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Tuesday 3 November 2015

Mardi 3 novembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 3 November 2015

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 3 novembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENERGY STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
DES LOIS SUR L'ÉNERGIE

Mr. Chiarelli moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning / *Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant plusieurs lois et abrogeant plusieurs règlements en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'énergie et la planification énergétique à long terme.*

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, my colleague from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Today, I rise to move second reading of Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015. If passed, this act would establish in law a long-term energy planning process that is transparent, efficient and able to respond to changing policy and system needs. This is consistent with our government's commitment to enhance transparency and community participation through open data, open dialogue and open government initiatives.

It would support increased competition and enhanced ratepayer value by empowering the Independent Electricity System Operator, or IESO, to competitively procure transmission projects, and it would introduce two new initiatives to help Ontario families and businesses conserve energy and water to help manage costs at both the retail customer level and the system as a whole.

Before I pass on to my colleague from Mississauga–Streetsville, I wanted to highlight the three core components of this important piece of legislation. Firstly, our government recognizes that sound, prudent long-term energy planning is essential to a clean, reliable and affordable energy future. The best way to ensure that kind of robust system planning occurs is to consult with

the public, First Nations, industry and the energy stakeholder community. The Ministry of Energy has developed our long-term energy plans to include broad consultations with the public and stakeholders. It's a transparent process for establishing the government's key goals and priorities for the province's energy system.

Today, our government is proposing legislation that would provide a statutory basis for this long-term energy planning process. The proposed legislation would ensure a consistent, long-term planning process is followed. As well, it would enshrine in legislation Ontario's Open Government Initiative by making consultation with the public, stakeholders and aboriginal groups throughout Ontario a requirement in the development of our future long-term energy plans—it will be put in the legislation.

To support an even more robust process, this legislation also ensures that supporting technical data are made public prior to the start of our next consultation phase. This would ensure everyone starts from the same appropriate technical level of understanding.

In addition, this legislation we are debating today also proposes an adjustment to transmission planning and procurement by providing the Independent Electricity System Operator with the ability to undertake competitive processes for transmitter selection or procurement when appropriate.

Competitive transmission procurement has only previously been done once before, through the Ontario Energy Board east-west tie designation. This is a very major transmission line that goes across northern Ontario, and very, very critical to the planning process that is in our long-term energy plan at the moment. Stakeholders and the Ontario Energy Board have agreed that the process run in 2012 was not as efficient as it should have been.

As we know, the IESO runs competitive procurement for energy generation projects with much success. We are proposing here to add transmission projects to their procurement processes. This measure is consistent, as well, with the recommendations of the Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets.

Next, Mr. Speaker, as Ontario continues to implement its 2013 long-term energy plan, one of our key goals is energy conservation. Conservation helps families and businesses save money on their energy bills. It's as simple as that. It reduces the need to build expensive energy infrastructure, helping lessen the need for rate increases. And conservation reduces greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, creating a cleaner future for our children and our grandchildren.

Ontario has already made great strides in building a culture of conservation. From 2005 to 2013, Ontarians conserved 8.7 terawatt hours of electricity, enough to power the cities of Mississauga and Oshawa in 2013. But there's more to do, Mr. Speaker, and this legislation takes additional steps.

Energy and water reporting and benchmarking initiatives for large buildings would require property owners to track their building's energy and water usage—as well as greenhouse gas emissions—over time, to determine how a building's energy performance is changing and how it compares to other, similar buildings. This ongoing review would help building owners identify opportunities to save energy and water, thereby saving money on their utility bills. It would also help tenants and buyers make informed property decisions, enabling property and financial markets to value energy- and water-efficient buildings, and it would help Ontario meet its conservation and greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Ontario is already demonstrating leadership to energy reporting and benchmarking requirements for government and broader public sector buildings. This is already being done, and it's being done quite successfully. As we proceed, it will only be required of large buildings—several dozen large buildings across the province. Extending this requirement to large buildings would align our policy with jurisdictions across the United States, Europe, the United Kingdom and Asia. We're not breaking new ground; we're following best practices, and some of those best practices are already taking place.

The second initiative sets water efficiency standards for products that consume both energy and water, such as dishwashers and washing machines. Currently, manufacturers can supply the Ontario market with models that meet our energy-efficient requirements, but they consume more energy than they would if we also included water efficiency standards. So if these same appliances and the same equipment had not only energy efficiency in it, but also added the water efficiency component to it, you would almost double the conservation benefits from the equipment.

Other jurisdictions, including the province of British Columbia and the US Department of Energy, have already harmonized both energy and water efficiency standards for these types of products. Again, we're not breaking new ground here, we're following best practices. By harmonizing with the US standards, Ontario can streamline the process for manufacturers, save consumers money and show continued leadership in setting efficiency standards.

In conclusion—I won't go into conclusion right now, because I'm going to speak to some of the issues that my parliamentary assistant was going to speak to, but he is not here yet.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, you cannot refer to the gentleman in his absence.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to try to demonstrate that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has set a very, very good example of how to

ad lib through time in this House, because he is masterful at it, and I wish I could emulate him.

Mr. Speaker, one of the main points of this particular submission is to create a process in legislation for planning the electricity system. There was a process that was contemplated under the Electricity Act. I forget what year it was enacted. It was a process that would have delegated to the Ontario Energy Board a very, very significant planning process. It was very prescriptive in terms of the type of consultation that had to take place, the length of time. Previous governments initiated the process to incorporate the Electricity Act process into the system, and it bogged down on a number of occasions.

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From 2010 to 2013, we did an alternative because we did not have that incorporated in legislation. We proceeded with what we called the long-term energy plan, or LTEP. LTEP, as it was implemented in 2013, included very, very massive consultation across the province that went from February through to November. It included, I think, nine sessions with First Nation and Métis communities. It went across the province. It had special sessions for stakeholders where they could have an interrelationship with the leaders from IESO, OPA, and it was extremely broad.

When the long-term energy plan 2013 was issued—it was December 2013—it was about 85 pages long, and it covered all the key components of the electricity system. The final product received a lot of plaudits and thank yous from the people, the stakeholders, who had participated in the process. When we announced that process, there were endorsements that came to the end product to the ministry, to the IESO and to the Ontario Power Authority for the fact that we listened and it was effective. Part of the long-term energy plan at that point established and required regional energy plans to be implemented, and so the 2013 long-term energy plan is being implemented now by those regional energy plans being implemented, and in each one of the regional plans there is additional detailed consultation. They consult with municipalities because, up until now, energy planning took place, and community planning and community official plans took place and they never connected the dots; they weren't on the same page. At the same time, the level of engagement, of energy conservation, combined heat and power projects, in municipalities was very, very scattered. It was successfully implemented particularly in Guelph, a leader in Ontario in that regard. But many municipalities were not paying attention to it.

So the regional structure for energy planning is being implemented now. One of the first to be implemented, one that actually was included, the regional plan was included in the long-term energy plan of 2013, was northwestern Ontario. That was the plan that identified the east-west transmission line to be implemented. It was the one that identified something that is absolutely transformational, and that is the transmission line to Pickle Lake, which will then move northerly to bring power, grid power, to 21 remote First Nation commu-

ities. It's transformational. That hasn't taken place anywhere in Canada or in other northern provinces.

About a month ago in Thunder Bay, they had the Chiefs of Ontario session, and at that time they announced a transformational public-private partnership. Watay Power is 100% First Nation. That group of First Nations—there were 20 First Nations who joined together in a public-private partnership with private sector companies Fortis and RES to actually put together a billion-dollar-plus transmission project to bring power up to Pickle Lake and then into remote communities in northern Ontario.

They had First Nations in that room who were in tears that they were leading it. Watay Power: The First Nations were leading this initiative. They had been working over the last two years with the OPA, the IESO and the Ministry of Energy. Most importantly, they were working meticulously to get all of these individual First Nations onside for this public-private partnership, which was transformational in terms of moving forward.

So the regional planning context is very, very important. That's what was included in the long-term energy plan. It's that type of consultation and forward-looking planning that is incorporated in this legislation to ensure that we can plan for the future.

There are issues that have arisen concerning what will happen to planning. This legislation deals with planning, and it makes it very, very clear that cabinet and the IESO will have the responsibility and the authority to designate transmission projects—not only to designate them, but to have them on a competitive basis moving forward. So we're very, very pleased to see that moving forward in this particular legislation.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We'll take it from here, Bob.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm hearing some chatter on the other side, and I didn't quite get the words. He is not speaking in his usual loud voice. I'm speaking about the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We'll take it from here.

Interjections.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I think I've almost used up his time. For those in Nepean–Carleton, they should be aware that Lisa MacLeod is here at the start of the parliamentary proceedings, doing her work and paying attention, and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is doing his usual thing of trying to be interruptive.

The other issue that I wanted to address in terms of this legislation are the issues regarding the equipment and appliances having conservation both with respect to water and with respect to electricity. That's new in Ontario. It involved a lot of internal discussions and some external discussions with manufacturers and so forth. One of the issues there was whether it should be done by the Ministry of the Environment or the Ministry of Energy, and we were able to resolve that issue successfully.

In terms of other planning issues, one of the significant elements that came out of the long-term energy plan

was the regional planning and the municipal planning that was relative to renewable energy. In that particular case, we did initiate consultations through the IESO and the OPA before they were merged, and that turned out to be quite successful. As you know, the outcome of that particular process is that municipalities now have a lot more input into the issues.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: He's here.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I know one of the tardiest and most attentive members in this place is the member from Mississauga–Streetsville. He just attended, and I'm just contemplating—I was just given a copy of his speech and told, "Just read his speech." I thought maybe we would teach the member a lesson and I would read his speech, and then he would be able to listen to it to see whether he prepared a good speech or not. But, Mr. Speaker, I won't do that. I'll ask the member to address the issues now. Thank you.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the Minister of Energy for his promptness, for his on-the-spot dialogue.

I now turn the debate over to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I certainly thank the finest minister that I've ever had the privilege of working with for doing some excellent ragging of the puck, I gather.

I'm tempted to begin this morning with a discussion of traffic in Toronto after spending two most interesting hours-plus sitting in it—

Hon. Mario Sergio: We need more money for infrastructure.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Yes, exactly. It sort of struck me as odd because the weather was perfect, the roads were dry, and it was just volume of traffic. But that's the subject for yet another discussion and a different act, and I can hardly wait. Of course, if I were to continue on this, my good friend and colleague across the way from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who loves to spar with me in debate, would say, "But he's not addressing the act."

I would like today to rise in support of the second reading of the proposed Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015. If passed, this act would establish in law a long-term energy planning process that is transparent, efficient and able to respond to changing policy and system needs. It would support increased competition and enhanced ratepayer value by empowering the Independent Electricity System Operator, which I'm going to refer to by its acronym, IESO, to competitively procure transmission projects, and it would introduce two new initiatives to help Ontario families, businesses and the province as a whole conserve energy and water to manage costs.

Speaker, the province recognizes that sound, prudent, long-term energy planning is essential to a clean, reliable and affordable energy future. The Ministry of Energy uses the development of long-term energy plans to conduct broad consultations with the public and with

stakeholders. It's a transparent process for establishing the government's key goals and priorities for the province's energy system.

In 2013, Ontario released the long-term energy plan for that year, the 2013 LTEP—sometimes called LTEP, but I'm going to call it the long-term energy plan—which balances five principles that guide all of the province's energy-related decisions. Those five principles are: cost-effectiveness, reliability, clean energy, community engagement and putting conservation first.

Since its release, the 2013 long-term energy plan has helped the province provide Ontarians with a clean, reliable and affordable supply of energy. Thousands of Ontarians participated in the consultation process for the 2013 long-term energy plan and helped us in our ministry and the many people who helped put the 2013 long-term energy plan together to develop the plan's strategies and targets to build a clean, modern and reliable energy future here in Ontario.

For the past two years, our ministry has been rolling out a variety of initiatives under the plan, and it will continue to guide our efforts. The overarching theme throughout the 2013 long-term energy plan and the guiding principle of the plan is Ontario's commitment to put conservation first. Conservation is the cleanest and most effective energy resource that we have. It offers consumers a way to reduce their energy bills.

A significant aspect of the conservation framework that guides the 2013 long-term energy plan is cost-effectiveness. We know that savings are important to Ontarians. Because the cost of electricity is rising everywhere in the world and we know that residential, commercial and industrial consumers are concerned about rates, the province is determined to find efficiencies that will assist homeowners and business owners to keep electricity costs down. This is a key priority.

From 2015 to 2032 inclusive, the forecast for residential bills indicates an average annual increase of about 2.2%, which is in line with neighbouring jurisdictions. The average annual increase in consumers' costs is generally in line with expected inflation, which averaged about 1.8% over the past 10 years.

To assist consumers to continue to see cost-savings and to manage electricity prices, the province has put initiatives in place, including Ontario's five-point small business energy savings plan, which is helping small businesses conserve energy, manage costs and save money. The government has always stood up for consumers and continues to be committed to putting consumers first.

This proposed legislation would, if passed, support two more guiding principles of the 2013 long-term energy plan: clean energy and reliability.

The Ministry of Energy will continuously monitor and support the development of more advanced and efficient ways to generate and to transmit electricity. In terms of supply, it's important to note that Ontario's precedent-setting closure of coal-fired generation in 2014 has earned Ontario's energy system recognition around the world. In fact, Ontario's electricity system is now 99.7%

free of carbon emissions. Of the emitters of greenhouse gases, Ontario's power generation system is no longer even among the top sources. Replacing coal-fired electricity generation was the single largest climate-change initiative undertaken in North America and was the equivalent of taking some 7 million cars off the road in Ontario.

Ontario was the first jurisdiction in North America with a significant reliance on coal to eliminate coal as a source of electricity production. It's something that the utilities in the United States are only now stepping up to address. It's a challenge that Ontario addressed 10 years ago and set about in an organized systematic way, and in so doing has given Ontarians the cleanest electricity generation system anywhere in North America. It's a tremendous achievement.

The beauty of Ontario's energy system is that we rely on a variety of generation sources, using the right source in the right way at the right time for the right reasons. The workhorse of our system here in Ontario has always been our nuclear power fleet. It's reliable, it's clean, it's cost-effective and it's a key contributor to Ontario's technological development and, of course, to job creation right here in the province of Ontario.

Ontario is a pioneer in the generation of electricity through nuclear power. Ontario has been operating nuclear power safely and successfully for more than 40 years. It began with the launch of Ontario's first full-scale commercial nuclear power. That unit, called Douglas Point, came online in the 1960s and was only decommissioned not all that long ago.

Since the first reactors in Ontario began generating electricity, Ontario has benefitted from emissions-free, safe, reliable and affordable nuclear power. The Pickering generating station came online with Pickering 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the late 1960s, then Pickering 5 to 8 in the 1970s, at about the same time as construction on the Bruce nuclear power development began, with Bruce A and Bruce B coming on stream in the 1970s and the 1980s. Darlington was first conceived in the 1970s, and the last unit of Darlington came on stream in the 1990s.

The story of nuclear power in Canada is one of constant innovation and refurbishment. Ontario will ensure that this track record continues. Today, nuclear power provides about half of Ontario's electricity.

Renewable energy is playing a key part in our efforts to make the energy system cleaner and more sustainable. Renewable energy represents an important piece of Ontario's supply mix. The 2013 long-term energy plan includes targets for renewable energy: some 10,700 megawatts for wind and bioenergy to be online by 2021, and some 9,300 megawatts of additional hydroelectricity to be online in about 2025.

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Ontario currently has more than 14,800 megawatts of wind, solar, bioenergy and hydroelectricity energy online. There are more than 3,600 megawatts of wind power currently online. That's enough electricity to power nearly a million homes each year in the province of Ontario. As well, approximately 2,100 megawatts of

contracted wind capacity is yet to come online. In just 10 years, Ontario has become a North American leader in the development, use and manufacturing of clean energy. We have the fastest-growing clean tech sector in the country, and that's something that Ontarians should be proud of.

In looking at some of the states in the United States, you have to ask yourself: What are our neighbours doing? In what direction is Texas going? Texas is pursuing wind power. California is pursuing wind power. The mid-western states are pursuing wind power. Ontario was there first.

One of the advantages to Ontario's wind power was explained to me during the summer when I paid a visit to the Independent Electricity System Operator. One of the things that the technicians in the control room told me is that one of the challenges for electricity is that at any given moment, supply has to exactly equal demand, because for all practical purposes, electricity is not a commodity that can be stored. They said one of the things that turned out to be a wonderful asset in Ontario's adoption of wind power—but one that at the outset of the Green Energy Act was not foreseen—was the ability to take some of the wind farms and to adjust the pitch of the blades so that the energy coming out of wind farms could exactly follow the rise and fall of the peaks during the day or even during the season. It meant that other dispatchable sources of power either didn't need to be brought online if they weren't needed, or didn't need to be brought offline. You could very finely tune the supply and demand for electrical power right at the IESO headquarters—which, by the way, are in Mississauga—by adjusting the pitch of the blades on wind turbines.

I thought: How interesting that here we have a technology that's enabling Ontario to meet the challenge of those differences in the demand for electricity at various hours during the day. It just gives you an idea of the flexibility that we have here in the province with our diversified sources of power generation.

Speaker, community engagement is another key pillar of Ontario's 2013 long-term energy plan. In this province, we make it a key priority to encourage municipalities and aboriginal communities to develop their own community-level energy plans. These plans set out infrastructure priorities and identify conservation and renewable opportunities tailored to local needs.

This province is committed to giving municipalities meaningful opportunities to participate when decisions are being made about siting renewable energy projects. It means that Ontario is constantly working with our partner ministries and agencies to ensure that First Nation and Métis communities are consulted on any energy activity that could affect their aboriginal or treaty rights.

The implementation of the 2013 long-term energy plan is helping the province make great strides in meeting each of our objectives to provide Ontarians with a clean, reliable and affordable supply of energy.

Among the other things, Speaker, we have some real centres of excellence here where some of our regions or

municipalities have really stepped up and approached some of the challenges of how they're going to generate energy locally. So I'm going to do a little shout-out to some of the best ones.

Oxford county is one area that has set out to become autonomous in the way that it generates and uses energy. I can see my colleague over here, the MPP from Oxford. I was in Woodstock not that long ago talking with the mayor and talking with Woodstock Hydro. They're a great example of how to set out to do a plan to approach their energy future by looking ahead and calculating how much energy the region is going to use, where it's going to come from and what mix it's going to be.

Another would be Guelph. Guelph has long been a leader in approaching how Guelph and the surrounding area use energy and where their energy comes from.

Today, our government is proposing legislation that would provide a statutory basis for a long-term energy planning process that builds on the 2013 long-term energy plan and that is designed to balance the principles of cost-effectiveness, reliability, clean energy, community and aboriginal engagement, and emphasis on conservation and demand management.

The proposed legislation would ensure a consistent long-term planning process is followed. As well, it would support Ontario's Open Government Initiative by making consultation with the public, stakeholders and aboriginal groups throughout Ontario a requirement in the development of energy plans, and it would ensure that energy plans and their supporting technical data are made public. These are our existing practices, but never before have they been enshrined in legislation.

The proposed legislation would also improve transmission planning and procurement by providing the Independent Electricity System Operator with the ability to undertake competitive processes for transmitter selection or procurement when those actions are appropriate. These competitive approaches will ensure that ratepayers get the greatest value and that the Independent Electricity System Operator is well positioned to undertake these selection or procurement processes.

And there's more: The proposed legislation would also advance energy conservation. As Ontario implements its 2013 long-term energy plan, one of the key goals of that plan is energy conservation. Conservation helps families and businesses save money on their energy bills. Conservation reduces the need to build expensive energy infrastructure, and conservation helps to lessen the need for rate increases. Conservation reduces greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Conservation creates a cleaner future for our children and for our grandchildren. Conservation is the cleanest and most cost-effective energy resource that Ontario has. Conservation offers consumers a way to reduce their energy bills. Conservation reduces the need, as I mentioned before, to build new generation as well as new transmission and distribution infrastructure. Conservation makes the best use of what we already have and the most optimal use of what it is that the province is building at any one moment.

The more we save, the less we need to look for new supply, and so Ontario's aim is to consider conservation as the first option before building new generation or transmission facilities wherever such a measure is cost-effective. That means adopting a conservation-first mindset throughout Ontario's planning, approval and procurement processes. It means bringing that mindset to work with Ontario's agencies, with local distributors and with the other ministries with which the Ministry of Energy partners. And, of course, it means building a climate of conservation and a culture of conservation here in Ontario.

As we plan our energy needs for the next 20 years, conservation will be the first resource Ontario considers before building new generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure. The Ministry of Energy is providing leadership in implementing conservation first by setting energy conservation policy and establishing energy efficiency standards.

Ontario has already made great strides in building a culture of conservation. From 2005 to 2013, Ontarians conserved some 8.7 terawatt hours of electricity. To put that in perspective, that's enough to power the cities of Mississauga and Oshawa throughout an entire calendar year.

As always, as things continue to evolve in a fast-growing place like Ontario, the legislation that the province is introducing today takes additional steps, and it introduces two new initiatives. There's more to do. The energy and water reporting and benchmarking initiative for large buildings would require building owners to track and report their energy and water consumption and greenhouse gas emissions to the Ministry of Energy, and potentially develop and publish energy conservation and demand management plans. This is something that many building owners are already doing. In fact, the best of the building owners are discovering that not only is it a particularly good idea, but as a not-bad-at-all plan it's something that all other building owners should adopt as well. The initiative would help building owners identify opportunities to save energy and water, thereby saving money on their utility bills. It would help tenants and buyers make informed property decisions enabling property and financial markets to value energy- and water-efficient buildings, and it would help Ontario meet its conservation and greenhouse gas reduction goals.

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Speaker, Ontario is already demonstrating leadership through energy reporting and benchmarking requirements for government and broader public sector buildings. Extending this requirement to large buildings would align Ontario's policy with jurisdictions across the United States, in Europe, in the United Kingdom and in Asia.

The second initiative sets water efficiency standards for products that consume both energy and water, and the most common in most homes would be your dishwasher or your washing machine. Currently, manufacturers can supply the Ontario market with models that meet our energy efficiency requirements but which consume more

energy than they would if we also included water-efficiency standards. To this end, other jurisdictions, including the province of British Columbia and, most importantly, the US Department of Energy, regulate both energy and water efficiency standards for these products. By harmonizing with the US standards for these products, Ontario can streamline the process for manufacturers, save consumers money, and show continued leadership in setting efficiency standards.

Speaker, to make smart decisions, you've got to have the best information. If passed, the new legislation would help Ontarians make smart decisions about the products that we use and the places that we live and work, and it would enshrine an inclusive, transparent and efficient planning process, ensuring we have the best information in planning for Ontario's energy future.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to rise today in debate for Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act. I applaud the minister, actually, for continuing on after he had indicated that he would be splitting his time, because I know he spoke a bit longer than he was prepared to.

