

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

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Lundi  
20 novembre 2017

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Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Dave Levac  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 20 November 2017

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 20 novembre 2017

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** This being our first sitting Monday of the month, I ask everyone to join in the singing of the Canadian national anthem.

*Singing of O Canada.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to make an introduction on behalf of the member for Kitchener–Conestoga and congratulate page Davis Gates, who is page captain today, and welcome his parents, dad Jeff Gates and mom Jacqueline Armstrong; sister Victoria Gates, a former page; and grandparents Scott and Sharon Gates and Sandra Armstrong.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It's with pleasure that I introduce our friends from OPTrust. We'll be having a reception this evening, meeting with several MPPs today: Hugh O'Reilly, James Davis, Reg Swamy, Audrey Forbes, Tim Shortill, John Walsh, Darcy McNeill, my friend Claire Prashaw, and Michael Rychlewski, who are going to be enjoying the day here.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's my pleasure to welcome to the House today a number of trans activists from across Ontario who have joined us or will be joining us: Freya Perry, Madison Richard, Davina Hader, Andrew Fraser, Boyd Kodak, Christine Newman, Bri Gardner, Susan Gapka, Eva Simone, Max Denley, Leon Tsai and Homa.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** While we were busy at work getting students back to school on Saturday, the Western Mustangs set a Uteck Bowl record. They won 81-3 over the Acadia Axemen. I know all members of the Legislature are going to want to join me in wishing the Mustangs the best of luck in the Vanier Cup this Saturday.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** It's my privilege to introduce the page captain today from my riding, Erion Keka. His parents, Silvia and Besim Keka, are here to watch their son in action.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** I would like to welcome Henry Spiteri and Mike Douglas, who are here today with the Ontario Real Estate Association.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** On behalf of the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, I am pleased to rise and welcome the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance to Queen's Park today. In the members' gallery are George Gilvesy

from the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, Ralph DeBoer from Flowers Canada (Ontario) and his daughter Madeline, and Jan VanderHout, president of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance. They represent an important part of the province, Speaker. And on behalf of myself, welcome to the members of OREA from Northumberland–Quinte West.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I would like to extend a warm welcome to Barb Guiden, Christianne Elizabeth Newton, Sylvie Marie DesHaies and Colleen Marie Emmerson, all from the Ontario Real Estate Association.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It would ill behoove all of us not to recognize that the Argonauts made a big comeback win yesterday, going to the Grey Cup on Sunday. Congratulations. Go, Argos, go!

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I have the pleasure of introducing today, from the gallery, Deanna Jane Gunter, Randy Wayne Mulder, Carolyn Bones-Poley and Stephen Oliver, who are with the Ontario realtors' association.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure to introduce my brother, Michael Horwath, who is not quite in the seat yet but will be joining us very shortly.

### ROYAL ASSENT

#### SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** 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 a certain bill in her office.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short):** The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to resolve the labour dispute between the College Employer Council and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union / Loi visant à régler le conflit de travail entre le Conseil des employeurs des collèges et le Syndicat des employés de la fonction publique de l'Ontario.

### WEARING OF PINS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I believe the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has a point of order.

**Hon. Laura Albanese:** I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that members be permitted to wear pins to recognize and celebrate Albanian Heritage Month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister is seeking unanimous consent to wear the pins for Albanian Heritage Month. Do we agree? Agreed.

1040

## TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Parkdale–High Park on a point of order.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent for a moment of silence this international Trans Day of Remembrance, for the thousands of trans, non-binary and two-spirited persons who have died due to transphobia.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Parkdale–High Park is seeking consent to pay a moment's silence for the death of those individuals. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask all members of the House and the galleries to please rise for a moment of silence to pay respect.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Pray be seated.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

## LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** My question is for the Premier. I was pleased to see earlier today the government announce details of the college student support fund. It's the right thing for colleges to give the net strike savings back to the students caught in the middle the last five weeks. But the government let this college strike drag on and on, and it's time for the Liberal government to right their wrong. Will the government commit today to matching the college student support fund, dollar for dollar?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite, and I know that the minister is going to want to speak to the specifics of the college fund. But let me just say this: Our focus all along has been on students, Mr. Speaker. We are very pleased to see the students back in the classroom as of tomorrow.

I think that on a number of issues, there are questions that need to be asked about the process, particularly about the way the process unfolded and the authority of some of the bodies involved.

We are going to ask those questions in order to make sure that students don't get caught in this way again and that collective bargaining can take place. But we do have questions that we need to ask about the process as it unfolds at this time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Back to the Premier: For the five weeks students were shut out of the classroom, they had a long time to think, Speaker. Let me tell you, I've heard from countless students that they're disillusioned. They've lost faith in the democratic process. The government needs to put money where their mouth is. Once again, will the government today commit to matching the \$500-per-student fund, dollar for dollar?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the minister will want to speak to the specifics of the fund, but I have to recognize that this question is coming from a member of a party that really doesn't support collective bargaining. The fact is we do support collective bargaining, Mr. Speaker. We believe it's an important part of our democratic—

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Start the clock. Evidence is presenting itself that I may have to pick up where I left off. I will, and quickly.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** She lies about us.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** If that's a challenge, I'll be up to the challenge. If it continues, I'll start.

Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, we believe that collective bargaining is an important part of our democratic process. The action that we took was a last resort because there was no foreseeable agreement. We are very pleased that students will be back in class tomorrow.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We are in warnings. You asked; I will give it to you.

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Back to the Premier: For five weeks, students weren't getting the schooling they were paying for. For five weeks, students missed out on potential earnings. For five weeks, students were forced to sell their personal belongings to make ends meet. For five weeks, students were put through unmeasurable financial stress.

Speaker, will the government do the right thing today? Will the government commit to matching the college students' fund dollar for dollar?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I was pleased this morning to be able to announce more details of the hardship fund. Full-time students will be able to receive up to \$500—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Yes, yes, we read the rules.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —for unexpected costs that they have incurred, such as additional child care fees, rebooked train or bus tickets and January rent. Students can start applying for that later this week.

In addition, for students receiving OSAP, if they're having their winter semester extended past the normal end date, they will receive additional OSAP for the length of the extension.

While it is our sincere hope that students will remain enrolled in their programs, there will be some students who will withdraw. We will refund their tuition, and there will be no academic penalties.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** My question this morning is for the Premier. Last week, Premier Wynne's \$4.5-million man, Mayo Schmidt, the CEO of Hydro One, was back in the news again. As he delivered remarks at the Empire Club, the \$4.5-million man was calling for higher hydro rates once again. In fact, Hydro One is requesting higher hydro rates right now.

Will the government promise that they will stop this proposed hydro rate hike now?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** Let me talk about something that I'm sure the member from the opposition hasn't read. It's called the fair hydro plan. In the fair hydro plan, he should be aware that, no matter the outcome of the application brought forward by Hydro One, the rate application will be held to the cost of inflation for the next four years. That's to make sure that we can keep rates as low as possible.

We've reduced them by 25%—and I'm sure that he hasn't heard that as well, Mr. Speaker—because that is helping every single family in this province. We've reduced rates by 25%, and as I mentioned, we're making sure that we're holding these rates to the cost of inflation for the next four years.

Hydro One and its application are being brought forward. It's being brought to the OEB. The OEB is going to review the application, but the costs will stay at the rate of inflation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** It sounds to me, Speaker, like the government is prepared to let that 5% increase in hydro rates go ahead. They'll just borrow billions of dollars more to make sure that it doesn't appear on bills now. But we know, because we have read the unfair Liberal hydro plan, that the rates are going to skyrocket after the next election. That's according to their own cabinet documents.

The Hydro One CEO makes \$4.5 million. Then he gives a speech at a swanky downtown Toronto hotel, and what does he tell the audience? How this is justifiable when Hydro One service has become less reliable but more expensive.

The auditor says that because of aging equipment, we have a higher risk of failing infrastructure. That really just goes to show how out of touch this government has become.

If the government won't stop the rate hike—it looks like they're prepared to borrow billions of dollars more to pay for it—will the Premier at least tell the people of Ontario that she doesn't support this rate hike?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** As usual, it's "say one thing and do another" from the other side. When the Hydro One executive was awarded the OEA's—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** When the Hydro One CEO was awarded the Ontario Energy Association's leader of the year award, which he attended, he stood and applauded with everyone else, Mr. Speaker. Now he stands in here to slam the CEO—the CEO who has found \$75 million in savings, the CEO who is actually changing the company to make sure that they're more customer-focused.

Let's talk about what Hydro One is doing to ensure that they can continue to operate and be customer-focused. They've voluntarily ended winter disconnections. They've voluntarily returned security deposits, Mr. Speaker. They're doing a great job as a company and making sure that they keep the lights on—

*Interjection.*

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Niagara West—Glanbrook is warned.

Final supplementary?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Speaker, I'm going to say this really slowly and very, very clearly: We are not criticizing the CEO of Hydro One. We're criticizing this Premier, and this government, who gave him a salary of \$4.5 million, 10 times what his counterparts are receiving in other provinces of Canada.

The government sits across from us and claims that they've rebuilt the system—what a crock—because the CEO at Hydro One is standing up before an audience downtown, saying the reason he has to come to them now looking for a nearly 5% increase is because of aging infrastructure. The government hasn't repaired what they said that they have repaired. They haven't modernized the system. If they'd done what they claimed, the \$4.5-million man wouldn't be asking for more money to do just that, would he?

Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier's \$4.5-million man trying to hike hydro rates to apparently rebuild the system if the Liberals already have rebuilt the system?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** I'm always pleased to talk about and remind the opposition about the fair hydro plan in which rates are being held to the cost of inflation for the next four years. We've also seen a 25% reduction for every single family and household right across the province. On top of that, Mr. Speaker, we've got families that live in rural and northern parts of our community that are seeing anywhere between 40% and 50%.

I know, Mr. Speaker, we're getting up to and close to around 300 days since they said they might talk about a plan, maybe show us something, even an iota of what they would do, but they don't because they have no idea—no idea on what to do to help those folks who are suffering right now with higher energy bills. That's why we brought forward the fair hydro plan, that's why we

voted in favour of it, and that's why they'll continue to vote against anything that will help the people of Ontario.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. This weekend, the Liberal government teamed up with the Conservatives and passed legislation to trample on the rights of college faculty. The Premier has underfunded colleges for years, Speaker, laying the groundwork for this strike in the first place. But instead of getting involved, which the law gives her every right to do, she refused, letting down students and letting down faculty members. Now she has forced faculty back to work with no plan to fix the mess that she has created in our colleges.

Why didn't the Premier exercise her legal right to direct the employer and avoid this strike in the first place, Speaker?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The leader of the third party is wrong on a number of fronts, Mr. Speaker, including what I had the authority to do or not do. I just said in a question earlier to the opposition party that there are many questions that have come out of this process, and one of them is exactly what those authorities should be and how we can move to make the process more rational so that collective bargaining can take place, but that students would not be caught in a situation like this again. Those are questions that need to be answered.

But, Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party is just wrong that those authorities are in place at this point. We supported the collective bargaining process. We wanted both parties to reach agreement at the table. When the final offer vote was not accepted, Minister Matthews and I brought both parties together and it was very clear that there was not going to be an agreement reached by the parties.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, if the Premier had no authority, how did she have the authority to bring the parties back together on Thursday of last week? Sections 4 and 5 of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act allow the government to get involved to facilitate bargaining if it is deemed to be in the public interest.

The Liberal government, for example, had the legal authority to direct colleges to reduce the number of part-time, precarious employees they hire, removing one of the single biggest obstacles to getting an agreement. Why didn't the Liberal government do this, Speaker?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, the leader of the third party is just wrong. That is not the issue that was the roadblock to an agreement, Mr. Speaker. That issue had been taken off the table and was going to be discussed separately.

The leader of the third party does not understand how the law works in this instance. We left it until the last moment. The minister and I invited the parties to come and talk to us, and only when we understood that there

was no possibility of an agreement did we tell them that we were going to move forward with legislation—and that's what we did. The solution of the third party would have been to let that bargaining go on forever and keep those students out of class indefinitely. Unacceptable; not a solution; not what we would have done.

*Interjections.*

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

Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's not information to anyone in this that the Liberal government left this to the very last minute. Everybody had to pay the price for the fact that the Liberal government left this to the very last minute.

Speaker, "public interest" is defined in the act as "the quality of education and training services provided to students." It's not too late for the Premier to take responsibility and use her legislated authority to help—

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Yes, we saw how you cared about—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. The Minister of Economic Development and Growth is warned.

Carry on.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's not too late to have her authority used to help improve college education in Ontario, and this clearly falls within the definition of "public interest" under the law. Will the Premier direct the employer to include in their submission for the arbitrator a plan to reduce the number of part-time, precarious employees that they hire?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I understand why the leader of the third party would now want to focus on what actually rests in the hands of the parties and the arbitrator, because she doesn't want to acknowledge that she had no solution for getting those students back into the classroom, short of having a collective bargaining process that would go on forever, Mr. Speaker.

She also doesn't want to acknowledge that the students could have been back in class today. They could have been back in class today, if the NDP had not chosen to take their route. We left it till the very end of the process. We believe in collective bargaining. When there was no option, when it was clear that there was going to be no resolution, then we acted to get students back as quickly as possible. The NDP stood in the way of that expedited process. But the students will be back in class tomorrow, and that's as it should be.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier: New Democrats are glad the colleges are open today, but I'm disgusted—I'm disgusted—that the Premier allowed—

*Interjections.*

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

Leader.



**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm disgusted that the Premier allowed the strike to drag on for five weeks—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is warned.

Please finish.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:**—while doing nothing at all. Students paid the price for the Premier's inaction: They paid academically, emotionally and financially. Today we're hearing that the Premier is capping the hardship fund that she promised students. Does this Premier believe that \$500 is enough to fix the chaos that she created in students' lives?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, some days, sitting in this House is a surreal experience, and I think we just saw one of those moments.

Yesterday, the NDP made it very clear that they would not have legislated—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, we can check Hansard: Yesterday, the member from Welland made it very clear that the NDP would never have legislated them back, that they would never have imposed the end of the strike. Now, to hear the leader say she's pleased that students are back, that colleges are open, when they are not—they could have been. If they had decided on Thursday or on Friday to support the legislation that ordered those workers back to work, the students would be in the classroom. They're not, and there's only one person responsible for that.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, what New Democrats would never have done is allow our colleges to be so underfunded that they fell to the back of the pack in all of Canada when it comes to per-student funding.

The Premier promised this assistance, this fund, to students weeks ago. Today, she's letting students down once again. Students deserve to be compensated fully for the costs they incurred as a result of this Premier's inaction for more than five weeks.

Will the Premier take full responsibility and get rid of the cap that she has imposed on the student support fund?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Of course, had the strike gone on longer, those costs would have been higher, but let me repeat some of the highlights of what we have announced today.

Full-time students will be eligible to receive up to \$500 for unexpected incremental costs associated with the strike. That could be child care. It could be an extra month's rent. It could be rebooked travel plans to get home for Christmas. Colleges will be opening applications for that fund later this week.

Another issue we heard from students—these are all initiatives driven by consultation with students. Some

students have been very concerned that they have missed the withdrawal date, that if they did choose not to complete the semester, they would have a zero on their transcript rather than a withdrawal. There will be no academic penalty and a full tuition refund, including the deposit, for students who make the choice to withdraw after the strike.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Students were forced to put their lives on hold for five weeks because the Premier and her Liberal government sat on their hands and watched the faculty strike escalate. Now today, after promising relief, the Premier is offering nothing but further confusion, chaos and hardship.

Will the Premier and her government be requiring colleges to provide enhanced—

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** You wanted her to interfere with collective bargaining. Is that what you like?

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

Carry on.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Will the Premier and her government be requiring colleges to provide enhanced mental health and academic counselling services to help students cope with the mess they've left them in?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's wonderful to hear the NDP talking about students for once. I think in the speeches yesterday there was only one mention—the member from Welland—of the word “student,” and that was when she was quoting Minister Flynn.

In consultation with students, with student leaders across the province and with colleges, we have responded to the concerns of students. I'm pleased with the package. I think our students will be pleased with this package. There has been tremendous uncertainty. They are happy that there is now certainty, that classes will resume tomorrow. But I'm not sure they will ever forgive the NDP for blocking a return to school.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. The government has made a commitment on mental health, but I'm hearing from mental health service providers that you've ignored the treatment. There are so many who need counselling who can't get it. The government is failing them.

If a child in this province breaks a leg, they are treated immediately, yet kids with serious mental health issues—some are even suicidal—are left waiting for treatment. Why is the government turning a blind eye to the real needs of our young people who face a mental health challenge? Why are these delays allowed in the province of Ontario? Can the Premier enlighten us?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** We are absolutely committed to providing the highest quality mental health services for

all Ontarians, regardless of where they reside in this province, regardless of their age.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Well done.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton Mountain is warned.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, as recently as this spring's budget, we announced an additional \$140 million for mental health services in a variety of ways: \$140 million that that member voted against. It includes the creation of up to 10 new youth wellness hubs to provide those wraparound supports that young people require at various times as they grow into successful adults. It included \$72 million for structured psychotherapy, so we're the first province in all of Canada to provide programs for cognitive behavioural therapy, and I'll talk more about that in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Premier: For the last 10 years, Assia Messaudi has struggled to get help for depression and anxiety issues. She spoke to CBC and Global to tell her story in the hopes that this wouldn't happen to other young people in the province of Ontario. I told the family that we would raise this directly with the Premier. In fact, Assia has attempted suicide a number of times. The reality is, Assia, like tens of thousands of youth in the province, can't get mental health treatment when they need it.

I know the Minister of Health and the Premier say everything is rosy, but it's not good enough. In some parts of the province, kids are waiting 18 months to get publicly funded counselling. They say everything's fine? Imagine having the courage to come forward with a mental health issue and being told, "Come back in 18 months." That's not the Ontario I know; that's not the Ontario that we should be.

My question, directly to the Premier—I hope that it's not passed off—is this: To a young Ontarian like Assia, are you going to continue to let them down? Can I count on the government to actually invest in mental health—

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

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Opposition.

Earlier this year, we passed Bill 89. The Leader of the Opposition and his party voted against that bill. In that specific bill, it lays out our Moving on Mental Health strategy by putting forward 33 lead agencies in Ontario to work on youth mental health.

We don't know why the Progressive Conservative Party voted against that bill. We do have some clues. There were some members who were on the record saying that they voted against Bill 89 because the Campaign Life Coalition told them to do so.

I want to know from the members opposite—and that was the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook who said that—why did you vote against Bill 89, a piece of legislation to support the well-being of children and youth here in the province of Ontario, specifically around mental health?

## LABOUR DISPUTE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Premier. While some students are relieved to be back in their classes this week, many are not. After five weeks of this government doing nothing to end this strike, many students would rather lose their semester than have to cram five weeks of content into two. This will be difficult for even the strongest students, and almost impossible for students with special learning needs. Many students want a fresh start in the new year, with the complete semester they paid for, and they are demanding a full tuition refund.

Will the Premier direct the colleges to provide a full tuition refund to every student who requests it and not just to students who are withdrawing from college completely because of the strike?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I said earlier, if students do make the choice—and we hope that not many will, but we do respect if students want to make the choice to withdraw as a result of the strike—there will be a full tuition refund, including the deposit, and it will be recorded as a withdrawal on their transcript; there will be no academic penalty.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm not talking about students who withdraw from college. I'm talking about students who want to start again in January with a new semester.

Many students are in an absolute panic. They are not only stressed about the academic pressure of a compressed and accelerated semester; they're also worried about having to relearn content they were taught back in September.

The crisis in campus mental health means that students struggling with anxiety and depression will be returning to campus without adequate supports to help them. They face the gruelling prospect of a high-pressure year, a shortened Christmas break and no spring break to recharge.

Will the Premier commit today to making emergency and enhanced mental health supports available for the college students whose mental health and well-being has been jeopardized because of this strike?

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**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's important that people in positions of leadership, like every single person in this House, actually support students. The colleges are doing a very good job working to make sure that students can successfully complete their semester. They have recovery plans. To suggest that they're cramming five weeks' work into two weeks just simply isn't accurate.

It's our job to support those students to complete their semester, to get on with their lives.

I have to say it's pretty rich hearing this coming from a party that said they would not ever order workers back. This strike has to come to an end. It was the right time. We had exhausted all other options. Students will be back tomorrow, and that's a very good thing.

### IMMIGRANT SERVICES

**Mr. Han Dong:** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. My riding of Trinity–Spadina and our province as a whole have a very diverse population. In fact, Canada's 2016 census showed that more than half of Torontonians identified as visible minorities.

This diversity makes us a stronger and more successful province. However, we must recognize that many diverse and newcomer communities continue to experience barriers to inclusion that must be overcome to ensure that all Ontarians have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of life in our province.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can she tell us what her ministry is doing in helping community-based organizations that are in a unique position to help newcomers, refugees and ethnocultural communities get involved in our province's civic, cultural, social and economic life?

**Hon. Laura Albanese:** I'd like to thank the member from Trinity–Spadina for his question and his advocacy towards newcomers.

Community-based organizations work at the local level to improve the lives of individuals. In June of this year, our ministry launched the Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program to help ethnocultural organizations advance diversity and reduce barriers to inclusion.

I was very pleased to have the member from Trinity–Spadina and the member for Beaches–East York join me recently at the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre in Toronto, where we announced the first recipients of the Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program. Just over \$3 million in grants, ranging from \$1,000 to \$8,000, were awarded to 465 worthy organizations across Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Han Dong:** I want to thank the minister for her answer. It was wonderful to see the microcosm of society represented at the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre last week. There was a group of truly worthy organizations looking to promote diversity and inclusion, including a group from my own riding. Our riding had 20 successful multicultural community capacity grant applicants. I'm proud to represent a riding where so many are passionate about growing their community.

Can the minister speak to the influx of applications for the program and how her ministry will attempt to support the numerous groups from across the province who wish to help promote diversity and inclusion in Ontario?

**Hon. Laura Albanese:** Once again, I'd like to thank the member for his question. Our ministry was extremely

pleased to see the high level of interest in the Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program. While we were able to help many organizations like the ones highlighted by the member from Trinity–Spadina, there are many more valuable projects out there.

That's why I was pleased to also announce that the application process for the 2018-19 call for proposals is now open for eligible not-for-profits. This grant is an excellent opportunity for organizations to facilitate community engagement, social integration, volunteerism and to promote social connections and employment networking. These modest grants support valuable and innovative projects that promote intercultural understanding and reduce barriers to participation in community life. By working together, we make our organizations stronger and more inclusive.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My question today is for the Minister of Energy. In my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, your ministry is pushing ahead with two new industrial wind turbine developments, the North Kent 1 and Otter Creek wind farms. These wind farms will generate electricity we don't need and contribute to pushing hydro bills even higher than they already are.

These developments include turbines almost 200 metres high with foundations that require pile driving into black shale bedrock, rock containing heavy metals. This bedrock carries water of the aquifer. Since the start of construction on the North Kent project, 14 water wells have become turbid and undrinkable.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen the impact of pile driving into black shale from the North Kent project. Why is the minister allowing construction to continue there, and why is he jeopardizing the drinking water of another community by going forward with the Otter Creek project?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** To the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

**Hon. Chris Ballard:** I'm happy to speak in some generalities around the need for wind turbines, and the very vigorous process that our government puts in place to make sure that the turbines are sited safely and that there is good, strong consultation with the community.

Speaker, we take the concerns regarding the environment and human health very seriously. I'll say that we adhere to a very strict renewable energy approvals process.

Thanks to clean air and clean energy—and let me speak to the fundamentals for a second—Ontario has saved more than \$4 billion in annual health and environmental costs because of this government's commitment to clean energy.

Unlike the PCs, we can't sit idly by. Renewable energy projects are a necessity and a crucial part of our low-carbon carbon switch, and we're not going to back down from our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I stand, you sit.

Supplementary.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the Minister of Energy: These wind farms will forever end food production on some of the best agricultural land in our country. And we are talking about an environmentally sensitive area, home to 24 species at risk, and within a major flight path for migratory birds. It is fragmenting the bedrock, turning clear, clean water into dirty, undrinkable swill, yet the project is going ahead even though the government has suspended the large renewable procurement II process because there is no need for additional electricity.

