominium, you're sacrificing in terms of size. It's smaller than a house would be. But what you make up for in terms of that loss in size is that often condominiums have a number of great amenities, and that's often the big selling point. When you purchase a condominium, often a lot of the owners and the people who purchase condominiums look to what amenities this building will have. Though they might get a smaller space, that condominium might have a party room. So they make up for having a smaller space in their actual living space by having a place where they can actually have friends come over. It might be a patio, it might be something outdoors. That provides them with an alternative to not having a large space.

1730

Often another selling point is that they might have a good gym in the condominium. They realize that although they are giving up something in size and they might have a condo fee that they have to pay, because they have access to a gym, it might be a bit of a savings. They don't have to pay for a gym membership; and in addition to that, have an amenity like a pool.

These are things that are told to the consumer: "If you purchase this unit, you are going to get a unit, it's going to look like this, and it's also going to have all of these amenities"—a lovely lobby, perhaps a wonderful pool and a great gym facility.

The protections that exist in this bill and the protections that now exist provide for very strict guidelines around the unit. The unit itself has to be exactly what, or very close to what, the developer or the person selling the unit says that it's going to be. That's good protection. But when it comes to the common elements, there is very

little regulation around that. You could hope and bank on getting a unit that has a big party room, that has a lovely gym and a pool, but at the end of the day you don't get any of that—or you get a smaller pool, maybe no pool, a really minor gym space when you're expecting a place that could replace your actual gym. When you don't get that, that is a big setback to the consumer; and there is a lack of consumer protection on that front.

That's an important area because that's something that condominium owners are banking on or hoping for, and they rely on that. When they don't see that protection, that's a hole, that's a mistake on the part of the government to not provide that protection.

In addition, one of the major areas of concern—I know one of my colleagues, the member from Welland, has experienced this as well. One of the major concerns that comes up when you purchase a new unit is the warranty.

I want to contrast. In this bill, the government has set up a condominium authority. The condominium authority is going to be run based on a levy of \$1 per unit per building. So there is a levy that's going to be mandated, and that's going to create a fund that is going to provide the resources for the condo authority to work, to run.

They did the right thing in this case, because when they asked for that levy, they realized those are public funds that are going into this condo authority, so the condo authority is subject to Auditor General oversight—which is the right thing to do. It makes sense. If you're requiring the community or the consumer to pay into this condo authority, it makes sense that that condo authority also has some oversight. The Auditor General can look into the books of this condo authority to make sure we're getting the best value for money, to make sure there's some transparency and accountability. That's the right thing to do.

The scope of the condo authority and its mandate is somewhat limited in what they are actually going to be able to do, but there is that accountability mechanism, so keep that in mind. The scope and the mandate for this authority are somewhat diminished to. It's going to be provide education and training, to provide some guidance to people in terms of how condo managers and condo boards should operate, but they have the accountability, the high standard of accountability, of the Auditor General.

Tarion is the only home warranty program that exists in Ontario. It is mandated; when you purchase a new home, you have to purchase a Tarion warranty. There is only one company; it's Tarion. It's been mandated by law by the Ontario government. But Tarion, which oversees billions of dollars in terms of all the homes that are built and providing warranties for them, is not subject to the Auditor General.

That is a serious concern. When you have something like the condo authority which, in terms of the amount of money coming into it and its actual scope and mandate, is far smaller than what Tarion is doing—the condo authority is subject to mandatory Auditor General over-

sight, but Tarion is not. That's truly troubling and that is going to be my next topic, where I really want to focus in on.

If the government doesn't take this opportunity to reform Tarion, they are failing to do their duty to really protect condominium owners and, in fact, all new homeowners, whether it's a condo, a townhouse or a house, a freehold home.

Tarion should be a source of security, of peace of mind, for a homeowner. You should be able to have that piece of mind, that "I have a warranty program. If there's any problem with my home, if there's anything shoddy, if anything has been poorly made, if there's any problem, then I can rely on this warranty program. I can go to that program, I can make a claim and I will get coverage."