In any event, Speaker, I think I speak on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus when I say that whenever an energy bill comes before this Legislature, it causes us a great deal of concern. After all, this is a government that has brought in the largest single hydro increase in Ontario's history. This is a government that brought in the Green Energy Act, which has destroyed much of rural Ontario and has increased our hydro rates. This is a government that cancelled two gas plants, to the tune of \$1 billion, in order to win an election. It wasn't based on sound planning, so when I hear the government talk about the long-term energy plan, when I hear them talking about the Green Energy Act and wind turbine developments, when I hear them talking about IESO, and when I hear them talking about the sale of Hydro One, I get concerned.

Just like clockwork, on Saturday evening and early Sunday morning, our time shifted backward and our hydro bills, yet again, went up in the province of Ontario.

As a former energy critic and somebody who's been very concerned about energy prices in the province of Ontario for quite some time, I urge caution whenever we look at a piece of legislation put forward by the Liberal government with respect to energy. I will be respectful of the government's time. I will be respectful of the fact that they have a bill before the assembly, but I will raise red flags because what they have done in the past is likely what they will do again in the future. That causes me concern for the good people of Nepean-Carleton and the city of Ottawa who have consistently sent me to this place to defend them.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, when we're speaking about energy in this province, like my colleague

just talked about, we need to look at what this province has done when it comes to energy.

One of the most troubling decisions, probably in the history of our province, is the fact that this government, when it comes to the energy file, is selling off our public hydro system. It would be one thing if they can substantiate this sale by saying, "Listen, by selling it we're going to raise enough funds that will actually pay for infrastructure." The reality, independently confirmed by the Financial Accountability Officer, is this: Selling Hydro One will actually put us further into debt. So how can there be a claim that by selling this asset, they will be able raise funds to build infrastructure, when the reality is this is going to put us further into debt? This will put us into a worse financial position. And this isn't my opinion, Mr. Speaker; this is the opinion of an independent officer of this Legislative Assembly. This officer stated very clearly—just looking at the facts, not affiliated with any party; looking at the facts of this sale—that it will put our province in a worse financial position.

Now, how can the government possibly stand up in this House and claim that they're selling this asset to build infrastructure when the reality is that it puts us in a worse financial position? In fact, they're making it harder to build infrastructure by selling this asset. The reality is that this makes it more difficult to actually invest in our province, by selling this asset. The reality is that it does nothing to benefit Ontarians.

Who knows what the real reason is? Who knows what the real benefit is? But it's certainly not to build infrastructure, which we so dearly, dearly need.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes, Mr. Speaker, like yourself, I listened attentively to the Minister of Energy and the parliamentary assistant the member from Mississauga–Streetsville. As you know, they are charged with a very important file that affects everybody in Ontario. With this legislation they're trying to ensure that, going forward, there are more efficiencies and more conservation measures. That's the core of this bill, Bill 135.

The interesting new analysis here is the connecting of water usage with power usage. We sometimes don't make that connection. Whether it's in your home or whether it's in your workplace, especially in large workplaces, water consumption is directly correlated with your energy consumption. So it's an attempt, in this legislation, to try to measure that in order to bring about more conservation.

If you look at the city of Toronto at night—I'm sure Chatham is the same way—you'll see that all the lights in the big buildings seem to be on. You wonder, "Why do all the buildings have to be lit up all night long when there's nobody in them? What's the cost of that? Do these big office towers measure that?" That's one of the things that is in this legislation, which I think is very important: to try to measure this energy usage and consumption so there would be some kind of benchmark so you can find best practices in how to reduce energy

consumption—because these big users, like the buildings that are in all our major cities and our industrial partners, have to start to measure and try to find out ways of conserving power.

This is what this bill tries to encourage, and that's why I think it's a bill worth supporting.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure for me to provide a couple of minutes of comments on the record regarding Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act.

I felt sorry for the government today. They really had a challenge giving their lead today, so part of me felt bad for the minister and the parliamentary assistant because any time they stand up and have to defend their energy policy, they do always appear to be on shaky ground. I share some of the same concerns that my colleague the member for Nepean–Carleton put on the record.

We just faced a hydro rate increase on November 1 because of this government's damaging energy policy. I do get worried when this government talks about energy policies that also include water consumption. This is a government that—when we had issues with billing and metering in rural areas, we went to the Ministry of Energy for answers and they shut the door. We had to bring in the Ombudsman to get those answers for our constituents.

So when we talk about water conservation, I'm just a little worried. I have a rural riding. I hope that this government isn't going down the road of metering wells, because I think they're going to have big, big opposition from ridings like Leeds–Grenville and all over the province of Ontario. I think they need to come clean with their energy policy. I think we've had a situation where we've asked for answers and they shut the door on us. We've got issues in this House almost every day with the sale of Hydro One. There is tremendous opposition in this province; 185 municipalities have stood firmly against this government's plan.

0950

In fact, even the Minister of Energy, when he was the mayor of Ottawa, stood vehemently opposed to the sale of Hydro One. That is the Bob Chiarelli we want to hear from today, not the minister that we heard from this morning. Come clean, minister. We want to hear from you again. Don't meter wells. Don't continue this disastrous energy policy in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the government side, to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for final comments.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Well, thank you very much, Coach—I mean, Speaker. I thank the members from Nepean–Carleton, Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Eglinton–Lawrence and Leeds–Grenville for their comments—some helpful; others less so.

The Green Energy Act, as I explained in my remarks, has helped Ontario contain costs and more efficiently manage energy supply and demand. Here is what Ontario's decision to move to green energy has done in

the last decade: Ontario has tomorrow's generation assets at yesterday's prices, procured with near-zero interest rates. Looking south of the border, the United States is scrambling to catch up to the province of Ontario by shutting down their coal plants and buying the energy assets they need today at tomorrow's prices, with interest rates that Americans cannot predict.

Ontario is not going to choose the conservative, retrograde option. We have to remind them that the 20th century is indeed over. In this century, Ontario is going to generate power cleanly and economically, while doing our part to lower greenhouse gases. Now, if one looks south of the border at other electrical utilities around us, we can see that Duke Energy is increasing its power rates. The many northeastern and Midwestern utilities are shutting down their coal-fired plants, as Ontario did a decade ago, and their power rates are going up. Austin Energy in Texas is raising its power rates. California's dozens of electrical utilities are all moving to renewable energy, shutting down coal, and their power rates are climbing.

We appreciate that power should be delivered as efficiently and economically as possible, and that is exactly what this bill and the long-term energy plan have allowed us to do.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much for allowing me to join the debate on Bill 135 today. I really did appreciate the minister coming in and pinch-hitting for the parliamentary assistant as well as doing his own job this morning. It's always challenging when someone is caught up in gridlock that is primarily caused by themselves. However, that is a story for another day, because of course we can talk about the fact that the Liberal government has done nothing to relieve gridlock in this province in the 12 years that they have been in power—absolutely nothing.

But there is so much to talk about and so little time. I'm looking at the clock and I really only have 20 minutes to speak today, whereas I should have an hour. Is it possible for us to delay question period and allow me to have the whole hour, all in one piece? Apparently not, no. According to the standing orders, I'll have to wait and come back another day.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: What if we just ring the bells?

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's always helpful if you can speak all at the same time.

But I am very nervous whenever this government brings out a new bill to deal with the energy sector. I think I have a right to be, and the people across Ontario share my view and my concern, because every time this government uses the word "energy," it seems that it costs us more and more.

I chuckle—but of course I didn't heckle, because I don't really do that on a regular basis. The parliamentary assistant spoke about how the Green Energy Act has helped to lower the cost of electricity—I'm paraphrasing

here. His implication was that it's been a good financial thing for the people of Ontario. Well, Speaker, you know and I know and he knows that nothing could be further from the facts. In fact, the primary driver of increased energy costs in this province is the Green Energy Act, and everybody who has done an independent analysis will share that view.

As a result of the Green Energy Act, we have what used to be called the provincial benefit, but it became quite a joke. It is now called the global adjustment. "Global adjustment" sounds like something that came from the Klingon universe or something. It's the global adjustment. I'll tell you what it does mean: It means that you're paying a lot more for your hydro bills here in the province of Ontario.

The global adjustment, as auditor Bonnie Lysyk has determined in her report, will have cost Ontarians \$50 billion by the end of this year. That's not million; that's billion. Take a million and add three more zeros; \$50 billion is what the global adjustment will have cost you by the end of 2015, and that is largely as a result of the changes made by the passing of the Green Energy Act in 2009.

I want to talk about this bill itself, but I see that, based on what the minister spoke about and what the parliamentary assistant spoke about, the discussion is somewhat wide open here today. I appreciate that because it gives us an opportunity to talk about—I know we do not question the motives of a member of this assembly, so I'm not doing that, but I think it is fair to question the motives of a government.

It seems that, as they say, timing is everything. Just ask the Kansas City Royals. It seems that the introduction of this bill coincided very closely with the Financial Accountability Officer releasing his report on the financial impact of the partial sale of Hydro One. I think something that was made abundantly clear in the FAO's, Mr. LeClair's, report—I have some facts and quotes here—is that he believes it's a bad deal for the people of Ontario. He also makes it clear that this Liberal government is anything but open and transparent.

The reason he says it's a bad deal is because—and he sees the politics. He's not political; he's completely neutral when it comes to politics, but he sees what the government is doing here. With this tranche that will begin on Thursday, 15% of Hydro One will be sold. I know that my people here in the PC Party, the official opposition, and my colleagues in the third party are going to consider that a very bad, dark day for the people of the province of Ontario because once the cat is out of the bag, it's going to be very hard to reverse it. As they say, you can't put the toothpaste back in the tube.

On Thursday, it's going to be a difficult day for the people of Ontario because they know that this government will have then crossed the line. There's always the opportunity to say, "We've made a mistake." We thought that just maybe, when the FAO released his report last week, this government would take notice and say, "At the very least, we have to pause this. We have to sit back and

say, 'Is this the right thing to do or is it maybe time for us to take a second look at it?'" I think that would have been a very, very reasonable approach to take.

The Financial Accountability Officer's job is to analyze how decisions made by the government will impact the finances of that province. What he pointed out in his report was that there's going to be a bump in the revenue of the province in the first year. Isn't that kind of convenient? A government that's talking about—as the finance minister repeats over and over and over again, "We've met every one of our goals, and we've met every one of our projections as far as reducing the province's debt and deficit."

1000

First of all, when you set them low enough, it's not hard to get to. But isn't that going to be convenient next year when the budget comes out and the finance minister is going to—and you know what? The Premier may even take that crowing opportunity on herself. She might say, "We have reduced the deficit for 2016-17 by X number of dollars." Really, it's going to be in the billions; we know that. This is a valuable asset that they've put up for a fire sale. It is not some used car that your grandmother had that's been sitting in the barn for five years. No. This is Hydro One. This is the caretaker of all the transmission in this province. This is the central nervous system of the electricity system in the province. This is what they're selling off, and 15% of that is going to bring in a lot of money.

So next year, it's going to be, "Look at us. You see, we've exceeded our deficit projections. We've exceeded our goal once again. Come and pat us on the back, because we've done so much of it we've dislocated our shoulders." That's going to be the story next year. I'm telling you in advance, watch next spring. That's going to be the story by the Minister of Finance and the Premier.

But there's a sad ending to the story. The FAO said it's going to be good news next year, but as we go down the road, the news is going to get worse and worse. This government knows that its days—they've done such a terrible job that even Justin Trudeau may not be able to save them in 2018. So here we go. As a result of this deal, they're going to see the deterioration of the finances of the province get progressively greater; the deterioration gets greater as we move along.

The FAO says a nice, positive bump in year 1, but in subsequent years, we're going to find that the decision to sell off this crown asset is going to hurt, and that will be reflected in the finances of this province. Our revenues are going to be damaged because the annual revenues from Hydro One's operations won't be there anymore. We're going to lose that. We're relinquishing our right to have that because it won't be in public hands anymore. That's the financial side of it.

We also have concerns about who controls the transmission in this province. My cousin Sean Conway, who was also my predecessor here in this House, came from the other party. Sean was a member of the Liberal Party, and I am not. Let's just leave it at that. Sean was the one,

I believe, who called it the central nervous system of the province. He decried toying with the idea of selling Hydro One in the previous government, as did the member from St. Catharines, the minister without portfolio, Mr. Bradley, as did Dalton McGuinty, the former Premier. I can name minister after minister in this government, but certainly members of the party, when they were in opposition, said that it is just the wrong idea to sell that crown corporation.

I'm just going to talk about the money at this point, too. It's the wrong idea; we've established that. This government doesn't want to back down on it because it is so desperate. It is so desperate to give the people some good news on the financial side of things next year, because they've been going on and on and on and on about "net zero." This is the new phrase when they're negotiating contracts: "net zero." Can anybody out there actually tell us what it takes to achieve net zero? It must be some kind of a dream in a fantasy movie or science fiction, that net zero, because every time you turn around, there's a settlement. And the ministers crow about how hard they worked and how their partners and they worked to get this settlement. The increases are this much in the first year—a lump-sum bonus for signing, this much in the first year, this much in the second year and this much in the third year—but it all adds up to zero. It's kind of consistent with the math of this government. They really have trouble with numbers.

Moving to the increase in hydro rates, what about the numbers that we get in the hydro rate increase? The OEB puts out a press release and the government just parrots it. In fact, I suspect that the government pretty much writes the release. The government parrots it and it gets portrayed in the media as being gospel.

Here is the trouble I have with the math. The off-peak rate for electricity was eight cents a kilowatt hour. It went to 8.3 cents a kilowatt hour. That's an increase of about 3.5%. The mid-peak went from 12.2 cents a kilowatt hour to 12.8 cents a kilowatt hour. That's about a 5% increase. The on-peak rate went from 16.1 cents a kilowatt hour to 17.5 cents a kilowatt hour. That's just under a 9% increase. The government's math is, if you take 9% and 5% and, we'll just say for the sake of argument, 3%, so 9% and 5% and 3% is about 17%. If you divide that by three, apparently it makes 3.4%. I'm just helping you guys out.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Michael. I have to keep moving otherwise my feet might get stuck to the floor.

You take 17% and divide it by three and in the Liberal world of math, that's 3.4%. I have a problem with that, because you take 17% and divide it by three, it's almost 6%. But in the Liberal world it's 3.4%. They've been saying the increase in your hydro rates is about 3.4%. No matter how you divide it—if every kilowatt hour you used was off-peak, you might be able to achieve that goal.

I would ask those people out in television land to examine their hydro bills. I want to be inundated with the

thousands and thousands of emails from every one of you who is going to say, “Oh, Mr. Yakabuski, every one of my kilowatt hours was off-peak.” I’ll be awaiting the emails. I’ll look for the relatives of Liberals to be sending that email in. That’s the only one I’m going to get because it doesn’t exist. In reality, it doesn’t exist. It’s not feasible. But this is the kind of math we get from Liberals. That’s what we’re getting with the FAO report and that’s what we got with the hydro increases: 17% divided by three now equals 3.4%. I better have a talk with the education minister.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: She’s probably busy these days adding up the cost of pizza.

More directly now to Bill 135: I have to set the background a little bit for it to be easier to understand why I’m concerned about this bill. What you have seen in the background is a government that is determined—determined—to put a picture on every piece of legislation and to make sure that their hands are on it.

1010

One of the big concerns about this bill—the minister mentioned the IESO, the Independent Electricity System Operator, frequently in his address and how they are increasing the role of the IESO. But in fact, the bill says:

“At least once during each period prescribed by the regulations, the minister shall, subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council”—that’s the cabinet—“issue a long-term energy plan setting out and balancing the government of Ontario’s goals and objectives respecting energy for the period specified by the plan....”

“The minister shall, before issuing a long-term energy plan under subsection (1), require the IESO”—that’s the Independent Electricity System Operator—“to submit a technical report on the adequacy and reliability of electricity resources with respect to anticipated electricity supply, capacity, storage, reliability and demand and on any other related matters the minister may specify....”

So it’s not the IESO that’s going to write the LTEP, the long-term energy plan; it’s going to be the minister. He is going to call the IESO and say, “I’d like your input as to the adequacy of supply and the blah blah blah, but I’m the one who’s going to write the plan. It’s going to be mine. We really only need you in an advisory capacity.”

When the IESO was first brought into being—it was the IMO at that time—it was supposed to take the politics out of it and allow the technocrats to help design the energy plans for the province of Ontario. But they have taken this electricity system and completely politicized it. Contrary to what the government and the minister imply—that the IESO is going to have a greater role—the IESO is going to have a lesser role, and the politicians are going to have more to say about running our electricity system.

I’d ask the people of Ontario, if the politicians are running our electricity system as they have under this gang, how are we doing so far? We’ve got a province

where electricity was 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour in 2003; it now peaks at 17.5 cents a kilowatt hour.

Now we are going to have the politicians take greater control of the long-term energy plan. Speaker, as Danny Labine once said to me, this is not good. Wow.

We pay a lot of money.

They amalgamated the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, which this government created, and then they realized it was nothing but a political smokescreen for them, and they were getting caught on it, so they amalgamated it into the IESO. But now what they’re doing is taking away all of the relative usefulness of the IESO. Is the government saying that they do not trust the Independent Electricity System Operator? Is that what we’re hearing in this House today, that the government doesn’t trust its own agency? We know they don’t like the Financial Accountability Officer because he didn’t tell the people what the government wanted the people to hear.

I’m running out of time, so I’m going to have to cut this in two. I will be back, Speaker, at another time to inform the people of Ontario in a bigger way about what’s happening in this province as a result of the negligence of this government.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the members for an interesting and lively debate this morning and for the warning from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke that he will be back.

It is now 10:15. This House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I’m pleased to rise today to welcome the friends and relatives of page captain Abby Moreside. In the gallery today are her parents, Kathy and Dave Moreside, and her former teacher, Karen Miller. Thank you all for coming to Queen’s Park and wishing Abby well today.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Page captain Cameron Rodzik is a St. Pius X grade 8 student in my riding. His mom and dad are here today: Amber and Donald Rodzik Jr. His brothers Christopher and Hudson Rodzik are here, as well as four grandparents: Donald Rodzik Sr. and his wife, Gail; and Joanna Staudt and her husband, Helmut. Thank you all for coming to Queen’s Park this morning.

Miss Monique Taylor: I’d like to welcome some guests who were here this morning to speak about autism. We have Katharine Buchan from Autism Ontario; Kara Onofrio of Autism’s Angels; and Linda DiMambro, Tony DiMambro, and their son Anthony DiMambro. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Unfortunately, my guests aren’t here yet, but I have the students from Neil McNeil high school, which isn’t quite in my riding; it is in Scarborough Southwest. Chrissy Orr and her students—grade 10

civics class. I'll welcome them maybe later when they get in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, you won't.

Further introductions.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ça me fait plaisir de présenter M. Alain Dupuis, qui est le président du RÉFO; M. Denis Vaillancourt, le président de l'AFO; ainsi que des représentants de la FESFO, Jérémie Spadafora et Rym Ben Berrah, qui sont ici à Queen's Park. Ils ne sont pas tout à fait arrivés, mais je ne voulais pas manquer l'opportunité de leur souhaiter la bienvenue. Ils viennent nous parler de l'université francophone.

Mr. Todd Smith: I would like to welcome a former broadcast colleague of mine, David Foot, from Peterborough.

ANNUAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2014-15 annual report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Acting Premier. Hydro One generates over \$700 million a year for this province. That's a lot of money flowing into provincial coffers. The FAO has confirmed that the Hydro One fire sale will see that money dry up. It's a one-time payout with long-term negative consequences.

Everyone in Ontario will pay for this bad deal. Will the Acting Premier tell the people of Ontario which taxes she will raise or what services she will cut?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I must say, I find the selective reading from the Leader of the Opposition to be quite remarkable. Nobody is suggesting that revenue will dry up. We are retaining a minimum of a 40% share. We will—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We will continue to receive revenues from Hydro One, unlike—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, how much?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, come to order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —unlike the deal to sell off the 407 that your party knows intimately. We will continue to receive revenue from Hydro One. We also did ask the assets council to look at other ways to generate revenue. We are, in fact, going to be raising \$100 million a year from increased taxes on beer, for example, so we are looking at—

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier, and back to the present day. The government is very good at blaming things that were done in past decades. The reality of this is a bad deal for Ontario today. Don't try to justify your actions by blaming things that happened in the distant past.

According to a poll done by the Ontario Energy Association, almost 80% of Ontario residents believe the fire sale will raise their hydro bills. When you combine rising hydro bills with the inevitable tax increases this government will impose to make up for the revenue lost from Hydro One, the people of Ontario will suffer a double hit.

Mr. Speaker, does the Acting Premier really believe the people of Ontario deserve to be punished twice for this government's incompetence and mismanagement?

Interjections.

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

Deputy.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think it's important that we go back and ask ourselves why, in fact, government made the decision to broaden the ownership of Hydro One. The reality is that we have a big infrastructure deficit in this province. We simply must invest in infrastructure, because the lack of infrastructure has a significant negative impact on our productivity. This is all about enhancing our productivity, Speaker. We are committed to building infrastructure. We have to pay to build that infrastructure.

One of the things that we're doing is broadening the ownership of Hydro One, but it's not the only thing that we are doing. We have sold the GM shares, we are looking at our real estate holdings and we are looking at other assets, because we need to get the revenue to pay for the much-needed infrastructure. We need to do that now, not down the road, so we are making those investments, because the people of Ontario need those investments in infrastructure.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier. This tired response, that this is for infrastructure—no one buys it. Your infrastructure budget for the 10 years is \$130 billion, pre-sale. Post-sale, it's \$130 billion. There's not one cent more for infrastructure. The FAO can show us exactly how much money will be lost. You're losing revenue for infrastructure.

This government's past record of fiscal mismanagement tells us that with the revenue lost from Hydro One, Ontario will spiral down a path of financial crisis. There are only two ways to replace the \$700 million that you're going to lose in revenue. It's either new taxes or cutting services.

Why won't the minister tell us which taxes they will raise or what services they will cut? Are we going to see more cuts to doctors? Are we going to see cuts in infrastructure? Tell us what you're going to cut.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, one thing I can guarantee you, Speaker, is that we are not going to be cutting 100,000 jobs, which is the platform of that party opposite. I also urge the Leader of the Opposition to actually read the report of the FAO, and when—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Let's keep it that way, please.

Carry on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think the Leader of the Opposition owes it to the public to actually present a more balanced view, but I don't think he's going to be doing that, so let me do that. Let me quote page 9 of the report: "This report does not seek to assess the merits of the decision to sell Hydro One." Also: "The results of this analysis are sensitive to the timing of subsequent sales.... These forecasts are subject to changes in the financial performance of Hydro One."

Speaker, the people of Ontario deserve—

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, since the Acting Premier won't acknowledge what taxes are going to be raised or what services will be cut, let me try with the Minister of Energy.

1040

Let me read you a quote from the editorial board of your Ottawa Citizen. "It's hard to see the benefits of the Ontario Liberals' decision to" sell "Hydro One ... now that we've seen the provincial Financial Accountability Officer's assessment of the proposed sell-off." It goes on to note, "The report also points out it would have been cheaper just to borrow the money."

The minister didn't see the benefits of the Hydro One fire sale when he was mayor of Ottawa; the minister must admit he doesn't see them today. Everyone in Ottawa is saying this is a bad deal for Ontario. Will you finally acknowledge it's a bad deal?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Energy?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: First of all, I want to say that I think the Ottawa Citizen endorsed my opponent in all of the 10 elections that I ran in, and I was able to overcome that.