When the minister made that announcement in September 2016, I said that North Kent 1 and Otter Creek should be cancelled as well. Had the minister cancelled these two projects, the long-term savings would amount to \$570 million. If stopping turbine construction makes economic, environmental and public health sense, why would the Minister of Energy sign off on continuing to build industrial wind farms in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Chris Ballard:** Thanks for the opportunity to follow up on the North Kent wind farm. Again, I'm going to reiterate that our government takes these concerns regarding groundwater quality very seriously. The renewable energy approval process, in fact, requires these proponents to undertake extensive consultation with municipalities, indigenous communities and the public. Additionally, we have taken a very cautious, science-based approach when setting the standards for renewable energy projects in order to protect the health of the Ontario people.

Speaker, the proponent in this case has done extensive monitoring prior to construction, and we're going to require them to continue to monitor the vibration data closely during construction and operation of the wind turbines. We require the company to conduct additional water quality assessments and we're keeping an eye on this.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier. Last week the CEO of the privatized Hydro One defended the sharp rate increases he's seeking to benefit investors. He told the Empire Club that the rate increases were needed for capital investments to keep the system reliable, but the Ontario Energy Board didn't believe this. They told Hydro One to reduce its revenue demands. Hydro One has basically refused, and came back with nearly the same demand.

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Let's be clear: Hydro One is not seeking this money to improve service. It wants this money so it can build an empire, including its ridiculous \$6-billion purchase of Avista. Why is the Premier allowing Hydro One to expand its monopoly at ratepayers' expense?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** When it comes to Hydro One's ask and to the OEB, it is just that: It's an ask, and the OEB will do its due diligence and, again, review this application.

But let's be clear, Mr. Speaker: The fair hydro plan talks about the 25% reduction that we've brought forward for all families right across this province, all residences, and then, of course, 500,000 small businesses and farms. That 25% is taking effect, and then the cost will rise only by the cost of inflation for the next four years.

Hydro One is looking at what its needs are. It put forward its plan to continue to make our system reliable. We spent \$70 billion making sure that we could rebuild this system, and we need to continue to maintain it. That's what this ask is about. The OEB will review it, always making sure that it keeps the best interests of customers in mind.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Again to the Premier: Two years ago, the Premier promised that Hydro One would lower hydro rates after it became a private corporation, but the privatized Hydro One refuses to lower rates, even after the Premier gave it a \$2.6-billion tax cut. In fact, Hydro One is taking the Ontario Energy Board to court so it can keep 100% of that tax break and leave nothing for ratepayers. It's refusing to be regulated by the OEB, and is demanding sharp rate increases in order to expand its monopoly, while doing nothing to improve its performance for Ontario families and businesses.

Will the Premier finally admit that her sell-off of Hydro One has been a complete failure?

**Hon. Glenn Thibeault:** The ownership of Hydro One does not change how rates are reviewed by the OEB. It also does not change the fact that rates will only go up by the rate of inflation, not by the fear-mongering coming from the NDP.

But let's look very clearly at what has happened with Hydro One rates, Mr. Speaker. Hydro One urban customers have seen a 25% reduction, just like every other family right across the province. On top of that, the rates for Hydro One R1 and R2 customers have dropped between 40% and 50%. That is a huge reduction for those families.

On top of that, Hydro One has voluntarily stepped forward and cancelled winter disconnections. They stepped forward and voluntarily ended security deposits. When it comes to seeing a company grow, they're actually growing and becoming more customer-focused and making sure that we can use the money we got from the broadening of the ownership to build infrastructure right across the province.

## ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** My question is for the Minister of Education. November 19 to 25 is Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. Our government is taking steps to

address and prevent bullying in Ontario schools, including in my riding of Kitchener Centre.

In 2012, we passed the Accepting Schools Act, which requires school boards to introduce measures to prevent and address inappropriate student behaviour. This very important piece of legislation is intended to make every school in Ontario a safe, inclusive and accepting place to learn, while at the same time supporting every student to have the right supports to reach their full potential.

Speaker, could the minister please tell this House how we are supporting safe schools during the school year, and especially during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I'm pleased to rise in the House this morning to recognize Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, which begins today. I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre. I know that when the Premier first appointed me as Minister of Education, I had an opportunity to visit a brand new school, Vista Hills Public School, in your riding, and how thrilled was I in that safe, accepting and inclusive school environment, where all school leaders were focused on a safe and accepting school environment.

Our government believes in supporting student achievement and well-being with a safe, inclusive and accepting learning environment for all students. As Minister of Education, I try to visit at least one school a week. I have seen students, educators and families across Ontario working together to make our schools welcoming for everyone. In January, I visited l'école secondaire publique De La Salle, and I saw how a student-led initiative was under way, including a gender neutral wash-room.

This week, I am encouraging educators across the province to spend time talking—

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

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I would like to thank the minister for her visit to my community recently. She was a big hit.

At an early age, Ontario students do learn how important it is to respect one another. This fosters a sense of success and belonging for all students. Schools are participating in Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, effecting positive change in student achievement and well-being.

For example, Collège catholique Mer Bleue in Orléans has undertaken a school-wide initiative. It's focused on caring to increase kindness, empathy and emotional support throughout the year. They're offering a series of classes for all teachers and students. In these weekly classes, they're learning about self-acceptance and cyber-bullying prevention. This is a great example of a safe, inclusive and accepting school in action.

Could the minister please tell us more on how we're promoting safe and accepting schools, and how we can all play a part in bullying awareness and prevention in Ontario?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** By promoting respect for all students regardless of background, identity or personal circumstance, Ontario schools are fostering safe and inclusive places to learn.

As we recognize Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, I am pleased to share with you that this year's Premier's Awards for Accepting Schools applications will be open. These awards showcase the initiative, creativity and leadership that safe and accepting school teams have shown. To recognize the work of a safe and accepting school's team, I encourage all members of the school community to visit the Ministry of Education's website tomorrow when the nomination period begins.

I also encourage every member of this House to participate in anti-bullying activities planned this week in your local schools and to promote the Premier's Awards for Accepting Schools. Let's work together to make our schools a safe and accepting place for all students.

## EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Last spring, the government introduced Bill 148, making drastic changes to employment and labour laws. They did no cost-benefit analysis, and now social service agencies face millions in new, unfunded costs.

OASIS, which represents nearly 200 agencies in the developmental services sector, told the government: "Without increased funding to the sector by the relevant ministries, Bill 148 threatens the sector's ability to carry out this work. It cannot be overstated that it will have an impact on the lives of the people served by the sector."

Why did the minister not speak up against a bill that threatens the very people she's supposed to protect?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** We on this side of the House are extremely proud of Bill 148 and the types of protections that are provided in that bill for some of the workers in our province who are working for minimum wage at the moment, and also in precarious employment.

Of course, the provisions of this bill are extremely important to all vulnerable Ontarians. In particular, as it relates to the agencies that my ministry has transfer payment agreements with, we're working with them and looking at the impact that that bill will have on services. That conversation continues, and we're extremely aware of some of the comments that the agencies have made.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** The minister is not listening to OASIS and its members. It sounds like she's just speaking up for the Premier.

Many agencies have not seen a core funding increase for nine years, and now OASIS estimates that Bill 148 will add at least \$55.96 million in new costs. One example: Community Living Toronto expects a reduction of "80,000 service hours a year through the loss of 40-plus full-time positions."

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OASIS and others have made practical suggestions, but so far their efforts have been met with silence. I wrote the minister last summer about this issue, and she replied, “I have also heard the trepidation amongst agencies,” but she offers no solution to offset their costs. If the minister can really hear the trepidation, why won’t she do something about it?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Again, we are very proud of the provisions of Bill 148. We certainly stand behind our leader and we’re totally united, on this side of the House, in terms of those important provisions.

As it relates to the agencies, we’re working with them. We’re listening to them. We are obviously looking at the potential impact in some of the situations that do occur with these agencies caring for those with developmental disabilities and vulnerable people. Obviously, there are requirements for shift work for some urgent situations that need to be addressed.

We will continue to work with the agencies. I meet with them regularly. We certainly are listening on this side of the House, and it’s quite clear that we will continue to work together with them on a solution.

#### MERCURY POISONING

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is to the Premier. We recently learned that the Liberal government has confirmation that Grassy Narrows First Nation is still being exposed to mercury poisoning through the contamination of the Wabigoon River. But the Premier says that the report that confirms this, delivered to the government in September 2016, never made it to her desk. The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation says that it wasn’t a communication breakdown and that the ministries don’t “keep the Premier of the day in the dark.”

But if the Premier is to be believed, that is exactly what happened. This is a glaring mistake that shines light on incompetence in the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and this Liberal government in general. Why didn’t the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation tell the Premier that he had confirmation of a systematic poisoning of an entire indigenous community?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** This is an extremely important issue. What happened at Grassy Narrows decades ago has to be rectified.

When I was the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, I travelled to Grassy Narrows, I met with the community and I met with the chief. I came back to the ministry, and we worked to determine if there was science available that would allow us to—one of the things that we were concerned about was that the disturbing of mercury in the water system would actually make the situation worse.

As soon as I learned, through a meeting with David Suzuki and Dr. John Rudd, that there was new science, that there was the ability to clean up the system—that’s why there is \$85 million that is set aside, that is at work. The scientists are there. That cleanup is beginning.

This has to be rectified, and we are the government that has acted on that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Again to the Premier: The Premier is just one person. She has an entire team of staff and cabinet ministers working for her. It’s hard to believe that no one in the Liberal government thought that this information was important or that it would save indigenous lives. This report should have raised alarm bells throughout this entire Liberal government.

What disciplinary action is the Premier planning for her Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation for this potentially life-threatening oversight?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There should have been alarm bells in the 1970s. There should have been alarm bells in the 1980s. There should have been alarm bells in the 1990s. The fact is that it has taken until now for this government to act because previous governments did not take action, Mr. Speaker.

Do you know what? The reality is that it was not clear exactly what the science was, exactly what action should be taken, but we have now taken action. This was a poisoning of a water system that should not have happened. What it does is it raises huge cautionary notes in terms of how we go forward, how we continue to work with indigenous peoples to make sure that such a thing never happens again. That is why the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation spends so much of his time working with communities, working with chiefs. We’re going to be meeting with the Chiefs of Ontario today, Mr. Speaker, because we know that those relationships have to change so that something like this never happens again.

*Interjections.*

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

New question.

#### ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

**M. Shafiq Qadri:** Ma question est pour la ministre des Affaires francophones, l’honorable Marie-France Lalonde. Il y a un an, l’Ontario devenait membre observateur à l’Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. C’était un moment historique pour tous les Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens, et aussi pour l’Ontario. Je suis très fier de poser cette question parce que j’ai moi-même une communauté francophone très dynamique, engagée et active dans ma circonscription d’Etobicoke-Nord.

Monsieur le Président, est-ce que la ministre des Affaires francophones pourrait nous rappeler ce moment majeur?

**L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde:** Je veux vraiment remercier le député d'Etobicoke-Nord pour sa question.

Effectivement, le 26 novembre 2016, j'ai eu l'honneur de représenter l'Ontario et la première ministre à notre tout premier sommet de l'OIF, à Madagascar. Je tiens d'ailleurs à remercier le Québec, le Nouveau-Brunswick et le gouvernement fédéral, en plus des 83 pays membres de l'OIF qui ont soutenu notre candidature. Lors de ce premier sommet, moi-même ainsi que la première ministre, via vidéo, avons pu nous adresser directement aux représentants et chefs d'État des pays membres de l'OIF.

Notre participation à l'OIF représente des opportunités hors du commun pour l'Ontario; parmi les plus significatives, mentionnons la possibilité pour l'Ontario de rehausser son profil auprès des 83 États et gouvernements de l'OIF, dont l'espace économique représente plus d'un milliard de personnes. C'est là une occasion unique qu'a la province d'appartenir à un organisme international de façon autonome et de mettre en avant ses priorités.

**Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac):** Merci. Question?

**M. Shafiq Qadri:** Je remercie la ministre pour sa réponse. C'est un plaisir de constater la reconnaissance de la communauté franco-ontarienne à l'échelle internationale ainsi que le rôle joué par le Québec, le Nouveau-Brunswick et le gouvernement fédéral. Avec une possibilité d'interaction pour l'Ontario auprès de 83 États et gouvernements, il semble qu'il y ait plus d'opportunités que jamais auparavant pour la communauté franco-ontarienne et pour l'Ontario en général.

La ministre peut-elle nous en dire plus au sujet des retombées et des opportunités liées à notre appartenance à l'OIF?

**L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde:** Encore une fois, je veux remercier le député d'Etobicoke-Nord pour sa question, mais aussi souligner son engagement pour la francophonie et pour les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes.

Depuis que nous sommes devenus membre, nous avons rehaussé le profil de la province et de notre communauté dans divers événements d'envergure internationale, comme le Toronto Global Forum, la Conférence de Montréal et les événements de l'OIF. Nous avons pu exprimer notre intérêt dans deux domaines spécifiques au sein de toutes ces plateformes : l'éducation et la formation, ainsi que l'égalité homme-femme. D'ailleurs, nous avons récemment envoyé une délégation de six femmes d'affaires de différentes régions de la province à la Conférence des femmes de la Francophonie, en Roumanie. Nous avons facilité la création d'un partenariat entre la Société Économique de l'Ontario et l'OIF. Nous avons eu des rencontres bilatérales afin de discuter d'opportunités de collaboration avec des représentants de dizaines de pays.

Notre appartenance à l'OIF montre qu'il y a un fort momentum pour la francophonie en Ontario.

## MERCURY POISONING

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** My question is for the Premier. Last Wednesday, the Canadian Press reported that, despite the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation receiving a report in September 2016 about the cleanup of the mercury contamination in the English-Wabigoon River upstream from the Grassy Narrows First Nation, the Premier had the audacity to say she never saw the report. Speaker, the report in its entirety can be found with a simple, two-minute Google search. This is an issue which the government has had more than a decade to address. Is the Premier really saying that there was an entire year of inaction on this issue because her office couldn't perform a simple Google search?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know the Minister of Indigenous Relations will want to speak to this, but I just need to reinforce what I said in the previous answer: What happened at Grassy Narrows and the mercury poisoning in the water that we all know is a hugely problematic thing for the communities surrounding that area—that should not have happened in the first place. And then, decade after decade, Mr. Speaker, there was no action taken. Part of the reason for that was that it wasn't clear exactly what the science was to get that mercury cleaned up.

We know now what has to be done. We have set aside \$85 million. That \$85 million is already working. There are scientists there who are getting ready to put the infrastructure and the mechanisms in place to get that water cleaned up.

There is more that needs to be done. We understand that. That's why we have set aside that money. We are the government that is taking action on cleaning up what should never have happened in the first place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** This is an issue about competency and trust. I'm going back to the Premier with this. This report, yes, is the foundation of an \$85-million cleanup fund—an important part of reconciliation with Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nation. Yet the Premier admits that she knew nothing about this plan just last week. This is very unsettling, Speaker. We would expect a Premier to have command of all of her files. Who is to blame for this incompetency? What is going to happen? Is it the Premier's office or the minister? Who is going to be fired over this inaction?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

**Hon. Chris Ballard:** It's an opportunity for me to talk about some of the things that are happening in Grassy Narrows. Like my predecessor and the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and indeed the Premier, our priority has been Grassy Narrows. It was the first community that I visited when I became Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

We've been working with that community and the Wabaseemoong (Whitedog) indigenous community for many years to identify mercury and to put the right

science in place so that we can begin the mercury remediation of the English-Wabigoon river system. We've got the dedicated \$85-million fund. We've already put in place \$5.2 million. We have drills on site testing right now.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

**Hon. Kathryn McGarry:** I wanted to introduce the International School of Cambridge, who have just been in watching the end of question period. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1143 to 1300.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce three guests of the Trillium Party of Ontario. We have Jodie and Marc Emery, who are leading advocates of marijuana in Canada; and we have Virginia Vidal of Mary's Wellness products, which are teas with THC in them.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** On behalf of the PC Party of Ontario, I'd like to make the following statement:

Saturday, November 25, marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Unfortunately, violence is a daily reality for countless women and girls throughout the world. Sadly, Canada and Ontario are not immune to this fact.

Every day, women and children across Ontario and Canada are affected by violence, and it's estimated that one in three women around the world will experience violence in their lifetime. On any given night in Canada, over 3,000 women and their children sleep in shelters because it is not safe at home. This is unacceptable. We, as a society, need to work together to put an end to this needless violence.

The elimination of violence against women is just not a women's issue. It's a problem that impacts us all. Both men and women must stand united and advocate for change. We must continue to work together to raise awareness of violence against women and shine a light on the abuse and offer support to victims.

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women serves as an important reminder to join in on the conversation and stand up against all gender-based violence.

I would like to thank all the various organizations and individuals that work tirelessly to raise awareness for this important issue. Let us all stand together and eliminate violence.

### YMCA SPROTT HOUSE

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's an honour to stand up today on the Trans Day of Remembrance, about the YMCA's Sprott House, Ontario's first LGBTQ and transitional housing program for youth.

Last week, I visited Sprott House and it was clear that the staff, including director Kate Miller, work tirelessly to provide a safe, supportive and welcoming space for LGBTQ youth. Sprott House provides residential living for 25 youth and is always at full capacity, with a wait-list of more than 40.

For these youth, this is the first place they have ever lived where they feel safe. LGBTQ youth are disproportionately represented among homeless youth, constituting 40% of all homeless youth. The challenges they face are unique, and trans youth especially are more likely to experience discrimination and violence in shelters. Sprott House gives its residents a safe place to call home and the support they need to continue with their education and find a job.

With affordable housing in short supply, shelters like Sprott House in the GTA struggle to keep up with demand. For example, the Toronto Transitional Housing Allowance Program, which helped Toronto families pay for their market-set rent, was cancelled because it was so successful that it exhausted its funds.

Affordable housing is essential to building a strong economy and an equitable society. To reach their full potential, youth need stable and affordable housing.

We need to continue to support groups like the YMCA who work to put a roof over everyone's head. A sincere thank you to the YMCA for leading the way. Clearly, this is a model of transitional housing that needs to be replicated across the province.

### MILITARY HERITAGE PARK

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** On October 27, I had the privilege of attending the grand opening of Barrie's Military Heritage Park. The opening had a remarkable turnout of dignitaries, veterans, peacekeepers and serving members of the Canadian Forces and residents of Barrie.

Located along the beautiful south shore of Kempenfelt Bay, the park serves as an important commemoration of Barrie's deep military history. It is fitting that this park opened just a few days before Remembrance Day, where we all had a chance to honour the memories of those who have served and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

The park features 25 Vimy Oak saplings descended from acorns sent back to Canada after the Battle of Vimy Ridge. An obelisk commemorates those who have been awarded the Victoria Cross, including Barrie's own Honorary Lieutenant Colonel Rev. John Weir Foote.



It also features an art installation of three steel panels depicting tulips, signifying the liberation of Holland; poppies, our national symbol of remembrance; and feathers, in tribute to the military contributions of indigenous people.

For years to come, this park will continue to serve as a lasting tribute to Barrie's military heritage, including our very close relationship with CFB Borden and the Grey and Simcoe Foresters.

I know that generations of families will enjoy this park and learn about the incredible men and women in uniform who have made this possible.

#### LINDSAY SHEPHERD

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** There is no person more centrist and inoffensive than Steve Paikin—he even wrote a great book on former Premier Bill Davis—yet Lindsay Shepherd, a teaching assistant at Laurier, has been censured by Wilfrid Laurier University for showing a clip from Steve Paikin's television program *The Agenda* to introduce a lecture in her class. Later, a student complained about the content, and Lindsay was called to a meeting with two professors and an official from the university's diversity and equity office.

Lindsay is now concerned that the professors will take away her teaching assistant position, which, alongside a scholarship, is paying for her studies.

This is not about left versus right. This is about academic freedom. This is about freedom of speech. This is about a university targeting a vulnerable teaching assistant, threatening her academic career and her source of livelihood.

As a result, Lindsay was quoted in a Waterloo Region Record feature saying, "I now feel so completely alienated from the university as an institution."

On behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, I express my solidarity with Lindsay Shepherd.

#### LABOUR COUNCILS

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** This past weekend, we celebrated a special milestone in Oshawa: The Durham Region Labour Council marked 75 years of activism, advocacy and impact.

Labour councils are the local action organizations under the umbrella of the Canadian Labour Congress. These councils have members from affiliated unions who come together to strengthen our communities.

I remember the first meeting I attended as an ETFO member with larger-than-life Jim Freeman as president. After hearing from the local affiliates about health and safety issues, about unfair and concerning employer challenges, and about charitable or advocacy campaigns across our community, I was hooked. I was also proud to later serve for a time as our labour council second vice-president.

Labour councils are where workers and community partners recognize our shared values and goals. It's where I really recognized that, regardless of the workplace, we

are all workers in Ontario and deserve fairness, respect and safe work environments. We are all in this together.

Jim Freeman always stood up for labour councils and recognized them to be the boots on the ground of the labour movement. They are the grassroots of change and advocacy. Durham is fortunate to have a strong community labour council, with leaders and workers who have come together since 1942 to make change happen.

I would like to recognize president John MacDonald of the current executive, and long-serving staff Linda McLaughlin, for their commitment to Oshawa and Durham region.

Our labour council has been building bridges, making workplaces and in community spaces safer, and stronger and has been making our community better for 75 years.

#### PAUL FRENCH

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I'm here today to pass on my comments about the passing of a good friend and a very renowned judge who passed away November 2: Paul French.

Paul was born in Ottawa, went to Ottawa U and married a very significant lawyer in Micki Smith—Michele Smith. They have two wonderful children, Michael and Laura, who miss their father greatly.

Paul French was the nephew of one of Canada's most renowned criminal lawyers, Arthur Maloney. He articulated with his uncle Arthur before he went into practice. He was called to the bar in 1984 and practised law.

He also helped establish a framework agreement between judges and the Ontario government which has been copied across Canada.

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He was appointed a judge in 2006, and he helped establish the first mental health assistance unit at Metro West Detention Centre. He was very concerned about mental health and how it affects our incarcerated men and women, and especially our youth. He also spent a lot of time trying to ensure that our young people, especially marginalized youth, were given the attention they needed beyond being dealt with by the full weight of the law.

I want to say thank you, Paul—Judge French—for your long life of service.

#### VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I rise in the House today to draw attention to the problem of volunteer firefighter recruitment in rural communities throughout our province.

Eighty-five per cent of firefighters in Canada are volunteers. In communities smaller than 5,000 people, 99% of firefighters are volunteers. Rural communities rely upon volunteer firefighters to respond to both medical and fire-related emergencies. Unfortunately, many rural communities are worried about recruiting enough volunteer firefighters to meet their needs.

In my riding, Councillor Shane Baker has reported that the Huntsville/Lake of Bays Fire Department is "stretched" because of problems with recruitment, espe-

cially with regard to remote fire halls. Gravenhurst and Bracebridge are facing similar challenges.

Local fire departments are working hard to increase recruitment. In particular, I wish to commend the Huntsville/Lake of Bays Fire Department, which ran the Camp Female Firefighters in Training program this past summer. This was a new program for my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. Seven women between the ages of 15 and 18 participated, and they learned specialized fire and rescue skills such as vehicle extraction.

I wish to conclude by thanking our volunteer firefighters. These local heroes commit to rigorous training routines and are often the first to arrive and provide life-saving support for their neighbours.

One such local hero is District Chief Mike Cook, who recently retired after 40 years as a volunteer firefighter with the Huntsville/Lake of Bays Fire Department. I congratulate him on his retirement and commend him for his many years of service.

#### TORONTO ARGONAUTS

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I rise in the House today to congratulate the Toronto Argonauts, a team with a never-say-die attitude. Full credit to the Saskatchewan Roughriders on a last-gasp display worthy of a sports movie, but with two minutes and 37 seconds left, Ricky Ray said, “We had plenty of time. We weren’t in a rush.”

I’m proud of the Argos. For the first time since 2012, the team is headed to the Grey Cup, which will be happening this Sunday, November 26, in Ottawa.

Toronto’s defenders intercepted the ball three times in the opening 30 minutes, no small feat. And heroics from Ricky Ray and Toronto’s defence have set up quite a Grey Cup final: the Argos versus the Calgary Stampeders. I look forward to watching these two teams play an intense football game. I know the Argos are coming into the final as an underdog. The Stampeders have the best regular-season record in the CFL, but if my boys in blue can survive a last-minute onslaught, they can do anything.

I’m hoping for a storybook finish to the season for the Argos. Best of luck to the Stampeders, but if the game goes as running back James Wilder says, “They’ll be in man, and it worked out just like we prepared.”

Join me in saying, “Let’s go, Argos!”