Often, for most people, a condominium or a home is one of the largest investments you make, one of the largest purchases you make. Often people look at their home as an investment, so to have protection on that very crucial investment—probably the most expensive, most valuable asset in most people's lives—it would make sense to have strong protection, a strong warranty.

Well, the reality is that Tarion systemically and systematically denies claims. There has been such a great outpouring of complaints around the Tarion claims process and Tarion in general, and the government has not done anything to address that. This is clearly a great opportunity, if you're reforming the condominium landscape in terms of the law, to address this issue as well; the government has failed to do so.

Some of the issues that could easily be dealt with: I proposed a bill, Bill 60, which again built on the heritage and the great work of Rosario Marchese. One of the key elements of this bill would require looking at some of the accountability and transparency around Tarion.

One of the biggest concerns that I and a number of people have—Rosario had this as well. If you look at Tarion, Tarion's purpose is to provide accountability, or to provide protection for the consumer when it comes to home builders and developers. Now, you would think that the board would have that principle in mind, would have that purpose in mind: that Tarion exists to protect the consumer, that Tarion exists to make sure that the consumer can have some peace of mind that they've bought this most expensive, most valuable asset in their life and they'll have some protection.

The first bylaw of Tarion clearly indicates, clearly states that half of the board members must be appointed by the Ontario Home Builders' Association. Now, you've got to take that in for a second. The Ontario Home Builders' Association is a great organization. They do great work, but they're a construction lobbyist, essentially. So, to fully appreciate the situation: You have a warranty program which is supposed to protect the consumer who has bought a home from a home builder, and in the organization that provides them with the warranty, half of the board members are made up of the home builders. So how would there be any accountability?

If I'm a consumer and I want to challenge what Tarion is doing or I want to challenge what the home builders are doing and say, "Listen, I want protection. I want a claim. I want to be reimbursed for this loss or this lack of appropriate building materials or the way and manner in which it's built, and I want to bring a claim," but the board members who are controlling this warranty program are all home builders, are all part of the construction side of the equation, that inherently seems to be unfair.

It would make far more sense if the board of Tarion was made up of consumers or, if nothing else, just independent people who have nothing to do with—or maybe experts in the field who aren't affiliated with either homeowners or with the construction side. That might be completely independent.

I would say that what would be better is that if we want Tarion to clearly be a protection agency for the homeowner, it should be protection for the consumer. So I think, if anything, it should be biased in favour of the consumer, and there should be some clear requirements that the majority of the board is made up of people who have that interest in mind, if that's its purpose.

It makes absolutely no sense that Tarion is controlled by the industry that it's supposed to regulate. Think about that for a second. How can you give the control of a warranty program to the industry that it's supposed to regulate? It just doesn't make sense. That would be a very easy reform, a very clear reform, something that the government could have implemented in this act, and they simply did not.

But let's talk about some of the good points and some of the things that we can build on. In terms of the positive points, one of the major concerns that people have when it comes to issues around condominiums is that the remedy that most people had up until this point in time was to go to the courts. Court remedies are very difficult. They're very costly. It's very time-consuming and it's difficult to navigate. So implementing tribunals is a great solution to that.

1740

The fact that the government has now introduced a tribunal which would address complaints that come up—there have been a number of examples of this. Various news agencies have covered issues where the condominium board refused to be transparent, refused to be accountable or refused to disclose what was going on, didn't provide reasons for why the condominium maintenance fees were going up and didn't provide a full, detailed explanation of what the repairs were, how much they cost, who won the bid or what was the bidding process. A lot of the issues around the maintenance of the condominiums are not transparent whatsoever.

Having a tribunal that addresses any concerns that the condominium owner might have with the condominium board makes a lot of sense. But the problem with the way in which this is structured is that a lot of the actual substance of the tribunal is left to regulation. The problem with that is, it doesn't give us, as the opposition

or as legislators or lawmakers in general, the opportunity to really provide scrutiny on the tribunal and how it's going to function. If most of its function is left to regulation to determine how it will work, the mechanism by which it will work, then how can we as the opposition do our job to ensure that it is actually a strong piece of legislation and eventually a strong tribunal?