But what's important is to give some reality to the report from the accountability officer. Again, I want to say, reading from the report, this report does not seek to assess the merits of the decision to sell Hydro One. What's more important, it does not seek to assess the prospects for performance improvements at Hydro One that might result from the partial sale or any future changes at Hydro One. The report does not seek to assess the financial impact of any government spending that may be financed from the sale of Hydro One.

These are very important omissions and I will refer to them in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the minister: The same editorial goes on to say—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Mr. Patrick Brown: —"the Liberals' argument seems to amount to 'we really, really want the money right now and hopefully something good will happen down the line.'"

The minister doesn't have a crystal ball to show him the future, but the FAO has laid out the facts very clearly. He showed that this is a bad deal for the province.

Why won't the minister come clean to his constituents and stand up against this bad deal? One hundred and eighty-five municipalities are saying this is a bad deal for Ontario. Will he come clean and admit this deal is just about temporarily cooking the books for the province to look better for the next election? This isn't a good deal for the province.

Interjections.

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

While I'm standing, I'm going to remind all members that the dignified way to acknowledge members in this House is by using their title or their riding. I'm getting a little more frustrated with the barbs that are coming out from either side, lowering the tone of debate.

Minister of Energy?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm up to the challenge of the battle of the newspapers. In the Toronto Star today there was a very, very insightful article that pointed out that in the report, they set out a number of scenarios, possible scenarios. A number of those scenarios show that it's a very positive result for the province of Ontario. We don't hear that.

Given that there are a number of scenarios that actually are included, some of which are positive, I think it's important to give context to the statement that says, "This report does not seek to assess the merits of the decision to sell Hydro One."

We believe that what is not included in here, and what's referred to here as not being included, is the economic assessment of those investments and the better production that will come from Hydro One.

We're confident this is the right decision. It provides infrastructure; it provides it now and over the next 10 years.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the minister: No one buys this argument that it's for infrastructure. The infrastructure budget doesn't change. You're losing revenue. That's why the editorial has been so critical.

I'll continue. The editorial reads there are "voters who are sick and tired of big-ticket, bad-outcome projects," something the Liberal Party has become famous for. The Citizen mentions cancelling gas plants, investing in

money pits like MaRS and throwing cash around at teachers' unions.

The editorial concludes that this fire sale “looks like yet another bad fiscal decision from a provincial government with a well-earned reputation for making them.”

Will the minister continue to defend the sale in the face of all evidence that suggests the contrary? Do the right thing: Listen to your constituents, listen to municipalities. Stand up to this government, stand up to your Premier and say, “Don't sell out Ottawa.”

Interjections.

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

Minister of Energy?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite makes it sound as though—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite makes it sound as though 100% of this crown corporation is being sold, and that's not the case. We are in fact broadening ownership; the first tranche is 15%. Of that amount, we are going to be credited with a deferred tax benefit of \$2.6 billion. We are going to receive enough money to reduce debt substantively, which also reduces cost. We are going to receive a substantive amount of capital that's going to be able to be reinvested into projects to earn more opportunity.

The question the member opposite is asking is, can the forgone revenue be replaced over a period time? Of course it's going to be replaced. Unlike what they did when they sold the 407 and gave us nothing in return, we are reinvesting, we are going to get—

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: —we continue to own the company—

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. The Premier told Ontarians that she'd lead the most open and transparent government in Canada. Instead, we see the Liberal government tearing a page from Stephen Harper's playbook by stonewalling independent watchdogs and trying to discredit them when they speak up. We've seen it with the Auditor General, we've seen it with the Ombudsman, and now we're seeing it with the Financial Accountability Officer.

Why is this Liberal government trying to discredit the Financial Accountability Officer?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have to make it very clear that the leader of the third party has her facts wrong on this. We completely accept the results of the Financial Accountability Officer, we respect his report; we just wish people would read it. If you actually do a careful

read of that report, he's very clear about what he is reporting on and what he is not reporting on. He looks at one side of the deal; he does not look at the advantages of the investments in infrastructure that we will be making as a result of this and other initiatives.

I urge the leader of the third party to actually read the report, and when she's speaking to Ontarians to acknowledge what he did say and what he did not say.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I just have to listen to that response and re-ask the same question I just asked because that is absolutely the problem here. They refuse to respect the Financial Accountability Officer and they're discrediting his report.

The Premier promised that there would be independent oversight of the Hydro One sell-off. For months the Premier has insisted that Ontarians cannot have public hydro and at the same time new transit and infrastructure investments. The independent oversight shows that if the Premier sells Hydro One, we could have neither of these things.

Will the Liberal government start listening to the people of Ontario, to the business communities, to 185 municipalities, to First Nations and to Ontario's non-partisan watchdogs and stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I refer the leader of the third party to the report, which I will quote. That's how much I actually respect this report, that I'm very happy to quote it here. The Financial Accountability Officer discusses on page 9 the scope of the review. He says very clearly:

“This report does not seek to:

—assess the merits of the decision to sell Hydro One

—forecast the impact of the partial sale of Hydro One on electricity rates

—assess the prospects for performance improvements at Hydro One that might result from the partial sale or any future changes at Hydro One

—assess the financial impact of any government spending financed by the sale of Hydro One, i.e. transportation projects financed by the Trillium Trust.”

We have complete respect for this report, we value this report, but we recognize the limitations of the scope as stated by the Financial Accountability Officer.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What it does say is that debt will increase and what it does say is that revenues will decrease, and what it also says is this is the very worst way to fund infrastructure for the province of Ontario. That's what the report says.

1050

By stonewalling the FAO, this Premier is undermining an independent watchdog of this Legislature. By selling shares in Hydro One before the FAO tabled his report, the Premier is undermining an independent officer of the Legislature. By ignoring the red flags that the FAO has raised, the Premier is undermining an independent watchdog of this Legislature.

Will this Liberal government stop undermining the FAO, listen to his advice, and stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let's be very, very clear: We appointed this independent Financial Accountability Officer through the report that we put forward in our budget last year, recognizing the importance of having that independent voice. We respect that.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Essex.

Hon. Charles Sousa: In fact, the report very clearly validates what it is that we've been saying all along. We recognize there is forgone revenue. We know that. We've been talking about that throughout the proposals and in the assessment of our budget. We also know that you cannot borrow in perpetuity without then having other implications on our fiscal plan, so we are taking a balanced approach.

Furthermore, we are retaining ownership of this corporation, which enables us to benefit from future dividends as accrued. More importantly, we're reinvesting, dollar for dollar, all of what we are receiving into other projects and will receive even greater economic prosperity.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Back to the Acting Premier: The finance minister knows that this province can't waste in perpetuity either, the way the Liberals have been wasting for a dozen years in this province.

When the Premier appointed her privatization committee, she promised that her plan to sell off Hydro One would be independently validated. Thankfully, the FAO stepped up to do that job, because that independent review was not going to be done by the Premier. She had no intention of fulfilling that promise.

But the Liberals have another chance now. Yesterday, the Keep Hydro Public coalition and the National Farmers Union called for the Ontario Energy Board to do a review of the sell-off.

Will the Liberal government join the call for the OEB to review the deal?

Hon. Charles Sousa: This proposal is being independently validated. The FAO has validated what we had said we were proposing.

More importantly, the most independent of all is the marketplace. They have independently validated the valuation of Hydro One at the high end, recognizing that the opportunities that exist with the proposal we brought forward will have positive opportunities for everyone.

We'll continue to hold a great ownership of this corporation. We'll continue to take great benefit from—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Essex—second time.

Please finish.

Hon. Charles Sousa: And we're reinvesting those monies, one, to reduce debt and, secondly, to create new assets.

Also, most conditions would agree that for every dollar we invest, \$1.40 is returned. That is a much greater return than maintaining and holding the shares that are not producing—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's good for Liberal insiders and good for Liberal friends on Bay Street, but it is bad for Ontario, Speaker.

The Liberals have been doing their very best to ignore and undermine the FAO. Maybe the Liberals are worried that a second review—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Maybe the Liberals are worried that a second review will show the exact same thing, that this deal is bad for Ontarians.

Will the government direct the Ontario Energy Board to review the Hydro One sell-off before it goes any further? Or is this government afraid that more independent oversight will mean more bad news for the Liberals?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite actually mistakes what broadening of ownership is. Forty per cent of the ownership of the first tranche is actually Ontarians—retail investors, the public of our province—and we still own 85% of the corporation on behalf of the province of Ontario.

More importantly, when she's speaking of the OEB, it's an important point: It is independently regulated. No one in this operation will be able to set the price, unless it's the OEB, similar to what they do with Toronto Hydro, as they do with Horizon and as they do with Brampton Hydro, all of which rival Hydro One to be more competitive, more efficient and more effective. That is why we added this discipline and that is why, in the end, it will be of greater benefit to the people of Ontario, because we're reinvesting all of that appreciation back into our economy.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Liberals promised independent validation of the Hydro One sell-off but so far, they're ignoring the FAO and refusing to hear from the OEB. Hydro One won't raise the money that the Premier promised. It won't lower debt like the Premier promised. Every time we learn something new about Hydro One's sell-off, the deal gets worse. The more we learn, the less the deal seems to do with transit.

If the Liberals are so convinced that it is a good deal, will they call on the OEB to review it so that Ontarians don't have to rely on blind faith in the Liberals because Lord knows where that gets us each and every time?

Hon. Charles Sousa: A prospectus has been brought forward. It has been reviewed by the marketplace and experts across the province—and Canada, for that matter. The FAO has validated the process and the valuation, and

he provided a number of degrees that that value could be. That value has now been assessed at the high end by the marketplace. So that part is done.

What we now need to do is to ensure that we reinvest that money for the benefit of the people and to ensure that we accrue greater returns through those investments. That has only been made available because of these transactions, and that is exactly what we do. We are not going to be borrowing in perpetuity, which will then enable us to have greater leverage. What we need to do is have greater benefit. We're doing so by reinvesting these assets, a component of which is sourced through this transaction. We will continue to retain a substantive share of an opportunity in Hydro One to enable us to have a greater benefit in the future.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, we've made it clear from the start that the intermittent nature of wind under the Liberals' Green Energy Act would ensure that it would never be a reliable source of electricity. We now have evidence that the level of production is actually lower than our worst predictions.

In 2009, Metrolinx, at considerable expense to the crown corporation, installed a 31-metre-tall wind turbine at its Lisgar station. However, this past August it was taken down because it failed miserably, producing less than 10% of the electricity that was expected.

Speaker, can the minister explain why, if Metrolinx has the common sense to cut its losses with unreliable wind power, the Liberal government continues to invest heavily in this expensive experiment?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The wind component of our energy supply mix is a very significant part of it. Number one: It's clean. In terms of the operating systems that are out there: I remember, while we were in estimates last week, that one of my colleagues checked the IESO app and was able to confirm on the spot that at that time in Ontario, there were 20 megawatts of wind being used in the system. That is reflective of the viability and the need for that type of energy mix.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: When wind hit that high point last week, it was a result of a deadly hurricane in Mexico and Texas. That's not a good time to be bragging about your wind.

The minister knows full well that even if the industrial wind turbine at Lisgar station had met its projections, that station would still require the stability of a grid in case the wind is not blowing on that particular day.

This example speaks to the larger problem that this minister would not accept: namely, that wind alone cannot be relied upon. It must be backed up by another form of reliable generation, essentially forcing Ontarians to pay twice.

Yet the government continues down this wrong path. Under the price schedule for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Come to order. Please finish.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Under the price schedule for 2016, the rate is increasing from 11.5 cents to 12.8 cents per kilowatt hour. This increased incentive means a flood of new wind on the grid, which will lead to an even more unstable and expensive energy supply.

Can the minister tell the House how many more examples like the Lisgar GO station will be needed before he stops signing these expensive, unreliable energy contracts?

1100

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm having trouble believing he is even having any credibility in his own premise, Mr. Speaker. He's finding one turbine owned by an entity that, for some reason, was dismantled. That's like seeing a Mercedes broken down on the side of the road and saying, "We should abolish all Mercedes." It's a ridiculous premise, and I can't answer any further than that.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Acting Premier. My recent freedom-of-information request shows that the number of children on the wait-list for IBI therapy this year is 2,192, and the number on the wait-list for ABA is an astonishing 13,966. This represents an increase of 75%. Estimates from the ministry show that only five more kids are receiving IBI this year than last year, and for ABA, 926 fewer children are receiving therapy than were receiving it two years ago. Yes, fewer children, and it's unacceptable.

Will the Acting Premier tell the minister to do the right thing for families and kids and immediately ensure all vulnerable kids on the wait-list have access to the supports they need?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know the Minister of Children and Youth Services will want to speak to this issue, but I did want to take the opportunity to say thank you to the parents who are here today and the kids who are here today for being strong and very important advocates when it comes to services for kids with autism.

This has been a priority for our government. We have doubled the investment in autism services, but we know that the demand continues to grow. I know that the Minister of Children and Youth Services does want to talk about some of the progress we have made and some of the challenges that do remain.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker, 16,000 kids on a wait-list for treatment is not progress. Study after study shows that early intervention is crucial for children with autism, and the government knows this.

Today, we are joined in the Legislature by two families directly impacted by the failure of this government to address the growing wait-list for essential therapy for children with ASD. These are just two of the hundreds of families, some who have to make those tough decisions like remortgaging their house or moving to another

province. Will the minister step up to the plate today and make sure these children receive the therapy they need immediately?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Our government and I absolutely recognize that families caring for young people with autism—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: —face very unique challenges, and we are working very hard to support them. That's why we invested about \$190 million—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I withdraw.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. That's why our government invests nearly \$190 million annually in autism services, an increase of more than \$100 million since 2003. But I know the wait-list persists—

Mr. Monte McNaughton: You lied to the people with autistic kids.

Interjections.

Interjection: Come on, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think I know what I'm doing.

The member will withdraw, and if it happens again, I will name him. Withdraw.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I hear the call from families. I hear the call from parents. I hear the call from Autism Ontario. I thank the people who are here today to tell us more about the challenges, but we're very familiar—that more help is needed. I'm committed to doing more, and even when kids are on wait-lists, we have a number of services to support children and families while they're on a wait-list.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: We all want to get those numbers down, Speaker—

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

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services is responsible for regulating a number of sectors and ensuring Ontario consumers are provided reliable information to make the choices they need without being subjected to unfair practices. As part of this priority, I know the ministry is responsible for regulating moving companies. Many Ontarians rely on moving companies. They perform important work and are responsible for protecting the

belongings of their clients. However, I have seen reports about moving companies allegedly holding people's belongings from them as a way to demand payment.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister please speak to the approach his ministry has taken to regulating the sector and provide advice on best practices for Ontarians?

Hon. David Oraziotti: The member from York South–Weston is asking about a very important issue around consumer protection. Movers provide an important service for Ontarians, and my ministry has worked to better protect consumers in this sector. Since Ontarians entrust movers with their personal belongings, it's important that they conduct themselves appropriately and that we hold them to high standards.

Ontarians should know that when they do business with moving companies, they are covered by the Consumer Protection Act. The act requires that contracts with moving companies be clear and understandable. It also prohibits misrepresentation and makes it illegal for businesses or individuals to give consumers false information about themselves or the products or services that they offer. The act also contains a 10% rule that states that a consumer cannot be charged more than 10% above the estimated cost for moving in a written contract.

These are important protections for Ontarians, and we'll continue to enforce these protections to ensure Ontarians are supported.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I thank the minister for his update on the Consumer Protection Act and its application toward moving companies. It's very interesting to learn that his ministry has identified residential movers as an important area for consumer protection. I am confident that he will work on behalf of Ontarians and the residents of York South–Weston to ensure that adequate protections are in place.

I understand that the Premier also expressed interest in consumer protection for Ontarians using moving companies, as reflected in the minister's mandate letter. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please further update the House on steps his ministry has taken to strengthen consumer marketplace fairness with respect to moving companies?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Again to the member from York South–Weston, who's a great advocate for her constituents, our ministry has recently implemented a risk-based and proactive compliance strategy for enforcing the Consumer Protection Act. The strategy will deploy resources to the sectors of greatest concern, including the residential moving sector. Our ministry has increased inspection powers to enforce the act, including the right for inspectors to enter a place of business in Ontario, examine relevant documentation and, where appropriate, issue orders to address marketplace concerns.

We've also commissioned a research report by Prism Economics and Analysis this past spring to provide insight into the residential moving industry. We've added

residential movers to our consumer advisory team's outreach sessions and have maintained detailed records of moving companies in our Consumer Beware List, which is posted online for Ontarians.

Speaker, I'm pleased with the steps that we've taken to protect consumers in this important area, and we'll continue to raise the standards for Ontarians.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Norm Miller: To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: Over the past month, I've had the opportunity to tour a number of mines operating in the province, and I'm sure you would agree with me that the work they do is remarkable.

By far the number one issue that continues to be raised is uncertainty in the permitting process in Ontario. The Fraser Institute's annual survey of mining companies reflects this and has again placed Ontario near the back of the pack for mining jurisdictions in Canada. In the investment attractiveness index, Ontario fell nine places, to 23rd in the world.

Minister, even with the changes made with the Mining Act, why does it take so long to permit a mine in Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much for the question from my critic on the other side of the House. We continue to work very, very closely with industry and with all stakeholders in the mining sector to continue to move mining projects forward.

We also work very hard to encourage investment in the province of Ontario, and we see successes continually as new mines continue to open up, despite the reality of the down cycle, particularly in commodity pricing.

One of the things we also do, working very closely with our Minister's Mining Act Advisory Committee that's in place, related to moving forward on a modernized Mining Act, is indeed find that balance as to how we can make sure that we put together the right system in terms of the permitting process, as well as being sensitive to the needs, to find that correct balance. This is an ongoing piece of work. We're very encouraged by the work that we're doing and continue to work closely with industry.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again through the Speaker to the minister: Uncertainty in the permitting process makes it harder for companies to justify investing money in Ontario projects. Noront Resources, trying to develop the Ring of Fire, had to wait two and a half years just to have their terms of reference approved. Just this morning, we heard from miners that it takes at least 110 permits to open a mine in Ontario. This uncertainty is compounded when taking into account the costs of high energy rates based on industrial consumers in Ontario.

Through the Speaker to the minister: How will we be able to bring into production new mines to replace those that will be closing in the next decade if the current permitting process in Ontario is so unpredictable?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I really do appreciate the question. It's an important one today when we do have, obviously, the miners here for Meet the Miners Day in the Legislature. We'll all be involved in activities throughout the day.

I think the important point to point out is that we recognize that it is indeed important to make sure that we do the best job we can in terms of moving the permitting process forward. We have a one-window approach, which, again, the member would know well about.

May I say I've already been part of a meeting with the Ontario Mining Association this morning. One of the things, actually, that Chris Hodgson, the president of the OMA, spoke about was the reality of an actual level of certainty in the province of Ontario related to the rules and regulations that are in place—which is not to say it's a perfect system, but again, that's where the challenge is: to find that balance. When we began the modernization of the Mining Act, we said very early on that this is about balance, finding a way to maintain a positive—

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

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you. My question is again to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Each year, Minister, we have Meet the Miners Day at Queen's Park, where mining companies come to enlighten us on issues they are facing in the mining sector. We welcome them here today.

Each year, they warn us that hydro prices are threatening their exploration, operation and ability to refine here in Ontario. Their alarm bells appear to fall on deaf ears, and several companies have left the province, taking good jobs with them. Minister, can you tell our friends here today in the mining sector how the fire sale of Hydro One is going to help these companies with their already crippling energy costs?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks again for the question—I appreciate it—from my critic from the New Democratic Party. The fact is, as the member knows well, that we are working very, very closely with the mining sector and have worked hard to provide significant breaks in terms of the costs of energy, recognizing that energy costs are significantly higher, particularly on the smelting side and in parts of the mining industry, which is why we are so proud of bringing permanency to the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program, which has been hugely beneficial. Thank you to the Minister of Finance for bringing that in. That has made a huge difference.

There are also other significant incentive programs the Minister of Energy has put in place as well. We continue to work closely with the industry to find the best possible way we can help them reduce their energy costs. As a result, we're seeing more new mines opening up. That's the positive side of the story.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Minister, there is no positive; there is no plan. This year, the message is loud and clear. The mining industry in this province is unanimous that they're worried about the sale of Hydro One, and they have not been consulted. They expect their costs to go up tens of millions and potentially lose good-paying jobs here in Ontario.

When industry comes to this government for help, they get nothing—and now this. This government is content to sit on the sidelines and watch as mining companies leave this province. Minister, why hasn't this government consulted with one of our biggest resource industries about the sale of Hydro One?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, it seems that the member across may have obviously had a very different conversation, but I can tell you about the conversation that we had this morning with the Ontario Mining Association with our caucus members. I am grateful to all those who were able to show up for it. Indeed, while there are many, many challenges in the mining sector, there are also so many positive stories.

We are continuing to work closely with the Ontario Mining Association and all their members, as well as the other very important partners in the mining sector, which obviously includes communities that are going to be impacted by future mining developments. We're going to continue to work with that. Again, I'm grateful for the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program being made permanent—\$120 million a year, rebates of almost \$500 million over the last number of years.

We're going to keep doing the good work. We're going to be positive. I wish you'd join me in being positive.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. We all know that people with developmental disabilities are very valuable members of our society. We also know that like everyone else, people with disabilities want the opportunity to participate and be active members of our workforce. I know that the minister is committed to leveling the playing field for people with disabilities when it comes to workforce participation.

Earlier this year, her ministry provided an update about the employment and modernization fund for individuals with developmental disabilities. It's part of our government's \$810-million investment strategy for community and developmental services that was approved in the 2014 budget.

Will the minister please provide this House with an update on the employment and modernization fund and the impact that it is having—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Community and Social Services?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for Beaches–East York for the question.

Our government recognizes and values the important contributions made by individuals with developmental disabilities to our communities and to our workforce. I'm so pleased to say that the investments made through my ministry's employment and modernization fund are starting to yield results on the ground that support inclusion and independence.

One of the projects that received funding is the new Centre for Excellence in Employment Services which is run by the Ontario Disability Employment Network. They have been working with many businesses to provide training and tools so that people with developmental disabilities are hired for competitive jobs in their communities. I'm hearing first-hand that more employers are starting to understand that hiring adults with developmental disabilities is good for business. Whether it's at a grocery store in Port Perry or at your local Tim Hortons, more and more individuals with developmental disabilities are securing competitive employment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I very much appreciate the minister's response and the update she's given the House today. I know that the people of Ontario and certainly my constituents in Beaches–East York very much appreciate the hard work she's doing on this file.

It's clear that by investing in better employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities, we are investing in their independence, their health and their overall participation in society. I understand that there are many more projects that support the employment of individuals with developmental disabilities and that have been approved by the fund in the past year. I look forward to hearing more about them in the future.

Will the minister then please tell us about the next steps for the fund and how we will be moving forward to help build Ontario up?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: As the member from Beaches–East York has expressed, there is great value in working towards greater inclusion for people with developmental disabilities. In fact, while securing a job is certainly one of the best routes to social inclusion, it also leads to better general health for the individuals involved.