#### ROBIN KENNIE

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Dr. Robin Kenzie of Perth, Ontario, who has been awarded the 2017 College of Family Physicians Community Teacher of the Year Award. The award, which will be presented to Dr. Kenzie at the OCFP awards ceremony in Toronto this week, on November 23, celebrates excellence in community family medicine education and is handed out based on nominations by family medicine students and residents.

Dr. Kenzie plays a very important role in the Perth community, not only as chief of the Perth hospital emer-

gency department, but as an investigating coroner for the region as well. Dr. Kenzie is both well respected and highly praised for his invaluable knowledge of rural community medicine by his students at Queen’s University as well as residents from the University of Ottawa. He has had a profound impact on his residents and students, and many apply to work in Perth. Combined with his continued mentorship of former students and residents, he is a model for a healthy work and life balance, and is a model and testament to the value and commitment to rural medicine.

I hope everyone will join me in congratulating Dr. Kenzie for this well-deserved honour.

### PETITIONS

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I have yet another important petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas on July 7, 2017, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) deemed the renewable energy approval (REA) application of Otter Creek Wind Farm LP complete; and

“Whereas Otter Creek’s REA stands at the technical review stage; and

“Whereas we believe that environmental studies to date have been insufficient with regard to species at risk; and

“Whereas we believe that studies to date have been insufficient regarding the adverse effects of wind turbines at Otter Creek to migratory birds and waterfowl; and

“Whereas the construction methods required for the Otter Creek site are similar to those being employed in the construction of North Kent Wind 1, where 14 water wells have now been contaminated due to vibration; and

“Whereas Ontario has already postponed the proposed LRP II (large renewable energy projects) because further production of electricity is not required;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate action to stop any construction or construction planning for the Otter Creek Wind Farm until the above-mentioned environmental concerns, and particularly the issue of water quality safety, are re-examined by expert consultants mutually agreeable to MOECC, the municipal council of Chatham-Kent, and the residents affected by the proposed wind farm development.”

I gladly affix my name to this petition.

#### INJURED WORKERS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** “Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

“Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their

employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

“Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

“Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages, and protection from discrimination;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

“Eliminate the practice of ‘deeming’ or ‘determining,’ which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have;

“Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

“Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on ‘pre-existing conditions’ that never affected the worker’s ability to function prior to the work injury.”

I agree with this petition, I affix my signature and I give it to page Erion to table.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current transit options to service Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor are insufficient and not at pace with a rapidly growing community;

“Whereas the communities of Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor require increased community consultation regarding the planning for a new regional express rail station in the neighbourhood;

“Whereas the currently proposed location for a SmartTrack station to service Liberty Village would not effectively connect with residents and businesses;

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

“To direct Metrolinx to consider and review the relocation of the proposed SmartTrack station from the Dovercourt-Sudbury Street site to a new location further east that would ensure enhanced and accessible service to residents of Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor.”

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Olivia.

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#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government first promised a legislated care standard for residents in the province’s long-term-care homes in 2003 but are yet to make good on their promise;

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) empowers the provincial government to create a minimum standard;

“Whereas a study done in 2001 by the US Centres for Medicare and Medicaid Services cited 4.1 working hours per resident day as a minimum target, which was later confirmed in a 2004 observational study and in a reanalysis by Abt Associates in 2011, and reinforced by the 2008 Independent Review of Staffing and Care Standards for Long-Term Care Homes report by Shirlee Sharkey, who recommended a four-hour minimum target;

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

“To legislate a care standard of a minimum four hours per resident each day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

I agree with this and will pass it off to page Emma.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to thank the residents of Westmount Gardens long-term care for suggesting this petition to me. It is called “Stop the Eviction of Long-Term-Care Residents,” and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: ....

“Whereas every resident of a long-term-care home has the right to be treated with respect and dignity; and

“Whereas section 1 of the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, identifies as its ‘fundamental principle’ that ‘a long-term-care home is primarily the home of its residents’; and

“Whereas regulation 79 under the act conflicts with this fundamental principle because it states that long-term-care residents can lose their home after 30 days in hospital and must then reapply and join wait-lists for available long-term-care spaces; and

“Whereas the risk of losing their home can create emotional distress and trauma for long-term-care residents who are temporarily hospitalized;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care change regulation 79 to ensure that residents of long-term care do not lose their home after a 30-day or longer stay in hospital.”

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

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I have this petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the current transit options to service Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor are insufficient and not at pace with a rapidly growing community;

“Whereas the communities of Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor require increased community consultation regarding the planning for a new regional express rail station in the neighbourhood;

“Whereas the currently proposed location for a SmartTrack station to service Liberty Village would not effectively connect with residents and businesses;

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

“To direct Metrolinx to consider and review the re-location of the proposed SmartTrack station from the Dovercourt-Sudbury Street site to a new location further east that would ensure enhanced and accessible service to residents of Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor.”

I agree and send it with page Alisha.

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Minister of Education ... declared on June 28, 2017, a province-wide moratorium on future school closures based on the results of the spring engagement process, stating that the pupil accommodation review process was flawed and should be overhauled; and

“Whereas during the 2016-2017 school year this flawed pupil accommodation review process was used to close schools; and

“Whereas some of these schools are not scheduled to close until the end of June 2018, so that staffing for these schools remains in place for 2017-2018; and

“Whereas it would be consistent with the spirit of the moratorium and the reason for the overhaul of the PAR process, to stop those closures announced after September 2016; and

“Whereas the 2015 Auditor General’s report section 4.3.2 (p. 299) recommends greater funds be put towards maintenance of current schools; and

“Further, whereas the current funding formula does not properly address the needs of schools within rural and northern communities;

“We, the undersigned residents of the province of Ontario, petition Minister of Education Mitzie Hunter, Premier Kathleen Wynne and all the MPPs of the Ontario Legislative Assembly to:

“1. Reverse the closure decisions for all schools where those decisions were made after September 1, 2016;

“2. Provide fair and equitable pupil accommodation review processes that school boards must follow, recognising the unique needs of rural and northern communities; and

“3. Review the current funding formula with a goal of developing fair and equitable funding formulae for all rural, northern and urban schools.”

I agree with the petition and affix my signature.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Anthony Skopyk, who is from Capreol, in my riding. He collected 150 signatures on the following petition:

“Whereas there continues to be a shortage of long-term-care beds in Ontario, resulting in the inappropriate use of acute care beds in Ontario hospitals; and

“Residents who do need secure long-term care are often forced to move away from their communities, families and friends;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To lift the moratorium on long-term-care licences so that the inventory of long-term-care spaces can be brought to a level that will ease the burden placed on Ontario hospitals; and

“Ensure that licences are granted for the creation of long-term-care spaces not only in cities but in smaller communities where residents are being forced to abandon everything they’ve ever known.”

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

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas the current transit options to service Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor are insufficient and not at pace with a rapidly growing community;

“Whereas the communities of Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor require increased community consultation regarding the planning for a new regional express rail station in the neighbourhood;

“Whereas the currently proposed location for a SmartTrack station to service Liberty Village would not effectively connect with residents and businesses;

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

“To direct Metrolinx to consider and review the re-location of the proposed SmartTrack station from the Dovercourt-Sudbury Street site to a new location further east that would ensure enhanced and accessible service to residents of Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor.”

I send it to you via page Iman.

### PROVINCIAL DEBT

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

“Whereas Ontario’s provincial government finances are a mess because of 13 years of Liberal waste, mismanagement and scandal; and

“Whereas this government is running eight consecutive budget deficits; and

“Whereas the government has racked up \$302 billion in debt, the highest debt in the country; and

“Whereas the debt servicing costs us \$11 billion in lost tax dollars every year; and

“Whereas the payments to service the debt are the third-largest expenditure and the fastest-growing expense in government, and money not spent on critical and core public services such as health care and education; and

“Whereas each \$1 billion of it equals the loss of:

“—one year of long-term care for 17,000 seniors;  
 “—one year of home care for 55,000 people;  
 “—3,550 palliative care beds for one year;  
 “—8,000 new affordable housing units;  
 “—\$260 a month for one year for each ODSP recipient;  
 “—one year of free tuition for 2,000 students;  
 “—10,000 new school playgrounds;  
 “Whereas if interest rates do go up, the cost of servicing Ontario’s debt will increase higher still, taking out even more money out of key public services that the people of Ontario need;  
 “Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:  
 “To take immediate action to stop sticking us with the tab for waste, mismanagement and scandal that’s made life harder for Ontarians.”  
 I fully support it, affix my name, and send it with page Devon.

#### PHARMACARE

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I have a petition entitled “Universal Pharmacare for All Ontarians.”  
 “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:  
 “Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care, and people shouldn’t have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need;  
 “Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don’t have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don’t take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost;  
 “Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and  
 “Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;  
 “We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians.”  
 I fully support this petition. I’m going to give it to page Adam to bring to the Clerk.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.  
 “Whereas the current transit options to service Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor are insufficient and not at pace with a rapidly growing community;  
 “Whereas the communities of Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor require increased community consultation regarding the planning for a new regional express rail station in the neighbourhood;  
 “Whereas the currently proposed location for a SmartTrack station to service Liberty Village would not effectively connect with residents and businesses;  
 “We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To direct Metrolinx to consider and review the re-location of the proposed SmartTrack station from the Dovercourt-Sudbury Street site to a new location further east that would ensure enhanced and accessible service to residents of Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor.”  
 I send it to you via page Javeriar.

#### DRIVER LICENCES

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.  
 “Whereas many residents and businesses in Ontario rely on the ability to drive a vehicle in order to work, buy food and otherwise function;  
 “Whereas licence suspension upon receipt of a medical notice to that effect is immediate; and

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“Whereas constituents are forced to wait 30 business days following a positive medical review by their physician prior to being reinstated; and  
 “Whereas this wait time is not prescribed in any legislation or regulation, but is solely due to Ministry of Transportation policies that ignore the reality of living and operating a business, especially in rural and northern Ontario; and  
 “Whereas a needlessly long licence suspension threatens the livelihoods of many families in Ontario;  
 “We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:  
 “To direct the Ministry of Transportation to institute a five-business-day service guarantee for drivers’ licence reinstatements following the submission of a positive physician’s review.”  
 I agree with this, and I’ll pass it off to page Vanditha.

#### ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from all over the northeast, but I would like to thank Sarah Cotnam from Val Caron. in my riding. It reads as follows:  
 “Whereas in the past 10 years in Ontario, 86% of all movies with on-screen smoking were rated for youth, and the tobacco industry has a well-documented history of promoting tobacco use on-screen; and  
 “Whereas a scientific report released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that 185,000 children in Ontario today will be recruited to smoking by exposure to on-screen smoking, and more than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related diseases incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and  
 “Whereas the Ontario government has a stated goal to achieve the lowest smoking rates in Canada, and 79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A...;  
 “Whereas the Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act...;

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

“To examine the ways in which the regulations of the Film Classification Act could be amended to reduce smoking in youth-rated films released in Ontario.”

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Unfortunately, that concludes the time we have available this afternoon for petitions.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CANNABIS, SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO AND ROAD SAFETY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2017

### LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CANNABIS, L'ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE ET LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 16, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 174, An Act to enact the Cannabis Act, 2017, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017 and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, to repeal two Acts and to make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act respecting alcohol, drugs and other matters / Projet de loi 174, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur le cannabis, la Loi de 2017 sur la Société ontarienne de vente du cannabis et la Loi de 2017 favorisant un Ontario sans fumée, abrogeant deux lois et modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne l'alcool, les drogues et d'autres questions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Well, you got it, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for the opportunity to rise and debate Bill 174. I'm pleased to join the debate here today. I know my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound will be up shortly to debate this bill.

In the words of our Attorney General, it is “a bill that, if passed, would move Ontario forward with a safe and sensible transition to the federal legalization of cannabis.”

Speaker, having had some time to consider the legislation, which is being referred to, in shorthand, as the Cannabis Act, I can say I fully support having the use of automated school bus camera systems and getting legal recognition for the evidence obtained from such systems.

I'd like to begin by congratulating the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, who brought forward this legislation in a private member's bill early on in this session. School bus blow-bys are a very scary and all-too-common occurrence in our communities. Even with red lights flashing and the stop sign extended, motorists often

speed by school buses as they pick up and drop off kids. There are a few videos that have circulated all across different social media of very young children exiting their school bus and having a terrifyingly close call with a vehicle that clearly is making no attempt to brake. I'm sure all of us here have seen them. As a parent myself, it's an absolute nightmare to watch, and the perpetrators are rarely held to account. To date, bus drivers have been expected to note the full licence plate number, a description of the vehicle and a description of the driver if there's hope of holding the offender to account. That's a lot of information to take in very quickly, in a moment that I'm sure is extraordinarily stressful: watching as children for whom you feel responsible have their lives endangered. The expectation that they're going to capture all that information—licence plate, vehicle, what the driver looked like—doesn't strike me as being very realistic. This is a law we're hearing is being violated regularly and which has proven to be nearly impossible to enforce consistently across the province. It's obviously a critically important law. That is a situation that it is essential to take action on.

So, Speaker, when the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex brought forward legislation to address this deeply troubling problem back in November 2014, I was thrilled to see it pass second reading with unanimous support—because this type of issue clearly demands all-party support to be passed and brought into force as quickly as possible.

And then that bill, Bill 50, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (School Bus Camera System), was left to die at committee. The Liberal government would not bring it forward to committee, and would not take the steps necessary to make it law in the province of Ontario. Then, of course, Speaker, the government prorogued, and all the bills they had left to linger on the order paper were killed.

So the PC member for Chatham–Kent–Essex brought forward the legislation once again. We debated it here in this House again, this time as Bill 94, and again called it the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (School Bus Camera Systems), and it passed second reading, again with unanimous support. That was nine months ago.

Then came the Safer School Zones Act. The PC caucus yet again tried to get these safety measures in place by proposing an amendment to the Safer School Zones Act, a related government bill on track for speedy passage. Again, the Liberal government refused to allow these measures to become law.

Now we find essentially the same legislation tucked into a massive bill about something else entirely, which is a tactic that we often see across the border. In the United States Senate, it isn't uncommon to see a rider—essentially, an unrelated bit of legislation—attached to a bill to ensure or prevent its passage. By tacking a desirable provision to a controversial bill, the hope is to make sure that bill gets passed. Conversely, a controversial amendment might be added to prevent a popular bill from moving forward. Sometimes it's just about trying to change the conversation.

Speaker, it is disheartening to see this type of tactic being used here in Ontario, where we are accustomed to a more thoughtful and forthright approach to policy legislation. Cameras on school buses clearly have nothing to do with selling pot. I have yet to hear anyone dispute that. Why is the government playing these games with school bus safety? We should be voting on policies on the basis of whether they're good for our constituents, not on the basis of what they're attached to. It's so disappointing to see the Liberal government adopting these American-style political tactics. These tactics have no place in Canada.

When the transportation minister was asked about this, he said, "The travelling public wants to make sure these laws are passed so that they can have safety, and the means by which that occurs is less relevant to most people." Speaker, I take real issue with that. What the minister is saying there is that the ends justify the means. It's saying that the legislative process, our very democracy here in Ontario, isn't all that important. That is very dangerous ground. The people of this province do care that the integrity of the legislative process is maintained. They care about important policies being debated openly and having each policy voted on based on its own merit. For a minister of this government to shrug off democratic norms like that is deeply troubling.

When the Attorney General was asked about this ploy by reporters here at the Legislature, he said, "We're finding an efficient way of making a good idea move forward," which makes no sense. This government has bypassed many opportunities to put these measures in place.

While I can't say I find it altogether surprising that the most efficient route this government could find to enact a law is to debate it twice, sit on it for years, defeat it as an amendment and then reintroduce it in a completely unrelated piece of legislation, I think most people who don't pay attention to the day-to-day operations of this Liberal government might find that explanation somewhat astonishing.

#### 1340

For years, this same legislation sat on a shelf. For years, these measures to hold reckless drivers to account, drivers who have endangered children's lives, have not been in place in Ontario because this government wouldn't move forward with an idea advocated by our caucus. I would hate to think that this government was playing games or putting petty partisanship ahead of something as important as protecting student safety. But here we are, debating these school bus safety measures for a fourth time since the Liberals won a majority government.

Speaker, not that long after the Liberals won a majority government under the current Premier, this issue was highlighted in the media after a month-long trial of cameras on buses captured evidence of hundreds of drivers blowing by stopped school buses. I'd like to read from a related article published by the CBC back on November 7, 2014:

"Safety advocates and some school bus companies want to crack down on careless drivers with cameras—capturing footage of motorists who ignore the stop signs and flashing lights when children are disembarking.

"A month-long trial run by Xerox Cameras and the Toronto District School Board saw hundreds of drivers who broke the law and kept going past stopped buses.

"It's a huge issue when you consider there's 72 kids on that school bus," said Brian Patterson, president of the Ontario Safety League.

"But to convict someone of failing to stop, a bus driver must provide the full licence plate number, a description of the vehicle and of the driver.

"That's virtually impossible, and that's the challenge," said Glenn Attridge of Attridge Transportation."

This article was from three years ago. If protecting these kids was a priority for this government, we would have had this law by now. And not only did this government not take the initiative to bring forward that legislation until now, their members stood and debated Bill 50 and then Bill 94, they passed over these bills at committee time and time again, and then they refused to accept the PC amendment to the Safer School Zones Act, which would have accomplished the very same thing.

In September 2016, there was a deeply disturbing article published in the Cambridge Times, which it's difficult to believe didn't prompt action from the government. I'm going to read a bit about that situation from the Waterloo region as well:

"Student transportation of Waterloo region general manager Benoit Bourgault believed he had a good idea of how bad drivers are when it comes to obeying school bus safety laws.

"It turns out drivers are even worse than previously believed. And now he has the evidence to prove it.

"It keeps me awake at night," said the transportation manager.

"Working to improve safety on the roads for students, Bourgault urged local school board and regional officials to consider embracing video technology to help catch and penalize drivers who fail to stop when school bus lights are flashing and stop signs are extended.

"Based on approximate assessments provided by reports from school bus drivers, it was believed between 500 and 700 drivers didn't stop for school buses on the region's roads each week.

"A pilot project that placed video cameras on the retractable stop signs of six school buses between May 24 and June 30 discovered 97 vehicles passed by a yellow school bus with its stop arm extended and lights flashing.

"According to a report slated for presentation at Waterloo Region District School Board last night (Sept. 26), when extrapolated to include all school buses, the number of violators per week is actually closer to 700 or more.

"When Bourgault analyzed actual video footage with police, there were some incidents that made him cringe with fear for students' safety.

“There are some clear ones where the sign is fully extended and two, three, four cars are driving by.”

“Some of the footage was downright frightening, he said.

“We have one student that almost got hit twice crossing the road.”

“The close call happened along Water Street between Galt Collegiate Institute and the Delta (where Water Street meets Dundas Street and Coronation Boulevard).

“The bus had pulled over on the right lane and a student hopped off the bus and was clear to start crossing, and moved into the middle lane. A car approached and the driver, just seeing the child in the nick of time, stopped just shy of passing the bus.

“Seconds later, the student made his way across the other side of the road and was just stepping on the sidewalk as a car in the outer lane blew right by him and the other lanes of stopped vehicles.

“Drivers continue to put children’s safety at risk every day, insists Bourgault.”

Speaker, it’s unbelievable: 700 drivers blowing by stopped buses every week just in the Waterloo region. This article is from over a year ago now. Quick math will tell you that means it’s happened about 8,000 times since that article was published, just in that region. Think about what that means for how many close calls have happened all across Ontario while this government hemmed and hawed over what to do. How many children have had close calls? How many children may have been injured or worse?

CBC was prompted to write again about this issue just last month in an article titled “Wheels of Bureaucracy Go Round for School Bus Cameras.” Speaker, I would like to highlight some of that report:

“What looked to be a speedy solution to the problem of school bus ‘blow-bys’ has been slowed to a crawl by red tape.

“From May 2014 to the end of October 2015, Safer Roads Ottawa put a camera on one east-end school bus route, to catch drivers illegally passing the bus when it was stopped with lights flashing. The stopping rule applies to drivers coming up behind a school bus, and unless there’s a median, to drivers approaching from the other direction as well. The current fine for a first offence is \$490.

“Police laid 75 charges during the pilot, and found video evidence of another 150 violations which police weren’t able to pursue within the constraints of the program resources, according to Safer Roads Ottawa coordinator Rob Wilkinson.

“Backers of the program told CBC News in spring 2015 that they hoped to expand it across the city by fall, but two years later, no cameras are operating.”

The article goes on, Mr. Speaker: “Ottawa is not the only community with concerns about drivers around school buses.

“In late September, a father in Perth, Ontario, posted video of a driver speeding past his children’s school bus. The video was shared widely on social media, and On-

tario Provincial Police later charged a 68-year-old woman.

“A week earlier, a Windsor-area mother had called for cameras after witnessing a car barrel past her daughter’s school bus on the road’s gravel shoulder.

“Such concerns have prompted Rick Nicholls, the” PC “MPP for Chatham–Kent–Essex, to put forward a private member’s bill to eliminate yet another obstacle to school bus camera programs, which is the need for a witness—frequently the bus driver—to support the video evidence if a ticketed driver contests the charge.

“That bill passed second reading in February, and Nicholls said he had hoped it could become law before the Legislature’s summer recess. It’s now in limbo until the government decides to call it up for consideration by a Queen’s Park committee.

“In late September, in response to questions from Nicholls, Minister of Transportation Steven Del Duca said the government would consult on the issue.

“Ottawa’s program will proceed with or without that change to the law, according to Gatien, adding that no drivers contested charges laid during the Ottawa pilot. But it could be a hardship for school bus drivers if they’re asked to forgo work and income to appear in court.

“Over at Safer Roads Ottawa, Wilkinson is buoyed by the thought this city’s pioneering slog through red tape will clear the way for other municipalities to get school bus cameras quickly in the future.

“But as for when the cameras—ultimately six of them in total—will be deployed on Ottawa school buses, Wilkinson said, ‘I stopped answering that question really directly a few months ago. I would love them on my kids’ buses, and protecting them,’ he said. ‘We’re going to get there.’

“Meantime, Gatien said, drivers continue to flout the rules dangerously. One spot in Orleans near a roundabout on St. Joseph Boulevard is of particular concern to him.

““We can get somebody there every day,” said Gatien. “They’re just not getting the concept.””

Speaker, this is a problem I think all of us in this Legislature have heard about anecdotally from school bus drivers and from parents. But part of the issue is we don’t have hard numbers on just how often this is happening. These test cases that I just referenced give us some idea of how big a problem we have here in Ontario, but the government has been kicking the can down the road for a long time on both investigating and dealing with it.

### 1350

I’d like to speak about this from a more rural perspective as well. A lot of these test cases of using cameras on buses have been in cities where traffic conditions are very different from the more sparsely populated parts of our province. In rural Ontario, where homes are found along roads with high speed limits in long stretches without lights or signs, it is incredibly important that we take every precaution to protect students as they get on and off their school bus. With the implementation of full-day kindergarten, children as young as three are taking



the bus daily to and from school. While parents, teachers and bus drivers do their best to teach kids to be careful and observant around roadways, we can't put the onus of being situationally aware totally on the shoulders of these children.

This is an issue that should have been addressed a long, long time ago. As those articles highlighted, this isn't just about cameras and being able to hold people accountable. It's also about raising awareness and making people more conscious of the danger of failing to stop for school buses. I can't understand why this hasn't been a priority for this government.

Speaking of which, my colleague from Nepean–Carleton has rightfully been calling the government out on their priorities when it comes to spending on government advertisements. She has been calling for 10% of the government's \$56-million advertisement buy to focus on raising awareness of the opioid crisis. For reference, the government's fair hydro plan and ORPP self-promotion ads cost \$5.5 million and \$5.7 million. I think she's absolutely right, and I think this issue is another example of those skewed priorities. I think the public would have been much better served by hearing about school bus safety than about the ORPP. Although that isn't a high bar, the public would have been better served by hearing more about many, many things other than the ORPP.

At the start of every new school year, we see signs in front of fire stations and community centres urging drivers to watch out for school buses and to watch for kids being near the road. I and many of my colleagues here and many community groups will push that message through social media as well. That's really the only time that message is promoted. To date, raising awareness about this problem has been a truly grassroots effort. Communities are concerned, and the government has been very slow to step up.