This is, I guess, a broader question about regulations versus putting things into legislation. I do understand and acknowledge that there are times when regulations provide flexibility and provide the government and legislators with the flexibility to address situations without requiring a piece of legislation to come back before the House in terms of a vote and having a new law passed or a law amended. But at the same time, when you overly rely on regulation, it doesn't actually provide clarity in terms of what the law is that we are seeking to pass in this House, and it doesn't allow for a very robust opposition or input from the opposition in terms of how a bill should be crafted. That's an issue with this bill. The tribunal is a great idea, but without knowing the regulations and the details around that, we're unable to really say if this tribunal will be effective or not. That's one of the problems that comes up with this bill.

When we look at the way this law was crafted or the process by which the government got to this point, one of the major concerns that comes up is that when you craft a law, in terms of the people you consult, to me it makes sense that you want to consult with, or you want a panel to be made up of—at least a completely balanced panel. Or, if there is a bias, the bias should be in favour of the person, persons or group that needs to be protected.

In this case, the bill is entitled Protecting Condominium Owners. The purpose of the bill is to protect the condominium owner. That's very clear in terms of the title. But if you look at the expert panel that was struck and the panel that was responsible for coming up with many of the recommendations that the government worked on or implemented into this bill, that expert panel was comprised predominantly of members of either the construction industry and two main groups that I can point to: There was the CCI and the ACMO.

Now, while it makes sense to obtain information and insight from those who are experts in the field, if the purpose of this bill is to provide protection for the consumer, then you would expect that the consumer—at least homeowners, condominium owners, condominium-owning associations, tenants or organizations that are made up of a membership which are people who own a condominium—would have a greater voice. When we look at the panel, there were consultants and lawyers that were connected—I'm a lawyer so I have no problem with lawyers being there, but the vast majority of them were connected with both construction-related organizations, CCI and ACMO. There was only one member on the entire expert panel that one could say represented the condo owners, a very able and skillful panel member, Anne-Marie Ambert, who manages the Condo Information Centre. But that was one member. On an expert

panel for a law which is entitled Protecting Condominium Owners Act, there was only one person representing a condominium owner on the entire panel. The rest of the panel was made up of people who were, if anything, associated with the construction side. So how can this panel really speak to the interests of the consumer, the interests of the actual condominium owner, when the vast majority of the panel was made up of people who weren't, as their main focus, their primary focus, concerned about the condominium owner and instead were associated with the construction side?

Again, having a balanced panel makes sense, having members from each of the related stakeholders or each of the related parties, but to have it so biased in one direction seems to me not to make a lot of sense if the bill was entitled "Protecting Condominium Owners." If the bill was instead how to protect the construction industry, or the home builders' association, that's different and then I wouldn't really be able to raise this concern. But if that's the purpose of your bill, then it doesn't really make a lot of sense.

But that being said, there are a significant number of improvements that are proposed by this bill. There are going to be some significant improvements if this bill is passed.

Just talking about the condo authority, the condo authority will be set up under this bill, and it will be a delegated administrative authority bound by the governance and accountability provisions in an administrative agreement with the crown and subject to oversight of the Auditor General. Like I said, that's an excellent step; it's a positive step.

The main purpose of the condominium authority will be to provide training, education and advice to condo owners and boards. This will definitely increase the playing field somewhat. When condo owners and boards have appropriate training and education, they will be able to be more effective in their job. Whether it's a condominium board that's able to more appropriately manage the condominium itself—in some cases, it's a tremendously difficult job. You have a number of units. There are various issues that come up in terms of maintenance and in terms of repairs, so having that training will be essential. That's a great step.

The other issue is giving the advice to condo owners. Now, an educated and informed owner will be able to navigate the system better; will know what their rights are; will know what they're entitled to; will be able to assess if a maintenance fee increase or a condominium fee increase is appropriate or inappropriate; and will know what questions to ask of the board, to be able to get to the bottom of it. A more informed and more educated condominium owner will be able to ensure that they have more protection and they are more protected.

The tribunal component: One of the things that's quite a positive sign is that the tribunal will have the same damage limit as the Small Claims Court, which has been recently augmented to \$25,000. That provides at least a meaningful recourse. If there is an issue with your

condominium and you do want to challenge it through the tribunal, the tribunal will be able to impose damages up to \$25,000, so it gives the tribunal some teeth.