The employment and modernization fund has two objectives: One is to create opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to secure competitive employment in the community, and the second is to support projects that lead to more individualized and responsive services and supports. LiveWorkPlay in Ottawa is a great example, as is the Paro Centre in Thunder Bay. In fact, there were 38 communities and agencies across the province that were successful in their applications to the fund this year, and my ministry is currently planning for the next call for proposals.

I look forward to many more successful projects.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Education. I'm asking for meaningful action on this

government's special education formula. I'm asking the minister responsible for the ongoing mess in special education to address the program cuts, the staff firings and, most importantly, the serious impacts on vulnerable students whose needs she is not meeting.

The minister needs to explain why she is spending \$3.7 million of taxpayer money to pay teachers' unions for negotiations, when she could have used it to hire back fired educational assistants to help our vulnerable students stay in school full days, not just part of the day. We want the money to go to students with special needs, including those with autism.

When will the minister stand up for the vulnerable children and put their teachers back in the classroom?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you. The member opposite—

Interjections.

1120

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: The member opposite mentioned negotiations, and I'm very happy to report to the House this morning that yesterday we concluded agreements, first of all, with CUPE, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which represents most of the caretaking and maintenance staff and some of the education workers; also with ETFO, the elementary public teachers—

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

Mr. Bill Walker: I can tell you, the parents, the special education assistants nor the children are standing up and giving you applause right now.

Back to the Minister of Education: The minister must know that her funding formula is not meeting the need. Between 2001 and 2014, the student-teacher ratios in special education have jumped from 22 students per teacher to 37. That's a huge cut in special education teaching staff.

The minister can try to spin and cover up this scandal all she wants, but she must admit that despite repeatedly saying she would not cut, she would not fire, the reality is that special education staff are losing jobs and our most vulnerable students are missing out.

Mr. Speaker, we want the Minister of Education to treat special education students with fairness and equity. Will she match the platitudes she just gave herself with real action and commit to putting students first by reinstating the fired special education teachers?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Speaker, I just want to make it clear that in all five of the collective agreements which we have concluded, there have been absolutely no cuts to the classroom.

Specifically, with respect to special education, the funding for special education has actually increased, up to \$2.72 billion this year. That represents a 68% increase since 2003. In fact, it's an increase of 9% since the 2012-13 school year. That 9% increase is at a time when the overall enrolment in the province of Ontario has gone down, which means that on a per pupil—

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Minister of Energy: A privatized Hydro One has no incentive to promote energy conservation. It makes more profit when people use more electricity, not less. We saw an example of this behaviour earlier this year when Nova Scotia's privatized electricity utility fought against the government's new energy conservation programs.

Will the government put energy conservation first, put the public interest first, and stop the further privatization of Hydro One?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, of course I don't accept the premise of the question.

In November and December of last year, we had 70-plus LDCs, local distribution companies, sign contracts with the IESO for the new conservation contracts program moving forward. That will save 30 terawatts up to 2032, a very, very aggressive target.

The important thing is, the private sector companies signed those contracts and are implementing our conservation program. That includes Fortis. It includes hybrid companies that have partial private ownership. It includes municipal utilities. They're all engaged in the issue.

If you look at the gas side, which the OEB manages as well, private sector Enbridge and Union are exceptional in their conservation programs. They are poster child cases for what can happen in conservation. Private—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, Germany sold off parts of its transmission grid in the 1990s, and politicians there now admit this was a historic mistake. Germans now realize that in order to connect people to renewable energy sources, they need a publicly owned grid. Germans have learned the hard way that once the public grid is sold off, it is very difficult and very costly to get it back.

Will the government learn from Germany's historic mistake and cancel the further privatization of Hydro One?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member can dream about how bad things are or can be, but let's look at what's actually happening. Hydro One has signed a contract. That contract binds them to abide by the conservation program that we have. Whether it's pre- or post-IPO, they're bound by it. They have very, very positive conservation programs, including ductless heat pumps, of which in Nova Scotia they've installed 40,000. They're saving customers an average of \$1,000. That pilot project is going on now, and I believe that the pilot project they have will be implemented to the benefit of ratepayers in Ontario.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: My question this morning is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Today, the Ontario Mining Association hosts their annual Meet the Miners Day at Queen's Park. This day looks at the positive aspects of mining in our province, and it's a

great opportunity to participate in and learn about the incredible role that mining plays not only in my riding of Sudbury but across the province and in our everyday lives.

For instance, Ontario has world expertise in mine financing, geology and engineering, stable exploration in mining industries, and one of the lowest mining tax rates in Canada. As well, we have the advantages of a strong economy, competitive business costs, and world-class research development in environment and in mining.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister speak of the significance of mining to our provincial economy and to the current status of mining in our province?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks so much to the member from Sudbury for the great question—obviously somebody who very much is a strong advocate for the sector.

Let me begin by saying that despite the real challenges in the mining sector, Ontario remains the leading jurisdiction for the exploration and production of minerals in Canada and a major player across the world. There are currently 43 operating mines in the province: 14 base metal mines, 16 gold mines and, of course, one diamond mine.

The mineral development sector plays an incredibly important role in our economy, as it does very much in our day-to-day lives. Not everyone knows this, but the mining sector directly employs over 26,000 people in the province of Ontario and 50,000 in the mining supply and services sector. The value of mineral production in Ontario in 2014 was \$11 billion, which is an unprecedented high. There's much more I'd like to say, and I look forward to the supplementary—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, you will stop. Supplementary.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: It is part of our government's plan to build up Ontario by creating a dynamic and supportive environment where business can prosper. The Minister of Northern Development and Mines has made it clear that our government is doing just that when it comes to the mining sector.

The global mining economy is evolving and our new competition is always emerging. I know that our government is committed to ensuring that Ontario remains a world leader in mining exploration and mining investment. Can the minister tell this House what our government is doing to maximize Ontario's mineral potential and support a modern and innovative industry, ensuring that Ontario's mining sector continues to thrive for decades to come?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks again for the question—a great question. Let me just say as strongly as I can that our government is absolutely committed to supporting a strong, healthy and prosperous provincial mineral sector. It's important for people to know that we've invested over \$160 million in Ontario mineral sector activities since 2003.

I referenced, in an earlier response, that the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program—a continued investment of up to \$120 million per year and, of course, made a permanent program because we recognize how import-

ant the mineral sector is—long-term investments that are incredibly important.

That's why Meet the Miners Day is so important to us. It helps us reflect on the role of the mine and mineral sectors in our lives. Certainly, on behalf of our Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, I'm pleased to join the Ontario Mining Association for Meet the Miners and invite all members to come to the reception this afternoon in rooms 228 and 230. It's going to be a terrific day.

SENIORS' HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the minister responsible for seniors. Many seniors in our province want to stay in their homes for as long as possible before moving to a long-term-care home. They rely on home care services and the help of family and friends to receive the support they require.

We know from Health Quality Ontario's Measuring Up report that one third of informal caregivers report distress, and some are unable to continue providing care.

1130

Can the minister please explain why these burnout numbers continue to increase despite the government's dedicated provincial secretariat focused on improving the quality of life for seniors and their families?

Hon. Mario Sergio: I want to thank the member for the question, and I'm sure that the Minister of Health wants to address the issue.

Let me say that I think we are all familiar with respect to our seniors population today. As of June of this year, people over the age of 65 are more than the people under the age of 14.

We have done a lot with respect to looking after our seniors. I have to say that a lot of seniors in the member's community as well enjoy some of the programs that we have been able to put in place. The Seniors Community Grant Program has been reaching some 116,000 seniors, and they are in every corner of our province.

With respect to the seniors in long-term-care homes, I'm sure that the minister wants to address the issue in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Back to the minister for seniors: We know from the Measuring Up report that this government's strategy—if it has one—is just not measuring up. This government made a deliberate effort to keep seniors living at home, but they haven't provided the supports necessary to do so.

The Auditor General said the government needs to take a hard look, to improve CCAC home care services. Without the home care they need, many seniors turn to the long-term-care system, where they end up waiting around 116 days for a spot. That's unacceptable. The end result: Informal caregivers are reporting record levels of burnout, doubling over the last four years.

Can the minister provide any hope to seniors' loved ones, who, through no fault of their own, can no longer provide the care they need?

Hon. Mario Sergio: To the Associate Minister of Health.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to thank the member opposite for his question. I want to assure this House and the member opposite that, in fact, we are investing in the care of our seniors. I just want to give you some examples: \$2 billion in funding, and a 2% increase in 2015-16 for resident care needs. We have opened 10,000 new long-term-care beds.

In fact, I was in London on Friday—

Interjections.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I was in Kitchener, sorry. I was in Kitchener on Friday with the deputy minister. Members opposite, from your caucus, were there as well. I was there for the opening of a brand new long-term-care facility—192 new beds. That's 192 new beds. That's adding 192 beds to our footprint.

That is just an example of how we're expanding care for our seniors.

NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Acting Premier. In 2012, this government cancelled our only passenger train in northern Ontario. The reason was because they had an equivalent bus line, and they were going to provide enhanced bus service. Since then, they've closed bus stations, and yesterday we learned that now they are cancelling bus routes.

Why is it acceptable for this government to deny public transit to people in northern Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The member knows, as we've spoken about it a great deal, we are very proud of the fact that we made a decision a little over a year and a half ago to keep four of the five lines of the ONTC in public hands, and that certainly included the motor coach service.

What we also made clear was that we were going to be working closely with the communities and with him to make sure that we provided services to all the communities where the Northlander no longer operated. Right now, the ONTC is identifying changes to the way that they operate, to maintain and ensure that sustainability.

But our commitment to the motor coach services remains as strong as ever. The member also knows we put \$6.2 million over three years to purchase new motor coaches, almost all of which have been put in service over the last short period of time.

The long and the short is that we're going to continue to make sure we ensure that long-term sustainability while we provide an efficient and well-run ONT service for people in northeastern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. John Vanthof: To the minister, or to the Acting Premier: While they claim their commitment remains strong, as we speak, services are being cancelled. Now it takes three days to get to Ottawa.

Once again, why is it acceptable, when this government keeps talking about increased access to transit, increased access to transportation, that they continue to cut access to transit in northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The facts are that we are working with the communities and with the public to make sure that we provide the services for motor coach services that are in place. We have made a significant investment of \$23 million. Most significantly—I know this received support from many in the House, certainly those on the opposition side—we were able to keep four of those five lines in public hands. There was a time when that was not the case. But the bottom line is we are providing services to all the communities that were previously served by the Northlander, and we are indeed maintaining those services.

There are decisions that need to be made by ONTC's management to ensure the long-term sustainability, because that is what is most crucial: that we make sure we provide the services, that we remain as sensitive as possible to the realities that are faced by the travelling public. That's what we're doing, and we're going to be continuing to do it in the best and the most sensitive way that we can.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I would like to correct the record in one of my answers to the Leader of the Opposition. I referred to an article in the Toronto Star. In fact, it was in the Globe and Mail.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The member has the right to correct his record.

VISITEURS

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General on a point of order.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Ça me fait plaisir aujourd'hui de présenter un groupe de la France qui sont ici dans le cadre du projet réciprocité France-Canada. Ils sont accompagnés par Léonie Tchatat de La Passerelle. Alors, bienvenue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I neglected to mention someone in the Speaker's gallery. My other brother, the brother of former Speaker of the House Steve Peters, Joe Peters is here—thank you, Joe—and my constituent assistant from the riding of Brant, Bob Yuhasz.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on an amendment to the motion for allocation

of time on Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act.

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

The division bells rang from 1137 to 1142.

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

On November 2, Mr. Gravelle moved government notice of motion number 43.

Mr. McNaughton then moved that the motion be amended as follows:

“That the motion be amended by striking out”—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense?

Interjection: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right.

Mr. McNaughton then moved that the motion be amended by striking out everything following the second paragraph up to and including “Monday, November 30, 2015,” and replacing it with the following—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense?

Interjection: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): “That the committee be authorized to meet on Wednesday, November 25, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. in Ottawa; and on Thursday, November 26, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m. in Thunder Bay, for the purpose of public hearings on the bill.

“That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 115:

“Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly’s website and Canada NewsWire; and

“That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Friday, November 13, 2015; and

“That following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the committee with a list of requests to appear; and

“That a member from all three recognized parties prioritize and return the list by 6 p.m. on Friday, November 13, 2015; and

“That the Clerk of the Committee schedule witnesses from these prioritized lists; and

“That each witness will receive up to 15 minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

“That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Thursday, November 26, 2015; and”—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Somebody wanted to hear this.

“That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 noon on Friday, November 27, 2015; and

“That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, November 30, 2015, at its regularly scheduled

time for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

“On Monday, November 30, 2015 at 5 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

“That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, December 2, 2015.”

We are now dealing with Mr. McNaughton’s amendment to the motion.

All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Arnott, Ted	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Hillier, Randy	Sattler, Peggy
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	Jones, Sylvia	Singh, Jagmeet
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Fedeli, Victor	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
French, Jennifer K.	McDonell, Jim	Vanhof, John
Gates, Wayne	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff

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

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Hoggarth, Ann	Meilleur, Madeleine
Baker, Yvan	Hoskins, Eric	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Balkissoon, Bas	Hunter, Mitzie	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kiwala, Sophie	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Kwintar, Monte	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	Malhi, Harinder	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Martins, Cristina	Sousa, Charles
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Thibault, Glenn
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McGarry, Kathryn	Vernile, Daiene
Fraser, John	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 42; the nays are 51.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the amendment lost.

Are the members ready to vote on the main motion?

Mr. Gravelle has moved government notice of motion number 43. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the “ayes” have it.
Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.
The division bells rang from 1148 to 1149.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Gravelle has moved government notice of motion number 43.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Hoggarth, Ann	Meilleur, Madeleine
Baker, Yvan	Hoskins, Eric	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Balkissoon, Bas	Hunter, Mitzie	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kiwala, Sophie	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	Malhi, Harinder	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Martins, Cristina	Sousa, Charles
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Thibeault, Glenn
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McGarry, Kathryn	Vernile, Daiene
Fraser, John	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Arnott, Ted	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Hillier, Randy	Sattler, Peggy
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	Jones, Sylvia	Singh, Jagmeet
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Fedeli, Victor	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
French, Jennifer K.	McDonnell, Jim	Vanhof, John
Gates, Wayne	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 51; the nays are 42.

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

Motion agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1152 to 1500.

ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On a point of order, the deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I have a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor signed by her own hand.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending 31

March, 2016, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly. Toronto, 26 October, 2015. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd like to introduce Kyle Nimmrichter. Kyle is from the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network; he's a volunteer.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm excited to share with my colleagues today that on Wednesday of this week, parliamentarians across Canada will be travelling to Ontario to participate in the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, Canada region, outreach program taking place November 4 to 8.

CWP is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2015, and this year's program is filled with discussions and activities all centred on celebrating women from the past and present who make a difference in their communities. This program will also focus on inspiring today's youth to become engaged and to make a difference.

While the CWP has always aimed to empower female leaders, a unique aspect of this year's program is to focus on women in the agri-food sector as well as rural Ontario. For the first time in eight years, this program will be hosted in both urban and rural settings. We're going to be wrapping up this particular program at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

The whole essence and theme of this year's program is engaging women to make a difference. I invite everyone to participate in a program the Speaker will be hosting on Thursday, right after question period, where we will be celebrating women who have led the way. After that, we'll be travelling to Guelph and engaging with women involved in the agri-food sector. Ultimately, they are making a difference.

We're going to wrap up the program by, hopefully, inspiring young women at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair to stay involved, be active and make a difference.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: The number of children waiting for IBI now stands at 2,192, an increase of 29% from just two years ago. The number for ABA has increased from under 8,000 two years ago to an astonishing 13,966 today—a disgraceful increase of 75%. The shock provoked by these numbers is compounded when we look at current service levels. There are only five more children receiving IBI than did last year and, incredibly, there are 926 fewer children receiving ABA treatment.

I was joined at a news conference this morning by Autism Ontario as well as two families who are affected each and every day by the failure of this government. Kara Onofrio was there, as well as Linda and Tony DiMambro with their son Anthony. After hearing these families speak about their own experience, nobody could be left in any doubt that we need to do more. They fought back tears and stood strong to tell their story. We are all indebted to the hundreds of families who do what they have to do when they are let down by their government. They remortgage their homes. They cash in their RRSPs. They say goodbye to any semblance of a normal life.

This morning, the minister yet again referred way back to almost a decade ago and called it progress. Since those increases, they need to have continued growth instead of squandering billions.

SOUTHLAKE REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

Mr. Chris Ballard: It's an honour to stand in the House to represent the great riding of Newmarket–Aurora. Today I want to recognize the great organizational culture and work of our local hospital, Southlake Regional Health Centre, led by CEO Dr. Dave Williams.

Southlake continues to inspire us through its “Southlake Way.” This is a commitment to provide a shockingly excellent experience to each and every person who comes through its doors. It's through five core values that Southlake hospital achieves this goal every day: putting patients first; pushing the envelope; honouring commitments; speaking up; and by simply giving a damn. Yes, that's actually a core value, Mr. Speaker.

Patients are given outstanding service when entering Southlake. The hospital is also a leader in innovative health care and recently celebrated five years of comprehensive cancer care services in the Central LHIN region and the opening of the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre at Southlake.

To be celebrating its fifth anniversary is an exciting milestone. It is exciting for our towns and for the hospital, but more importantly, it's exciting for the people it serves every single day; for those individuals who face this disease and for their families who find support within the walls of Southlake and the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre.

I'm proud to represent such an innovative hospital, filled with committed and dedicated staff, that continues to inspire everyone in the community of Newmarket–Aurora.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise today to share a town of New Tecumseh's committee of the whole resolution that was passed on June 15, 2015, and adopted by council on June 22, 2015.

The town of New Tecumseh is in the south end of my riding, home to Honda of Canada Manufacturing. This

resolution is against the Liberal government's plan to sell off Hydro One. The resolution reads, in part, as follows:

“Whereas the public electricity system in Ontario is a critical asset to the economy and vital to the living standard and well-being of all Ontarians; and

“Whereas it is essential that Ontarians maintain public control and public decision-making with respect to electricity; and

“Whereas experience in other jurisdictions shows that privatization typically means consumers pay more for electricity; and ...

“Whereas our public electricity system currently generates hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for the provincial government every year to help pay for public services we all depend on; and

“Whereas the sale of shares in Hydro One will provide a short-term financial gain for the province in exchange for a much larger long-term financial loss; and

“Whereas the provincial government has no mandate from voters to sell any part of Hydro One; ...

“Therefore be it resolved that the town of New Tecumseh call on the provincial government to:

“—Halt the sale of any part of Hydro One, and maintain Hydro One as a public asset for the benefit of all Ontarians....”

Mr. Speaker, some 200 municipalities have passed resolutions like the one passed by New Tecumseh council. I'd like the House to know that they're a non-partisan council and they want the government to listen to them.

NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Imagine the surprise and imagine the anger that northerners woke up to just this week when they found out that bus service from Hearst to Kapuskasing, Cochrane and points in between is being cut and that we're losing full-day bus service in towns like Kapuskasing and Hearst—this at a time when the government says it's got to make massive investments in infrastructure when it comes to transportation. They are at the same time selling off Ontario Northland, which they essentially tried to do at a loss; and now, after making a promise that they were going to enhance bus service and that we were going to get better service by way of buses than we got with trains, the government's going back on its word and is eliminating bus service where it exists. Places like Cochrane, Kapuskasing and Hearst are losing bus service, and in some cases are losing all-day service in order to get three buses a week.

This is not what the government should be doing, if the government is serious about dealing with infrastructure in this province and making sure that we have good transportation infrastructure. The province goes farther north than just the north of Toronto. There are places like Cochrane, there are places like Kapuskasing, there are places like Hearst that need to have that service to be able to function. When they see the government on the one

hand saying it wants to make investments in transportation and at the same time cutting transportation services in northern Ontario, they see this for what it is: It's a rule for people in one part of the province that's very different than the other.

1510

MELANOMA

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Today, the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network is launching their newest website portal. The portal will take you to a part of the website that has information on melanoma.

Approximately 6,500 Canadians are diagnosed with melanoma annually, and this number increases every year. The Canadian Cancer Survivor Network recognized the heavy burden that the diagnosis of melanoma places not only on those who are diagnosed with it, but on their families and extended support network. In response, CCSN has created an online portal recognizing and addressing the experience of melanoma, whether in its early or more advanced stages.

The melanoma portal provides a trusted and accurate source of melanoma information. Sections on the portal centralize information on the diagnosis and treatment of melanoma, provide information and resources on financial planning, and address the issues that caregivers face. As a cancer survivor myself, I know the value that resources such as these can provide for treatment and recovery.

I commend the work that the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network does to help educate people on cancers such as melanoma. Congratulations to the CCSN, and thank you for all that you do.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Laurie Scott: The poor policy choices of the Liberal government continue to make life increasingly unaffordable in Ontario. As of November 1 of this year, the cost of on-peak electricity is now 17.5 cents per kilowatt hour. This is over four times more than what the rate was when this government first came to power. The new set of increases of electricity continues to force rural and suburban Ontarians into energy poverty. There are so many people in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock who are faced with an impossible choice of either paying their hydro bills or putting food on their tables.

Now the Liberal government wants to sell Hydro One without any assurances to Ontarians that hydro rates won't continue to skyrocket. Some 185 municipalities, including some in Peterborough county and Haliburton county, have all passed resolutions that oppose the sale. Ontarians are resoundingly against this sale. All of the provincial government's independent officers are opposed to the sale of Hydro One, but the government seems to conveniently neglect all of that.

By 2019-20, once the full 60% is sold, the Financial Accountability Officer has said that the province will

suffer an ongoing, negative impact on budget balance; \$750 million in annual revenue will be lost. The government talks about just how important infrastructure is, yet it is satisfied with selling a public asset for only 2.5% of its plan.

I implore the government to finance infrastructure without choking Ontario's sustainability for generations to come.

DIWALI

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today to speak about a very special celebration for the South Asian community in Ontario. Diwali, or the festival of lights, is celebrated by millions of Hindus, Jains and Sikhs around the world. This Hindu festival celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, or good over evil. On November 11, people across Ontario and around the world will mark Diwali through prayers, the lighting of lamps and by gathering with friends, family and loved ones.

But, Mr. Speaker, the celebrations have already started. This past Sunday, I took part in a Vibrant Milton Connections Diwali celebration. The evening was an incredible display of culture, community and tradition. The room was packed with friends, families and neighbours all joining together to celebrate the festival of lights. It was wonderful. Children, parents and grandparents enjoyed tasty food, stepped to some tunes and shopped at a fantastic marketplace. There were also some amazing performances put on by some very talented young people.

I want to thank Vibrant Milton Connections for pulling together a terrific event. This event was a wonderful way to honour and promote South Asian culture and heritage in Ontario. I'm proud to be a part of a diverse and culturally rich community like Halton. It's a place where our diversity is celebrated and makes us all stronger. We are fortunate to live in a multicultural society where our diversity is valued.

Thank you, and a very happy early Diwali to everyone.

IRVING UNGERMAN

Mr. Mike Colle: Today, I rise to give tribute to a true giant who passed away last Tuesday, October 27, and that's Mr. Irving Ungerman.