From the articles I've cited here today and from the debate we've already heard on Bill 50, Bill 94 and this bill, we know this is a problem from September through June. The government has had no end of excuses why they couldn't or wouldn't address it, and now they have brought forward solutions. If it weren't for the efforts of the members from Chatham–Kent–Essex and Kitchener–Conestoga, I doubt we would be discussing this here today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I listened intently to the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, and he spent his entire debate time talking about the road safety amendments to the Highway Traffic Act. I would have liked to hear somewhat of his opinion on the rest of the bill, the cannabis portion of the bill, and what his party plans to do on this bill. I was in the House the other day and I listened to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, and his entire debate was on the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. So I still haven't had the opportunity to hear the Conservatives' stand on the other two schedules of this bill. But that, very frankly, is the

fault of the Liberals, because they have again found a way to put together all different sorts of legislation into one bill. These are bills that could be separated. There never should be this many acts covering this many different topics under one piece of legislation.

I'm sure they're doing that just so that they can tell the Conservatives that they voted against something, just as they do within the budgets they bring forward. We will have a small piece of a huge budget bill that we fundamentally disagree with, and they'll try to wedge us on that. There will be several of those pieces. We will vote against their bad budget and then they will talk about the couple of little good things that are inside of that bill, saying that we voted against those two. It's just another game by the Liberals. It's unfortunate that they've put together another bill in the same format.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** It's a pleasure to rise and make a few comments in regard to the remarks from the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I was actually beginning to concur with the member from Hamilton Mountain, as he did spend at least 18 of the 20 minutes talking about road safety. My conclusion is that he actually approves of this part of the bill. But he failed, of course, to talk about perhaps the core of this particular issue, which is our regulation of the federal requirement to legalize the use of cannabis. I will pick up on his emphasis on safety and education when it comes to this bill's important focus on public health and harm reduction, because the most important thing is that we need to ensure that youth and young adult exposure to cannabis use is done in as safe a manner as possible.

We know that we need to protect Ontarians from the health hazards of second-hand smoke and vapour. We have taken the advice of CAMH, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, in relation to setting the age here in Ontario at 19. I think this is a very important thing that we're doing. This does mirror our use of alcohol in this province. The method by which cannabis will be available is the most important piece of all in this legislation: the use of an LCBO-like retail environment with that ability to check age to ensure that at the outset, when a purchase is made, it's done appropriately.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It's always a privilege to rise in the House, and I'm glad to be back. We talked about being away for a few weeks, but things haven't changed. The political games continue to go on. You have a bill that the government must follow through on a plan for cannabis, regulate it. It's mandated by the federal government. What do they do? They bring in something that we've been trying to get through over the last five or six years.

I remember hearing this government, not that long ago, talking about how one of our amendments that we proposed—the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex—about the school bus cameras: how they couldn't be put

in; it's too complicated and too soon. But lo and behold, they slip it in a bill. I'm trying to figure out why they do this, but of course they do this all the time.

The bill is very adamantly called the Cannabis Act. You'd wonder why you'd bring school safety into such a thing, because if you read through the bill, it really has nothing about keeping your children away from cannabis. I think that a lot of studies show that's an issue. Instead, they bring through this school bus camera—that if you took them at their word when they said it was impossible to do, lo and behold, a month later they slip it in the bill and they don't even want to talk about it. I guess it's that simple.

We see time and time again where we listen to our delegations and the people that come before us and we put in many thoughtful amendments and we see a government that refuses to accept any of them. This is just a classic case, where we see this now: something that was a bad idea just a month ago all of a sudden turns into something that they can quietly slip in a bill.

It's a government—they talk about it being politics, but really, it's time that we put the people first and talk about things and debate them fairly. That's really the problem we have in here: We try to bring things in front of people and debate them fairly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question or comment.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I am pleased to rise on behalf of my constituents to offer some brief comments about Bill 174, the Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act.

Speaker, my community of London is one of the Ontario cities that is going to be getting at least one of the 40 outlets that the government has indicated will be going forward. Unfortunately, the legislation that is before us today raises more questions than answers for my community as to how this legalization plan will actually roll out.

**1400**

In particular, Speaker, there is absolutely nothing in this bill to address how municipalities will be compensated for the additional costs that they will have to incur to enforce the government's proposed cannabis monopoly, to deal with the new requirements for public education, and, in addition, the health costs of the legalization of cannabis. We know that there's going to be a significant burden on cities for policing, for zoning, and for the public consultation that will have to go into determining where these outlets are going to be located and what kinds of changes have to be made to official plans to support that, and also the enforcement of legal cannabis sales.

Municipalities like London and other cities across the province will have many more questions that will have to be answered before we are actually prepared for July 2018.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Now I return to the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for his response.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain, the Minister of Community and Social Services, my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and my neighbouring MPP from London West. Thanks for adding, I guess, to my 20 minutes on Bill 174.

Speaker, I did dedicate 20 minutes to talking about school bus safety because, like many of us in here, I'm a parent; I'm a father. I'm extremely concerned. This issue goes back as far as the cameras on school buses, to 2014, and I think, quite frankly, it's a disgrace that the government hasn't moved forward on this and they're throwing it inside a piece of legislation, the Cannabis Act. It makes no sense to me. I think it's irresponsible of the government to do that. School bus blow-bys are very scary and they are an all-too-common occurrence across the communities which I've represented and across all communities across the province. Families are extremely concerned about this. When you take your child to the end of the laneway and they hop on that school bus, you're hoping they get to school and return home from school safely. This should have been dealt with years ago. I commend once again the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, who heard stories in his own community about this and saw the news, like we've all seen over the years, about the number of blow-bys in communities. I made reference to a number of these when I spoke for 20 minutes. These perpetrators are rarely held to account today, and they need to be. This should have been dealt with a long, long time ago. It is disgraceful that the government would put this part of legislation inside the Cannabis Act in Bill 174.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I am very pleased to be able to have an opportunity to speak to this bill, Bill 174, the Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017.

As we have been discussing since this piece of legislation hit the Legislature, there are a number of different components to this bill and they don't all connect in a way that we can figure out. We just had a fulsome discussion about road safety and buses.

Now I'm going to take my time and speak to the bulk of this bill, which is the cannabis focus of this legislation, because, Speaker, as I'm sure you're finding and the rest of us have been finding, this has been a very engaging topic in our communities, and an interesting topic, in that we are talking about a substance that up until recently—we teach our children that drugs are bad and this is a drug, and all of these conversations, and now we're having a conversation in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and more broadly in the country about legalization, about decriminalization, about access, about revenue and about responsible government. It's an interesting time. Ten years ago, maybe people didn't know when we would get here or if we would get here, but here we stand, with a piece of framework legislation in front of us.

This bill, while it is bulky, leaves out a lot of the details. This cannabis bill is a disappointment because it leaves us with so many questions. There are questions about rules that are going to govern the choice of specific retail locations or how many stores our big cities like Toronto, Mississauga, Hamilton and Ottawa are going to get. How big are these stores going to be? How is the cannabis going to be priced? Is it going to be competitive? How will it be taxed? We have questions about partnerships with our municipalities or even about an understanding with our municipalities.

We support the legalization of recreational cannabis and support the LCBO's role in this—and I'll get more into that in a bit. But there are so many questions about this. The government seemingly arbitrarily chose these 40 locations. They've made their list. It turns out that there hasn't been consultation with the host communities. I know that my community of Oshawa would have opinions, but we're not on the list, nor do we know if we're going to be on the list. The Premier has let municipalities down yet again. They put this list out before they even consulted thoroughly with these potential host communities. No shock there—but again, disappointing.

A bit of a quick breakdown: The first schedule of this bill is the Cannabis Act, and the goal of this is to protect public health and safety, protect youth and restrict their access to cannabis, and ensure that the sale of cannabis is in accordance with schedule 2, which is the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act.

We know that the sale of cannabis out in our communities is a fairly competitive endeavour. We have an illicit, illegal set-up currently going, and what this is hoping to do is to deter folks, to eliminate the illicit market and to capitalize fairly on the revenue that I think our public ultimately wants to see.

There are so many questions around that. When you look at the street value of cannabis versus the proposed value in one of these dispensary storefronts, how is this government going to ensure that this legal framework ensures a competitive environment? If it isn't competitive, we're going to be spending a lot of money on these stores, and we aren't going to be sure that that isn't a waste of money if they can't even demonstrate that they've done a solid business case, and we haven't seen that. Our critic on this file, the member from Essex, in his one-hour speech made that very clear—he has been asking everybody. He has been asking all of the bureaucrats and the policy folks and everyone who has been working on this bill. He wants to know where that business case is and what the projected volume is, and, "Let's talk about supply and how to be competitive." There are no answers, or none that we have been given. So we encourage the government to be forthcoming, and if they haven't done the math on this, they probably should do it.

The biggest—well, it's not the biggest; this whole thing is big. But one of the big parts of this bill that the government is making very clear is that no one shall be allowed to sell cannabis except through the Ontario

Cannabis Retail Corp., the OCRC. When we look across our communities and see the LCBO—that's where we can purchase alcohol. We're going to have OCRCs, and we have yet to see what that will look like, but it's through the LCBO or in partnership—not partnership; the LCBO, I guess, is almost like a parent entity responsible for the OCRC.

#### 1410

This piece of legislation goes fairly tough when it comes to penalties for anyone who would endeavour to sell cannabis illegally, as it should be. We want to deter, we want to eliminate the illicit market. There are pieces of this bill that focus on landlords, that no landlord shall knowingly allow their premises to be used for unlawful selling or distribution. It's interesting, though; there is no equivalent provision under the Liquor Licence Act that holds landlords so liable. A couple of months ago it was a landlord who came to my office to advocate for their tenants, and they were concerned about how this legislation is going to affect their buildings. One gentleman did come in and talk to us about the federal decision to allow folks to have four personal plants that they can grow. His concern, as the landlord, was grow lamps, the increased potential for hydro use and electricity use, and how that cost would be distributed and borne by the rest of the tenants. That is one thing that is part of this broader conversation.

But there are other pieces to this—that if, through this legal mechanism, someone buys cannabis, it can only be consumed in private residences. There is no public space where it can be consumed. We've seen that, of course, with smoking anything else as well, Speaker, but it brings up an interesting point that, again, the member from Essex brought up. In Windsor, they have folks who come over on a regular basis because the legal drinking age is 19, which is a bit of a draw for folks who are living in the States and not yet 21. It's a tourist draw, that they can partake of alcohol in our fine province. Well, now we have a situation where the age for use of cannabis is going to be 19 as well and you're going to have an influx, essentially, of cannabis tourism. While they will be able to purchase this cannabis in legal storefronts, they won't be able to consume it because they don't live in Ontario. So for them not to be able to safely or legally use what they are legally allowed to purchase, there's going to be some real tension there. And beyond tension, that's a legal concern, obviously, because then they can't take it back across to the States.

Again, we have a piece of legislation here where maybe we haven't done all of the math on all of the situations. I know the government is open to looking at—I forget how they worded it—the feasibility of other spaces for consumption. We see in communities places like compassion lounges. I don't know if that's a direction that they're going or if they're working with municipalities and different partners to make sure we don't have a bunch of loopholes that snag and ensnare people unexpectedly.

Gosh, there's so much in this and so much to talk about.

The penalties are significant. The penalties, however, for violating the government's cannabis sales monopoly are much higher than the maximum penalties for selling cannabis to minors. I thought that was interesting. These maximum penalties are vastly higher than what faces unlicensed liquor sellers under the Liquor Licence Act. As you're really delving into this—and I'm not suggesting that people not be penalized for doing things that are illegal, but it is interesting that the penalties are so high for challenging the government's sales monopoly rather than the focus on keeping our youth away from this.

It is just interesting that the government really, really wants to get a lot out of this. I get it: Revenue is revenue. We had hydro and then we sold it, and that was a revenue stream that was predictable.

So here we have a big opportunity to bring in big money—maybe, because we haven't seen the business case. I hope there is one, but like I said, how do we know that it will be priced competitively? How are they going to ensure that? I don't know.

The government wants a lot of money coming in from this. They're going to make sure to squash any other illegal ventures. Absolutely, squash them. We're doing this as a country and as a province because we want a safe and responsible legal framework if this is going to be an accessible substance. We want to make sure, though, as with any new venture, that we do it well, we do it responsibly and we do it right. So we have lots of questions.

Briefly, schedule 3 is the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. It repeals the previous Smoke-Free Ontario Act and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015, and basically re-enacts both of them in the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017. It doesn't, however, seem to re-enact the vicarious liability clause from section 3(4) of the existing Smoke-Free Ontario Act that deems the owner of a store who fails to exercise due diligence to be liable for a sale of tobacco to minors.

Again, why are we loosening a little bit the access for minors? We want to keep that tight because when it comes to being a responsible and capable government, we can't just do a cash grab—open something up to have all the money come in and sort of wash our hands of who has access. We need to keep our youth safe and we need to do this responsibly, even if it means losing out on a couple of bucks from inappropriate sales to minors. We need to be responsible.

As we've heard from the PCs today, we know that schedule 4 is the road safety amendments to the Highway Traffic Act. They focused on bus safety, but some of the other pieces that are being updated or brought in—it adopts a zero-tolerance approach to drugged driving by young, novice and commercial drivers. A zero-tolerance approach—great.

There are also pieces—automatic licence suspensions applied to commercial motor vehicle drivers when approved drug screening equipment indicates a non-zero amount of any drug that the police officer believes to be unauthorized for medicinal use.

I'm actually going to deviate from that a second. One of the conversations I've had with members of council in my municipality is that this is going to look different in every municipality, in every backyard. If folks are going to be partaking of cannabis in their own space or their backyard, this is more often than not a smoked substance. Smoke doesn't actually hold still. It doesn't stay put. It drifts, it wafts and it hops fences. It will do what it's going to do.

Some of the questions are not just about enforcing but also about unavoidable or unintended exposure. If you're sitting in your backyard having a barbecue in the summer and the guy beside you or your neighbour has cannabis smoke wafting into your shared space—I don't know how all of the toxicology works, but is that going to be someone who could potentially register on a piece of federally regulated equipment that they have cannabis in their system if they're pulled over?

This was a question, actually, that the mayor brought up. If you have someone who in their line of work is subject to random drug tests and they have it in their system when they aren't actually using cannabis, we do need to talk about exposure. We need to talk about what on earth the municipalities are going to do to enforce it and how they are going to figure all that out, because if you're going to increase their responsibility for enforcing these rules but you're not giving them additional supports, direction or resources, we are going to find that a struggle with our municipalities.

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Anyway, back to schedule 4: It has provisions in here about alcohol being detected. If the police officer reasonably suspects that they have alcohol in their system, they can require a second test to determine the concentration of alcohol in the driver's body. But that's about alcohol. A friend of mine was in an accident with someone who was determined to be impaired. Without a proper roadside test that can measure the cannabis in their system—and, at this point, even detect for sure; we don't yet have that federally regulated piece out in our communities. It's not about putting the cart before the horse; I don't think this government has done due diligence or done all of the work to make sure that this rollout into our communities is not just responsible but safe. I would like to see them answer those questions. I would like to see them make the commitments to work with municipalities, to work with law enforcement, to work with our neighbours to ensure that we do this right and we do this well.

Let's see; what else? So many pieces. Really, it's a hot topic for the last stretch of time. You can't spend any time in your community at a park or anywhere else without someone coming up and asking you about cannabis and wanting to talk about what this will look like. In the last federal election, this was a significant issue that everyone wanted to talk about. They are wanting to see how this is all going to play out and what it's going to look like in our communities. I'm curious as well, and I don't see all of those pieces in this legislation.

We don't have a lot of the research that has been done because this is a prohibited and schedule 1 narcotic in the

US—so we don't have a lot of research about that. The government has to continue the ongoing research, learning and the education side because this is uncharted territory. I don't ever have faith in this government that they do things well or that they do things responsibly. I think they do things halfway; they do things quickly. I think they're really excited to get in on the cannabis conversation because they saw how well it went for the federal campaign. Here we have it actually rolling out in our communities, and there are so many questions about the taxation regime or any revenue-sharing with municipalities. How are we going to support the municipalities as they are enforcing or figuring out—and doing all of the homework that this government really hates to do? When it comes to safety and security at the roadside and the effects on youth, what is the education going to look like? Are we going to have labels on packages or in the windows of storefronts? What are the storefronts even going to look like? What will the cost be? What is the anticipated volume? How are they going to meet the demand? Where will the supply come from? How are they going to be competitive with street value? All of this, I honestly don't know if they have considered.

Here we have the piece of legislation. We're going to debate it. We're going to work with our community partners, go to committee and hopefully make this the best version of this bill that it so much needs to be.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Chris Ballard:** Some good questions and good comments from the previous speaker.

I just wanted to touch lightly on some of the key messages and some of the key issues that I'm hearing, not only from that presentation but certainly hearing in the community.

A bit of background for those who haven't been involved: What Ontario is putting forward is a response to the federal legalization of cannabis. What Ontario is doing, Speaker, is proposing a very safe and a very sensible framework to govern recreational cannabis use within the province. And I can assure citizens that even as cannabis becomes legalized, it will remain a carefully controlled substance in Ontario subject to some pretty strict rules when it comes to both use and retail distribution.

Speaker, Ontario has significant experience and history managing both tobacco and alcohol—as well as the practical experience of other jurisdictions that have recently introduced legislation. The government has done the math. I can say that in setting the rules that will apply here in Ontario, the government is guided by two very important principles: First, we are taking a safe approach by protecting youth, by ensuring that retail distribution will be carefully controlled; and second, we're taking a sensible approach, consulting widely with the public, public health, municipalities, indigenous communities, and by learning from the experience of other jurisdictions that have gone before us. We wanted to learn what they've done right and what they would do differently.

We're committed to getting this transition right.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'm pleased to rise to add my comments to the member from Oshawa's speech just a minute ago. She touched on many things that are in this bill that she has issues with. I certainly do have issues with a number of pieces of this bill, and I'll be touching on a few of them when I do my 10 minutes at the end of the session.

Speaker, one of the things that she said was that a lot of people have been talking to her about this legislation, about the legalizing of marijuana. I have got about zero people that I can remember in my riding talking to me about how important this legislation is. Nobody is talking about it. They're more interested in—they're trying to pay their hydro bills. That's one big issue in my riding. That seems to be one of their issues, and yet we know how the government listens to that.

I do want to bring up one aspect of what the member from Oshawa talked about: the enforcement of the rules. Police are not going to be ready for this. Police are not going to have the tools that will allow them to enforce the safe use of marijuana, especially when people are intoxicated by this and driving down the road. This has been something that has been talked about for quite a while, ever since this legislation was brought up: Our law enforcement people are not going to have the tools to do it with.

I also had a conversation with a doctor last week, and actually, she did talk about this. She said that we're letting folks who are 18 and older use this product, and brain development does not stop until 25 years of age, so what are we doing with these people?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** It is a pleasure to rise to offer some comments on the speech from my colleague the member for Oshawa with regard to Bill 174, the Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act.

One of the points that she made that deserves to be repeated is around the inconsistencies in the penalties that are set out in this act when it comes to selling cannabis to minors compared to existing penalties related to selling alcohol to minors and selling cigarettes to minors. Certainly, she has mentioned that the risks of some kind of effect on brain development are significant for young people, whose brains are developing up to age 25, and this is what Ontarians would expect from this Legislature—that we would put in place very stringent protections for our youth. However, ironically, the penalties that are set out in this legislation for selling cannabis to minors are actually less—the financial penalties are less, the prospects of imprisonment or the length of imprisonment are less—when compared to the Liquor Licence Act and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. This is a major concern, because certainly when we are putting in place a regulatory framework, we want to ensure that the risks of cannabis, the risks of cigarettes, the risks of alcohol—that all of these risks are acknowledged and

that the appropriate protections are put in place. We are concerned that this legislation perhaps doesn't do enough to protect our young people.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Etobicoke North.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** As you are aware, we in the Legislature of Ontario are bound and also inspired by the federal legalization of cannabis occurring in July 2018 and we need to create the on-the-ground framework.

This is going to be a very momentous weekend, because it is going to be the policy weekend for the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario. I think many are noting that basically it seems the Tories are doing everything we are, except four years later. That's approximately what I've been able to glean from the Conservative Party's mandate or their very studied silence with regard to it.

I have to salute the member from the fourth party. At least the man gets on the record. The honourable Jack MacLaren, the member of the Trillium Party, actually comes forward and whether it's popular or not, votes on principle—reflecting, by the way, his own constituents.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I hesitate to interrupt the member, but I would remind him that it's important that his comments relate to the presentation that was just given in the House by the member for Oshawa, and I hope he gets to that.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Absolutely, Speaker. I thank you for that reminder.

With regard to cannabis, if I might add some medical light to it: As you will know, we as physicians encounter it in a number of different guises. It's used for chronic pain, anxiety, depression, nausea, vomiting, arthritis, migraine, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, pediatric epilepsy, insomnia, post-traumatic stress disorder, inflammatory diseases of various kinds as well as cancer pain.

I have to say that having prescribed, monitored and seen some of the treatment outcomes, that we have actually, I would say, a new respect for this substance and cannabis in its various uses, whether it's, by the way, smokable, injectable, inhalable and even, of course, now coming in oral forms. I think this is really just part of, as I said earlier, the government's mandate to reply to the feds.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Oshawa for her reply.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I appreciate most of the comments.

I would like to address first the comments from the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. He said that this is in response to federal legislation—yes, much of which we haven't seen. They had sort of left out edibles and now we've left out edibles, but they might have provisions for edibles. I don't know about injectables. I've never heard such a thing, but the doctor opposite just talked about injectable marijuana, so maybe they'll encourage that; who knows?

Maybe it exists; I don't know. To the member opposite and his comments: It's a response to legislation, but it doesn't have to be a rush job, for crying out loud. It needs to be fulsome. It needs to be correct.

To the member from Perth–Wellington: I don't know what to tell you. I think the difference from riding to riding—when I knock on doors, it's amazing how many folks in Oshawa want to talk about cannabis. They call it all sorts of different things, but I'm going to call it cannabis. I don't know about the folks in your riding. I don't know where they're partaking or if they do. Again, different communities, different municipalities—we need to have different conversations about the needs in communities, right? Knock on a few different doors, I would encourage the member.

To his point that police are not going to be ready or that they don't have the tools—that is an interesting one because in the Police Services Act—that's another piece of legislation where the government is wanting to privatize all sorts of police services. One of the things they want to privatize is the administration of Breathalyzers. If we are going to have a federally approved Breathalyzer for testing for cannabis at the side of the road, that may not even be done by a police officer if this government has their way. That's a whole other conversation for another day that I'm looking forward to having.

Questions about brain development and questions about youth effects: We need stringent protections as we're going forward with this change.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** Mr. Speaker, Bill 174, the Ontario Cannabis Act, 2017, is a bad bill. It is bad business. It seeks to put government into a business that government has no business being in. Government does not know anything about the business of cannabis, government does not like the business of cannabis and, most important of all, government is not good at business, period. Government should not be involved in any business that the private sector can do. Government should only be involved in business that only government can do.

At the Trillium Party, we understand that small business is the backbone of Ontario's economy. We know that small business creates 75% to 80% of all private sector jobs in Ontario. If small business thrives, Ontario thrives. We are strongly opposed to the government's plan to sell legal cannabis through a large, single-desk LCBO-type government monopoly agency. The Trillium Party strongly supports selling legal cannabis through regulated, independent small business outlets. This will be competitive, effective—

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** On a point of order, the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I don't believe we have a quorum present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is there a quorum present in the House?

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** There is a quorum present.

I return to the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** The Trillium Party strongly supports selling legal cannabis through regulated, independent small business outlets. This will be competitive, effective and efficient, and the lowest-cost service to consumers. The competition that comes from a free market economy will encourage consumers to use regulated cannabis because it will be at a competitive price. This lowest price will provide the strongest competition for illegal sellers of unregulated cannabis and will thus discourage the unregulated illegal sellers on the street. This is the main objective. Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's plan to monopolize the sale of cannabis will be a costly, doomed attempt to deny and deprive Ontario taxpayers and citizens of an equal opportunity to help grow the emerging legal cannabis industry.

Private, independent businesses are the lifeblood of Ontario. Our communities are diverse and spread out across this large province, with many citizens eager for a chance to be small business owners. We should not allow the Ontario Liberals to destroy the dreams of Ontario citizens who have been hoping for the ability to take part in the provincial retail sale of adult-use cannabis. The Liberals may talk about supporting entrepreneurs and businesses in Ontario, but the Cannabis Act they propose actively holds back many of our young, female and minority group citizens who are already struggling to find opportunities in business.