But I want to focus on this point: It's important to know, like I said earlier, that the tribunal will not hear disputes involving developers and condo managers. These still must be resolved in court. Like I said before, it's disputes with the developer and the condo managers which are often deemed the major or the majority of the complaints. If those major complaints and the majority of the complaints aren't actually going to be addressed by the tribunal, it raises the question of why they would not include it. If you want to have an effective tribunal, why wouldn't you include these other parties and, at the minimum, still impose the \$25,000 limit? If there is a matter that's greater than \$25,000, perhaps it requires the greater scrutiny of a court. But at least allow for matters up to \$25,000 in terms of damages; at least allow those to be included in this tribunal. That would be an easy amendment, and it would significantly improve protection for condo owners.

Just on that condominium authority, finally, I really want to highlight that if you look at its authority and what it's going to do, it's going to be a tribunal. The condominium authority will also provide training and education and advice.

1750

Now, if you compare those three components—and the tribunal has a limit of \$25,000, and the levy of one dollar per unit per building—to what Tarion does, the amount of money that Tarion charges, the amount of resources that Tarion is responsible for and how important in terms of the claims that you can bring forward to Tarion, they are quite different.

If I can put it this way, one has a significantly larger source of resources in terms of how much money you put out, and more impact in terms of your life if you have a claim you want to bring forth to Tarion. But something that's bigger and has more access to funds is not subject to the Auditor General, while something that is smaller, that has less of a scope, less of a mandate, is subject to the Auditor General. To me, it makes sense for both of them to be covered by the Auditor General. This would be another very important, very simple amendment to this bill. If they would include an amendment to Tarion to require Tarion to also be subject to the Auditor General, it would be a tremendous step forward.

One of the things that I think is, again, something very important—and this is something about which people find a lot of confusion. There's definitely a lack of clarity around this issue. A provision in this act will allow for clear, more comprehensive rules to prevent owners from being surprised by unexpected costs and maintenance fee increases after buying a newly built condo.

This is one of the scenarios that happens: People want to get you through the door; they want you to sign up very quickly, get into that condo, and there isn't a full and clear disclosure about what the cost may be. Once you get into the condo and a year goes by, all of a

sudden, you are hit with a significant increase. You've been told that the condo fees would only be \$300 or \$400 a month, which is still quite expensive, but then all of a sudden, they balloon up to \$1,000 a month. That's something that you don't account for when you budget. A consumer is looking at, "What does this condominium cost? What are my mortgage payments going to be? What's my tax exposure? How much am I going to have to pay per year on tax? What are my condo fees? And if they don't include utilities, what are my utilities?"

People budget for what they know. If all of a sudden, they see not a 100% increase but a 200%, maybe even a 300% increase, that is completely unacceptable. People aren't going to be able to budget for that. It will throw them completely off. They probably wouldn't have made that decision in the first place. Maybe they would have purchased another unit; maybe they would have held off on purchasing a unit. But the fact that there wasn't that disclosure up front, the fact that there weren't clear guidelines and rules around what the unexpected costs may be, what the maintenance fees may be and how they may increase, that's something that's doing a disservice to the consumer.

To provide strong consumer protection, the condominium owner should know very clearly that this is what the fees are now, this is what they may increase to, and have a timeline and a guideline of approximately how much they can increase and when. In that way, they can make an informed decision. If the consumer still wants to go ahead and purchase that unit, then they're able to.

This is an area of concern that's come up a number of times: unethical sales practices. The bill will prohibit some of those practices. One of them, which we've talked about very briefly, is promising one thing and delivering another thing, and providing clear guidelines around what is promised and what should be delivered.

Like I said, there are clear rules around the unit itself. If you're promised something in the unit, there are pretty tight rules around the unit being exactly what you were promised. But those same rules don't apply to the actual common elements. Like I said, in a condominium it's the common elements which are often some of the biggest selling points. There needs to be a very clear guideline around what is promised and what is delivered, that there can't be significant variances to what's initially promised, even if it's a common element. Those common elements are often just as important as the unit itself. I think that's an important area that needs to be bolstered. Right now, the law only prohibits and prevents some of the unethical practices but not all, and it could be broader to cover more of those.