Irv, as he was commonly known, was born down here in Kensington Market, not too far from here. He was born at two and a half pounds. He survived to become, I think, an incredible builder in this city and in this country.

Irv was the city of Toronto's boxing champ when he was 15. He went on to run an incredible poultry business, Royce Dupont Poultry. He was always supporting charitable activities like the Reena Foundation and Variety Village.

He was one of the main movers of getting the Blue Jays to Toronto, along with Paul Godfrey. He championed great boxers from Canada: George Chuvalo and Gray. He essentially got behind all good things and good

people. He was an honorary member of the RCMP. He was a great friend of the former Lieutenant Governor Lincoln Alexander. He won the Order of Ontario. This little guy was a giant.

As they say in Yiddish, if you don't mind, he was a true mensch—a "mensch" means a wonderful human being. He was charitable, he was generous and he loved this country and he loved this city. He was the last of a breed.

God bless Irv for all that he did, and his wife, Sylvia, and all his kids and grandkids. We're going to miss you, champ.

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order, the member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you for your indulgence, Speaker. I just want to take the opportunity to introduce a friend from Windsor. Corporal Bruce Moncur is here at the invitation of the Lieutenant Governor to preview a documentary in which he is highlighted as an injured Afghanistan veteran. I want to thank him for being here today, and I want to thank him for his service.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, on a little point of order.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Yes, indeed, little but very important: I'd like to introduce and welcome into this Legislative Assembly a kinesiologist from my region of Peel, Mr. Qusai Gulamhusein.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As previously said, thank you to all the members who made statements.

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 November 3, 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

CY AND RUBY'S ACT (PARENTAL RECOGNITION), 2015

LOI CY ET RUBY DE 2015 SUR LA RECONNAISSANCE PARENTALE

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 137, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act, the Vital Statistics Act and other Acts with respect to parental recognition / *Projet de loi 137, Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance, la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil et d'autres lois en ce qui a trait à la reconnaissance parentale.*

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.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Currently, subsection 1(1) of the Children's Law Reform Act states that for all purposes of the law of Ontario, the "natural parents" of a child are the child's parents. That provision is repealed and in its place, the bill requires parentage to be determined in accordance with rules set out in part II of the act that address various possible arrangements under which persons choose to parent a child. These include the following: rules respecting persons who provide human reproductive material or an embryo for the assisted reproduction of a child; and rules respecting persons who enter into agreements respecting parentage, whether the birth of the child is as a result of assisted reproduction or not.

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Other amendments to the act include providing that the determination of a biological or genetic relationship between a person and a child on the basis of an ancestry test is not determinative of parentage.

Subsection 9(1) of the Vital Statistics Act is amended to replace the reference to "the mother and the father" as persons who certify the birth of a child with "the parents." Other amendments to the act provide for circumstances in which a child may have more than two parents.

Various consequential amendments are also made to both the Children's Law Reform Act, the Vital Statistics Act and other acts.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item numbers 6 and 7 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item numbers 6 and 7 be waived. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CRIME PREVENTION WEEK

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's my pleasure to rise as we recognize the first week of November as Crime Prevention Week in Ontario. This is a week when we focus on the things that all Ontarians can do to help prevent crime in their communities. It's also a time to showcase local initiatives that have helped to prevent and reduce crime in the province and enhance community safety and well-being.

We celebrate the people who work tirelessly to prevent crime and keep their communities safe.

Ontario remains one of the safest jurisdictions in North America. Since 2003, Ontario's police-reported crime rate has dropped by 34% and Ontario's violent crime rate dropped by 27%. In fact, Ontario has had the lowest crime rate of any province and territory every year since 2005.

Ontario's police services are often at the forefront of these crime prevention efforts. We are enormously grateful to them for that, but crime prevention involves more than the police alone. It involves all members of the community, including parents, educators, social service providers, police, correctional services staff and health care workers. Everyone needs to work together to identify those issues that could have an impact on the incidence of crime, and intervene to prevent it.

I want to take this opportunity, Speaker, to pay tribute to all those community members and organizations right across this province that are working hard to prevent crime in our communities. Their work involves identifying the most vulnerable and at-risk people in the community and providing the services they need to help them avoid becoming victims of crime or perpetrators of crime.

These principles of effectiveness, community and collaboration are at the heart of the Strategy for a Safer Ontario that the government is now developing. Ontario's Strategy for a Safer Ontario is about finding smarter and better ways to do things, and applying evidence-based policies to improve outcomes. Our government knows that building safer, stronger communities is the foundation on which we build a safer, stronger Ontario, and that when communities plan together and work together, they achieve better results for residents.

These same values of collaboration and co-operation will be at the centre of our effective, sustainable and community-based model for policing in the 21st century. They will guide us as we rewrite Ontario's policing framework to reflect the priorities and realities of the 21st century to ensure we continue to build even safer communities and a stronger province.

Tomorrow, I will be speaking to a group of middle school students at St. Simon Stock Catholic school at the launch of "Pink Is the New Blue" anti-bullying campaign. It's one of the critical efforts being organized

to help kids deal with bullying—one of the greatest threats to the safety and well-being of our kids today. Initiatives like this to protect the most vulnerable are critical to preventing crime and ensuring community safety and well-being, and represent the kind of proactive, evidence-based community safety planning we want to encourage across the province.

We must continue our efforts to strengthen partnerships, invest in our people and create opportunities to prevent crime and promote safe and healthy communities. A dollar invested now in crime prevention and early intervention avoids \$7 spent on prosecution, incarceration and other associated costs in the future. It is this idea of proactive intervention and multi-sectoral collaboration that is behind the situation table model and a range of other community safety and well-being initiatives that are being created around our province.

These projects bring police and social service providers together to work collaboratively and rapidly mobilize services that will reduce risks that could lead to victimization or harm. These models show new ways of sharing information across the social sphere between cultural, religious, community and health care groups, providing opportunities for early intervention that help prevent crime and improve outcomes for local residents and the community. These models make police services part of a stronger safety net rather than being the entire net themselves. This frees up resources to help solve more crimes and prevent even more from happening in the first place.

These are the types of programs that we must continue supporting, investing in and championing, because the only way to truly fight crime is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Our government is committed to investing in its people, strengthening our neighbourhoods, and building safer, stronger communities right across Ontario.

This week, I encourage all members to take part in Crime Prevention Week activities in their respective communities and to continue to do their part to enhance community safety and well-being, and, by extension, crime prevention all across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to respond to the minister's statement on Crime Prevention Week. As the PC critic for community safety and correctional services, I am committed to reinforcing a strong working relationship between our caucus and the front-line officers who keep this province safe.

I'd also like to begin by acknowledging leaders in the Ontario policing community, including OPP Commissioner Vince Hawkes, Ontario Provincial Police Association Acting President Doug Lewis, Police Association of Ontario President Bruce Chapman, and Chief Jeff McGuire, president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police.

In my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, I'm grateful for the work of Chief Gary Conn and his entire staff of

officers, as well as that of OPP Detachment Commander Brad Coulbeck and his counterpart in Essex county, Glenn Miller.

This year's theme for the week running November 1 to 7 is, "Working Together to Improve Community Safety and Well-Being—a Shared Commitment in Ontario." It encourages police, levels of government and communities to work together to prevent and decrease crime by addressing concerns and creating strategies. Most people think of police as people whom we call on to respond to crime, but the reality is that they devote much of their time to crime prevention. They educate citizens on how they can protect themselves against becoming a victim of crime, and forge relationships with their communities to promote public trust.

Men and women on police forces from across the province risk their lives each and every day to keep our communities safe. I refer to them as our unsung heroes. We can do more to help these heroes. They face incredibly stressful situations each day and sometimes witness horrific scenes. PTSD is a real issue for many of our police officers, and we must help them together as a province.

Crime prevention starts at home. Following some easy and inexpensive tips can help reduce the risk of becoming a victim of crime yourself. Here are three tips to help prevent crime:

- (1) Always lock your home, garage and vehicle doors.
- (2) Never reveal personal information to anyone online, to help prevent identity theft.
- (3) Be wary of any website, caller or business asking for your credit card information or even your social insurance number.

1530

Chief Gary Conn and the Chatham-Kent Police Service understand and value the role that everyone in the community plays when it comes to preventing crime. This week, they are highlighting individual communities and thanking them for their efforts.

Chief Conn put it very well: "Crime prevention and community policing is what we do.... In addition to the day-to-day work that members of the Chatham-Kent police do, there are many community associations working at a local level assisting with well-being and safety issues in our community albeit in a non-traditional crime prevention manner. These community associations are doing great work"—Speaker, especially at the local level—"and our service would like to take this opportunity to highlight that work."

This is only one of the countless initiatives happening simultaneously throughout the province. Halton regional police are inviting residents to learn more about how to protect themselves from break-ins during Crime Prevention Week by visiting with a police officer in multiple locations throughout the week. Many police services, such as the Toronto police, Hamilton police and Waterloo regional police, are now conducting gun amnesty programs to prevent crime and keep their communities safe. These programs allow gun owners to call police and have weapons picked up without threat of prosecution.

While it is the respective police services that put on these programs, they ultimately depend on buy-in from their communities for their success. Crime Prevention Week is, in fact, a way to start a conversation between police officers, government leaders, community leaders and individual citizens. When each part of our society recognizes, respects and reinforces each other's efforts to keep our community safe, that is when we truly can prevent crime. Speaker, working together, we can make Ontario's communities safe and resilient.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex for his statement.

Further responses?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm honoured to have the opportunity to rise in the Legislature, as the NDP's critic for community safety and correctional services, to recognize Crime Prevention Week and to thank our police officers, our police services and all front-line services for the role they play in crime prevention.

I appreciate the work that front-line officers do every day in my community of Oshawa, but police officers across the province work tirelessly to protect Ontarians and keep our communities safe, so I appreciate any opportunity that I am granted to thank them for their dedicated service and to recognize how important their role is.

I also appreciate the opportunity to speak about crime prevention and where this government can improve its efforts by providing our front-line workers with the tools they need to prevent crimes and to keep our communities safe.

It is said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. By its very nature, crime prevention is forward thinking. It is about taking steps now to mitigate problems down the road. It is about investing in the future safety and well-being of our province. It is a complex issue, but an important one, and I'm glad that we're discussing it today.

Speaker, there are two ways that you can beat a common cold. First, you can try to eat well, get proper exercise, dress appropriately for the weather and potentially avoid the cold altogether, or you can skip these steps and try to scarf down as much vitamin C as you can find after you've already become ill. The same applies to any problem. You can look forward, you can look at trends and contributing factors, and attempt to address a problem before it happens, or you can find yourself reacting when it is already too late.

Sadly, we see much more of the latter from this government: more reacting than investing, more short-term than long-term thinking. The fact is that we know there are consistent contributing factors to crime, and they are the same factors that leave our health care and social services strained. There are investments that our government can make to improve the quality of life for all Ontarians, like a properly funded public education system, a stronger social safety net and investment in mental health.

Our communities work together to prevent crime every day. Community organizations, employment strat-

egies and youth engagement help to create positive pathways for our community members and alternatives to criminal activity. Neighbourhoods do vital crime prevention work every day in partnership with our authorities.

Our police services do incredible work in our communities, but the fact is that they are strained too, just as our correctional officers and parole and probation officers are. Too often, they become the first point of contact for individuals with mental health issues, because the existing resources are insufficient. Still, this government continues to cut funding to health care, and our services for mental health remain decades behind.

Fortunately for this government, our police services are picking up the slack. We know that in recent years, we have seen an increased focus on de-escalation and an increase in mental health awareness and training, but these are reactions they've been forced to make because this government has ignored the root causes.

Let's invest in strengthening our communities; let's build community partnerships; and let's work towards finding solutions.

As an example, as we've seen across the province, the abuse of fentanyl patches, a prescription medication that is an often-used opioid, is a growing concern. To address this problem in my community, the Durham Regional Police Service and the municipality teamed up with local pharmacies to develop the Patch for Patch program, to help prevent the non-prescription use of fentanyl.

I'd like to take the opportunity to recognize that the member from Nipissing has tackled this problem as well.

These types of forward-thinking community partnerships can save lives, they can make our communities safer and they can limit the strain on our justice and correctional systems. Speaker, that strain is reaching crisis levels. Over the past year, we have heard numerous stories of judges forced to change sentencings because of a lack of sufficient mental health services in our correctional facilities. This is on top of the system-wide overcrowding and understaffing that plagues our prisons. Simply put, this government has to do better.

We need to ensure that the first point of contact for individuals with mental illness is not our justice system. For the individuals that do end up in correctional facilities, we need to ensure that the ultimate goal is rehabilitation. We need more diversion programs for offenders to limit reoffences and allow them to become contributing members of society. We need better programming in our correctional facilities, so inmates can retrain, improve their education and reintegrate successfully in our community. These are complex issues, but we need to do better.

We're fortunate to have such incredible police officers, correctional officers, probation and parole officers and front-line services in this province, but we need to invest in forward-thinking policies and programs that will mitigate the strain on these services and help prevent crimes before they happen.

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

PETITIONS

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

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

"Whereas the final report of the select committee, entitled Inclusion and Opportunity: A New Path for Developmental Services in Ontario, was tabled in the Legislature on July 22, 2014;

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

"That government of Ontario immediately review the final report and commence the implementation of the recommendations of the select committee, as contained in the final report."

Not surprisingly, I support this petition, because I was a member of that select committee. I will give it to page Marco to take to the table.

ACCIDENT BENEFITS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to acknowledge Mr. Gulamhusein for his work in making sure these petitions were signed. I have a petition today.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ...

Whereas "the \$3,500 minor injury guideline cap is an insufficient amount of funds provided, since assessments on all patients are required to ensure their safe ability in performing tasks associated with attendant care, house-keeping, and caregiving. Furthermore, repetitive muscular strain as a result of performing household tasks daily can lead to chronic long-term impairment. Accidental slips/falls due to dizziness/vertigo can result in further injuries" involved ...

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:"

To remove the minor injury guideline "sections 18(1) and 18(2) from the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule," and incorporate rebuttal examination reports back into the system.

I agree with this petition, will affix my name and provide it to page Shirley.

STUDENT SAFETY

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there are no mandatory requirements for teachers and school volunteers to have completed CPR training in Ontario;

"Whereas the primary responsibility for the care and safety of students rests with each school board and its employees;

"Whereas the safety of children in elementary schools in Ontario should be paramount;

1540

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

"To work in conjunction with all Ontario school boards to ensure that adequate CPR training is available to school employees and volunteers."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and give it to Victoria to bring down.

TAXATION

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

"Whereas life under this Liberal government has become more and more unaffordable;

"Whereas Ontarians' assets are already taxed multiple times throughout their lives;

"Whereas the Liberal government has raised taxes through new eco fees, a health tax, and increased income taxes multiple times;

"Whereas the death tax in Ontario is the highest of any province in Canada;

"Whereas the last thing a grieving family should worry about is the taxman at their door;

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

"That the Ontario government repeal the estate administration tax immediately."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and I'll send it to the desk with page Julia.

LUNG HEALTH

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: "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 that 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, 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 affix my name to this and give it to page Abby to deliver.

TAXATION

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Liberal government has indicated they plan on introducing a new carbon tax in 2015; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers have already been burdened with a health tax of \$300 to \$900 per person that doesn't necessarily go into health care, a \$2-billion smart meter program that failed to conserve energy, and households are paying almost \$700 more annually for unaffordable subsidies under the Green Energy Act; and

"Whereas a carbon tax scheme would increase the cost of everyday goods including gasoline and home heating; and

"Whereas the government continues to run unaffordable deficits without a plan to reduce spending while collecting \$30 billion more annually in tax revenues than 11 years ago; and

"Whereas the aforementioned points lead to the conclusion that the government is seeking justification to raise taxes to pay for their excessive spending, without accomplishing any concrete targets;

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

"To abandon the idea of introducing yet another unaffordable and ineffective tax on Ontario families and businesses."

As I am in agreement, I have affixed my signature, and give it to page Marco.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm pleased to present this petition that comes from my riding; more precisely, from Julie Rodrigue from Chelmsford in Nickel Belt. It reads as follows:

"Hydro One Not for Sale! Say No to Privatization.

"Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

"Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

"Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don't have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

"Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario’s Hydro One.”

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

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas dental decay is the second-most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

“Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentrations; and

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I agree with the petition, affix my signature and give it to Vanessa to bring forward.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Laurie Scott: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario families and businesses have seen their hydro costs more than triple under the Liberal government since 2003;

“Whereas the Liberal government’s unaffordable Green Energy Act, the \$2 billion wasted on the smart meter program and the \$1.1 billion wasted on the cancelled gas plants will translate into a further 42% increase in hydro bills over five years;

“Whereas the Auditor General revealed that the Liberal government has collected approximately \$50 billion over the last decade through a global adjustment tax on hydro bills largely used to subsidize exorbitant green energy contracts;

“Whereas the Liberal government has allowed peak hydro rates to increase by 15% on May 1;

“Whereas the Liberal government’s elimination of the clean energy benefit will mean an average increase in hydro bills of \$137 per year;

“Whereas the Liberal government’s planned sale of a majority share of Hydro One will mean higher hydro bills;

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

“To call on the Liberal government to protect Ontario families and businesses from further hydro increases by applying all proceeds from the sale of Hydro One to the \$27-billion electricity debt and imposing a moratorium on any new industrial wind and solar projects.”

Brought to me by many residents of River Mill Village in Lindsay, I’ll hand it to page Kyle.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that is signed by Mrs. Tammy Wheely from Hanmer in my riding, and it reads as follows:

“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...;

“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;”

They “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 fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Cameron to bring it to the Clerk.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This petition is titled “Planning for Ontario’s Future.”

Hon. Jeff Leal: Oh, that’s a good one.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Yes, it is.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

1550

“Whereas the” previous “federal government” had “refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

“Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

“Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

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

“That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this. I will sign my name to it and I will hand it to page Victoria.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

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

“Whereas the final report of the select committee, entitled Inclusion and Opportunity: A New Path for Developmental Services in Ontario, was tabled in the Legislature on July 22, 2014;

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

“That government of Ontario immediately review the final report and commence the implementation of the recommendations of the select committee, as contained in the final report.”

As a member of the committee, I clearly support this petition. I affix my name to it and give it to page Nicole.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was signed by Ken Hill from Nairn Centre, which borders my riding and Algoma–Manitoulin. Half of it is mine; half of it is in Algoma–Manitoulin.

It reads as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices”;

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

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

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act respecting Invasive Species / Loi concernant les espèces envahissantes.

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 / 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.

An Act to protect and restore the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin / Loi visant la protection et le rétablissement du bassin des Grands Lacs et du fleuve Saint-Laurent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day. The Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thanks very much, Speaker. I must say that yesterday was a banner day in the Leal household. Karan and I—our daughter, Shanae, was 16 years old yesterday. It was a wonderful day for our daughter. I know what you want me to do. I just wanted to give a little plug for the Leal family today.

I'm moving government order G109, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'EMPLOI ET LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 29, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et les relations de travail.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm very pleased to be able to pick up where I left off last week and finish the remaining time for some remarks with regard to second reading of Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015.

Just to recap briefly what this bill is about, I'll just make a few comments about the other parts of the bill that I referenced last week. This bill, if passed, would

make a number of changes to workplace laws, including the labour relations provisions of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

Section 1 of Bill 109 proposes changes to the labour relations provisions of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. This section of Bill 109 was drafted in consultation with the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association and so is supported by firefighters across the province. This bill includes important provisions that will assist municipalities that employ full-time firefighters who also serve as volunteer firefighters in other municipalities, the so-called double-hatters, as they will provide a measure of protection for the full-time position held by the double-hatter. The proposed change means the International Association of Fire Fighters will no longer be able to force its members who volunteer in composite departments—that is, professional full-time and double-hatter departments where there are also unionized full-time members—to stop doing so. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has been requesting this change for years. In my opinion, this legalization of double-hatters is the best part of this bill.

Bill 109's proposed amendments to the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act applies when the government restructures or amalgamates services. These changes provide that a vote to determine a new bargaining unit is not required if a prescribed percentage, at least more than 60% of employees in the bargaining unit, were previously represented by a single unit. This change will have the greatest impact on health services integrations such as those involving hospitals.

While I question the justification for many of these amendments, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union is adamant that these changes should not go ahead because they may take away the right of an employee to choose what labour union or bargaining unit they belong to. I would just say that personally I sympathize with their objection because these changes result in less choice for an employee, and as a Progressive Conservative, I believe in more choice.

But the remarks I want to make today centre more around the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. So I will look to the question of protecting workers from anecdotal-based allegations. This deals with claim suppression.

As I began describing last Thursday before my time was over, section 3 of Bill 109 would make a number of amendments to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. The focus of these amendments is to stop claim suppression by employers and increasing death benefits to survivors.

The Workplace Injury Claim Suppression: Final Report, completed by the consulting group Prism, was used by the government as a rationale for this section of Bill 109. That report needs to be examined with this bill to assess the need for the changes proposed.

When we read Prism's report, we find that there is actually little evidence of claim suppression as a problem

in the workplace. Claim suppression is defined by Prism as "actions taken by an employer to induce a worker not to report an injury or illness or alternatively to under-report the severity of an injury or illness or the amount of lost time attributable to that injury or illness. The inducement may be coercive, i.e., the inducement may involve an actual or perceived threat of sanctions. Alternatively the inducement may be accommodating, i.e., the employer may offer the worker benefits in lieu of workers' compensation, if full WSIB benefits, especially lost time benefits, are not claimed."

1600

So an employer must "induce a worker not to report" or to "under-report" an injury to WSIB. I want to just jump in here and parenthetically insert a response by the construction employers council on WSIB. Here's just a brief moment of what they have to say. "Instead of celebrating a 45% reduction in the construction lost time injury rate over the last 10 years, such achievements are disbelieved as evidence of claim suppression. Enough." And that's what we're saying.

So an employer must "induce a worker" not to report or to under-report. But to induce a worker, the employer must have intent to do so, and this is where the report fails us. The Prism report fails to introduce a single motivation explaining this unlawful behaviour. "There is no strong evidence to support credible inferences on the motivation for claim suppression. Indeed, it is unlikely that conventional research methods could ever generate valid estimates of the incidence of claim suppression or incontestable accounts of the motivation for claim suppression."

The report's inflammatory conclusion is that "claim suppression appears to be a real problem." But at the same time, the report incredibly offers that "it is not feasible to develop even a weak estimate, let alone a credible estimate, of the incidence of employer-induced claim suppression."

The report also admits that "the survey evidence is too limited to support any plausible estimate of employer-induced claim suppression...." It seems, then, to me, that what we are looking at is trying to create a solution for a problem that doesn't exist.

The Prism report relies on anecdotes and a fundamental contradiction of the principle of innocence until proven guilty to support its conclusions. For these reasons, we should throw out the Prism report with regard to consideration of this bill. Its only use is to comment on the risk of claim suppression, not its actual prevalence.

It is clear to me and many others that this section of Bill 109 is solving a problem that does not exist. Worse, the maximum fine that could be imposed on a corporation found guilty of an offence would be increased from \$100,000 to \$500,000. Furthermore, a new administrative penalty may be applied by the Ontario Labour Relations Board up to any amount.