Today we have a guest who is with us here today in the gallery, Virginia Vidal, who exemplifies the type of businesswoman who is being shut out from the legal cannabis industry by the Ontario Liberal government's proposed Cannabis Act. Virginia has invested years of passion and work to create a product that is professional and in high demand. She runs Mary's Wellness Ltd., a line of cannabis-infused teas and coffee products. Virginia, a mother of six children and caregiver to her elderly grandmother, has been victimized by cannabis laws in the past and is one of the few citizens who have been able to defeat the charges in court. After great expense financially and personally, she defended herself. Many others attempted the same, but most are punished by the laws with no ability to defend themselves.

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Our citizens like Virginia trust the government to protect their rights and freedoms, and to allow our residents to enjoy opportunities to contribute to our province. The Liberal Cannabis Act will deprive Virginia and thousands of others of those rights and opportunities, and will criminalize her for being an entrepreneur.

Legalization was supposed to offer our fellow citizens the opportunity to engage in a new business model to provide the products and related services that have been in demand for decades while creating jobs and tax revenue, leasing storefronts, and adding to the diversity of our communities. Many Canadians use cannabis, and

they currently face criminalization and extreme hardships in accessing and supplying that product. Many citizens have been involved in the cannabis industry for years and have been waiting for the chance to be legalized.

Unfortunately, the federal Liberal legislation, Bill C-45, does not end criminalization, and allows provinces to introduce their own rules for distribution and retail, which has resulted in this government proposing the worst possible model. Our provincial government owes it to our citizens to get rid of roadblocks and unfair hurdles that deny employment opportunities to the millions of residents of Ontario. We should support the cannabis industry in Ontario. We should promote the creation of as many jobs as possible in retail, marketing, farming, manufacturing, tourism, medicine, research and development, and other ancillary businesses.

It is offensive that the Ontario government is not only going to deny the ability of our residents to enjoy the benefits of a vibrant, diverse, privately run cannabis industry, but they are also actively spending hundreds of millions of dollars on the creation of a new bureaucracy that is unnecessary and viewed with well-deserved skepticism. Not only will the Ontario government waste our precious, limited tax dollars on a new cannabis bureaucracy, but they are also promising to finance a new massive law enforcement crackdown on the existing cannabis industry, an industry that was supposed to be brought out of the shadows and into the light with legalization.

The continued criminalization and demonization of the cannabis industry will make it even more difficult for the Ontario government to be taken seriously as a retailer of legal, recreational cannabis. The Ontario government has no expertise in cannabis. They have no history with or knowledge of the product being discussed in today's legislation, and, even worse, they express disdain for the very substance they seek to monopolize and profit from.

How can the Ontario Liberal government be trusted to manage this new marijuana model efficiently? How can they have any credibility when they do such a poor job of managing the other businesses they're engaged in? How can they claim to be eliminating the criminal market in cannabis when they introduce legislation that continues to criminalize cannabis with even harsher penalties?

I say no to the exclusion of our citizens from this emerging industry. I say no to these barriers being put up to prevent the most experienced and knowledgeable to fairly participate. I say no to the increased penalties and violations of rights contained in Bill 174.

The Ontario Liberal plan for a pot monopoly is doomed to fail and will cost Ontario taxpayers many hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars in the years to come. The Ontario government should let our fellow responsible, experienced, taxpaying entrepreneurs and business owners develop and promote this new legal cannabis industry in a way that benefits everyone, not just the Ontario government.

Government should not be in the business of running businesses. We have seen how that has failed before. The Liberals should throw out this entire flawed piece of

Cannabis Act legislation and introduce reasonable regulations to let our citizens create the jobs and tax revenue that a truly fair, free market cannabis legalization retail model can provide.

Mr. Speaker, I will be voting no on Bill 174, the Ontario Cannabis Act of 2017.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes, I'd like to comment on the presentation from my friend from Carleton–Mississippi Mills. One point I'd like to make—I don't know whether the government is listening—is that we can learn from those jurisdictions that have gone before us. I'm thinking of the state of Colorado and Washington state. It was five years ago—actually, in November 2012—that both Colorado and Washington became the first two states to legalize not only personal possession but also the retail sale that the member was just talking about. I've been out to Washington once for presentations on this and out to Colorado twice and have had presentations. Colorado has made an awful lot of mistakes. They have the commercial sale extended from the medical marijuana distribution system.

In contrast, the state of Washington didn't have the medical marijuana market before and they have basically set up kind of a government-controlled system which sounds like it is something that this present government might be looking at. I'm just checking my note. Let's see: Washington began retail sales in 2014, under the Washington State Liquor Control Board. Colorado, as you know, is existing—almost storefronts; many of them are growing cannabis in a warehouse in the back. Certainly, Colorado has made an awful lot of mistakes, and I suspect Washington has as well. Given my experience with 20 years at the Addiction Research Foundation, this government will make a tremendous number of mistakes with this distribution system in the next few years.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I listened intently to the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, and he brought up some points about things that I've wondered about also. What is going to happen to the current distributors who are running businesses in our ridings now and across the province? That's a major problem that I see within this bill. We're trying to create legislation to govern our province for federal legislation that currently isn't even finalized yet. So there are many questions of how we are possibly going to govern this accordingly to ensure that people who are producing teas and different ways of ingesting things for medical purposes—will they be caught in this? How is it going to look for them? How is this going to be taxed? How is this going to be policed? How is this going to be monitored? There are so many questions that we see as we continue to peel apart the layers of this legislation.

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And then all of the regulations that will come after the fact—nobody in this House will have any say on them,

because, as you know, regulation is created by the government, created by the ministers. They can put anything that they want into regulation. We will have absolutely no say, as legislators, on what that looks like.

What this is going to look like at the end of the day, I think, is really still very much up in the air. How folks are going to be affected and how they're going to deal with it and recoup costs and ensure that they are made whole again is still very unknown territory.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Kathryn McGarry:** It's a pleasure to stand up in the House on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge and add my comments to this debate on Bill 174, and address some of the comments made by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

In response to the federal legislation of cannabis by July 2018, Ontario is proposing a safe and sensible framework to govern recreational cannabis within the province. Even as it becomes legalized, cannabis will remain a carefully controlled substance in Ontario, subject to strict rules when it comes to both lawful use and retail distribution.

Ontario's approach is informed by provincial history in managing both tobacco and alcohol, as well as the practical experience of other jurisdictions that have recently introduced legalization.

In setting the rules that will apply here in Ontario, the government is guided by two key principles: First, we are taking a safe approach by protecting youth, by ensuring that retail distribution will be carefully controlled; and by introducing penalties for drug-impaired driving and prohibitions against public use that will further protect our youth.

As you know, Speaker, we have proposed that the legal age will mirror the legal age of consumption for alcohol, so youth will have to be age 19 before they are able to consume this product.

Secondly, we're taking a sensible approach by consulting and continuing to consult widely with the public, the police, public health experts, municipalities and indigenous communities, and by learning from the experience of other jurisdictions and by taking decisions in a deliberate, considered fashion.

We are committed to getting this right. We will ensure that we align with our priorities of protecting youth, promoting public health and safety, focusing on prevention and harm reduction and eliminating the illegal market.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one more question and comment.

The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills can now respond.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** I would like to thank the members from Haldimand–Norfolk, Hamilton Mountain and Cambridge for their comments.

It is unfortunate that Ontario has decided they want to go with a government monopoly agency. The province of Alberta, in contrast, under an NDP government, has gone with private, small business outlets, like we should do here. That would be the right thing to do.



What the government should be doing is sanctioning the existing small business cannabis retailers as legal business people, as opposed to the criminalization of these people, who are experts in their industry.

Virginia Vidal, who is sitting over here in the gallery with us, is such a business person. She has created products and developed a market, and successfully retails them and pays her taxes. She is running a business in Ontario and feeding her family.

Is she now to become an unemployed criminal? If this law was done properly and we acknowledged small business people and let them be in business, she and thousands like her could be employing people, creating profits, paying taxes and helping us to build the province of Ontario. That is the way it should be.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to stand and speak today to Bill 174, the Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act.

Bill 174 is supposed to be in response to the federal cannabis legislation, Bill C-45, which makes recreational use of pot legal in Canada provided that those 18 years and older may be permitted to possess and use cannabis, subject to any restrictions imposed by the provinces. The fact that the federal government is in the process of legalizing it means the individual provinces are now obligated to respond with their own framework with regard to the sale and distribution of cannabis.

By way of Bill 174, Ontario has proposed to establish the OCRC, the Ontario Cannabis—

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** When the Chair called for more debate, I believe I was standing. I believe I'm next in rotation, if that's the right phraseology to use. I'm seeing nods, so I gather that it is.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Please give me a moment to consult with the Clerk.

I thank the Minister of Transportation for his request for clarification. The independent member who just spoke sits there. I decided to go in rotation. I saw the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound stand up. If there was an agreement in the House of some sort, I wasn't aware of it.

The normal rotation would be, I understand, that after the independent member speaks, to go to the Conservatives.

The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has the floor. I apologize if there's any inconvenience to any member.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll continue on. I may have to talk a little faster to get it all in now, but I think I can do that.

By way of Bill 174, Ontario has proposed to establish the OCRC, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp., which will be the sole distributor and retailer of recreational cannabis here in our province. The bill also makes additional

changes to the Highway Traffic Safety Act and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act that are unrelated to the distribution and retail of recreational cannabis.

We're seeing a number of trends here of omnibus bills. We saw the Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act, which is bringing in, I think, about 14 or 15—maybe more than that—pieces of legislation in one, just because they're trying to steamroll through as we get to the end of the session. We need to do legislation properly. That's the reality that the government needs to respect.

The bill sets out penalties for those who sell or distribute cannabis outside of the OCRC, with the focus of shutting down the numerous illegal cannabis dispensaries which are currently operating throughout the province. The bill also includes penalties of fines of up to \$250,000 and jail time not exceeding two years for landlords who knowingly allow for the illegal distribution or sale of cannabis on their property, but there are also multiple other measures that are completely unrelated to cannabis that don't belong in Bill 174 and should be removed and reintroduced as separate bills.

I think the members have heard or read about the way New Brunswick has organized its pot legislation. For those who missed the debate speech by the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington—Randy Hillier, my colleague—I will rehash what he said about New Brunswick's cannabis legislation:

“The New Brunswick government tabled five separate cannabis bills: one for the retail corporation, one for making lawful—the cannabis use and the framework around that—as well as ... education and awareness of cannabis.”

The Liberals are doing nothing in regard to education, which is very interesting because just a little while ago here in the House the Minister of the Environment stood up and spoke to one of the biggest concerns that they had—protecting our youth. I would ask him and his whole party: Why, then, is there nothing specific to actual education for youth related to this act?

It's very important that the government recognize the need for separate bills for education and awareness. That is critical, particularly with our youth. We've heard from a number of speakers about the concern over the brain not being fully developed at that time, and yet they're legalizing it at this age. They may not have anything to do with the legalization because that's federal, but at the end of the day they certainly have the responsibility to ensure there is education and awareness, particularly for our youth.

We want to ask again in this House: Why didn't the Liberal government of Ontario focus on the education and promotion specific to youth? Instead of following best practices, they introduced this omnibus bill, Bill 174, which even sneaks in surprises like school bus cameras while completely leaving out essentials like public education and awareness.

Like New Brunswick, Alberta too—to the best of my knowledge—had introduced separate bills to deal with highway traffic act amendments and another for retail

distribution to allow for proper debate on these three critical aspects. Surprisingly, Bill 174 fails to adequately address, as I've already said a number of times, public education of our youth.

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Again, New Brunswick has introduced legislation to establish a stand-alone fund to promote youth education throughout the province, as well as help fund additional scientific research on cannabis use and abuse, and its effects on health. This, Mr. Speaker, we believe is fair—but it doesn't seem, despite them using the word "fair" all the time here, to Liberals.

They espouse the word "fair," in fact, but it's interesting that we just debated, in a special sitting here over the weekend, a college strike—the longest in provincial history. Where was the fairness to those college students? They—the ones in my riding and, I believe, across the province—certainly didn't see much fairness and felt that, actually, it was very unfair to them.

Instead of providing an opportunity to properly focus on debating cannabis distribution in Ontario, the Liberal government gives us something else—Bill 174—where they have crammed all kinds of measures that have no relation to cannabis distribution and that also, importantly, fail to adequately address public education concerns, as I say again and again and again, the education and awareness for our youth.

Manitoba introduced several acts to address health or safety concerns around cannabis consumption, so again, I'm a bit quizzical as to why in this case the government chose to not include education. They talk about this being safety—and yet one of our critical, key areas of responsibility is for our youth, in making sure they're properly educated and made aware, especially for something of such significant change in our province.

Manitoba separated the elements of cannabis distribution and retail from amendments to the Highway Traffic Act to address concerns of transportation of marijuana and drug-impaired driving. Why wouldn't the Liberal government have followed suit? Why would they not have shown leadership in a similar manner to two other provinces that have gone ahead and done this in, we believe, a very responsible manner—to actually debate the specific pieces so we all understand it?

This is monumental legislation. This is a monumental change in our society, to allow cannabis in our province and across our country, Mr. Speaker. Why would this government not show proper leadership and address those very specifics, like some of their colleagues and counterparts? Surely to goodness we can find a way to collaborate when there are other leading examples that have proven to work that we could learn from.

Instead of dividing the provisions into separate bills just as is being done in those provinces, they decide to jam Bill 174 with four different and unrelated schedules. So not only are they not compartmentalizing it and ensuring that we actually debate the merits of the very specific areas; they've crammed four other different and unrelated acts into this, just, I think, to throw people off.

So they start talking about the shiny object over here—which, again, we see very, very often in the Legislature.

What does school bus safety and children's safety on a school bus have to do with pot distribution and consumption? And by the way, if this is such a big concern, they could have actually supported my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex's PMB, which he introduced in this Legislature when he wanted to talk about and did talk about the safety arms on school buses. They did not support it. Again, it's very interesting that they had the opportunity and they didn't. And now they want to put it into a cannabis bill—very, very interesting. It's cynical to see this government go out of its way to fuddy an issue that truly deserves proper debate.

As I just mentioned, two of my caucus colleagues—my caucus colleague from the riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, Rick Nicholls, and the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, Michael Harris, have been actively pushing Liberals for stronger legislation to deal with careless driving and distracted driving penalties, and school bus cameras. So it's obvious the Liberals force our support without debate and politicize issues that have no business being politicized. They could have, again, debated those totally separately, had a proper, fundamental debate—which is what we're here to do—and not brought it in as an omnibus bill. So there is something going on, Mr. Speaker. I'll let the people of Ontario choose whether that was appropriate or not.

Seeing as there are multiple provisions in this bill that are entirely unrelated to the legalization and retail of recreational cannabis, those aspects should be removed from the bill and reintroduced as separate bills for debate before this House.

Looking at schedule 1, the Cannabis Act, we see the following: It prohibits sales and distribution outside of the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp., with the exception of medical cannabis—an exemption for medical marijuana patients for the sale, distribution, purchase or attempt to purchase, possession, consumption, offering to cultivate or cultivation, offering to propagate or propagation or offering to harvest or harvesting of cannabis.

It limits all youth under 19 from possessing, consuming, attempting to purchase, purchasing or distributing, cultivating, propagating, harvesting or offering to cultivate, propagate or harvest cannabis. Youth caught in possession of cannabis may be referred to an approved youth educational or prevention program instead of a fine. Also, the use of cannabis is prevented in public, in the home in the presence of a home health care worker, in a vehicle or boat, and anywhere deemed a prescribed place via regulation.

Transportation of cannabis is prohibited in a vehicle or boat unless packed in baggage which is fastened closed and out of reach of the driver. Police who have reasonable grounds to suspect that cannabis is not properly stored in a vehicle may at any time, without a warrant, enter and search a vehicle or boat and search any person found in it. This applies to medical marijuana.

Police can seize anything that is deemed to be evidence of an offence under the act; is being used in

connection with an offence under the act and, unless it is seized, would continue to be used in the commission of an offence under the act; or the thing is proceeds of an offence under the act.

It prohibits landlords from knowingly permitting property they own to be used for the illicit sale or distribution of cannabis. When charges are laid for an illicit sale or distribution of cannabis and there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a property—i.e., a storefront—was involved in said contravention, then it shall be closed and barred for entry until the final disposition of the charges laid. It may be ordered closed for a period not exceeding two years.

Fines under the act are as follows: no more than \$250,000 for corporations and no more than \$100,000 or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both, for an individual. Landlords who contravene the act are liable for a fine of not more than \$250,000 or no more than two years' prison time or both for a first offence. It increases to \$100,000 per day an offence took place and/or imprisonment for more than two years.

Corporations which contravene the act are liable for a fine between \$25,000 to \$1 million on first conviction; it increases to \$100,000 per day an offence took place and/or imprisonment for no more than two years.

Those under 19 who contravene section 10—possession, cultivation, etc.—are liable to a fine of not more than \$200. A fine for consuming marijuana in prohibited places on a first conviction is no more than \$1,000, and, for subsequent convictions, not more than \$5,000.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting again that in this House we have talked a number of times about the crackdown on illegal smoke shacks as pot dispensaries. Illegal shacks are a growing problem in Ontario, and represent \$800 million in unpaid tobacco taxes lost every year by this treasury. As I have said in this House many times and on many occasions, the illegal sale at smoke shacks is very harmful to our youth.

When you can buy a package of 250 cigarettes for less than \$10, that sadly is a case where it may very well encourage a young person to begin smoking, to begin a lifetime of that very harmful impact to themselves. It has been interesting when we have debated other acts in this House that the Liberal government of today seems to not be interested at all in going after those, yet they bring out a bill supposedly about the safety of cannabis and they don't even talk about it. What about the illegal operation of those facilities, where they are actual illegal smoke shacks that could be operating as illegal pot dispensaries? I hope the government will truly take a second look at those.

Looking at schedule 2, the Cannabis Retail Corp. Act, we see the following: The corporation is responsible for buying and selling cannabis and related products and for setting the price. It will be run by a board of directors that shall consist of at least three and not more than seven members appointed by the LCBO, subject to the approval of the minister. The members of the board of directors shall be appointed for a term not exceeding five years

and may be reappointed for further terms not exceeding five years each.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting again that this government chose to set up yet another bureaucracy rather than actually putting money into the education and awareness of our youth of the impacts and effects of cannabis. I find it very strange that they would actually go again to set up—because we've seen it a number of times in this House—partisan, crony appointments to a body that they can actually control and they can set the tone and they can set the agenda, as opposed to actually putting money into the safety of promotion and awareness for our youth.

The OCRC's net profit shall be determined and paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. It is my hope that in this case the auditor will be involved and make sure that they are using acceptable accounting practices, because we've seen recently in the Fair Hydro Act that they have actually moved money around and the Auditor General stepped up and said that that is not appropriate; that is not an appropriate and accredited use that every other province has used and we had used until they tried to use a different system.

I hope in this case, when I see it going into a consolidated fund, it will be tracked appropriately. Maybe, Mr. Speaker, they would accept an amendment that funds going into that Consolidated Revenue Fund would actually be set aside for education and awareness for our youth, which is a huge, huge oversight with this legislation as it currently is written.

The OCRC may borrow funds for capital expenditures. Cabinet may authorize the Minister of Finance to purchase securities of, or make loans to, the corporation in the amounts, at the times and on the terms determined by the minister, subject to maximum principal amounts specified by cabinet that may be purchased or advanced or that may be outstanding at any time. The corporation will be audited annually by the Auditor General.

#### 1510

Again, I go back to that point: I certainly hope they respect the Auditor General's opinion more in this case and actually use standardized, accepted accounting principles rather than some kind of jiggery-pokery that they used the last time, a bit of a shell game to move money off the books so it didn't show in their budget. That's exactly what they did, and they incurred a \$4-billion expenditure that won't be going to things like education and health care or those less fortunate when they did that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit—just because I see my time is running fairly short here—about a very significant piece that has been brought to my attention. I want to remind people that the Wynne Liberals have had two years since the government and opposition passed the drug-impaired laws in Bill 31, the Making Ontario Roads Safer act, to provide police the resources needed to keep our streets safe and properly crack down on drug-impaired driving, and they have failed to do so. Bill 31 already called for all those who fail a drug impairment test to face a driver's licence suspension for three, seven,

30 or 90 days. Bill 174 actually only impacts suspected young, novice and commercial drivers, who will be subject to federally approved—once the federal Cannabis Act is approved—oral swab tests, in addition to the roadside sobriety tests that can be utilized on all levels of licensed drivers.

The province has only provided training for 15% of officers who would be required to carry out this roadside testing and enforcement. Concerns we've heard are certainly, from the police side of the equation, "We don't have the resources. We don't have the proper machines to do this type of testing. We certainly haven't all received the training."

Mr. Speaker, do the people of Ontario really feel safe that only 15% of officers—it's a bit of a gamble here. Someone could be impaired in a vehicle, and if you get the right 15% of the population of our police officers—who do a great job, by the way—they may actually enforce; they may crack down. But at the other end, at the time, they may very well not have any training, so the person gets off scot-free, or they could do a charge and it may not be the right charge. So again, we're clogging up our court resources for something that could have been prevented had they actually taken the time. They have had two years. There's no excuse that they actually could not have got this done.

In September, OPP Deputy Commissioner Rick Barnum told a federal committee that the OPP only has 83 officers trained to recognize drug-impaired driving. They need up to 500, and yet we heard nothing today to help bridge that gap.

In September, Greenwood Village, Colorado police chief John Jackson indicated that legalization in that state drove impaired driving to skyrocket, stating, "We've seen the carnage on our highways from it." Colorado saw its highest number of vehicle crash fatalities in 12 years after pot was legalized. Of the 608 fatalities recorded, 125 were marijuana-related. Exceptions to the rules allowing drivers the use of the drug for medical purposes create a situation where the law is necessarily permitting impaired drivers on the road.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the federal government has approved, so there's not much the government can do about that. I'll give them a pass. But it's their job—this is the actual enforcement; this is the actual implication of how this is going to happen in Ontario. If they are truly serious about the safety of all people on our highways—they incorporated the highway act into this—then why did they not provide the proper training? Why are they not providing the proper resources to those people who are there?

Mr. Speaker, 15%, 83 officers out of 500, is a long way from having this truly ready to go so that the people of Ontario can very comfortably and convincingly drive down the highways knowing that they're safe. It's concerning that once again it seems that we want to expedite; we want to get on. We've bundled a whole bunch of things into this act that we're very concerned about. I'm very concerned from the whole perspective that the resources are not there.

There are a lot of questions. Many other speakers in this House have done the same thing. They've stood and asked and challenged on questions that aren't answered yet, and yet it's, "We're going forward. We're going to go forward again," like, sadly, the Liberals have done on a number of these.

Four times, school bus safety has come to this Legislature and has been voted down. I mentioned earlier my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex, with the safety arms on school buses. They could have done that in a separate piece of legislation and already made our highways safer and our students safer, but yet they are trying to bundle it in here just to take away the reality. They're trying to ram legislation through in this type of legislation, an omnibus bill, and yet, at the end of the day, it's buzzwords. They are saying it's about safety, but they haven't provided the resources.

There are a lot of unanswered questions from our police side of the equation, and certainly the courts are concerned. I'm hearing concerns about how much this might back up our courts, that there may be a lot of cases that go to court and people can't even be convicted because they haven't done it properly.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, I would ask this government to go back and review New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, to name a few. They actually separated the pieces of the legislation out so that everyone was clear. Everyone had time to properly debate it, and it was very much debated in a public manner so that everyone was consulted and felt truly safe. They do not, I believe, in the province of Ontario today, feel that this legislation is the best it could be. We need to do our best.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I appreciated the speech and remarks from the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who brings up excellent points that we should always be repeating, and that is about education, consultation and community trust in legislation.

The consultation side: Absolutely, we should have seen fulsome consultation, but certainly, from this point forward, we must see it. We need our municipalities to feel prepared. We need our law enforcement to have the tools and resources that they need—absolutely.

His questions about education and public information, especially when it comes our youth—great questions. When it comes to cannabis use and abuse, health hazards—any of those things—where is that conversation? How are we going to educate? We're saying, "Hey, new substance that you can buy" at this store that we don't yet exactly know what it will look like. But there are no risks or responsibilities associated with that consumption? Are they going to put warnings, like they do with cigarettes, on the packaging? I don't know, and neither do they, and that's a bit concerning. When it comes to education, public health—all of those pieces—we have to be responsible. The government has to be responsible and give this the thought and the attention it deserves.