There is a positive amendment which seeks to amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, and to extend Tarion warranty coverage to include condo conversions, as per regulations. We heard some of the previous members speak about condo conversions, and it's good to see that the new home warranty plan and the Tarion coverage will extend to those conversions, but again, if Tarion is not reformed and made stronger, some of that protection is not really that meaningful.

We need to make sure that if we want to extend that same new home warranty program and Tarion coverage, Tarion is also strengthened and we don't see the current situation where people are relying on Tarion, they think that they have this protection, and when they make the claim, they are faced with an army of lawyers on one hand who are fighting tooth and nail to deny the claim, and on the other hand, you have the homeowner who is strapped and overextended in terms of their costs and expenses, and doesn't have the time and the ability to actually navigate the legal system in order to put forward or advance their claim. That's why we need to really look at reforming Tarion to make this meaningful.

The next piece here is that condo boards will be required to file annual returns with the condo registrar. Now, this is something that seems to me to make a lot of sense. When you have a condominium board, they're dealing with sometimes a great deal of money, if you look at the amount of condo fees collected by each unit. Their operating costs are quite significant, but there have been a number of news stories released where condominiums have kept a big surplus, or there's a lack of clarity about what's happening with the money that's being collected. When there are no overt repairs and no overt maintenance being done but there's an increase in maintenance fees requested, people are left wondering where that is coming from, where the money is going, why the money is being spent. Requiring condominium boards to file annual returns will really satisfy a lot of the concerns that are raised. It seems to be something that should have been done before, and I'm glad to see that it's included in this part of the bill.

Again, these issues were raised by one of the condominium owners' advocates, Anne-Marie Ambert. She raised a number of areas that are still missing. Though there's the requirement to have an annual return filed, there are certain areas that are not included in that return and need to be addressed. There are inadequate checks on unexplained large surpluses and inadequate owner control over large expenditures. Whereas the condominium board will put forward these returns, there isn't a check and balance in place on explaining why there is such a large surplus and where that came from.

More importantly, if there are large expenditures, the owners of the condominiums themselves have to have input in terms of how that is done. If there are minor things like snow removal, it makes sense that the condominium board can have the flexibility to do those on their own. But when it comes to things like the serious overhauling of maybe the facade of the building or serious changes to the lobby that are going to significantly impact the condominium owner and also be a significant cost, then in those circumstances the condominium owner should have a more active role in determining where those expenditures are made and how they're made, and decisions around that.

In that same vein, in terms of those large expenditures, there needs to be more transparency for contract procurement, including knowing the names of bidders in

order to discourage bid-rigging. Again, when it comes to these condominiums, often they're dealing with a large amount of money. When it comes to providing bids, those bids should be done in a very transparent manner, and the owners should have a lot of access to that, to address that.

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I always appreciate the subtleness of Mr. Speaker in providing me with a heads-up, and I appreciate that in this circumstance as well. I

would, with your leave, Mr. Speaker, ask that I may conclude my remarks at a later date.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. You will have additional time at a more appropriate time.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is now 6 o'clock, this Legislature stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
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Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
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Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Wellsand	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
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Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
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Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
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McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
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Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
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Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
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Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
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Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
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Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel**

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Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch.

Continued from back cover

Invasive Species Act, 2015, Bill 37, Mr. Mauro / Loi de 2015 sur les espèces envahissantes, projet de loi 37, M. Mauro	
Second reading agreed to	5061
Correction of record	
Hon. Reza Moridi.....	5061

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	5061
Hon. David Oraziatti	5061

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

Road safety	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	5061
Climate change	
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5062
Events in Halton	
Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris.....	5062
Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder	
Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	5062
Bapu Surat Singh Khalsa	
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	5062
Mexican Independence Day	
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	5063
Mexican Independence Day	
Mr. Steve Clark.....	5063
Eye examinations	
Mr. John Fraser	5063
Hispanic community	
Mrs. Cristina Martins	5063
Private members' public business	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5064

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

Standing Committee on Government Agencies	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5064
Report deemed adopted.....	5064