In summary, there is no justification for increasing the fine fivefold. Claim suppression is already an offence

under the WSIA. Add to this picture Prism's unfounded conclusions, and then we must ask ourselves: Why does this bill deal with the issue of claim suppression at all?

The final thing I would like to comment on is that I was at least underwhelmed with the Minister of Labour's introductory speech on this bill. His speech was nine minutes. The minister had the opportunity to speak for up to an hour to explain the purposes of the bill and the rationale for its proposed changes. Given the breadth of the bill and its potential impacts, I am disappointed that the government minister failed to enlighten the members of this House on the true nature of this bill.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's a pleasure to rise again and speak to Bill 109, a bit of an omnibus bill that amends the Labour Relations Act for the firefighters to bring them under the same protections that almost every other worker in this province is able to enjoy. It also amends the WSIB act around a number of issues, claim suppression being one of them, which has, in my experience in the health care sector, been a huge issue over probably the last 20 years, where we saw hospital employers and other employers in the health care sector actually getting huge rebates—experience-rating rebates—while at the same time they were suppressing hundreds of claims of nurses in this province.

I think it's particularly important, in light of the fact that so many nurses are being assaulted in the workplace—more than 700 in the last seven or eight years. I think it's very important that employers are actually penalized when they do not put claims in for nurses and all other workers in this province.

The last piece is with regard to the PSLRTA legislation—the poison pill, as I call it—which was introduced into this bill and that the NDP do not support because it takes away a basic democracy: the right to vote for a union of your choice. This bill would allow for no vote where a union has more than 60% of the workers in a forced amalgamation or merger in a municipality, in the health care sector or at the schools level. I think it's really an affront to democracy.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm happy to speak about Bill 109, which would actually amend three separate acts affecting workers, to increase fairness and efficiency: We have the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act and the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act.

Coming from a long line of firefighters, I would like to use my brief time to talk about the amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. My dad, who just passed away this summer, used to drive the trucks here in Yorkville, in Toronto, for many years, as did my uncles. His brothers were also firefighters in Toronto, in Scarborough, as well.

Our government is very committed to supporting firefighters. These are very brave men and women who

selflessly put their lives in danger every day to ensure the rest of us are safe. I see that first-hand in Pickering–Scarborough East. I had the honour to recently attend a firefighter retirement dinner, as well as their award and recognition night.

But back to the bill: The amendments we are proposing would bring the Fire Protection and Prevention Act into greater alignment with the Labour Relations Act and provide additional tools to resolve disputes and reduce the need to seek remedies through the courts. That sounds like a good way to go. Specifically, they'll enhance the act by adding key legislative provisions already covered and provided in the Labour Relations Act, things like unfair labour practice protections; expedited grievance arbitration; union security and related provisions; religious objections; an authority to enforce all provisions under part IV, I believe, of the act; the power of an arbitrator to enforce a written settlement of a grievance; and the ability of the parties to file an arbitration decision in the Superior Court of Justice and have it enforced as an order of that court. It goes on, Speaker.

I'm very pleased to support this bill.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to recognize the member from York–Simcoe. As always, she shares very thoughtful comments on legislation—

Applause.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's due. With respect specifically to Bill 109, I appreciated how she touched on the fact that this bill needs to happen because it includes important provisions that will assist municipalities that employ full-time firefighters who also serve as volunteer firefighters in other municipalities. I'm glad she brought that up, because in terms of recognition where it's due, our colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills first spoke about this, Speaker, over a decade ago. And it just goes to show you how this government slowly comes around to good ideas.

The thing that frustrates me, though, is—

Ms. Laurie Scott: The spring bear hunt was good.

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Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: The spring bear hunt is another concept.

That said, we have to recognize that this government has become very much entrenched in speedy legislation.

Not only did the member from York–Simcoe recognize the importance of this bill, but she recognized and was quite blunt and straight-up in saying she was underwhelmed by the minister and his comments when he first introduced this. He spoke less than nine minutes, Speaker. That's unacceptable. There are elements of this bill that have been long overdue. As I mentioned, with regard to double-hatters, our colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills introduced this over a decade ago, and yet the minister still chose to speak less than nine minutes on a very, very important piece of legislation that earmarks a lot of requests. For instance, AMO, the Association of

Municipalities of Ontario, has been requesting the double-hatter change for years. Finally, it's happening.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's a pleasure to be able to rise in the House and follow the remarks from the member from York–Simcoe. Unfortunately, I was able to only listen to the last 10 minutes of her remarks because I wasn't in the House for the first 10. Although I disagree with her on some points, I always appreciate that she follows a reasoned thought process and actually gives reasons. It's not just empty rhetoric, and I really appreciate that.

There are parts of this bill that we are very supportive of. It always amazes me with government, specifically this government, why they don't just put like legislation into a bill and we have a good debate about it. If it was a good bill, it would pass without the rancour. It's a majority government; they don't need to do all the twisting and turning which they do.

This bill is another good example of a couple of pieces of good legislation which we support. We support the part about the firefighters. The part about WSIB: Every person in this House has had big issues trying to help constituents with WSIB.

But then they have to turn around and put the undemocratic part in, where you can't choose who to belong to if you want to belong to a union. Really, does that fit with the other? Remember grade 1 class, when you saw the blocks—which block doesn't fit? One of those blocks doesn't fit.

Unfortunately, that's something this government has done over and over and over: Instead of just trying to provide good, sound legislation, they always try to stick a poison pill in it. That's one of the big problems in Ontario.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I certainly appreciate the comments made by the member from Welland, the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the member for Huron–Bruce and the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

At the very beginning of my speech, I talked about the limitations that are placed on us, as legislators, when you put different items into one bill. Parties on all sides have done this in government, so I'm not blaming; it's just an issue.

Clearly, as you listen to the comments made by those in the room, we all support the idea of making those changes for the double-hatters. It was a big issue in my riding because each of my municipalities had a mixed component of full-time firefighters and double-hatters. So it's certainly something whose time has come.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Yes.

The question of the union of choice: I made a comment at the time, and I certainly agree with the member from Welland.

Just concluding in the last few seconds: Clearly, our support is in the direction of the changes that have been

made to the firefighters, and the question around things like claim suppression are issues that we have strong feelings about and that there are limitations to the evidence to support an initiative that would make it even more draconian.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this bill, Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act. I want to first commend my colleague the member from Welland, our labour critic, who has done really a wonderful job in highlighting our thoughts on this bill: some of its shortcomings and, also, some of the positive aspects of the bill that we certainly can be supportive of. That's what I will attempt to do in my 20-minute speech here today and, hopefully, raise a couple of points to which we haven't given much thought, or any thought, as of yet.

This is an omnibus bill of the like we've seen in this House before. That means, for viewers tuning in right now, that it is a piece of legislation that encompasses various acts unrelated to one another. They wrap it all into one nice tidy bill and hope that nobody pays that much attention. However, thankfully, we have an effective opposition here in the NDP and we certainly do our due diligence in examining what the government is trying to push through this place as a majority government and what their intentions are. Sometimes, we don't know what their intentions are because, sometimes, we think they don't even know what their intentions are. It is hard to figure out. I'll point to one aspect that I can't figure out quite yet: what the solution is that they're trying to find a problem for. But we'll touch on that in a little bit.

Speaker, the bill amends three bills: the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997; the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997—commonly known as the PSLRTA Act; and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997—the WSIA. The first schedule is the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. This mirrors provisions and protections in the Labour Relations Act by preventing unfair labour practices, interference with representation, intimidation of employees, membership in associations, expedited rights of arbitration—similar to section 49 of the Labour Relations Act—and a clear process by which complaints can be brought to the OLRB and modifications that take into account the unique natures of firefighters' labour relations.

Let's expand on that. What does that mean in real English? It means bringing firefighters under the umbrella of the Ontario Labour Relations Act, something which most of us would think would be quite common sense. They perform a role. They are certainly unique in that role, but ultimately, they are workers. They are public service workers who provide an invaluable service, and I certainly want to commend the men and women who serve as full-time, volunteer and part-time firefighters in our communities. They keep us safe. They

run in when we run out, and for that they are to be commended.

It is, of course, our duty to ensure that they have the protections that they afford us—at least those types of protections at the very minimum. On our side, as New Democrats, we've attempted to extend protections for firefighters and first responders. My colleague Cheri DiNovo, the member for Parkdale–High Park, has introduced several times—I think four times—a bill that would extend PTSD support for our first responders, those who again, as I said, rush in when we are running out. We ask them to do a job and to see things that we cannot see, that we do not want to see. We ask them to perform a public service in a professional way that many of those among us just wouldn't be able to do. For that, we have to acknowledge that when we send them into harm's way, there's a chance that they may be harmed, not simply physically, but also emotionally and psychologically. That being said, Speaker, we have to ensure that we are affording them the protections. Unfortunately, that hasn't seen the light of day yet.

On this side, as opposition members, we have to question the government's priorities in what they actually legislate and bring forward on the order paper. The amendments to the OLRA bringing firefighters under the umbrella of the OLRA are a step forward. We certainly appreciate that and I know that firefighters and municipalities appreciate that, as well. However, there is so much more that can be done. It begs the question, why not deal with those issues in a stand-alone bill that deals specifically with our first responders and our fire services? They would certainly appreciate that. It's been a long time coming and I would assume that it would receive all-party support. We have seen all-party support for that type of bill before in this place. However, again, it doesn't make the list of high priorities when it comes to the Liberal government's legislative agenda.

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So, again, the schedule under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act deals with what has been a contentious issue over the years, and one that I've learned about since being elected: the double-hatter issue, where firefighters are also volunteering or working in other jurisdictions and providing that same service. It has been a contentious issue between municipalities and between firefighting associations, but I think there is a balance that is struck here that everyone can live with. We certainly look forward to hearing more about that at the committee stage. So that's the first part of this bill.

As I said, this is an omnibus bill. Let's talk about the other section that it deals with. It's the public sector—no, let's go to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. That's the second section that it deals with: the WSIA, which is the act that governs our WSIB system, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, which was previously known as the workers' compensation and insurance board, one that I think in years past had an emphasis on compensation. That's what the system was supposed to be. It actually acknowledged that if you were

a worker in the province of Ontario, you paid into the WSIB as a deduction off your pay. That was the insurance that would be provided to you should anything occur throughout your working career, whether you were injured on the job as an acute injury or whether you sustained or developed an occupational disease. It was the compensation system, and it had some faults; there's no question about it. It has been an evolving process over the years. But I can tell you that I know from, I guess, a little bit of institutional knowledge from my mom having been a constituency assistant for a former MPP that they did a lot of work on comp claims and they helped out a lot of people. Sometimes they actually acted as adjudicators and representatives for those workers.

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, my mom did that. They did a lot of claims. We don't do that anymore out of our MPP offices. We're not working in tandem and appealing at the board level. We just don't have the resources. Why? Because there are so many claims that come through our office now, through the WSIB, that it would be impossible for our constituency staff to take on that burden. We would have to have a staff of 20 people in each constituency office to deal with the level of WSIB claims that come through.

There are glaring faults and failures in the system that have been clearly highlighted and articulated, including through the Arthurs report of 2012 that looked at the issue of deeming, the issue of the unfunded liability, the issue of how to figure that out and how to address those issues. The Arthurs report made several recommendations. Actually, it made many, many recommendations, and to this day, since 2012, none of those recommendations have even been initiated. However, today we see—

Mr. John Yakabuski: What? Not one?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Not one. Can you imagine? Not one. But we do see a couple here that are highlighted.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What have the Liberals been doing?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: What have they been doing? Well, not much on the WSIB file.

Some of the key amendments that are included under this schedule, schedule 3 under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, are the appointment of a Fair Practices Commissioner to serve as an ombudsman of the WSIB who would have the full authority to investigate complaints and make recommendations—not a moment too soon, in my opinion.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Elizabeth Witmer. That's what they—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Well, that's one thing that they did do: They appointed Elizabeth Witmer as a chair of the WSIB. That hasn't resulted in that much positive change, at least from the perspective of injured workers. Life has not gotten better since she has been sitting in the chair, although there are some indications they are starting to listen to injured workers' groups, many of which I've met with over the years.

Certainly there are advocates out there who have fought long and hard for changes to the WSIA, and not

only changes for themselves as injured workers, but for families of injured workers who have had to endure really difficult circumstances when they have lost a spouse or gone down to one income earner or no income. It causes an enormous amount of trauma. I want to certainly applaud their efforts in at least bringing these types of provisions about, because we know they've had a huge role in doing that.

The Fair Practices Commissioner, as an ombudsman of the WSIB—I welcome that type of role, somebody who can come in and actually assess whether the practices under the WSIB are being effectively and fairly implemented. We know that it is a difficult and sometimes all-too-common interaction between WSIB and injured workers. Secondly, there are provisions against claim suppression. So it provides procedural provisions against claim suppression.

Speaker, what is claim suppression? Let's say you step off the chair as you're leaving today, and you trip and fall and twist your ankle. You know what? You're injured. It's rare that we see injuries in this line of work, but they do occur unexpectedly. Imagine if members of this House said, "Well, listen, even though those stairs might not have been adequately sized; maybe they might have been out of whack and maybe you might have hit a loose board or the carpet is a little loose there—even though that might have happened, don't file a claim. Keep your injury to yourself. Stay quiet. We're just going to sit you in the back of the members' gallery. We'll bring you some cookies and coffee. You just take it easy for a little while until you're back up on your feet." Speaker, that is claim suppression, when an employer would say, "Don't report your injury because we don't want it to go onto our claim and affect our WSIA rating." That is something that happens, again, all too often.

Here we see that the government has addressed that or is attempting to address that by expressly prohibiting employers from suppressing claims, which they should be doing as it is now, directly or indirectly. If employers are found guilty of claim suppression, they could be fined up to \$500,000 versus the \$100,000 threshold currently. I think that's welcome. I wonder if it will send a signal that will reverberate throughout the workplaces in Ontario covered under the WSIB or WSIA.

Is it enough? I hope so, because each and every day, workers get injured, workers develop occupational disease and workers are killed in this province, and we are not doing enough. We have not done enough, at least since I've been here. I know, historically, injured workers' groups have advocated for more to be done through the government—more heightened inspection, more awareness, increased fines. There is so much more that we could do to ensure that no worker has to go home in a body bag, and that's as grim as it is. There are workers who don't make it home at the end of the day, and it is our obligation to do everything we can to avoid that and to make sure there are no occupational deaths in the province.

So those are two schedules that New Democrats certainly can support. We look forward to discussing

them at committee, and we look forward to hearing testimony from stakeholders who have brought those about, because I would have to give some credit—these aren't ideas that are novel to the government. These are things that have been floating around throughout labour circles for 20 years, certainly, and have been waiting for a government—any government—to address. So we certainly support that.

Speaker, as the government is prone to do from time to time, they throw what would be a good bill—they throw a contentious aspect in what would normally be an uncontentious bill, and I speak specifically of schedule 2 in Bill 109.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Poison pill.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's a poison pill. It's been referred to as that by many members in this House, certainly on our side. It's the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997, the PSLRTA.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Mike Harris.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Mike Harris.

The changes under the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act really boil down to this: There's a transition, there's a merger happening. Whether it be in the hospital, municipal or school board sectors, two entities come together with maybe a host of bargaining units, CUPE, OPSEU, ONA—who knows, right? But different sectors and different workers could be represented and most often are represented by different bargaining units—different unions. What the government is saying now is that once those mergers occur, if one of those units holds 60% of the bargaining unit in that certain workplace post-merger, if they represent 60% of the workers that are organized and currently unionized, then they would not be required to have a vote to merge all of the workers. They would then just automatically suck up all of those outstanding members that belong to a different bargaining unit.

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Now, what is the thought around there? Do you think you're going to save money? Do you think you're going to save time? Because what you're actually doing is finding a problem to a solution that already exists. We have fair, free collective bargaining. What I think you will be doing as a government is immediately initiating a charter challenge by all of the groups that are involved in bargaining units under these sectors.

We already know that that has happened. It happened through a decision of the Supreme Court, through the RCMP. There was a case that found that section 2(d) of the charter guarantees "a meaningful process of collective bargaining," which includes "a process that provides employees with a degree of choice and independence sufficient to enable them to determine their collective interests and meaningfully pursue them." A summary of the case can be easily found.

This is not a priority either through those bargaining units or through the entities that are involved in them. It's not a priority that they're asking the government to address. We are wondering what the rationale is. There

has been only one vote in 2009 and one in 2010—sorry, 2014 and 2015. I want to thank my colleague for providing me with some good notes to reference. There have only been two votes: in 2014 and in 2015. That is not an enormous amount of labour activity to actually warrant having to throw this aspect in there—one that is wholly undemocratic, one that takes away the charter rights of an organized, represented individual to at least vote on who they want to represent them.

It may not even be that the larger unit, given that they would hold the largest numbers in that organization—it may not be that they even win the vote. It may be that that representation might need to change after years, that they have been represented. So let's leave those unions with the ability and the obligation to make their case, to sell their product, to sell their representation, to talk to those members and to discuss what they can do as a representative. That's how it goes—that's how it should go. There is nothing wrong with that process. It doesn't cause any more strife than any other process.

The government seemingly is attempting to streamline that by—and the only way that they can figure out how to do that is to remove the democratic right of those workers to decide by themselves, through their own volition. We can't support that. We would never support something that removes the democratic right to choose your representation at work, and we certainly wouldn't get into a charter challenge and a battle with labour unions in the province of Ontario. That just doesn't make sense to us. It's a waste of time, it's a waste of a provision of a bill, and we would love the government to take a second look at it. Remove that aspect, and then we can pass this bill and see some good, positive steps go forward in the House. Again, it boggles the mind why they would want to do that and ruin what would seemingly be a modestly effective bill.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: So they can say we voted against the bill.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I guess maybe that is the politics. I should be a little bit more astute than that. Thank you. The politics is that they will go out and shop it around and say, "Look, the NDP voted against a labour bill. It did all of these great things, and they voted against it." Well, come on, give us a little bit more credit than that. Those who are involved in these sectors understand and are a little bit more savvy than that, to think that you're going to play politics, especially with the NDP on a labour bill. It's just not going to fly.

We will do our due diligence, we will do what's fair and we will ensure that there's a balance struck in the bill. That's what we do. That's how we go about it. My, oh, my, wouldn't it be nice if that was the focus of the government more often than not?

Speaker, it's always a pleasure to speak in this House. I do appreciate the privilege that it is, on behalf of my riding of Essex. I thank the members for their attention and I look forward to hearing thoughts and comments from my colleagues.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I listened to the member from Essex for his, I think, very thoughtful presentation. He was certainly very informative and he feels very strongly about certain parts of this bill.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, there is no bill that is perfect. That's why we continually have bills before us. As I've said before, the only perfect bills are presented in North Korea. They have wonderful bills there all the time. But here we're imperfect, so we try to improve things in Ontario.

I know that the member stressed the importance of having proper legislation to protect the rights of unions and unionized workers. This does that with the Fair Practices Commissioner and some amendments to the Labour Relations Act to include firefighters.

But, you know, the majority of workers I run into that have the most problems are ones who are not members of unions. They are people who work for minimum wage jobs, on the margins, who are just working to essentially survive. Many of them are newcomers to Canada who will take any job, and many of them are not treated fairly when it comes to being injured on the job, especially, and getting their pay or survivors' benefits. I know I'm dealing with a case right now in terms of survivors' benefits because there is a lot of off-book nonsense that goes on with these small employers.

So we also have to look at protecting the rights of those individuals who don't have a union. If they have a union, wonderful, but if they don't, they also need to get protection. In this act, there are protections in terms of survivor's benefits and workplace safety, and not to suppress injuries, because that is another very common complaint that I have: employers trying to suppress injuries in the workplace.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to stand and comment on the member's 20-minute speech on Bill 109.

There are three aspects of this bill that are important, but for me, serving the riding of Dufferin-Caledon, I will focus my remarks very specifically on the allowance in this legislation that will ensure that young people who want to volunteer in our fire departments are able to do so.

I once described to the minister at the time that these individuals who are volunteering in our local departments are actually the farm team. That is where employers go and try to find and hire new firefighters, new professional firefighters, full-time firefighters. The fact that those people want to return to their home community, give back and continue the ability to volunteer in their own community through these volunteer departments, I think, is commendable. I'm absolutely thrilled that it has been incorporated into the proposal in Bill 109.

I won't speculate as to how long this legislation will take to get through the process, but I'd hope that we don't spend too much time drawing this out, because, as other colleagues have mentioned, it is an issue that has plagued smaller communities, communities that are

served by volunteer fire departments, for literally decades. It does us no service to have that issue continue to drag out. So I'm pleased to see that in Bill 109 and I hope we can get that in and passed relatively quickly.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's always a pleasure to stand and bring the voice of my constituents from Windsor West to the debate. I know I only have two minutes. Later on this afternoon, I'll have 20, so I'll have plenty to say.

I'll touch on just a few things.

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The member from Essex really drove home the real issue with the bill, which is that we have some really good legislation in place when it comes to firefighters. I think everybody in this room can appreciate the work that firefighters do on a daily basis, not just in their role as firefighters, as far as going and putting out fires or showing up at accident scenes or what have you, but beyond that: the fact that they go out into the community, they give back to the community; they help educate some of our youngest members of our communities about fire safety as well as some other safety issues; they do fundraisers and give back to non-profit organizations in their communities.

So I think we can all appreciate the work that firefighters do, and we certainly want to make sure that they are recognized and respected, and this bill takes it in that direction.

Unfortunately, what it also does is, by having the other issues in there around unions and organizing, as far as two unions merging and such, it muddies the waters and it ends up pitting firefighters against the rest of the unions. I'm certain that is not what the firefighters want to see. It's very unfortunate that that's what has happened, and I think it needs to be separated.

In the 25 seconds I have left, I just wanted to mention: The member from Eglinton–Lawrence had mentioned protecting the employees who live on the margins, those who are low-income earners, and making sure they're protected. I'd like to point out that the government side has actually attacked some of the lowest-income people within the education sector by saying that they're going to dock their wages for withdrawing voluntary services. So I'm not really sure that the government side really believes what the member from Eglinton–Lawrence just said.

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to speak to Bill 109 today.

Actually, like my colleague the Minister for Children and Youth Services, I was pleased, a week or so ago, to attend the Guelph version of the annual firefighters' retirement dinner. So I thought I'd speak a bit about the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act amendments that are in Bill 109. They actually apply to all workers; for example, strengthening the right of the worker to file a

claim for all workers if they're injured on the job, and an increase in the maximum corporate penalty that could be applied if a business didn't hold up their side of what they're supposed to do under the act.

The third thing that I wanted to talk about, really, is a particular issue for firefighters, although it's often an issue in other cases, and that's the whole area of chronic diseases and occupational disease. What often happens is, particularly with cancers, where you've been exposed to some chemical, for example, through your work as a firefighter—there's often a very long latency period, so that by the time the disease manifests itself, by the time the disease has been diagnosed, the person has often been retired for a very long time and really doesn't have any significant income. If that person, unfortunately, dies due to their disease, the act needs some updating to make sure that the calculation for the survivors' benefits is not based on the low income in the retirement low-income phase of employment, but is actually based on the average salary of people who are currently employed in the similar profession.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Essex for his final comments.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I want to thank the members from Eglinton–Lawrence, Dufferin–Caledon, Windsor West and the Minister of Education.