As he brought up the penalties—and as we have talked about—for selling to minors or for minors, they're less stringent than they are with alcohol and tobacco. That is concerning.

The other thing—oh, we don't have time; I have five seconds left. All right. Well, I would love to talk another time about impaired driving and how we can ensure that our roads are always safe.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It's a great pleasure for me to stand and make comment on the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound's wonderful speech in the House here. He raised a number of very, very good issues, particularly around where I think he talks about the legislation being vague in areas and he wants more details. We know, Speaker, that in this piece of legislation it's very important that we get the base terms in place, and then we can deal with some of the devil being in the details in the regulations.

It gives us a lot more flexibility in order to move forward, and it's not just on the cannabis and the retail piece; it's also, if you look at what we are doing, in the vaping sections. I know there has been a lot of concern from a lot of people—people who run vape shops—that it all looks very draconian in the way it's set out in the act. But what the act really does is it sets out opportunities for exceptions to how things are handled, so they can be handled in a very responsible and meaningful way moving forward.

I have spoken with members of the Canadian Vaping Association, with Marc Kealey. They're in discussions, and they have been since the day that those vaping regulations were first passed in the Making Healthier Choices Act two years ago, but they were never proclaimed. So what we've got in this piece of legislation, in schedule 3, is actually marrying up what we have already debated and put forward in a previous iteration of the debate two years ago—just duplicating it here—so it's all in one heading under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. That's important, so we have consistency in how we manage things that are tobacco, tobacco-ish-like—and the marijuana pieces are all in that.

As I say, Speaker, it will be very important as we have those discussions with—I was just at an event with realtors, the Ontario Real Estate Association, and they raised concerns. I look forward to more comment from them about the provision that people can grow four plants in each unit. What is that going to look like, when as a real estate agent you try to certify that a building has never been any kind of a grow op? How are we going to manage that in an effective way?

So some good questions, and I appreciate the member's comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound brings up a number of very good points in his speech today concerning this bill. Certainly,

one is the protection of the citizens of Ontario—especially the youth. We are going to legalize—or the government wants to legalize—a drug that can have some big effects on youth, because they are allowed to purchase this after they're 18 years old. We've heard from a number of medical people that your brain keeps growing and keeps maturing until you're 25 years old. So what effect is this going to have on those people who chose to use this product?

**1520**

The other issue that I think has been talked about a couple of times here but that I don't think is receiving the attention it should receive—again, the member from Grey–Bruce–Owen Sound brought this up—is our police officials. They have emphatically said that they're not going to be ready for this. I would hate to see police officers out on the road dealing with an impaired person who hasn't been drinking alcohol, but not qualified to deal with that person using marijuana, lay a charge, go to court and get it thrown out because of this type of thing.

So I think we need address this situation in a very serious manner, and that's not being done here. This bill is being pushed through just because the Prime Minister of this country wants it pushed through, and it's not giving the provinces enough time to address it and take some safe measures in order to control its use and also help control what could be a serious problem on our highways.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions or comments?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** It's my pleasure to rise to offer a few comments on Bill 174, the bill to regulate the sale of recreational cannabis. The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound talked a little bit about medical cannabis, and I think that this is something that we really have to keep in mind: What are the implications of this bill for access to medical cannabis?

I want to speak specifically about my community of London. London, like every other community in Ontario and Canada, is truly in the grip of an opioid crisis. We have the second-highest rate of opioid-related hospitalizations in Ontario, the third highest in Canada. We know that many people who rely on opioids would rather have access to medical cannabis. Unfortunately, we have a health system that covers the cost of opioids for people who are on ODSP or Ontario Works but doesn't cover the cost of medical cannabis. I know a physician in London who prescribes medical cannabis who says he is inundated with patients who want to get off opioids but can't afford to buy medical cannabis. He says that he sees at least 3,000 patients at his clinic in London and that many of these patients want to try medical cannabis but can't afford it.

So as we look at expanding the market of recreational cannabis, we also have to think about what happens with medical cannabis: Will it be insured under OHIP? Will it be taxed the same way? What kinds of concentrations will it be available in to assist people who have medical conditions?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound can now reply.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to thank the member from Oshawa who referenced a lot about public education and the awareness of youth and the lack of resources to actually do education. She referenced that there are lots of unanswered questions, and she talked about penalties. I'm sure my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga is going to get into that because, in his briefing to us, he shared a lot of things where there aren't consistent realities for someone impaired in a legal-drinking-age situation—that's going to be changing, certainly, with cannabis—and whether those are going to be the same. Certain levels of drivers and certain qualifications of drivers are going to be totally different. It's going to be very, very confusing.

The member from Beaches–East York used the terms “base terms” and “the devil is in the details.” I definitely appreciate that, but at the end of the day, they've had two years, so I would have hoped that they would have handled this and would have broken it out, as I said, like other provinces, into very specific areas so that it was black and white, crystal clear. He didn't really get into anything about youth awareness, but I'm not certain how that couldn't have been a priority when they say “base terms.”

The member from Perth–Wellington brought up a lot of good points. Certainly, the one that resonates with a lot of people is the resources out there for our police. They are going to be the people on the roadside who are responsible for enforcing this legislation, and they're saying, “We don't have the resources. We haven't been educated.” I'm not sure—it's not even crystal clear or black-and-white-defined.

The member from London West talked about medical cannabis, and I've heard, similarly to her, that physicians are concerned about being inundated with many people wanting to get on medical marijuana. I have friends who have to use it for medical reasons, and that's wonderful. But we owe it to them and to all of the other people who are going to be on the road what the clear legal definition is. If you're impaired, whether it's by alcohol or some kind of a drug, the reality is that everyone should have same the expectation. Impairment is impairment, and it should be based on that. If you're impaired, you should not be behind the wheel, period.

At the end of the day, if they had taken this out and done this in five separate compartments or however many we choose, then we could have really dove into the details. We could have had those regulations so that they were crystal clear and everyone knew them, with a focal point of impairment is impairment, and it has to be about safety for all people.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Brampton West.

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** Thank you very much for your indulgence. In the east lobby, we have a former MPP who served in the 38th and the 39th Parliaments, Dr. Kuldip

Kular. With him is his cousin, who is visiting us all the way from India, and his wife: his cousin Jaranil and his wife, Jessie Kular. I just want to welcome them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much for drawing that to our attention. Welcome back to the Ontario Legislature.

Further debate?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I'm very happy to have an opportunity this afternoon to provide some of my thoughts with respect to Bill 174. I know there is lots of interest in this particular legislation, and that's understandable. I've had the opportunity this afternoon to hear from other members in this chamber about some of their thoughts on the legislation. I will focus my time in debate this afternoon, not surprisingly, given my responsibilities, on those provisions within the bill that deal with road safety specifically.

In this chamber and beyond this chamber, over the course of the last three and nearly three and a half years, many have heard me say repeatedly that over the last 16 years—and that would be 16 consecutive years, Speaker—the province of Ontario has ranked either first or second right across North America as it relates to safety on our highways. That is a track record of which I'm very proud, and I think we should all be proud, as Ontarians, of that kind of traffic record. Certainly within the Ministry of Transportation, and in particular within the road user safety division of the ministry, there is a great deal of pride, but also a belief that we continue to have to look for ways to be innovative and creative, to work with all of our road safety partners and with law enforcement and also to examine closely what's happening in other jurisdictions so that we can keep that 16-year track record going forward into the future.

In my time as minister, we have managed to successfully pass, with the support here in this Legislature, two pieces of legislation prior to this, Bill 31 and Bill 65, both of which contained important advances for road safety. We managed to pass that legislation. Bill 174, as it relates to road safety in particular, I would argue, is no exception—in terms of making sure that we do have this legislation passed so that we can continue to build on our track record and keep motorists and the travelling public, generally speaking, safe on Ontario's roads and highways.

I will in a moment delve into some of the specifics that are contained in this legislation. I will say, I suppose only in passing, having heard some of the debate this afternoon, that I am completely respectful of the importance of a robust opposition when it comes to legislation, especially groundbreaking or landmark legislation, but I would strongly encourage colleagues on the opposition benches to really and truly consider the outcomes we're talking about here, whether it's being prepared so that we can safely transition on our roads and highways to the new reality that will be here, whether they like it or not, come July 1, 2018, because of the federal government's decision to legalize cannabis; or whether we're talking about protecting our most vulnerable road users, like

pedestrians, both young pedestrians and the elderly, like cyclists and like others on our roads and highways; or whether we're talking about, for example, a topic that I know is of particular importance to members in the Conservative caucus but also the NDP caucus, school bus safety cameras or video cameras. All of these initiatives, all of the advances that we're making or proposing to make in Bill 174 deserve their support.

**1530**

I would say, in listening to the debate this afternoon, I've heard many complaints that are being thrown at this notion of what I'll argue is a process notion. I say that with a great deal of respect for the process that we have here in the Legislature, and respect for the fact that members of the opposition need to do their work and need to do it on a regular basis. But I would only say, as the minister responsible for safety on our highways, that what's most important for the people who live across this province is that we achieve the outcomes that we are looking for. I would advise members of the opposition to be less focused on, as it relates to road safety in particular, the vehicle that's being used to arrive at the outcomes that the people of this province, the people all of us are very proud to represent, deserve.

As it relates specifically to drug-impaired driving, a couple of things that have been mentioned already in debate, and certainly when we made the media announcement relating to the road safety provisions in Bill 174: In this legislation, we're proposing to implement a zero-tolerance policy for the presence of drugs in young, novice and commercial drivers. We chose those three categories not on a whim, not arbitrarily. We chose those categories, Speaker, because we recognize that there are significant challenges inherent in those three classes of drivers that we have on our roads.

We all know that when there is a collision or an accident or an incident on a road or a highway involving, in particular, a large commercial vehicle, very often, and unfortunately, the outcomes can be significant and horrific. We've seen that in recent weeks, and we know that we have more work to do in that regard. So making sure that we have a zero-tolerance policy for commercial drivers—I find it hard to believe that anybody could argue with that.

For young and novice drivers, Speaker—not unlike that which exists for alcohol-impaired driving—we wanted to make sure that those who are not yet necessarily used to the rules of the road are in a position to keep 100% of their focus and their attention on what they are supposed to be doing when they are operating any kind of vehicle that they are allowed to operate and are able to get from point A to B safely and make sure that other road users around them, including their own passengers, if they happen to have passengers, are also kept safe at all times.

Speaker, we're proposing to increase costs and consequences for drivers who fail to yield to pedestrians. We're also proposing to create a new offence—this is particularly important—for careless driving causing

death or bodily harm, with tougher penalties for cases involving vulnerable road users. In this moment, Speaker, I would like to pay particular credit to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, our MPP from Burlington, Eleanor McMahon, and I know others in this House as well, including the opposition member from the NDP caucus from Parkdale–High Park: two individuals among many who have, in the past, brought forward private members' bills that are very similar to what we're talking about in this provision. To both of them and to all of our road safety partners who have long advocated for this kind of proposal or legislation, Speaker—I want to thank them for their patience and for their perseverance and for working with the Ministry of Transportation to end up with this in proposed legislation or legislation that has been introduced.

Of course, increasing the penalties for distracted-driving offences: In Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer act, we, at that point in time, toughened the penalties significantly for distracted driving. We knew then and we certainly know now, in discussions with both law enforcement and with road safety partners, that we continue to see far too many drivers, far too many vehicle operators on our roads, who are still distracted, who are still looking at their hand-held device, taking their eyes off the road, taking or making a phone call with their hand-held device, sending or receiving a text message. We've had a very strong and jarring public relations campaign that many in this House would have seen. It was known as "It happens fast. Put down the phone." The imagery used in that was designed so that it would be particularly impactful to our road users, to the travelling public. But we hear clearly from law enforcement that we continue to have a very significant challenge in this regard. So in this legislation, Bill 174, we are looking to toughen the penalties for distracted driving, in particular for repeat offenders, for people who are clearly not getting the message.

Also in this legislation, we're proposing to better protect our children on school buses by making it easier for school bus camera footage to be introduced into legal proceedings and used as evidence in court. On this particular point, I know the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound in debate earlier today acknowledged the fact that members of his own caucus, particularly the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, in the past, have brought forward a private member's bill on this. I acknowledge that. I've had conversations with the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex about his passion for this particular initiative. I share that passion. While my daughters, who are 10 and six, don't actually use a school bus to get to and from school because the school is very close to our home, I will acknowledge, of course, that tens of thousands of young boys and girls across the province are on school buses every single school day of the year, and the Ministry of Transportation, of course, at all times, wants to make sure those tens of thousands young boys and girls get to and from school safely. So I would sincerely hope that members of the Conservative caucus, notwithstanding some of the process observations

that they've made here today and in the past, would understand that this is moving forward in the right direction and would be supportive.

I will also point out that we propose in this legislation to expand the use of flashing blue lights on enforcement vehicles that currently use flashing red lights to help them be more visible on our roads.

I will say, in both the media events that we did relating to these specific measures contained within Bill 174 and in every single one of the conversations I've had with advocates, with road safety partners and, certainly, with law enforcement, there is significant and broad-based support for these measures within Bill 174.

I would finish up today simply by saying to all members of this House that we know now that come July 1, 2018, cannabis will be legalized across Canada and, of course, here in Ontario. We can pretend that it should be otherwise; we can wish that it should be otherwise, but we know it is, in fact, a fact. So I would strongly encourage all in the course of debate and in the course of their own deliberations as individual members or as caucuses to give very serious consideration to the fact that—and I say this as Minister of Transportation—specifically as it relates to the road safety provisions, we need to work together, and we need to collaborate to make sure that the people of Ontario can safely transition into that new era post-July 1, 2018, and can continue to be safe on our roads and highways.

Again, Speaker, there is an old saying—and I was sharing this with the President of the Treasury Board earlier this afternoon: “In life, it is better to strike a match than to curse the darkness.” Again, I would strongly encourage members of the opposition parties to focus just a little bit less on the machinations and the inside-baseball process and focus far more significantly on the positive outcomes that I believe we have all been sent to this chamber to produce for the 13 million Ontarians that collectively, I know, we're proud to represent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's always a pleasure to rise and to debate today, and I thank the honourable minister for his comments.

I just left OREA, where I had the opportunity to talk about a private member's bill that I've had over many years, and my colleague from—what is your riding?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Beaches—East York.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** —Beaches—East York was with me. We had a wonderful time. But I did talk about the new impending legislation coming from the federal government and the fact that we need to be prepared for that here in the province of Ontario. I am very concerned about grow ops and clandestine drug operations. I think that that's going to be something that we have to consider—that we have to actually call a grow op a grow op, especially if it's illegal; secondly, we need to have a registry; and third, we need to have standards ensuring that we remediate these homes appropriately. I think that these are some of the very important issues that we have to discuss.

But, Speaker, I'm going to take the limited time I have today to talk about something that really rocked my community over the past 24 hours—and it is off-topic; I apologize, but I need to get this on the record. There were two dogs trapped in an apartment building in Ottawa, and the Ontario SPCA was not providing the order to extricate those two dogs that were living in filthy conditions over a period of time.

I had to call the OSPCA today after they had taken away the ability for the Ottawa Humane Society to deal with these issues. I called them, and I've got to say, Speaker, I have never been more disappointed in an organization than I was with the Ontario SPCA. Not only were they hard to contact and track down, they were absolutely rude on the phone, and they didn't act immediately, as they should have.

I wanted to make sure that the people of Ottawa understand that I took that issue that I read about this morning very seriously, and I wanted to raise it on the floor. I do hope the people at the Ontario SPCA understand that cruelty to animals is unacceptable, and we expect them to act when they find out about it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It was interesting to listen to the Minister of Transportation on the section of this bill that deals directly with the transportation act and the important regulations that need to come with this bill that so many people still have so many questions about.

**1540**

We have federal legislation that is not yet enacted, and yet we're trying to create our provincial legislation that is going to go hand in hand with the federal legislation that we don't have finished yet. So I think when the federal government decided that Canada Day, July 2018, was going to be the day, they didn't really think about the fact of how all of this legislation was going to be completed to ensure that something that is totally going to change our communities—how this was all going to be done so quickly. I'm not sure whether the Prime Minister thought that when the fireworks go off on Canada Day, so would the rest of the crackers.

I'm just not sure why he thought that Canada Day was the day in 2018. It's what, seven months away? And we have legislation federally that's not completed. We have legislation provincially that's not completed. Then it's all going to be enacted in July, in seven months' time, when people are going to be able to smoke cannabis throughout the province. We're not sure where they're going to be doing it, other than inside their own homes. We have so many questions here on this side of the Legislature that I'm just not sure we're going to be able to get completed before the next election.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Beaches—East York.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to respond to the Minister of Transportation's comments on this bill.

It is interesting about this bill—because obviously, it comes from the federal piece, the downloading and the



legalization. There are so many different aspects of our society that are affected by the legalization and the more widespread use of marijuana, be it for medical or recreational purposes. I talked a little bit earlier about the vaping sections in this bill and how they had to get transported so they're all part of a unified section. That's why the Minister of Transportation has his section—I think it's schedule 4 in the bill—where we talk about the impacts on drivers and driver safety and give the tools that are needed by our law enforcement agencies to ensure that we continue to keep our roads safe.

It is quite revealing that—I think it was a 2014 study where twice as many people who were stopped had drug impairment as opposed to alcohol impairment. We've done an incredibly good job—more still to be done—on making awareness of how it's just not okay to drink and drive. But that same level of understanding in the general public and among users doesn't seem to be there with the use of drugs and drug impairment and driving. So the measures that the minister outlined here very clearly—the increased enforcement, the zero tolerance for youth, commercial drivers and drivers who are without their full licence—is extremely important so that we can keep the roads safe.

Now, my kids never went on school buses either, but I did have a very interesting school bus story in my riding where a community wasn't able to get a school bus, and these kids in grade 4 and 5 had to walk almost three kilometres—two and a half kilometres—to get to their school. Instead of using the bus, they were being bused around in vans and were being charged \$100 a month to be bused around unsafely in vans with unregistered drivers. We were able to put an end to that by getting them a free bus from the Toronto District School Board.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to reply to the Minister of Transportation. I fully support that all of us should be here and safety should be absolutely paramount—and frankly, want to work together. I think we all welcome that invitation. I know certainly my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga would have been more than happy to meet with him at any time to bring his concerns forward before it was even drafted, to give him good, solid input, and it could have been a better piece of legislation.

He talked a lot about safety, and he even referenced my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex, who brought in the arms on school buses. What I don't understand is why he couldn't convince his colleagues to actually vote for that. It would have already been in and it wouldn't have been a distraction now at this time and having to take away from the other safety implications that we have.

He talked about zero tolerance, Mr. Speaker, and again, unequivocally, I fully support zero tolerance. Though the challenge is being asked questions—then why aren't 100% of our police officers going to be trained when this comes in? Why will they not have

100% of the resources to actually understand when someone is impaired? That's what I'm hearing from the people who are going to be at the roadside. Right now, they know with a Breathalyzer for alcohol. You blow in, it tells you and they know unequivocally that the person is impaired and is going to go and be penalized. Right now, they don't have those resources; they don't have that same confidence. I think it's a concern that people are going to be impaired, whether it's through medical use, recreational use or whatever the case may be, and they could very well jump on the highway and endanger all of us.

Mr. Speaker, he talked a little bit, right near the end, about machinations and working together. I truly and respectfully suggest to him that his caucus at times, in committees I've sat through—they've pulled back amendments of ours, voted them down and put the exact same wording in, and then passed it so that they could say, "We did this."

If he truly is sincere about these things, then let's stop it at all levels. Let's truly be here for the right reasons. Let's all work together, and let's make sure that safety is paramount. We'll be happy to support you if you're listening to us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the Minister of Transportation for his reply.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the members from Nepean–Carleton, Hamilton Mountain, Beaches–East York and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for their questions and their comments.

Speaker, I'm going to focus in particular, if you don't mind, on the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who finished up on the questions and comments section.

There are a couple of things that I didn't convey in debate this afternoon that I should now. Number one is that the responsibility for setting what constitutes the level of impairment does rest with our federal government, as it does with alcohol. The per se limit of 0.08 is something set by the federal government.

Secondly, the oral fluid screening device is technology that is being worked on in partnership with road safety partners, with the centre for forensics, and with provincial and territorial ministries of transportation, but it is also something that is being primarily led by our federal partners, as it should be.

I will also say, as it relates to the school bus safety question, notwithstanding what I said in debate, which I stand by, which is that the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex brought forward legislation—I've said this in responses to questions from that member in this House; I've said it to media. At the point in time at which that legislation was proposed by that member, a video or a picture that would have been taken by the technology would not necessarily have been permissible in court without having an independent, third-party eyewitness there to attest to the fact that it in fact did take a picture of something that took place.

We wanted to make sure within the ministry, working with our municipal partners and the industry that's

responsible for producing this technology, that we landed it in the right way. I've explained that privately to the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, and I've said it publicly many, many times. It is now contained in this legislation because we are comfortable moving forward.

I would sincerely hope that not only the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, but the official opposition critic, the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, and the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex and others in both opposition caucuses would be supportive of Bill 174.

I look forward to the rest of debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to rise in the House on this Monday afternoon to add my voice, and some of the concerns that we have as New Democrats, to Bill 174, the Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017.

It is interesting; when you get out of this place sometimes, as some of us manage to do on occasion, and you listen to some of the perceptions of what actually happens here, it gives you pause.

I just came from the OREA conference, where I shared some of our thoughts, our concerns and our plans for the future of how we can grow the economy and ensure that people can reach their potential and yes, one day, that dream of owning a home would be realized for many citizens across this province. I drew the connectivity of the economy and housing as the great stabilizer, if you will.

One of the questions came up from the floor to the panel, which has already been referenced. Our member from Essex was on the panel, and the question was this: "What is the government going to do about trying to control those plants?" The people who are going to be growing plants in their homes, in their rental units or in their condos—I think that realtors across the province are just genuinely concerned about this concept that people will be growing four plants to one metre high. There's never been solid rationale as to why four plants, why one metre high. Really, it was astounding to me because the member from Beaches–East York responded—and I don't know if you have some regrets about the way you responded—but he compared cannabis plants, marijuana plants to avocado plants, and I think that we should at least, at the very beginning—

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** They're both green.

1550

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** They're both green, yes, says the Minister of Transportation, but I guess we should just come to some conclusion that we are actually dealing with a very different substance than avocado. I enjoy an avocado just like the next girl, but I'm really thinking that when you are smoking a drug in your apartment, your condo or your rental unit, it is very different than growing avocado plants. As a very basic set of standards here, I think we should start right there because the piece of legislation that is before us leaves us with many questions, but that is not one of them.

The realtors have a concern. They brought forward a health and safety concern because they've identified the fact that it's very difficult to address smoking in a rental apartment or condo units, for instance. When you live in close proximity like those condos and apartments and rental units, you are actually living with all of those other people. It's very close proximity, and depending on construction and depending on if Tarion did their job, which is highly unlikely, the construction is not always up to the standard where you can actually—you know, sounds travel, smells travel, what have you. In this instance the realtors raised a very valid concern in that if smoke is a deterrent from somebody buying or renting a unit, if it's been identified as a health and safety issue actually for children, second-hand smoke, why would cannabis not also be considered as a problem? There's been no provision for a safe public space for people to smoke cannabis, smoke pot. That is not part of your provisions. So in not providing a secondary space, a public space, if you will, which obviously would be monitored—has to be—you're confirming that all smoking of cannabis will happen in a residence. Therefore, you are actually containing it only into a place where actually it isn't contained, where other people in those rental units will have the second-hand smoke of marijuana, of pot.

The realtors obviously have had long-standing concerns around grow ops in residences. I know the member from Nepean–Carleton called for a registry so that we can find out which homes have had large amounts of marijuana, but the realtors actually said that even the four plants is a concern for them. I know they've submitted a paper to the minister. I know they will be coming to committee and they will be sharing their health and safety concerns, but they will also be sharing the impact of having a residence where perhaps a good deal of marijuana may have been consumed and smoked, and the impact that that has on the resale, on the retail value of that property.

I thought I might raise that because it is a huge issue for real estate agents in the province of Ontario.

New Democrats have long called for the legalization of recreational cannabis, and supports the LCBO role in the distribution of this product. We have supported the decriminalization and legalization of cannabis for a long time, and it should not have taken this long to legalize it and establish a government strategy. We're going to start with that part.