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

Great Lakes Shoreline Right of Passage Act, 2015, Bill 118, Mr. Gates / Loi de 2015 sur le droit de	
--	--

passage sur le littoral des Grands Lacs, projet de loi 118, M. Gates	
First reading agreed to.....	5064
Mr. Wayne Gates	5064
The Gage Research Institute Act, 2015, Bill Pr24, Mr. Dong	
First reading agreed to.....	5064

MOTIONS

Private members' public business	
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	5064
Motion agreed to	5064
House sittings	
Mr. John Yakabuski	5065
Motion agreed to	5065

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Ontario farmers	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	5065
Privatization of public assets	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	5065
Lung health	
Mrs. Cristina Martins	5065
Concussion	
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	5066
Diagnostic services	
Mme France Gélinas	5066
Personal-injury lawyers	
Ms. Soo Wong.....	5066
Health care	
Mr. Bill Walker	5066
Highway improvement	
Mr. Taras Natyshak	5067
Concussion	
Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris	5067
Health care	
Mr. Steve Clark.....	5067
Hospital funding	
Ms. Cindy Forster.....	5067
GO Transit	
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry.....	5068

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015, Bill 106, Mr. Oraziatti / Loi de 2015 sur la protection des propriétaires de condominiums, projet de loi 106, M. Oraziatti	
Hon. David Oraziatti	5068
Mr. Chris Ballard	5071

Mr. Jim McDonell	5073
Mr. Percy Hatfield	5073
Mr. Mike Colle	5073
Mr. Steve Clark.....	5073
Mr. Chris Ballard.....	5074
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	5074
Mr. Jim McDonell	5079
Ms. Cindy Forster	5082
Mr. Bas Balkissoon.....	5083
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	5083
Mme France G�linas.....	5083
Mr. Jim McDonell	5084
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	5084
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	5089

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 15 September 2015 / Mardi 15 septembre 2015

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Strengthening and Improving Government Act, 2015, Bill 85, Mme Meilleur / Loi de 2015 sur le renforcement et l'amélioration de la gestion publique, projet de loi 85, Mme Meilleur	
Ms. Sylvia Jones	5037
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	5039
Mr. Mike Colle.....	5039
Mr. John Yakabuski	5040
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	5040
Ms. Sylvia Jones	5040
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	5041
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	5048

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Steve Clark	5048
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde	5048
Mr. Patrick Brown.....	5048
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	5048
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	5048
Hon. Michael Gravelle	5049
Hon. Mario Sergio.....	5049
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	5049
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	5049
Ms. Cindy Forster	5049
Mr. Bas Balkissoon.....	5049
Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris	5049
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5049
Legislative pages	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5049
Appointment of temporary Ombudsman	
Mr. Gilles Bisson	5049

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Teachers	
Mr. Patrick Brown.....	5049
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	5050
Privatization of public assets	
Mr. Patrick Brown.....	5051
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	5051
Privatization of public assets	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5052
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	5052

Privatization of public assets

Ms. Andrea Horwath	5053
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	5053

Ontario economy

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	5054
Hon. Charles Sousa	5054

Teachers

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	5054
Hon. Liz Sandals	5054

Bear control

Mr. Glenn Thibeault.....	5055
Hon. Bill Mauro	5055

Health care funding

Mr. Jeff Yurek	5056
Hon. Eric Hoskins	5056

Government accountability

Mr. Taras Natyshak	5056
Hon. Brad Duguid	5056

Poverty

Mr. Mike Colle.....	5057
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5057

Justice system

Mr. Randy Hillier	5057
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	5058

Pension plans

Mr. Paul Miller.....	5058
Hon. Charles Sousa	5058

Student assistance

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn	5059
Hon. Reza Moridi.....	5059

Physiotherapy services

Mr. Bill Walker	5059
Hon. Eric Hoskins	5059

Visitors

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry.....	5060
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	5060

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Protection of Public Participation Act, 2015, Bill 52, Mme Meilleur / Loi de 2015 sur la protection du droit à la participation aux affaires publiques, projet de loi 52, Mme Meilleur	
Second reading agreed to	5060

Continued on inside back cover