I thank the Minister of Education for bringing up a point that I forgot to touch on, that aspect of survivor benefits. Indeed, it is an accurate and an adequate response to what has been a lingering problem, in terms of folks who have suffered occupational diseases that have a long latency period and changing the calculation so that it's based on the average salary of that work. So that's a good thing. One of the things that I hope the government considers is removing the retroactivity portion of it, dating back to 1998. There are, as the minister referenced, chronic and occupational diseases that have a longer latency period than that. What happens to those people who received or were given that diagnosis in 1997? They're left out of this. That's something the government should consider. It would go a long way to supporting those families who have been struggling and fighting for adequate survivor benefits under the WSIB, which they deserve.

Again, I'm very happy to see some action taking place on the part of injured workers and their families and some attention being given to firefighters and adding a level playing field to their profession.

However, the one aspect under the labour transition—I forget the acronym. We have to look at the overall democracy of that provision and factor in, are we heading down a slippery slope if we eliminate the democratic right of workers to decide who bargains for them?

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's always a pleasure to stand in my place. Today, I'll be sharing my time with the member for Brampton–Springdale, the member for Cambridge and the member for Ajax–Pickering. I'm

delighted to rise on behalf of my constituents and speak to Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act.

Increasing fairness for all workers is something all of us here today can support, and the changes proposed by this important bill do just that. By amending three separate acts—the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, and the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act—we can directly impact the fairness and efficiency that workers experience in their workplaces.

Mr. Speaker, I think I can speak for all of us when I say that the firefighters in our communities all across Ontario are modern-day heroes. In fact, just last week I had the pleasure of attending our volunteer firefighter recognition evening in our community, and in a few weeks' time I will be attending our annual banquet that celebrates the contribution of our Burlington firefighters. Day after day, they risk their lives to keep us safe, whether it be in our homes or on the road, where accidents can and do happen at any moment. These brave men and women dedicate their lives to protecting ours, and the least we can do in return is ensure that they have a fair and equitable workplace.

The proposed amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act in this bill would add new provisions, similar to those already found in the Labour Relations Act, designed to protect firefighters from such things as unfair labour practices, having their bargaining rights interfered with, or being intimidated or coerced by their employer. These valuable members of our community work hard enough at their jobs without having to worry about their collective rights, as well.

We must also protect workers' rights more broadly, and Bill 109 provides greater safeguards to all workers in Ontario. Every employee in this province has the right to file a WSIB claim, and it is our responsibility to ensure that this right is protected and maintained. Some employers engage in claim suppression, which is, of course, absolutely inappropriate, as the member from Essex noted earlier; and I absolutely agree. The proposed changes under this bill would protect workers and prosecute employers who engage in these pernicious practices.

Injured workers are often left vulnerable in these conditions, and we must do what we can to make sure that no employer can take advantage of them in these situations.

Unfortunately, there are also cases when a worker may pay the ultimate price and the survivors of work-related death are left to cope on their own. Under the new amendments, survivor benefits would be calculated based on the average earnings of an individual employed in the same profession as the deceased worker. The significance of this change will directly affect the benefits payable to the families of workers who passed away of a work-related illness that manifested after their retirement. Many illnesses can take years to develop, often presenting symptoms well after individuals have been removed

from the conditions which caused them. It would be unfair to base the compensation for their families on their post-retirement incomes.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, Bill 109 will protect the workers of the province and their families in times when they may need it most.

The final component of this bill is related to amalgamations of schools, hospitals or municipalities. This bill would remove the redundant vote in those situations when two unions, by necessity, amalgamate as well and one union has a clear, large majority. This will reduce delays and costs associated with a vote and result in smoother transitions and take some tension out of labour relations.

1650

Bill 109 is, in the end, simply about protecting the rights of workers in Ontario, whether it is providing tools to firefighters to help resolve disputes, ensuring smoother transitions in the public sector or just making sure that our workers' compensation system is fair. Bill 109 goes a long way in establishing protections for employees across all sectors and all of our communities. Our government is committed to making sure that Ontario is the safest, fairest and simply the best province to work in in Canada. This is just another example of that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing the debate, the member from Brampton–Springdale.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to join my colleagues to speak to Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015. As has been pointed out during previous debate, this is an extensive bill bringing together three acts: the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997; the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; and the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997. Each of these bills was new legislation 18 years ago, in 1997. Times have changed since 1997, so it's time to make amendments that will ensure the legislation continues to meet the needs of those they govern.

Our government is committed to providing increased fairness to all workers across Ontario. Bill 109 proposes to strengthen protections, enhance compensation and ensure that broader public sector transitions are allowed to go as smoothly as possible while still balancing the democratic rights of workers.

It is a sad fact that in Ontario too many are struggling to make ends meet. In my own riding of Brampton–Springdale, I meet with hard-working people who want only to put in an honest day's work in order to bring home a paycheque to contribute to or to support their family. They struggle to find employment, and when they do, they feel vulnerable and insecure, wanting to ensure that they do a good job so as not to lose it and to fit in.

It angers me when I hear of employers who convince, perhaps even threaten, their employees in order to prevent unsafe workplaces or accidents on the job from being reported to WSIB. One of the issues that Bill 109 addresses is to ensure that workers are aware of their rights to file a WSIB claim and that their right is

protected. If passed, Bill 109 will inhibit employers from taking any action that might discourage a worker from filing a claim or not following through with a claim to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

The penalties to employers who do try to break their obligation to keep employees safe or provide adequate compensation if they are injured will be increased under Bill 109 as well. Corporate penalties of \$10,000 to \$500,000 will be levied upon a conviction of an offence under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. This will bring the penalties in line with the maximum fines for corporations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We need to do everything we can to ensure that employees are getting the support they need and to ensure questionable relations between employers and their employees are not allowed to happen.

Every employee must have the right to speak up if they see or experience an unsafe situation or practice. No one should worry when they leave for work in the morning whether they will return home or not. Another amendment in Bill 109, if passed, would be to mandate the WSIB board of directors to appoint an organizational ombudsperson, a Fair Practices Commissioner who will be independent, neutral and a confidential resource for injured workers as well as for employers and service providers. The Fair Practices Commissioner's services could include not only looking into individual complaints but also tracing complaint patterns, identifying system-wide issues within an organization and recommending improvements to WSIB itself.

Mr. Speaker, safety in the workplace is a very important issue, and one that is not automatic. That is what Bill 109 is addressing: the all-encompassing issue of people who do get hurt on the job and ensuring that they have access to the support they need. Identifying unsafe situations and practices is one thing; however, there are parts that must be considered—an air quality problem or a work procedure that causes an injury that is not apparent right away.

I know that it has been discussed several times by members during the debate that relates to this bill, but it's hard not to mention our professional firefighters, volunteer firefighters and other first responders. Not only do they face danger every day and endure injuries on the job, but there is a frightening realization of the cancers that develop, for many being diagnosed after they have retired. In situations where a worker dies of an occupational disease and has no or lower earnings at the time of the diagnosis because they are retired, the WSIB's current operational practice is to calculate survivor benefits based on whichever is greater: the average amount of annual earnings of a worker engaged in the same trade when the disease was contracted, or the worker's annual earnings in the year prior to their diagnosis. If passed, Bill 109 would allow the WSIB to continue this practice under the law rather than the statutory minimum currently allowed under the WSIA.

The men and women who give so much to us, running into fires while we are running out, deserve to be taken

care of. The proposed changes in Bill 109 are long overdue, and I believe they have been introduced in a way that all Ontarians will understand as a fair way to make amendments. It's a balanced and responsible way to proceed. There is little doubt that, when passed, Bill 109 will save lives in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing with debate, the member from Cambridge.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It is a pleasure to rise today on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge and add a few comments to today's debate regarding Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015. I know that our government's Bill 109 strengthens protections for workers while supporting businesses. There are three acts that are being amended by this bill, as stated by my colleagues: the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, and the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act. I know that if these amendments are passed in the bill, it would increase fairness and efficiency for all workers across Ontario.

I wanted to spend a few minutes, Speaker, if I may, just on the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. Certainly all of us are very well aware of the job that firefighters do, day in and day out, not only to protect the public, but the risk that they have because of their job. I always like to say about our firefighters that if a fire or an emergency situation develops, they run towards the danger whereas we as the general public, and my family generally, tend to run away; and I commend all firefighters for the job they do, each and every day, protecting us.

The amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act would bring the Fire Protection and Prevention Act into greater alignment with the Labour Relations Act and provide additional tools not only to resolve disputes but to reduce the need to seek remedies through the court. Although there are examples that my colleagues have referenced—unfair labour practice protections, expedited grievance arbitration, union security and related provisions etc.—I really did want to focus for a few minutes on the hazards that firefighters have on the job, and these are especially the health hazards.

Interestingly, I have several friends who are firefighters. My son is a fire ranger up in the north, in Timmins; he's a fire ranger during the summer. And what's interesting to me, because I have sometimes had to attend, as a former emergency room nurse, to some of these firefighters in my work in the past to sort of help fix them up after an incident. What I remember in particular is that the firefighters say that if they've been involved in a fire, no matter whether—they're all wearing their personal protective gear, but their skin smells of that fire, whether it's plastics or a smoke smell, for sometimes up to three days. The reason is that the skin is our largest organ, and a lot of those toxins are actually absorbed through the skin. Sometimes, two to three days go by, and no matter how many showers they have, no matter how many baths they soak in, they are still smelling of that fire.

That's the essence of the problem of the latent cancers that crop up later on. The toxins are super-heated, absorbed through their skin, and then they sit latently and cause these occupational health hazards later. So I know that we have done this profession a service by adding some of their occupational-health-related cancers to the list of those that they can be compensated for, but there is still certainly more that needs to be done. I'm very proud that we will be taking this forward to ensure that those firefighters, even into retirement age, will be able to have the benefits that they so deserve.

1700

I wanted to spend a few minutes also on the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. In my job as an emerg nurse at one time, I used to be the first person triaging and helping to treat workers who came in from their job sites, whether it was a nail in the foot or a fall off the ladder or other things that were certainly much more traumatic.

I really got used to dealing with the initial claim forms and making sure that the workers knew, right at the time of triage and their emerg visit, that they needed to keep all of their records going forward, to be able to ensure that they got the benefits that they so deserved. I often heard, sometimes later, of workers who got the first letter and, even though we had faxed all the documents in, they didn't get service right away. Although that has been getting better, workers really do need to be informed of their rights.

It worries me sometimes when I do hear of corporations and workplaces that are suppressing claims and saying, "Well, I don't want to send this claim. We'll send you off to the emergency department. You get fixed up and come back." That worries me, and I really do believe that this bill will help to do this, especially when we're looking at an increase in a maximum corporate penalty for a conviction for an offence under the WSIA from \$10,000 to \$500,000. I think this will send a signal to all workplaces that they are always involved in ensuring that we do have claims for and the ability to assist workers in their injuries.

I'm going to stop there and, in conclusion, just say I really do support Bill 109. I think it's in line with our government's commitment to the people of Ontario, by strengthening protections for workers while supporting business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing debate, the member from Ajax-Pickering.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'd like to commence the process on Bill 109, following the members from Burlington, Brampton-Springdale and Cambridge.

If passed, Bill 109 would amend three separate acts affecting workers, to increase fairness and efficiency. These acts are the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997; the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; and the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997.

Changes under this bill would, if they become law, provide increased fairness to all workers across Ontario.

This would be done by providing more tools to resolve disputes in the fire sector; ensuring that broader public sector transitions go as smoothly as possible, through greater efficiency and stability; and helping to provide a fair, just and efficient workers' compensation system.

I took some Buckley's just before I started this. It's not quite working yet.

Strengthening protections for workers while supporting business is part of our government's plan to build Ontario up. Bill 109 is one more example of our commitment to the people of Ontario.

In summary of Bill 109, particularly the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, our government is committed to protecting Ontario firefighters, the brave men and women who selflessly put their lives in danger each and every day to ensure that the rest of us are safe.

The amendments we are proposing, if passed, would bring the Fire Protection and Prevention Act into greater alignment with the Labour Relations Act and provide additional tools to resolve disputes, reducing the need to seek remedies through the courts.

Specifically, the amendments would enhance the FPPA by adding very similar key legislative provisions already covered and provided for in the Labour Relations Act, 1995. A few examples of this are things like the unfair labour practice protections; expedited grievance arbitration; union security and related provisions; religious objections; Ontario Labour Relations Board authority to enforce all provisions under part IX of the FPPA; the power of an arbitrator to enforce a written settlement of a grievance, and the ability of the parties to file an arbitration decision in the Superior Court of Justice and have it enforced as an order of that court; and finally, the power of the Ontario Labour Relations Board to grant interim orders.

Our firefighters sacrifice so much to help keep Ontarians safe, and we are grateful for all the work they do. In return, it's up to us to ensure that they too are protected. They deserve to be protected. Firefighters deserve and should have these rights and protections afforded by the Labour Relations Act.

Under the WSIA—I'm sure I won't finish all of this—Bill 109 would provide greater safeguards to all workers in the province, through making changes in the Workplace Safety and Insurance act. These amendments, if passed, would do four main things, the first being to ensure that workers know it's their right to file a WSIB claim and that this right will be protected. If passed, the bill will prohibit employers from taking any action against a worker with the intent of discouraging the worker from filing a claim or influencing a worker to withdraw or abandon a claim for benefits for work-related injuries or illness within the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, WSIB.

I will continue on the WSIA. If passed, this bill would increase penalties from \$10,000 to \$500,000, which is consistent with maximum fines for corporations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

If passed, the bill would also provide greater fairness for survivors in cases of work-related death.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I should wrap this up, Mr. Speaker, in one sentence, by saying that these proposed changes are about providing increased fairness to workers across the province by strengthening protections.

Thank you for the flexibility and the opportunity to address this bill.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I hope they give Joe time to do the two-minute wrap-up because he certainly deserves it.

Anyway, I want to thank the Speaker for the opportunity to put a couple of minutes here on Bill 109. I hope I get the opportunity to speak to it in a more comprehensive way—perhaps a 20-minute rotation; maybe only a 10. But I see Lucas under there already conspiring. Maybe the guillotine is going to come down on this bill, as well. We'll have to see.

My God, I'm down to a minute and 27 seconds. I want to talk about the double-hatter issue. This is what I want to commend the government on. I think they've done something very positive. That's been an issue since before I got here. When I was running for election here in 2003, Ted Arnott, the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, was one of the people I got in touch with, to talk about his fight to make double-hatters legal here in the province of Ontario. It's one that's gone on for some time. This will actually make that possible, so that a person who is employed in one firefighting group somewhere in the province can also volunteer in a volunteer fire department in the place where they live.

In my opinion, it was never an issue about safety, and I think the government has recognized this. So many of these people wanted to avail themselves of the opportunity to give back, on a volunteer basis, to the communities they actually live in. Plus, those departments can benefit tremendously from the expertise of a person who does this professionally, for a living. So I think it's a win-win situation.

There are other aspects of the bill—as I say, I hope I get the chance to speak to it in a more comprehensive way. I don't know that I will because I know what goes on in that corner office up on the second floor, but if I do get the opportunity, I'll have more to say.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's good to have another kick at this bill, so to speak. It was the Mike Harris government that introduced mergers and amalgamations in this province, back in the 1990s. Some of them have worked and some of them haven't worked, but in any case, this PSLRTA legislation was put in place to actually address that. Speaker, it's been working for 20 years. It sets out a systematic way for unions to figure out who's going to represent the same classifications of workers at the end of the day. All this bill is doing is actually pitting the

firefighters' issues that they've been trying to get for 20 years against the other broader public sector unions. This government is good at creating chaos in labour. We all remember Bill 115. We all remember Bill 122.

1710

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Remember the EllisDon bill?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Oh, and the EllisDon bill. Yes, we remember that one as well.

So all you're doing here with putting this piece in this bill—which has a couple of things that, certainly, the NDP can support around firefighters and around WSIA—is pitting union against union and causing labour chaos and strife once again.

I guarantee that there will be a charter challenge on this issue. The unions will be taking this government to court on a charter challenge based on the RCMP decision of just last year, where the Supreme Court wrote that workers have the right to choose their representative—not just to unionize, but to actually choose who their representative is going to be. This government is actually taking away that right by introducing this change to this act and putting this poison pill in this omnibus bill.

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

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm very pleased to join the discussion on Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015.

Now, you have heard today that this bill is going to be affecting three separate areas: the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, and the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act. Changes under this bill are going to provide increased fairness for all workers across Ontario. We're talking about firefighters; we're going to see more tools to resolve disputes in the fire sector. We are ensuring that broader public sector transitions go as smoothly as possible through greater efficiency and stability. And we're going to be helping to provide fair and just conditions for workers' compensation in that particular system.

I do want to share with you a very quick story about firefighters in my riding of Kitchener Centre. It was June. We were gathered with a group of supporters to mark our one-year anniversary. We are at Victoria Park, right by the lake, and a young boy noticed that there was another boy in the lake drowning. He came over to some adults who were standing there and said, "I think that there's a child in there drowning." I quickly got on the phone and called 911 while my riding association president—his name is Sean Sullivan—without thinking jumped in and grasped this boy just as he was going down, and brought him up. If you remember John Milloy, our previous MPP for Kitchener Centre—he was at this event. Long arms; he reached over.

I had called 911. The very first people to arrive on the scene at this situation were the firefighters. They got the boy out and they made sure that he was okay. He had ingested some water. But they were the first ones there, and we were very impressed by this.

I'm very proud of the firefighters in Kitchener Centre and in all of Ontario. To the brave men and woman who

work in this field to keep us safe, I say that they deserve our support with this strengthened bill.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to have my two-minutes of questions and comments on Bill 109. I think we've seen, as some other speakers have said today and earlier this week, a pattern with the government. This is a situation where we've had four government members—from Burlington, Brampton–Springdale, Cambridge and Ajax–Pickering—speak to the bill. This is a planned strategy that this government has, that they're going to have as many people split those 20-minute rotations as possible to get to a point to try to justify to you, Speaker, and to the table to move this forward with closure or with time allocation.

I particularly want to bring forward the fact that there is some division in the opposition benches on this bill. When the government puts its guillotine motion, to use the word that Mr. Yakabuski used earlier today, I would hope that they would take into consideration that there is some division in the opposition benches, and that they will have some hearings on this bill across the province so that we can get those differing opinions on the record. It probably won't happen. We'll probably have to amend that motion to make it happen.

I do want to echo what my colleague Mr. Yakabuski mentioned earlier, and that's about the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, Mr. Arnott, who, from his first days in this place, has always stood up on the double-hatter issue.

I know in my riding—it's a predominantly rural riding—we only have two professional firefighters groups, in Brockville and in Gananoque. The balance is with volunteers. I know some of the very, very small municipalities rely on the volunteer efforts of some of those professional firefighters in the bigger centres. They also include Kingston and Ottawa for those municipalities closer to those cities. So I do support those provisions. I think they do help out small rural communities like the ones that I represent.

I look forward to further debate. But I do want to accelerate the debate to say that we need hearings. We need to be able to have those differing views brought forward to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the government, whomever that will be. The member from Burlington, for a final comment.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: What a pleasure to join the members opposite from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Welland, my colleague from Kitchener Centre—a vibrant discussion, as always, Mr. Speaker, and an opportunity to salute our firefighters.

What I love about this place—and I'm still learning, because I haven't been here for terribly long—is that we get all kinds of viewpoints, from all sides of the province and all sides of the House. As oftentimes can be, sometimes it's glass half empty and sometimes it's glass half full. Often on this side of the House, and certainly

when it comes to this important legislation, I would say that we are definitely on the glass-half-full side of the conversation today.

When it comes to safeguarding our workers, when it comes to fairness, when it comes to the double-hatting provisions that were already addressed, when it comes to helping resolve disputes, when it comes to helping our firefighters—I have to tell you that my firefighters in Burlington have urged me to support this legislation, were pleased to hear that I was speaking on it today, and are just delighted that government is taking these steps.

If you'll indulge me, Speaker, in my wrap-up I just want to talk about something that I hadn't had the chance to speak about, and that is the Fair Practices Commission that will be enshrined in this legislation. It's an important feature because it's an independent, neutral and confidential resource for injured workers, employers and service providers, and its services are free of charge. These services include looking into complaints, tracking complaint trends, identifying system-wide issues and recommending improvements to the WSIB.

So all in all, how can one not support a piece of legislation that does all of the important things that Bill 109 does? I encourage all members of this House to support it, because this is an act of fairness, and our workers in Ontario deserve this and more.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you, Speaker. You should know that; we get to sit together most days.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share some of my thoughts here on Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, an act designed to, according to the minister, "Provide increased fairness to all workers across Ontario by strengthening protections, enhancing compensation and ensuring that broader public sector transitions can go as smoothly as possible, while still balancing the democratic rights of workers."

That is a whole lot of proposed fairness and balance. Given their track record, I think we would all be forgiven if we didn't have some questions as to the ability of this government to live up to their words and commitment to fairness and balance, as we've all heard those words from these guys before.

For my part, while this bill would seek to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997 and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, it is the possible changes surrounding firefighters where my questions lie—most of them, that is.

Again, as our critic, the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, has noted a number of times in his comments, we in our caucus are clear in our support of fair labour laws in the province of Ontario, both historically and to this day. We've worked over the years on the need for a balance which respects the rights of workers and the needs of employers equally to create a stronger

relationship that helps to grow the economy while creating new, good-paying jobs.

In the case of firefighters, the continued work on creating that balance in turn serves to protect our people and allows those providing that protection the security that they will be supported if their lives are impacted on the job, whether that job is paid or volunteer. I would like to thank our critic, the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, for his work on this front—ongoing, consistent work that has seen him seek to move government policy forward in recognizing the dedication, determination and importance of double-hatter or two-hatter firefighters in our local communities.

1720

Speaker, as we've heard, my colleague's work led to proposed legislation that would have protected the right of full-time professional firefighters to continue serving as volunteer firefighters in their own communities, on their own free time, allowing the continued work of double-hatters to ensure protection for those in our more rural communities and areas, as they do in our major municipalities. These men and women not only work for our safety when they are on the job, but also provide fire protection services in smaller municipalities that do not require and could not possibly afford a full-time salaried fire department, in their off-hours.

Yet time and again, we've seen the emergence of disturbing trends in which double-hatters faced union reprisals and even dismissal from their full-time employment due to their off-hour volunteer efforts. While I believe we can all agree that double-hatters provide valued experience and expertise that can benefit their volunteer co-workers, due to the fact that my colleague's attempt at legislating two-hatter rights failed to take hold, these noble men and women have continued to face a series of hurdles aimed at preventing the practice from moving forward. It's not right. It has never been right and that's why, again, the member from Wellington–Halton Hills has never given up that fight.

It's to his credit, in part, that this issue remains front and centre since he first decided to move forward with his private member's bill in 2002, based on the principle that the need for community safety in small-town Ontario and the freedom to volunteer in a person's free time should be, in fact, a government priority. It was an effort that received expressions of support from the Fire Fighters' Association of Ontario, representing volunteer firefighters, Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Fire Marshal of Ontario.