The legalization of cannabis has been called for as early as 1972 by the federal government's Le Dain Commission and, since then, organizations like CAMH, the Canada Drug Policy Coalition and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse have all called for the legalization of cannabis, and yet here we are, in 2017, only now discussing something that should have happened, honestly, years ago—years ago. This bill is obviously disappointing for us. It leaves us with more questions than answers—some of the questions, I've just posed on the part of the Ontario

Real Estate Association, which is actually now the Ontario Realtor Party. They are going through a rebranding process.

Schedules 1 and 2 of the bill enact the Cannabis Act. The act establishes prohibitions relating to the sale, distribution, purchase, possession, cultivation and the harvesting of cannabis. Schedule 2 enacts the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. This will be a crown agency that is an exclusive seller of recreational cannabis in Ontario.

It's interesting; there is a connection with Kitchener-Waterloo. Kitchener is one of the 14 municipalities that are getting a store in 2018. The Waterloo Regional Police Service is going to certify two additional police officers for drug recognition enforcement to prepare for cannabis legalization. They have raised many concerns with this Liberal government on the cannabis progression. The Waterloo Regional Police Service says that it is difficult to predict exactly how many new police officers will need to be certified ahead of legalization. It costs the police services around \$2,500 to be certified.

I've raised this in the House before, around the slow response to ensuring that front-line police officers have access to naloxone. I'm not sure why it would take so long; it's a basic health and safety measure for our front-line services. Our police chief just went ahead and purchased \$43,000 worth of naloxone because we had one officer who came in to contact with fentanyl and recognized very quickly that he had been exposed. The result of having exposure to fentanyl can actually be deadly, as we saw this last week here in Toronto.

The police have said that they will need additional funding for the training piece. They have to put some extra training in place to ensure that recognizing cannabis consumption or exposure happens really quickly, especially with those people who may or may not be driving. We know that taking a tough-on-crime approach doesn't work, but a bill that has more questions than answers is also not the solution.

Some of the big questions that we have as legislators—and I know that this has come through in my riding—are: What rules will govern the choice of specific retail location? Is this just pure politics about who gets a retail store and who does not? I hope that we can all agree that 40 stores are just not going to be enough. If the goal is truly to keep small-time drug users out of jails, they're going to want to have access to that product, as they have been promised by the Prime Minister in the last election. If they can't access it, then they're going to go underground. Then there are all sorts of subsequent issues that happen because of that—perhaps unintended consequences—but since we are notifying you of those consequences, it shouldn't be unintended and you should actually do something about it.

How many stores? Where are they going? How big will those stores be? How will the cannabis be priced? How will the cannabis be taxed—I think that is one of the bigger issues that I am hearing, aside from the way the government has rolled this out. There was a story in the

Toronto Star at the end of September that, "Ontario Considers Price of \$10 Per Gram in Government Stores for Marijuana Once It's Legalized Next Summer."

So \$10 a gram—

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It's cheaper on the street.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Is it? I don't know.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Probably.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** All right. We're not quite sure where the government is getting the pricing benchmarks on cannabis, and I'm not quite sure how you're going to go through the taxation process. It will be very interesting. Who came up with the plan that it was going to be four marijuana plants to one metre high? I often wonder how much cannabis they had consumed when they came up with that plan.

I know that some people are trying not to laugh; it actually is a very funny joke.

The bill isn't forward-thinking or balanced enough. It is more obvious than ever that 40 locations are not enough for a province of 14 million people. It needs to be said and needs to be enforced—and it will not stem organized crime. Even with online sales, the province won't be able to meet the demand that exists and thwart organized crime. This won't stop the sale of unregulated cannabis in our province. I cannot stress that enough. Regardless of where you are on the legalization—hopefully all of us, regardless of political stripe, can agree that the plan that has been put forward by this Liberal government will not stop the sale of unregulated cannabis in our province.

**1600**

The bill also keeps Ontario in the prohibition era, setting arbitrary restrictions on the use and sale of cannabis. Consumers will likely be confused by the conflict between the legalization of cannabis and the new powers of the police that are far more severe than what exists for alcohol or cigarettes. Some of the provisions could result in heavy-handed enforcement and unintended consequences. I want to point out the police also want clarity. They've been asking for clarity in their role in the decriminalization of marijuana as well.

It is interesting; the background on the criminalization of cannabis and its impacts actually should be guiding this legislation. We know that 60,000 Canadians are arrested for simple possession of cannabis every year—60,000—accounting for nearly 3% of all arrests. At least 500,000 Canadians carry a criminal record for this offence, which can significantly limit a person's employment opportunities and place restrictions on their ability to travel.

The enforcement of cannabis laws is very costly. For 2012, the annual cost of enforcing cannabis possession laws in Canada was estimated at \$1.2 billion. Think about where that money could be going: restorative justice practices, if you will; the reintegration of those who have been in our prison system for too long; mental health services. There are so many better ways to spend \$1.2 billion.

The prohibition of cannabis and criminalization of its users does not deter people from consuming it. We know

this. There is evidence. There is years of research. The evidence on this point is clear: Tougher penalties do not lead to lower rates of cannabis use. They do not.

People who are already vulnerable are affected disproportionately. Evidence suggests that police often use the charge of cannabis possession as an easy way of pulling in folks who are, perhaps, from marginalized populations. These are some of the concerns that have been brought to us from folks in our ridings and from across the province.

I need to go back to this pricing issue, because we are talking about consumer protection in this House, we're talking about health and safety issues in this House. Right now, as the government is considering pricing cannabis at \$10 a gram, how much will it really be priced? This is an outstanding question. At \$10 a gram, it still leaves a lot of room for the illicit market to exist.

The Cannabis Act establishes that no landlord shall knowingly allow their premises to be used for the unlawful selling or distribution of cannabis. We can't even be sure that this happens today in the province of Ontario. Currently, craft brewers and distillers can sell on-site. Will craft cannabis sales also be allowed? When you're setting the bar for a particular group of entrepreneurs or businesses in the province of Ontario, you set a precedent, right? So you will see, obviously, those who are interested in entering the business of cannabis lobby a government to actually have the same rights as those who are craft distillers or craft brewers, for instance. Actually, this has already come up in my office.

The new act allows for police to refer youth under the age of 19 who are caught consuming or possessing cannabis to an education or prevention program. It is astounding that this is actually in here. The wait-list for youth addiction in the province of Ontario is immense. We've been helping an individual who was incarcerated, who accepted a longer term in jail so that he could access the addiction program that was being offered for those who had a longer sentence. He accepted the fact that he was going to have to stay in jail longer but that he was going to get access to this addiction program. However, when he accepted the sentence, the addiction program was full, and he didn't have access to it. Imagine being so desperate to access therapy, addiction control and counselling that you're willing to stay in jail longer, and accepting that term, and then being denied the counselling. This is actually what happens in the province of Ontario.

Who will run these cannabis education or prevention programs? Who will pay for them? Given that using prevention programs as an alternative to laying charges will be arbitrarily decided by police officers or prosecutors, how will the government ensure that racialized or marginalized youth are not punished disproportionately? I think this is a very valid question, especially given the latest report that has come out, specifically around Toronto and how poverty affects racialized communities in this city.

The act establishes that "no person shall drive or have the care or control of a vehicle or boat" that contains

cannabis that is not "packed in baggage that is fastened closed." What exactly does this mean? A rule like this is more likely to confuse people than to prevent driving under the influence of cannabis.

You can see that as we make our way through this legislation—which also has bus safety measures included in it—I think the realtors found this very confusing also, as they should. Even as we are very supportive of the legalization of recreational cannabis, there are obviously measures that can create unintended consequences. The fact that there is no provision for public consumption so, therefore, it must happen in a residence—as I said, there are health and safety and housing advocates who have serious concerns about this. The last fellow I spoke to at the OREA conference said it's even hard to have smoke-free apartments, because if there's one person in that apartment who is a smoker, you can't declare the entire triplex, for instance, a smoke-free building. How will that affect the landlords who are probably trying to create some clean-living situations? How will cannabis affect that scenario?

In conclusion, I think that there's a lot of interest in where these stores are going to go. There are a lot of questions that are outstanding on how the laws will be enforced, because those laws are quite vague. We as New Democrats find ourselves in a very unusual position, which is that we find ourselves supportive of the idea but very concerned about how the act will be implemented.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Chris Ballard:** After listening to the member opposite's presentation, I just wanted to take a minute—because I've heard this a few times today—and focus on consultation.

We know that the timeline for federal legalization is incredibly ambitious: July 2018. The amount of work and preparation our government has had to do and will do over the next few months is daunting.

But I'll just let people know that we've been working on our priorities for over a year now. The legislation that we are proposing and the approach it supports were developed through months of research and policy development across a dozen ministries, led by our dedicated legalization of cannabis secretariat.

We've been working very diligently to make sure that we know what questions to ask and that we have the right answers as we move this legislation forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Nepean–Carleton—sorry; Ottawa–Nepean.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Yes, Nepean–Carleton, but it's okay, because it's in Ottawa, Speaker, so it's all good. I can go by any riding you attribute to me, anyway, so that's fine.

I wanted to say thank you to my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo for her intervention in the debate today to discuss this new Cannabis Act. We may not agree on everything, but I did appreciate her bringing up

some of my concerns about illegal grow ops and clandestine operations where it pertains to drugs. She had pointed out something very specific that is a concern of the realtors of Ontario, which is the reduction in plants for multi-unit dwellings. I was there, obviously, as a panellist today, and indicated that, so I will be reintroducing my PMB.

**1610**

What it would effectively do is designate illegal grow operations as unsafe. It would encourage the inspection of all former illegal grow operations, because I believe there need to be standards for remediation. We would have a registry for all grow ops and former grow ops in the province of Ontario so that there would be a level of consumer protection. There would be mandatory training for home inspectors so that they would recognize what an illegal grow operation or clandestine drug operation is, because this could have severe damage to walls, to your attic or to the air quality within the unit.

And then, finally, the reduction in plants for multi-unit dwellings: This is a very serious issue that has to be considered in advance of this piece of legislation, and I do hope that the government will consider limiting the plants from four to one. I did hear a number of realtors say to me, after the comments made by the member from Beaches–East York about avocados, that they were quite offended by that. It really did bother them—they followed me right out. So I wanted to reiterate that and, again, just thank you for the opportunity to be able to provide my views on this debate today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's an honour to be able to speak on this issue. I would like to talk about a real-life experience and what we could learn from that.

My family comes from Holland, and my wife's parents and all her relatives still live there. A few years ago, we went back to Holland with my four children for their 50th anniversary.

As you may know, soft drugs are legal in Holland, so my kids—and they're adults—decided to have the true Dutch experience. They bicycled around the canals, and at night they decided to go—in Holland, they're called “coffee shops”—and buy some legal soft drugs in the coffee shop and see what that was like. My girls chickened out. My son went in the coffee shop, and they had for sale—they were called “space cakes.” They were €15 apiece, and my son said, “I'll take five.” The guy behind the counter of the coffee shop said, “Buddy, how big a party are you going to have?” Well, he just went by the price; he could afford that many space cakes. So they got one space cake. They cut it up into five pieces; it was supposed to be for eight, and it was a very bad experience for my kids. I don't think they'll ever try a space cake again.

But the moral of that story, and why it's so important—I know edibles aren't part of this legislation, but if that guy behind that counter hadn't said those words, my son would've bought five, and the consequences could

have been drastic. So if we are going to sell this as a government, we'd better make sure that people have all of the information when we do it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I'm pleased to join the debate on this important piece of legislation. I think it is important legislation because it really goes to the heart of our health, of our safety and of protecting our young people. These are things that we think about and talk about in this Legislature every day in different contexts, but I do think that this legislation speaks directly to those issues.

I don't have time to cover everything, but I think one of the areas that I want to just quickly talk about is safety, particularly road safety. It's something I know the members in this House will know that I have a strong interest in. I think one of the things that's really positive is that in this bill we're putting forward a zero-tolerance policy for those who are driving while under the influence of cannabis, just like we have for driving under the influence. We have stiff penalties for driving under the influence and driving while distracted; similarly, we have put in place a zero-tolerance policy, which will allow us to take strong measures when we need to to make sure that we keep our roads safe.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes questions and comments. We go back to the member for Kitchener–Waterloo for her response.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you for the comments on the 20 minutes that I had to speak to Bill 174.

I think the issue that my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane raised about not having the knowledge around consumption is a very real concern. I had never heard of a space cake before, and I'm happy to learn about it. Obviously, we will be going down that road at one point, because if you're legalizing a substance like cannabis, the population is going to get pretty creative with what to do with that product and that substance.

I want to highlight the fact that we have not fully thought out or resourced the need for drug addiction counselling that will be needed in this province. We know that for sure because we don't have enough addiction counselling, and particularly youth addiction resources, in place right now. Even when you are in extreme crisis, you get referred to a wait-list. That is not helpful when you have taken the step and said, “You know what? I do have a problem with this substance, and I want to make sure that I can actually deal with it.” It takes a lot of courage to do that, Mr. Speaker.

The finance minister says that “revenues of more than \$100 million annually are possible given that Ontario will have a larger customer base than many US states with legalized marijuana.” That's a direct quote. He says, “It's not a ridiculous number to consider because, as you've seen in other parts of North America, the numbers have actually been even higher,” as high as \$506 million in tax revenue.

So I would encourage this government to stay focused on actually putting that revenue towards helping people

with addiction issues in the province of Ontario, particularly those who are youth.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and one-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 or his designate specifies otherwise.

I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, no further debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you.  
*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

STRONGER, FAIRER ONTARIO ACT  
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2017

LOI DE 2017  
POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT  
ET PLUS JUSTE  
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Sousa moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 177, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / *Projet de loi 177, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Minister of Finance to lead off the debate.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'll be sharing my time with the member from Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to speak about the 2017 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review. Bill 177, the Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act (Budget Measures), is an update to our fiscal and economic plan which would enact important legislative components of that plan.

I appreciate the opportunity to talk about how we grew the economy and balanced our budget, going from the depths of a global recession to becoming an economic leader in Canada and the G7, and about how we continue to transform our economy by creating opportunities for the future instead of clinging to the past.

As an example, I'd like to use something close to home. For decades, my community's waterfront was home to a majestic facility that helped millions of Ontarians keep the lights on, and it created jobs. It also gave us many smog days and impacted our health. Of course, I'm talking about the Lakeview generation station.

I grew up in the shadows of the Four Sisters, and while I lived near the lake, I never enjoyed the view of the lake—the view of Lakeview. The old plant completely blocked access to our prime waterfront.

Make no mistake: This station, built in 1958, was critically important for Ontario. It provided cheap electricity and powered our economy. But it was also the worst polluter in Ontario, and it was in desperate need of a major and expensive overhaul, so those iconic smokestacks finally came down in 2007.

But rather than replace it with another obstruction, we knew that these valuable lands could be used for so much more. After careful planning and engagement with the community, a shared vision is now well on its way to becoming a stunning reality, transforming the waterfront into a dynamic mixed-use community with boardwalks, homes, green spaces and wetlands, with small businesses creating many more jobs and stronger economic activity.

**1620**

The decommissioning of the plant also occurred at the same time as Ontario was going through turmoil. The province was feeling the effects of the global recession. People were facing hardships and uncertainty. They worried about losing their jobs, losing security, and many losing hope for a better future. The Conservatives were screaming for us to slash and burn and institute across-the-board cuts, and let the fittest survive, while the NDP blamed big businesses and demanded more taxes, insisting that everything should be state-owned. But the reality was more and more people relied on government to take a balanced approach and take positive action to help them help themselves.

So it wasn't enough to just stop the downward slide; we had to position Ontario for success in the long run. It wasn't enough just to keep doing business as usual; our plan had to help Ontarians recover for a sustainable future for tomorrow while maintaining essential services today, especially during those difficult times. We had to transition the economy away from an old world of smokestacks to a new world of green and clean, from manual assembly lines to advanced manufacturing and high-tech factory floors, from paper to tablets—and create jobs. So we committed to investing in our people and investing in what matters most to them: health care, education and the social programs they needed.

We made historic investments to renew our infrastructure, but we also managed expenses, making Ontario the leanest government anywhere in Canada, as we transformed government services to make them more efficient and effective. Last week, Ontario's fall economic statement confirmed that our plan is working. We're balancing the budget this year and for the next two years. Our economy has grown faster than Canada's and that of all G7 countries. Our job numbers are up. In fact, since the global recession, 800,000 net new jobs have been created in Ontario, the majority of which have been full-time in the private sector in industries that pay above-average wages. Unemployment has steadily declined to 5.9%—that's below the national average for 31 months in a row. Independent economists expect Ontario's economy to continue to grow at a strong pace by 2020, creating another 300,000 net new jobs, meaning that Ontario will have created over 1.1 million net new jobs since the depth of the recession.

While Ontario is in a position of greater fiscal and economic strength, we know our work is not done. Balancing the books was only the first part of our plan. We must use Ontario's growing economy and balanced budgets to continue to help even more people get ahead,

to ensure that more families get a fair shot and get ahead. Mr. Speaker, change is not done with us, and we're not done with change. We must continue to make sure that fairness and opportunity reach everyone across the province.

One of the ways we're helping create opportunity and fairness is by repurposing old assets into new modern assets. It's why Ontario will credit the sale proceeds of the Lakeview lands, for example, and all other less-productive assets, including the proportionate amount of shares of Hydro One, into the Trillium Trust, all dedicated to building new infrastructure investments.

We now have a pipeline representing the largest infrastructure program in our province's history, with \$190 billion in investments over 13 years supporting 125,000 jobs per year, helping build an even stronger economy because we know that modern roads, bridges, transit, hospitals and schools drive economic growth, stimulate the economy, attract skilled talent and encourage business investment and improve our quality of life. Yet there are some in this House that want to limit investments in infrastructure. The leader of the Conservative Party has called on the government to restrict infrastructure to the term of an election cycle. Imagine: Like an ostrich sticking its head in the sand, this short-sighted plan would limit the ability of our province to thrive. We have to plan long-term and think long-term. We have to have vision.

In fact, the Centre for Spatial Economics estimates that for every dollar we invest in our public infrastructure, our GDP rises by \$6 over the long run, providing lasting benefits, including improvements to our fiscal fundamentals. Our debt-to-GDP is improving to 37%. Our accumulated-deficit-to-GDP, at 25%, is the same as it was 25 years ago. All the borrowing that we're doing is locked in at lower rates over longer periods of time, which supports new projects. So when they ask for us not to make any further borrowings, it begs the question, what would you not build? Which hospitals would you not build in the communities? Which schools would you avoid improving? Which public transit systems would you not do in a respective community? And what more would you cut?

The first step in managing debt is to eliminate the deficit. We just saved, last year, \$300 million in interest costs. In fact, our interest on debt as a percentage of our budget is now at 8%. It's the lowest it has been in 30 years, and they're locked in for long-term maturities. We will continue to build and we'll continue to look long-term. It is key.

It is also why we're committed to helping small and medium-sized businesses grow. These Ontario businesses have been instrumental in our path to balance, and they will continue to shape Ontario's economy and prosperity. Their success is our success. We recognize the critical importance that these businesses play in growing our economy. About a third of Ontario jobs are in SMEs. So to support businesses, we are providing more than \$500 million in a suite of new initiatives to lower costs and

foster growth, including the 22% cut in the corporate income tax rate for small business. With the changes proposed by the federal government and the combined federal-Ontario CIT rate for small business, it will be the lowest it has been in over 30 years.

We're also making it easier for small business to access the Ontario government's procurement opportunities. We will designate one third of our procurement spending for small and medium-sized local businesses.

We believe these measures, combined with other supports, such as improving access to financing and reducing red tape, will help enhance opportunities for businesses to thrive.

Mr. Speaker, our continued economic success depends on having a well-educated workforce. Our talented, diverse workforce is the envy of many of our competitors worldwide. It is crucial to our ongoing success and prosperity that Ontario's best and brightest are given the opportunity to pursue excellence and achieve their full potential, because it is estimated that about 70% of the jobs created in the future will require some form of post-secondary education. We believe that access to post-secondary should be based on the ability to learn, not on the ability to pay. That's why our government has transformed OSAP. This year, more than 210,000 full-time college and university students in Ontario are getting free tuition.

But a post-secondary education isn't the only pathway to a prosperous career. For many people, apprenticeships are the gateway to success. So we want to help more of them complete their training as well. That's why our government is proposing a new Graduated Apprenticeship Grant for Employers. Employers would receive funding as the apprentices complete their levels and certification, up to \$19,000 per apprentice. We will cover new sectors of the economy as well, and support even more people, including individuals with disabilities.

Fairness in Ontario also means having a suitable and affordable place to call home. The effects of our strong economic growth have been attracting more people to our province. This has increased demand for more homes and dramatically increased prices over the past few years, which put buying a home out of reach for many families. Speculators were crowding out many young families. So last April, we introduced Ontario's Fair Housing Plan, a comprehensive package of measures to temper the market. And by all accounts, the housing market has become more stable.

On the supply front, Ontario is also taking immediate steps to streamline the approval process for new housing developments, to help new home builders get supply to market sooner, to better align infrastructure and land use planning, to support forward-looking zoning, and to advise municipalities implementing provincial land use policies.

**1630**

As mentioned, in my community, waterfront revitalization is key to protecting future generations. Closing the Lakeview power plant was part of a broader

strategy to phase out coal-fired electricity. The closure of Lakeview alone eliminated carbon emissions equivalent to taking about a half a million cars off the road. It brought an end to white ash that used to coat the cars and streets of my neighbourhood when I was growing up.

But the entire electricity grid was in need of major repair and capital investments to improve its integrity and reliability. Gone are the days of brownouts and smog days. As a result of those long-term investments, electricity costs in Ontario became high for some, so this year we delivered a rate reduction of 25% for all households and about 500,000 small businesses and farms and up to 60% reductions in remote and isolated communities, all of which has been done to better match the long-term lifespan of these assets. And that is fair.

Let's talk about fairness in more ways. Fairness for families means that kids have the tools they need to learn and grow and succeed, regardless of how much their parents make. It means that parents don't have to decide between medicine and food when their child is sick. That's why, starting this coming New Year's Day, everyone under the age of 25 will receive free prescription medication through OHIP+. It is the most significant expansion of medicare in Canada's history.

Fairness for families also means that parents can entrust their kids to high-quality, affordable and accessible child care. That's why we're making 100,000 more licensed child care spaces available across the province—that's twice as many kids as current capacity now allows for. That means more parents will be able to pursue more opportunities and meet more of their obligations. Our goal is to ensure universal accessibility.

Fairness also means that our children get the best education. That means all children should be able to go to schools where they feel safe, welcome and encouraged to learn. This past September, students started classes in 50 new or newly renovated schools across Ontario. We want all children to get the best start in life, and investing in education is a down payment on their prosperity.

Fairness also means that all Ontarians should enjoy our current economic success, yet too many people today are facing low pay and uncertain hours without benefits and protections. That's why we're raising minimum wage to \$15 an hour by January 2019 and ensuring equal pay for part-time workers doing the same job as full-time workers. While the opposition would postpone and kick the can down the road, we on this side of the House are steadfast in helping everyone succeed and be at their best. To delay a fair wage is denying people a fair wage.

The Conservative Party's position is clear: They propose to deny the hard-working people of Ontario a fair chance. They will push back minimum wage. Will they retract the introduction of paid sick leaves? How about minimum vacation entitlements and the right to emergency leave days for all employees? Mr. Speaker, I have yet to hear a plan from the Leader of the Opposition until now, and their plan is to delay fairness and to stop making investments.

We currently have more than two million seniors in our province, and that number is expected to grow to four

and a half million by 2040. Seniors speak with experience, wisdom and perspective, and we can learn from them. We want to ensure that seniors continue to enjoy active, healthy lives, help shape our province and enjoy a fair share of the value they've contributed to our lives. Aging with Confidence—that's Ontario's action plan for seniors—includes supporting 40 new active living centres and adding 5,000 more long-term-care beds by 2022 and more than 30,000 over the next decade. We're redeveloping 30,000 beds as well and expanding compassionate and end-of-life care for 2,000 more families.

Fairness in our society must include indigenous peoples. Ontario remains committed to reconciliation, to bringing meaningful change to indigenous communities. We're working with our indigenous partners in a spirit of openness and respect to address the legacy of residential schools, to close gaps and remove the barriers to their opportunity and to support indigenous culture, and we are going to reconcile relationships with indigenous peoples. We continue to do so always. That is why we support indigenous institutes as the third pillar in our post-secondary education system among colleges and universities.