On that, as we've heard from our critic, the Fire Marshal of Ontario at the time, Bernard Moyle, actually appeared before the justice committee to express his support. Not only that, Speaker, he sounded the alarm bell on the impact of the government failing to act to prevent the systematic attacks on the vital service performed by our double-hatters. He noted, and I quote from committee:

“The sudden or phased withdrawal of two-hatters from communities dependent on volunteer fire departments

could significantly impact on their ability to provide an adequate level of fire protection and may in some cases pose a potential serious threat to public safety for the following reasons.

“There would be a loss of experience, leadership and expertise in some communities. In fact, for that very reason, even a single two-hatter can make a significant difference in a small rural community. For example, some two-hatters serve as senior officers and captains and have fire prevention and training responsibilities, which are key functions in any fire department.

“There may be a reduced capacity for providing adequate emergency responses during weekdays, when two-hatters are more readily available due to their shift schedules.

“Increased response times may occur, at least until replacements can be recruited and adequately trained, if in fact replacements are available within the community. There may be an increased time in which to assemble an adequate fire attack team and a potential short-term reduction in fire ground effectiveness, resulting in greater fire losses.

“The time required to recruit and train full-time, part-time or volunteer firefighters can be extensive, creating short-term delivery difficulties. In some communities there may not be a pool of potential candidates available to become volunteer firefighters and a community may not be able to afford hiring full-time firefighters, creating a potential public safety issue.

“In a number of communities that have a heavy reliance on two-hatters, the sudden withdrawal of their services could create a potential serious threat to public safety.”

Again, this was the justice committee back in 2002, and his words ring just as true today as they did then. That's because, while my colleague's private member's bill did receive those expressions of support from the Fire Fighters' Association of Ontario and other groups, it did not receive an expression of support from all corners of this House. The lack of support led to the defeat of the Volunteer Firefighters Employment Protection Act on a third reading vote on December 11, 2002. But as I said, the defeat of the bill did not mean the end of the fight for those looking to create a workable solution to protect our double-hatters. It's a fight that continues year after year as double-hatters go through new trials and challenges to their full-time employment just for the right to protect their neighbours.

It was just a year ago that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario applied for intervenor status in a case before the Ontario Labour Relations Board on behalf of a professional firefighter who works in one community, but also serves as a volunteer firefighter for his local municipality. That firefighter had been banned from the firefighters' union association because of his volunteer service. Further, as his membership within the union association had been removed, the union sought his dismissal from full-time employment, as only association members in good standing are able to be members of the full-time firefighter bargaining unit.

To their credit, AMO stood up for the firefighter, indicating that firefighters should be able to use their free time as they wish without reprisal. They indicated that “For hundreds of Ontario municipalities it makes fiscal and logical sense to rely on a combination of full-time professional firefighters, double-hatters and volunteers to protect the community.” Adding that, “It is the job of individual municipalities to decide how to deliver fire protection services as determined by local need and circumstance. One size does not fit all.” I couldn’t agree more.

While today, from what we understand, Bill 109 goes at least some of the way to answering the questions that have long plagued those firefighters who choose to answer the call in their local communities in addition to their regular paid duties, many questions remain. It’s those questions specifically relating to compensation for firefighters who get sick due to a work-related circumstance that I wish to examine a little further.

Speaker, it has now been close to eight years since the government passed legislation allowing for regulations related to compensation for firefighters who get sick due to work-related circumstances. Soon thereafter, a regulation unanimously passed giving compensation to full-time firefighters who have contracted certain cancers or illnesses, in cases where the illness arose due to work as a firefighter. The regulation identifies at least eight types of cancers, including brain, bladder and other cancers, as presumed to be work-related when contracted by firefighters.

Unfortunately, it is the issues relating to coverage for double-hatter firefighters in similar situations where our enduring questions lie. Those questions come close to home, as it was just over about a year and a half ago that I began asking questions and working on possible legislative solutions of my own after a concern over benefits for firefighters who develop cancer prompted two-hat firefighters to leave the Wellesley fire department in March 2014. Specifically, the firefighters’ concerns related to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and its handling of cases of firefighters working for multiple departments.

The fact is that under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, there are no specific rules for double-hatters. To fill this legal gap, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has used a rigid interpretation of section 94 of the act, which states that if a presumptive cancer claim is made, the last employer is responsible. For example, if a firefighter leaves his job in Kitchener, starts work in Toronto and then develops a presumptive cancer, Toronto would be responsible for the claim because that would be the last place he has worked.

The issue came to a head in my riding when the WSIB applied this legal interpretation to a case involving a double-hatter in Waterloo region who was diagnosed in 2012 with a presumptive cancer, working out of the city of Waterloo. By using this section, section 94, the board determined that the municipality where the firefighter had fought his last fire must assume responsibility for the

claim despite different levels of compensation or different schedules, either a schedule 1 or a schedule 2 employer. One pays premiums; the other pays the claim—the difference in the two. According to the WSIB guidelines, determining the cause of the cancer is on a case-by-case basis, looking at employment history and workplace exposures over time. But it also says that another factor is the last exposure prior to the onset of the occupational disease.

1730

That is the sticking point here, Speaker, and the point that we continue to get hung up on. Ultimately, the ruling meant that a double-hatted firefighter, volunteering for a rural department while working for an urban one, could be denied the higher level of benefits if his last call was with the rural department. It’s a bit ludicrous when you think of it like that. To attribute the onset of cancer to one’s last rural call for help simply doesn’t make much sense. I’m certainly no doctor, but from what I know of cancer, it’s usually attributed to a buildup over time. It’s not something you just catch one day when the rural neighbour you’re saving breathes on you—or exposed to a fire per se.

That said, the WSIB, in its infinite wisdom, determined liability through use of section 94 of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, which states that the “employer who last employed the worker in the employment in which the disease occurs is the worker’s employer for the purposes of the insurance plan.” In other words, according to this section, the last employer is responsible for the insurance claim. That’s where the problem is, Speaker.

Further, that same problem has meant that a fire department that once benefited from the experience of full-time firefighters to complement their volunteer forces has been forced to bear the brunt of resignations in the face of risks to full-timers’ potential sick benefits.

In the wake of the enduring concerns that hit home in my area, I moved to host a roundtable discussion at the Wellesley fire department, to help bring clarity to the issue of firefighter compensation throughout our region and, in fact, across Ontario. Unfortunately, no representatives from the WSIB participated in that discussion, and the information the board provided to local officials, firefighters and members of the media failed to provide any clarity whatsoever on how the board determines liability for presumptive cancer claims made by double-hatters.

To make matters worse, a WSIB response to the media preceding my meeting only further muddied the waters, stating that WSIB benefits would remain the same whether Waterloo or Wilmot, Wellesley or Woolwich paid out a presumptive cancer claim because they have all selected the maximum coverage. The response fell well short of clarifying what would happen to a presumptive cancer claim made by a firefighter volunteering in a community that hasn’t selected the maximum coverage—in fact, there are many municipalities throughout the province of Ontario that do not—nor did it explain

what would happen to additional benefit packages, including those that may have negotiated further benefits with their employer. For instance, if they've negotiated a year if you're diagnosed with a presumptive cancer—they may have topped it up to a second year off. That may be negotiated within a collective agreement, as in the case of Waterloo, I believe.

The confusion left in the wake of WSIB decision-making and lacklustre responses has placed the critical role played by full-time firefighters volunteering at fire halls in surrounding rural municipalities in jeopardy. Again, after surviving challenges on a number of fronts already, this vital working relationship was thrown into further question because of a gap in Ontario's laws that could lead to a dramatic drop in compensation for firefighters who develop cancer.

The bottom line is that this continued situation presents a serious safety risk for our rural communities, and so I continue, even after the introduction of Bill 109, to call on the government to take immediate action to fix the law before rural fire departments in Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich lose the essential service that double-hatters provide—and, for that matter, right across the province of Ontario.

I reiterate that call because following the introduction of Bill 109, and after I sent over a detailed explanation of the problem and its impacts, I called the minister's office for a briefing on the matter and the bill's possible effects to address the situation, and, unfortunately, at that briefing the questions continued to go unanswered. Even after explaining the issue in detail to the minister's staff, they were unable to even remotely provide any answers as to the potential for Bill 109 to meet the needs of double-hatter firefighters concerned about risks to their sick benefits. Now, they did leave and they've gone away, and I hope that the minister and his representatives will look at the proposed solution that I did give them at the time, and I hope that we can work through this, potentially in committee as an amendment.

That said, I can report that even as this speech was being written, the minister's staff did attempt to shed some light on the situation with an email that came in a couple of hours ago. I do want to thank them for that, of course; only, the response itself seemed to provide little more than what has all been said before.

In the minutes I have left, I will read the email response:

"Firefighters, both full-time and volunteer, who are injured or develop an occupational disease, are entitled to the same types of benefits and services from the WSIB.

"It's important to note that in determining the employer of record for a firefighter's occupational disease claim, the 'last fire fought' is not the sole determining factor the WSIB considers."

This mirrors the response we've seen before. While it sounds good on the face of it, the issue begins to get a little more complicated when the email goes on to note that, "In any WSIB claim where the worker has more than one employer and an occupational disease may have

occurred, the WSIB must determine which employer is the employer of record. In cases of occupational disease in firefighters who are double-hatters, the WSIB looks at the worker's entire employment and exposure history, and a number of other factors to determine the employer of record."

Then the clarity that was noted at the beginning of the email starts to fall apart altogether when you read that:

"If the WSIB determines that the employer of record is the municipality for which the worker volunteers as a firefighter, and

"If the municipality is one of the 30% that has selected a coverage amount lower than the maximum, then

"The firefighter's loss of earnings benefits could then be lower than if the WSIB determined that the firefighter's full-time employer was the employer of record, assuming the worker's full-time earnings were at or greater than the maximum."

So there you go, Speaker. The more that things change, the more they stay the same, it seems. While we are hopeful for some of the changes proposed for firefighters in Bill 109, and while we hope the bill will at least address some of the ongoing challenges to double- or two-hatters, it's clear that when it comes to some of these more intricate matters, specifically surrounding sick benefits, the bill actually continues to provide little clarity at all.

As we continue to work on these issues and as this bill heads to committee, which I'm sure it eventually will, I want to remind members that even as we strive toward the balance and fairness which respects the rights of workers and the needs of employers, let's not forget those who fight on our behalf to protect lives, in both urban and smaller rural communities, those double-hatters, who require some balance and fairness themselves.

Thank you, Speaker, for the time.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to thank the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, because he did raise some issues that, at least, I haven't heard about in the few days that I've been sitting in here listening and debating Bill 109.

I know that, for issues around injuries and illnesses of firefighters, the issue that he raised about loss of earnings in those situations—I don't get why the government, when they're looking at a bill, isn't looking at the entire impact of that bill, at the end of the day, in all of those kinds of situations, to make sure that our workers are protected.

They've gone to some length to ensure that firefighters have the same protections that other workers have under the Labour Relations Act by amending the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. On the other hand, they haven't addressed the issues of what happens with respect to firefighters who are full-time in one place and part-time in another place and there is an injury: Are there enough benefits in place to actually cover their loss of earnings? I think that's an important piece that needs to be addressed.

Certainly, on the issue of PTSD, it's an issue that affects firefighters and many other front-line workers. I don't know why the government isn't addressing that important issue as part of this omnibus bill, as opposed to throwing in this PSLRTA piece, which isn't a priority at all because there have only been two votes in the last two years, because that's the number of mergers or amalgamations that have actually taken place in the last two years.

I think the government needs go back and have a look at that. I know that, clearly, we'll be bringing forward some amendments when we get to committee with respect to the PSLRTA part of this bill.

1740

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: The bill itself is one, I think, that contains—and the member has admitted this or suggested this—some very positive provisions in terms of labour relations in the province. One of the areas that was touched upon is that of firefighters and the presumption—I know the issue—of a disease related to an occupation. It is certainly present when it comes to firefighters.

I know that we, just this week, buried Corry Vanderlee in St. Catharines, a long-serving captain in the St. Catharines fire service. He had a bout or two, in fact, with cancer recurrence and fought very hard but, ultimately, passed away.

Many who are in the occupation of firefighter are exposed to chemicals, fires that take place and combustibles that, ultimately, have an impact on their lives. It may only be one occasion where there was a particular fire where there was a release of substances that caused an acute problem for that firefighter. More often, it is exposure over a number of years, because they are confronting, on an ongoing basis, combustible materials, which we find out, somewhere along the way, have an impact on an individual's health.

Many of the changes that have been made have been very positive in terms of how they impact firefighters. There are other provisions in this bill, as well. There was extensive consultation—and I think that's important—before this bill was presented to the Legislature. I think, ultimately, it will be a benefit to the province and the workers within it.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: In Thornhill, while we don't have a lot of volunteer firefighters, as far as I know, we certainly have a great team—on the Vaughan side and in the city of Markham—of firefighters protecting our community.

Just this morning, I got a message—just to tell you how tuned in the community is—to ask why there were fire trucks, six of them, on a small court in Thornhill, as well as an ambulance. Apparently, what happened was a couch caught on fire. This took place yesterday, late in the evening; a couch caught on fire. It was a group of

townhouses, and they were going and checking all the attics in the whole row of townhouses to make sure that there wasn't somehow a spark that could be smouldering and spreading.

That's the kind of proactive, trained firefighters that we want and we need and we have in our province. You don't train doctors overnight, you don't train nurses overnight and you certainly don't train first responders and firefighters overnight. If they are able and willing to help out, in any capacity, in their community—on a volunteer basis or even to work in two different communities, if that's what is needed; perhaps part-time work or something like that—I cannot understand why we wouldn't be supporting that and why their associations wouldn't be supporting that.

We want firefighters to be appreciated, to be well trained, to be safe and, also, to be happy in their workplace. I think that that's something that we forget about sometimes. We're enjoying ourselves so much here, Mr. Speaker, that we forget that others might not be enjoying their careers as much as us. If the firefighters are asking for anything at all in order to make their careers or family life in any way happier, I'm all for it.

Let's all stay happy and ensure that our firefighters are happy as well.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to rise again. I have not heard any member on the government side give us a fully nuanced explanation as to the need for the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act schedule of this bill. I beg—I propose to the members of the government: Tell us why this is needed. Give us one rational explanation of why you need to do this today. The next person to get up—hopefully you will have a chance—tell us why. That's my question to you. Because, as we have clearly articulated, there have only been two requirements for a vote in the last two years, in 2014-15. There is not massive labour upheaval when mergers happen in the public sector involving these institutions, whether it be hospitals, municipalities or schools. It's not a priority. And those labour unions who are involved in that type of negotiation aren't asking for this.

So we just want to know why, what the rationale is for you to have to do this. Because ultimately, it is a subversion of the democratic right that that member of that union has, well articulated through the Supreme Court decision involving the RCMP, where they have the right to choose and to vote on their representation. You're taking that away. Again, I'd like to know why and ultimately, I guess, I'm going to want to know how you intend on doing that without initiating a charter challenge.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Kitchener-Conestoga for his final comments.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm back at the pleasure of the whip; I know he'll be happy to see me. Nonetheless, I

want to thank the members who commented on my remarks with regard to Bill 109. I do hope that the Ministry of Labour took some notes during my remarks. I got into some specifics as to how I feel the bill could be potentially strengthened to deal with a problem that came up in my riding about a year and a half ago.

It's really just a fluke and a scenario that perhaps wasn't picked up on when the presumptive legislation was brought in, as well as the WSIB Act, when determining benefits or the employer who will pay for those benefits should a double-hatter be diagnosed under the presumptive cancer. There was an example of that in my community. It then forced volunteer firefighters who also served as full-time firefighters to depart the volunteer forces because their families could eventually be at risk—their own financial risk—should they be, God forbid, diagnosed under the presumptive cancer.

I hope that they will look at this. Clearly the problem still exists. I think it was identified in a meeting previously, a few years ago; there was acknowledgement of a gap within the law, and I hope that they take that opportunity now to close it.

In the last 30 seconds, I definitely want to thank both our full-time firefighters in the city of Kitchener and my community, but more importantly those volunteer firefighters who work full-time through the day, shift work, even possibly as a full-time firefighter, and give their own time away from their families at all hours of the night to get up and respond to the call to help our community each and every day.

I want to thank those for the work that they do, their service; and with that, I hope that the government will take my suggestions and fix this problem.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I just got a call from Peterborough, and the good folks of Peterborough say that they want this debate to continue because they were very impressed with the speech from the honourable gentleman from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. So I want it to continue, to give him his opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Minister, before I continue, I do beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list draw of October 5, 2015, for private members public business such that Mr. Tabuns assumes ballot item number 6 and Ms. Sattler assumes ballot item number 23.

Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to once again rise to speak to Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015. I had two minutes to speak to it a little earlier in debate. I had planned on 20

minutes. I've got about 10 minutes left, so I'll hit on some of the key points.

1750

There are a number of points to go on in depth, but just to keep it short in light of time, Bill 109 contains a number of proposed changes to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, also known as FPPA; the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997, also known as PSLRTA; and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, also known as WSIA. The changes range from what can be considered housekeeping issues to more substantial changes that are very concerning. I look forward to speaking to as many elements of the bill as I can get to in my 10 minutes today. Luckily, we had an excellent one-hour lead from our labour critic sitting next to me here. She touched on a lot of the points that I would also have touched on today. She has covered them just in case I can't get to them.

New Democrats have long advocated for the betterment of working conditions for Ontario families, and the ability to earn a fair wage and career stability. That said, there are too many Ontarians who work at precarious jobs, work for too little or are placed in unsafe conditions. I think the debate today really strikes the core of the workplace issues that we have talked about at length in this chamber. Specifically, we need to ask ourselves, as a province, what supports we can offer when someone is injured on the job. Everyone in this chamber needs to understand the value of workers' ability to exercise democracy when choosing who will represent them in the workplace.

To begin, and just for some background on my personal experience with some of the labour organizations this legislation impacts, I currently serve as the NDP critic for education. I was appointed to this role last spring, and I'd like to thank the leader for the opportunity to be the education critic. Having come from education, having been a school board trustee, it's a sector very near and dear to my heart. I appreciate the ongoing support of my colleagues here in the New Democrat caucus.

That being said, Speaker, I've heard countless stories from education support workers in Windsor and across Ontario about the on-the-job hazards they face daily. Just to build on that, I had my assistant here from Toronto sit in on a meeting. He was actually shocked to hear of some of the issues that our education workers face on a daily basis, specifically the support staff who help assist the teachers when they're dealing with some of the students who have some special education needs. When you hear of support staff who are there to help to ensure that all children succeed regardless of their abilities—I mean, that is the goal: that every student has the ability to learn to the best of their ability and to access our public education system.

Unfortunately, some of the staff who help service these students are sometimes put into some situations, and they don't feel supported from the government side when they bring their concerns forward. For instance, we

heard stories of support staff who have to wear Kevlar sleeves. For those who aren't familiar with Kevlar, Kevlar is the same material that police officers have in their bulletproof vests. We hear of them having to wear that because we have children who aren't maybe put in the best situation as far as the classroom atmosphere, so they're exposed to triggers that would set them off. The reason they're put into these situations is because we're seeing cuts to education. The Minister of Education talks about no cuts to the classroom; that, in fact, is not true. We're not seeing the supports for these students, and ultimately, it's the students and the staff who are paying the price. It's shocking to some to hear about what education workers actually face on a daily basis.

It's not just first responders, police officers and firefighters and such who we see are put in dangerous situations. Sometimes it's support staff in schools, and we need to make sure that not only do they have the supports they need, but that these students do, so that the students can do the best that they possibly can. We want to see them excel.

I think that we need to remember that workplace danger looks different across the industries, as I've touched on in the education sector. Speaking specifically to schedule 1 of the bill, and being mindful of my time, this speaks directly to some of the issues that firefighters face. As I said in my two minutes prior, I don't think any of us can argue the fact that firefighters provide a very valuable service, and they are often put in harm's way. Sometimes, the issues that they face, we don't see them immediately. Sometimes it's down the road, later in life, after retirement, that you see some of the things they had been exposed to and how that's affected them on a personal level.

We need to make sure that firefighters are supported, that their concerns are recognized and that there is respect for the work that they do. And that goes far beyond them responding to a fire. There are so many more services they provide. Outside of the scope of their work, we also looked at what they give back to the community. Aside from working hard to keep us all safe, they then go on to do fundraising. They get involved with many different organizations, non-profit organizations, in the community to help those who are less fortunate than many of us in the room. I think it's important that we take very good care of the people that take care of us.

Some of the issues that are addressed in this bill when it comes specifically to firefighters are an incredible step forward in recognizing exactly what it is that they bring to our community and the value that they bring to the community, and the jobs they do for us.

Unfortunately, the downfall is that the government has tied to that good piece in the legislation a piece that is viewed broadly amongst other unions as basically an attack on their democracy. What we're seeing is that by adding in here the piece about when we're looking at a merger of, say, a hospital, and so potentially two unions having to come together, they're taking away the democratic right of all those members from both unions that are affected; they're taking away the ability for these people to say, "This is who we choose to represent us." I think that it's very unfortunate that they would take something that is such a positive step forward, like the legislation to recognize the value of the services firefighters provide, and tie it to another piece in the legislation where they're basically saying that there's going to be one union that's better than another or "We're going to make the decision of who gets to represent these people" rather than the broader public, those within the union, being able to say, "This is who we feel represents us the best and this is who we choose."

So I think it's really unfortunate that they've gone that route, and I'm not quite sure why those two pieces need to be tied together. As the member from Essex had brought up, there has been no explanation from the government side about why there is specifically the change to the way two unions would then come together and choose who would represent them. I'd be very interested in hearing from the government side. I'm sure those that are in unions and even those outside of unions would like to know why those two pieces are tied together.

Being mindful of the time, Speaker, and knowing you're going to cut me off any minute, I think the important thing to note is that firefighters want the piece that's in here for them. They really appreciate what's in here and they think it's very thoughtful. But I don't think they appreciate being put in a position where it looks like, in order to get what they want, other public sector employees have to take a hit, a very negative hit.

I look forward to hearing others during debate at a different time, and I would really appreciate to hear someone from the government side stand up and explain why these two pieces are put together when we could pull the firefighter piece out, pass that legislation and then deal with the other section at another time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank all members for debate this afternoon.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is now 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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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
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
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
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
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	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	York–Simcoe Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB) Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Halton Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC) Potts, Arthur (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) Sattler, Peggy (NDP) Scott, Laurie (PC)	Perth–Wellington Beaches–East York Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord Northumberland–Quinte West Guelph London West / London-Ouest Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP) Smith, Todd (PC) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) Taylor, Monique (NDP) Thibeault, Glenn (LIB) Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) Vanthof, John (NDP) Vernile, Daiene (LIB) Walker, Bill (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton Prince Edward–Hastings Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale Hamilton Mountain Sudbury Huron–Bruce Timiskaming–Cochrane Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Simcoe–Grey	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC) Yurek, Jeff (PC) Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) Vacant	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London Willowdale Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Christopher Tyrell

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
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Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
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Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel**

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
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