Finally, integrity and reliability are key to everything we do, including health care. Our universal health care is an expression of our values of fairness, quality and compassion. It also gives us a competitive edge in the global economy. It's why we announced an additional \$7-billion booster shot for health care in the last budget to reduce wait times and improve access to care, including the expansion of Trillium hospitals in my local community, like Mississauga hospital and Queensway Health Centre.

In the fall economic statement, I also announced an additional \$100 million for more medical procedures in these very hospitals. This year alone, we have added 1,200 new hospital beds to make sure more people get better access to care. Fairness means you get the care you need, when you need it and where you need it.

Our future economy also depends on securing and expanding access to markets around the world. The Premier has been relentless as a champion of our province on her many international missions, which have now secured 265 agreements valued at over \$4.3 billion to our economy and created over 4,500 Ontario jobs.

Broadening our trade is critical, especially the context of the current renegotiation of NAFTA and its uncertainty. About \$1 billion in goods are traded between Ontario and the United States every day. Ontario's economy accounts for more than half of Canadian trade and goods with the United States. That's why our government is working tirelessly to help secure our existing trade relationships.

Today, Premier Wynne has met with 32 US governors, and our message is clear: About nine million US jobs are dependent on that trade with Canada, and our trading relationship, worth over \$600 billion annually, benefits all sides.

Thanks to the perseverance and ingenuity of the people of Ontario, we have recovered from the global



recession stronger. Our economy has grown. We are in a strong position to take advantage of new opportunities to invest in our people and in our businesses.

When Lakeview's Four Sisters were torn down, it wasn't enough to simply replace coal with another fossil fuel like a gas emitter. It would have been easy and short-sighted, and that would have left its real potential untapped. Instead, we all dug deeper. People and businesses took an active part in a new vision, a shared vision. Protecting new lands is pivotal in securing greater benefit for future generations, just as Ontario now pivots to a brighter future, all of which is afforded because we take a balanced approach, delivering a balanced budget, so that we can continue to invest in what matters most across Ontario: creating fairness and opportunity for all.

It gives me great pride in the outstanding work that Ontarians have done since that recession, and it has been a sustained recession. The measures that we've implemented most recently in our update are, yet again, to provide for supports and stimulus to continue to grow while, at the same time, being fiscally responsible to manage our expenses and balance the budget.

**1640**

To say more about these outstanding measures, an individual who I've had the pleasure of working for and working with, I should say—sometimes it feels like I'm working for him—is my parliamentary assistant, Yvan Baker. He has taken many consultations, has been working on a number of outstanding files in the Ministry of Finance, and I welcome his input and appreciate his engagement. Mr. Speaker, Yvan Baker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Otherwise known as the member for Etobicoke Centre. I recognize the member for Etobicoke Centre.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you, Speaker. I do prefer the minister's introduction, though, I have to tell you. Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to add my voice and to follow Minister Sousa in speaking about Bill 177, the Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act, 2017.

I have to start by saying that I've had the opportunity to work with Minister Sousa as his parliamentary assistant for about a year and a half, and he is absolutely right. He is one of the hardest-working people I know. He is a great finance minister. He's a great champion for his community of Mississauga, or, as I sometimes refer to it, the gateway to Etobicoke. I'm glad to have the opportunity to work with Minister Sousa and to work for him.

Minister Sousa has spoken on how this bill moves forward with our commitments. I just wanted to take a step back. As I was listening to the minister speak and talk about the many different elements of the bill, I was reflecting a little bit on some of the early days, just after the last election, when we were here in the Legislature, when we were doing our introductory speeches and debating the budget which Mr. Sousa reintroduced after the election.

I remember during those remarks I spoke about why we were here as elected officials, why these roles are so

important and what duty has been placed on us by our constituents. I remember talking about how part of what we're here to do is foster opportunity for our constituents. Part of it is to invest and strengthen the services that the government of Ontario provides to people across Ontario, things like education and health care, but also provide protection for people who need protection, those who are vulnerable, who might be subject to harm from others. I was reminded of that because as I listened to Minister Sousa and I thought about what's in this bill, there are a lot of things here that will benefit communities across the province, but I think it captures some of those key themes I just mentioned.

Outlined in the 2017 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review that the minister tabled on Tuesday is this bill. I'd like to share further details about some of the measures that are in this bill, but first, I'd like to just speak about how this bill moves our plan forward for individuals, for families, for businesses and for communities.

Now, when the global recession hit—and I know we all remember that time—the effects were felt by everyone. They were felt by people in their homes, in their workplaces and in boardrooms across the province. When the recession hit, I remember seeing the looks on the faces of my colleagues, young people, business owners, friends, professionals and family. I remember the anxiety, the concern that a lot of people felt. People felt uncertain. They felt powerless. They felt concerned about what the future brought. They were really concerned about the fundamentals of our economy.

They were concerned about what the future held for them, for their children, for their grandchildren. It wasn't even just that they were concerned about job losses—although that was undoubtedly a concern—but anxiety over where the world was headed, where the economy was headed and what kind of future was in store, not just for them but for their children and for their grandchildren. Talk was rampant—you may remember this in 2008 and 2009—about the entire global financial system potentially collapsing, leaving people to think about what that would mean for them, for their families, for our communities.

Our government saw that a plan was needed. We needed a plan to recover from the hardships of what would become known as a great recession. But it wouldn't be enough to just stop the downward slide and get the province back on its feet. We needed to do more than just that, although we needed to do that. We needed to restore that lost confidence. We needed to restore hope in the future. The plan would need to make the changes necessary to put Ontario on the path to long-term success and to long-term prosperity. We knew we just couldn't go back to business as usual. We had to move forward. We had to adapt and we had to evolve. Our government has done just that. We did it by creating a plan, a multi-faceted plan. A key part of that plan was eliminating the deficit by transforming the way in which government delivers its services. Another part of the plan

was to prepare our economy for success today and for tomorrow in the new, greener, high-tech and innovative economy. We worked hard to recover lost jobs, to transition our economy, and maintain and enhance public services that people rely on. These components of this plan—balancing the budget but also helping to reposition our economy for the future—were critical.

Speaker, I know I've shared this story with you before, but when I ran for office, I ran on a number of things, and one of the things that I ran on that I committed to was that our government would balance the budget. This was important because we needed to make sure that we put ourselves in the strongest fiscal position possible to be able to continue to invest in the services that the people of Ontario rely on. That's what we've done. We've reached a really important milestone in our plan.

With the fall economic statement tabled on Tuesday, Minister Sousa once again confirmed that Ontario continues to project a balanced budget for this fiscal year, and not only for this fiscal year but for the next fiscal year and for the fiscal year after that as well.

We've done this, Speaker, and there have been a number of components to this. A component of balancing the budget is strong economic growth. Strong economic growth has undoubtedly contributed importantly to balancing the budget. That's a credit to the people of Ontario.

Another component of balancing the budget has been sound fiscal management, and in particular, management of our costs. I see the President of the Treasury Board is here. She and her team, and ministries across government, have done incredibly important and challenging work to find a way to make sure that we get even better value for taxpayer dollars and find ways to make the tax dollar work harder for the people of Ontario. By getting that better bang for the buck, that enabled us to help balance the budget. It wouldn't have been possible otherwise.

As someone who had the opportunity to be parliamentary assistant to the President of the Treasury Board when I first got elected, and now to the Minister of Finance, I've been involved in some of that work, Speaker. I can tell you that that's been done in a very thoughtful, systematic and methodical way to make sure that we're not just cutting costs like previous governments have done, slashing and burning—that's not what we've done at all. In fact, it's been a priority that we maintain the services and strengthen the services that the people of Ontario rely on. But what we have done is we've gone in and looked at every line item in the budget, every program that we fund, and looked at: Is it delivering on the objectives that we want it to deliver? Let's make sure we measure our results better so that we know which programs are delivering and to what extent they are. And then we found ways to make sure that we're putting our resources and putting taxpayers' dollars towards those programs that are having the greatest effect and that are delivering the most impact, whether it be in

health, education, social services or whatever the case may be.

I'm very proud of that, Speaker, not just because I've been involved in it, but because this has been a team effort, led by President of the Treasury Board—but certainly the team at Treasury Board and ministers and members of this government worked very hard to deliver on that. The way we've approached that, the way I've just described it, is how businesses run their operations. That's how businesses make sure that they're hitting their fiscal targets in a responsible way, and we've done just that. I think we can be very, very proud of that.

I talked about responsible fiscal management, but we've also invested in the people of Ontario. We've made important investments, and these investments have enabled people, businesses and communities to not only recover from the global recession but to come out stronger than before.

We also embraced change, Speaker. We help people get ahead today while preparing for the challenges of tomorrow. You heard the minister talk about the concept of fairness. The concept of fairness, as the minister alluded to, is at the heart of our fiscal plan. We worked very hard to strike the balance between responsible fiscal management and investing in the people of Ontario at a time when this province needed it most. We helped families, we created opportunity and we invested in our top priorities, like education, health and infrastructure. All the while, while doing that, we helped the province transition to an economy that is greener, more innovative and more resilient.

#### 1650

At the same time, our government places the highest priority on steady, prudent management of the province's finances. This year we tabled a balanced budget, as I mentioned earlier. This was the direct result of a deliberate, strategic plan to transform government and our economy.

We did this in two ways. First, we stimulated economic growth by investing in infrastructure. We have committed to invest about \$190 billion in public infrastructure over 13 years, starting in 2014-15. Let me just say that again: We're committed to invest \$190 billion in public infrastructure over 13 years, starting in 2014-15.

This is the largest infrastructure program in our province's history. This is leading to and will lead to hospitals—new hospitals and hospital additions—transit, roads, schools and many other infrastructure projects that are critical to providing the services that people care about.

The minister spoke about the number of schools that are being built or that have been improved as a result of these investments. This is a great example of that. These categories that I talked about are examples of that, and the examples the minister gave are examples of how we're improving education. These investments are critical.

The Trillium Trust dedicates to infrastructure spending the net proceeds of the sale of some government assets,

such as the province's sale and redemption of shares in GM, the sale of the LCBO head office lands, and the shares of Hydro One.

We took advantage of historically low interest rates today to invest in those things that matter today and tomorrow, to make us more competitive today and tomorrow. This spending benefits the entire provincial economy.

To cite an example, Speaker, according to the Centre for Spatial Economics, for every dollar that we spend on infrastructure, our GDP can grow by up to \$6, on average, in the long term. To realize on that, of course, we need to make those investments, and we have made those investments, like I said, in hospitals, schools, roads, bridges and countless other projects.

Second, as far as our fiscal plan goes, we created the environment for sustained prosperity by investing in our people.

I used to be a part-time faculty member at York University, at the business school there. It's called Schulich. When I taught there; when I was a management consultant before that, advising businesses; and when I was in business school before that, learning about what it takes to make businesses and economies successful, one of the things that was very apparent was that the economies that succeed and are positioned to succeed in the future are those that are investing in their people in the right way, and those that are providing the right education and the right supports, so that people can compete and succeed in the labour market of today and the labour market of tomorrow.

We made it a priority to help people get the education they needed to succeed in this new economy. Improving their skills and training would make the people more competitive and therefore more employable, and therefore allow more Ontarians to achieve their potential.

We knew that having a highly skilled workforce would give us an economic advantage, attracting investors and enabling companies to hire the right talent for the knowledge-based innovation economy. So we invested in education. Some examples of that are rolling out full-day kindergarten for every child and reinventing the Ontario Student Assistance Program, which I think we can all be very proud of.

While we have taken all these steps, and all of them have helped to support a strong economy, both today and in the future—while we are pleased with this, we know that more work needs to be done. More work needs to be done to ensure that more people share and participate in this success, because right now, not everyone does. When we look at the economic numbers, they tell us Ontario is doing well. We have one of the strongest economies in the G7. The minister spoke to that. Our GDP is growing, and our unemployment rate is down.

But some of the effects of the global recession persist. It's like a major winter storm: It hit some people harder than others, and some people have struggled to recover. The truth is, despite our growing economy, some people are feeling left behind. Despite what the economic

statistics show us, things are not all well, and people are worried about their futures.

That is not acceptable, and we believe that it's our role to make sure we do everything we can to address that. With our plan and a balanced budget, we will open doors for people to share in Ontario's success while increasing the key public services that matter most to the people in this province.

Speaker, as I've mentioned many times to you and in this House, one of the services that is most important, frankly, to all of our communities, but certainly in my community, is health care. I represent a community where we have one of the highest percentages of seniors of any riding in the country, and so I hear a lot from my seniors when I meet with them about some of the areas where we can do better in health care, how we can build a stronger health care system.

A stronger health care system is not only essential to creating a more prosperous Ontario; it is a foundational principle of our way of life here in Canada. We know that all the opportunities in the world don't mean much when you're worried about your health. We believe that fairness in our province must include fairness in the health system. Everyone in Ontario should have access to the right kind of care at the right time and in the right place, and our government is taking significant steps to bring about fairness in that health care system.

An example of that is the launching of OHIP+, children and youth pharmacare, which is one of the most significant expansions of medicare in Ontario, I'd say, in a generation—a new benefit that will fully cover the cost of prescription medications for everyone age 24 and under, regardless of family income, starting January 1 of this coming year, just over a month from now.

We are also investing \$618 million more this year in hospitals—that's \$100 million more than we announced in the 2017 budget—so more people can access more procedures, programs and technologies to improve their health.

We also recently announced that Ontario is making available more than 2,000 additional beds and spaces this year to improve access to care for patients and families and reduce wait times at hospitals, at home and in the community.

In addition, we're taking action to combat the scourge of opioids in our province by providing more front-line workers, expanding harm reduction programs, and increasing access to free opioid antidote kits and treatments for substance use disorder. We are working closely with front-line workers and people with lived experience to strengthen the province's coordinated response to the opioid crisis. Our Opioid Emergency Task Force will ensure those closest to the crisis are providing critical insight about what is happening on the ground so that we have the most accurate information, the best tools and the most effective strategies. The goal is to save individuals, families and communities from the tragedy of opioid-related overdoses.

Speaker, I was talking about health care, and I've talked about a number of components of health care,

including combatting the opioid crisis, including the investments that we've made in our hospitals. Another important component of investment in health care is our support for mental health. We are moving forward with a comprehensive approach to transforming the province's mental health system. We're working to create an Ontario where all people have the opportunity to thrive and where they can get the support that they need when they need it, an Ontario where people with mental illness or addictions can recover and participate in welcoming, supporting communities.

We recently announced that our government is expanding psychotherapy programs across Ontario, which will support more than 100,000 people with conditions such as anxiety and depression. This is an important step to ensuring that people with mental illness receive equitable access to the health care that they deserve. It is crucial that everyone receive the health care support they need. This is particularly true for those who struggle with mental health and addictions and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Having an affordable place to live with appropriate support services can help people maintain mental health and help improve their involvement in their communities, and help them take part in our society and be part of the prosperity of our province that we want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to enjoy. That is why our government is investing more than \$45 million over three years to provide up to 1,150 additional supportive housing units for people with serious mental illness or addictions.

We're also partnering with the federal government to provide over \$1 billion in investments in affordable housing, including creating more supportive housing for people with mental health and addiction issues, and better coordination between municipalities and local health integration networks to meet people's mental health and addiction needs.

Under our comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy, the province has invested \$16 million over three years to create approximately 1,000 new supportive housing spaces for people with mental health and addiction issues.

**1700**

Mr. Speaker, we know that for many young people, transitioning to post-secondary education can be an exciting time, but it can also bring about increased stress, anxiety and mental health pressures. That is why Ontario recently committed to investing \$6 million in additional funding over three years, bringing our total to \$15 million annually to support mental health services and supports at Ontario's colleges and universities.

Speaker, I've talked to you extensively about health care, some of the track record of our government and how our fiscal plan supports those investments, whether it be in hospitals or in mental health services. Now I'd like to talk to you about something else that's close to my heart, close to many of us, which is education. Along with health care, education is a critical fundamental to ensuring quality of life in Ontario, and it's vital to our

plan for long-term economic success. Investing in education is putting a down payment on a prosperous future. Our steadfast commitment to excellence and opportunity in education is one of the principal reasons Ontario is a highly successful destination for investment, innovation and business growth.

We have one of the world's most talented and diverse workforces, and the percentage of adults here in Ontario with a post-secondary education is among the highest of any nation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The talent and skills of Ontario's people are our greatest competitive advantage, and we want to make sure that everyone in the province gets the training and knowledge they need to compete and excel in today's economy. That is why we are making tuition free for more than 210,000 college and university students through the new OSAP, rolled out earlier this fall. Getting post-secondary education should be based on your desire to learn and grow, and not based on your income.

We are also preparing students for success in their post-secondary education by investing \$16 billion in capital grants over 10 years for schools, and building or renovating more than 50 new and improved schools this year, providing high-quality programs to strengthen student achievement and well-being.

We are also refreshing Ontario's curriculum, from kindergarten to grade 12, to ensure that students are learning the skills they need to thrive in a changing world and keep them in high demand by employers. Over the next three years, Ontario will introduce 17,000 more grade 11 and 12 students to career options while obtaining their high school diploma through the expansion of the Specialist High Skills Major program. And earlier this month, we announced that we are now making financial literacy a requirement in the revamped grade 10 career studies course, starting next September. Speaker, I have to tell you that I am incredibly proud of this addition to our curriculum, the fact that we're making financial literacy a mandatory component of our curriculum. This is one of the areas that I know I and many here in our caucus have been advocates on, and I'm so pleased that Minister Hunter announced that we're making financial literacy a compulsory component of the curriculum and revamping that component of the curriculum.

I was actually at a financial literacy event this morning. I was speaking at the Economic Club of Canada, and we were talking specifically about financial literacy. Not only did I share this news with those who were gathered—and they were very pleased to hear that news—but we also heard from a panel of incredibly talented leaders in financial literacy. This is just another example of how we're making the changes and the adjustments in the curriculum and the education system to make sure that the next generation of young people is positioned to succeed.

We are also building a competitive workforce and reducing employment barriers through the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy. It is a strategy that is providing

skills development and lifelong learning opportunities across Ontario. Tens of thousands more students will have an experiential learning opportunity as we work to ensure that all secondary and post-secondary students have at least one before they graduate.

We're also boosting the number of graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics by 25%, and graduating 1,000 applied master's students in artificial intelligence-related fields per year, all within five years, because we know that skills and specializations like these will be in increasing demand in an interconnected and high-tech world, and we know that this is fundamental to our long-term prosperity.

And we are doing more. Our bold measures to strengthen the province's education system have made Ontario a prime location for investment. Global giants such as Johnson and Johnson and Thomson Reuters have expanded their operations in Ontario, and we're making a compelling case to Amazon, based on the merits of our workforce, to open their second headquarters here in our province.

Recently, I was at an announcement where we announced an investment to support Apotex and the creation of jobs in Ontario, in fact in Etobicoke, which I'm particularly proud of.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Etobicoke North.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I know Dr. Qaadri is here and he's incredibly proud of that investment as well. He often reminds me that this investment was in Etobicoke North. I will concede that point—nevertheless, an important investment, one that impacts all of our communities because the people who work at Apotex live in Etobicoke North, but they also live in Etobicoke Centre, York South–Weston and many other ridings nearby in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that our plan to bring Ontario out of the depths of recession is working. In the 2017 fall economic statement, Minister Sousa laid out our bold next steps in our long-term strategy to create a more prosperous Ontario. Having delivered a balanced budget plan, we now turn to ensuring that everyone in Ontario has a chance to participate and contribute to the province's growth and prosperity.

Bill 177 contains a series of initiatives and amendments to support our plan for the economy. I want to take a few moments to share with all of you and those who are watching some of the key components of this proposed legislation.

I often talk about seniors because I have a community where we have one of the largest percentages of seniors of any riding in Canada, and so I want to talk about the influence of our seniors on our population and how that share of our population that is seniors is growing, as is their role in the economy.

Today, Ontario has more than two million seniors. That number is expected to double in 25 years. People of all ages in Ontario are grateful for the many contributions that they have made to our economy, and continue to make today to our economy and to our province. Our government deeply appreciates how seniors have helped

to build Ontario up, and we are working to ensure that they can take part in our dynamic and prosperous province for years to come.

We recently released something that I'm very excited about, and actually did an announcement on in my riding of Etobicoke Centre, called Aging with Confidence: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors. It's an action plan which will support seniors so that they can live independent, healthy, active, safe and socially connected lives. Our plan will help more seniors across the province stay healthy and active by supporting 40 new seniors active living centres over the next three years. These community centres will offer social and recreational programs, like exercise classes, transportation services, communal dining, and health and wellness classes.

We are fostering social inclusion, volunteerism and lifelong learning for seniors through innovative projects funded by the expanded Seniors Community Grant Program.

We're also launching a special project that will connect youth volunteers with seniors to help them build their understanding of technology.

We're also improving health care for seniors. We are providing 2.6 million additional hours of home care—let me say that again: 2.6 million additional hours of home care—including for personal support services, physical and speech therapy, nursing care and respite services for caregivers.

We will modernize 300 long-term-care homes across Ontario through the redevelopment of more than 30,000 long-term beds, and we will create 5,000 new long-term-care beds by 2022 as a first step—and this is a first step, Speaker—to creating more than 30,000 additional beds over the next decade. We're also providing more than 200 affordable housing units for seniors who need a place to live when they are discharged from the hospital.

These are incredibly important investments. They're substantial investments, and this is something that I know that people across Ontario, whether they be seniors or whether they be younger people, can appreciate the importance of.

Also, earlier this year we launched a new three-year, \$100-million dementia strategy. I actually held a consultation in my riding on the dementia strategy and heard from those struggling with Alzheimer's and dementia, and also from caregivers who are caring for their family members with Alzheimer's and dementia. This is particularly important for seniors in my riding, who have told me that dementia is a concern.

As well, we are recognizing the invaluable work of caregivers, and this bill proposes to create the Ontario Caregiver Tax Credit. We all know or know of someone who gives so much of themselves to take care of a loved one who may have complex health needs while balancing other responsibilities at work, at home or in the community, and we all speak of them with admiration. Our government is turning that admiration into action. In addition to the proposed tax credit, we are providing more education and training to caregivers, to help them cope with the

physical, emotional and financial demands of caring for a loved one.

Speaker, I'm incredibly proud of these initiatives and of the ones I mentioned earlier. These are just some of the initiatives in the Aging with Confidence action plan, but these are some of the initiatives that will really help support seniors in communities across Ontario—including mine, those living in Etobicoke Centre, in my community—to live more active and healthy and rewarding lives.

**1710**

One of the recurring concerns that I hear from people in my riding relates to consumer protection. It's not just a worry for seniors; it's a concern for people of all ages. Speaker, you may be aware, but I have been very active in the area of consumer protection and have introduced private member's bills on consumer protection to ban unscrupulous door-to-door salespeople, to stop the calls from air duct cleaners and others who continuously call people in my community and harass them and try to get them to buy services that they don't need.

We know that a safer and more informed marketplace makes for a more prosperous province, for a more prosperous country, and it's critical that people enter into the marketplace with clear information and confidence. Our government is helping people to make those sound decisions so that they can more confidently take part in Ontario's economy. That's why we're taking action to strengthen consumer protection in a number of areas, including financial services, real estate and auto insurance.

The government is moving forward to establish the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario, a new, flexible and innovative financial services and pension regulator that will strengthen protections for consumers, investors and pension plan beneficiaries. This summer, we appointed the first board of directors for FSRA, and we are continuing to take key steps to develop the authority's mandate and governance structure.

As part of our Fair Housing Plan, we'll create strong and clear rules to govern real estate agents in multiple-representation scenarios. We are also working to make disclosure clauses in real estate contracts clearer and more consistent, so consumers will better know their rights and their responsibilities. We continue to engage in a comprehensive review of real estate rules to improve consumer protection and professionalism.

Consumer protection, of course, isn't just for homeowners; it's for renters, too. We expanded rent control to all residential units, which has strengthened protections for tenants against sudden dramatic rent increases.

We propose to build on these initiatives through amendments to regulations under the Mortgage Brokerages, Lenders and Administrators Act that would establish investment limits on syndicated mortgages to prevent retail investors from overcommitting to potentially high-risk investments and would require mortgage brokers to keep a record of their assessments of whether a syndicated mortgage product is suitable for their clients. This would ensure that the only people investing in these

potentially high-risk products are those investors who can tolerate the risk.

Bill 177 proposes to amend the Securities Act to amend the Ontario Securities Commission information collection powers; to detect, identify and mitigate systemic risks related to the capital markets; and protect the stability of the Canadian financial system.

With two thirds of Ontario workers not participating in workplace pension plans, many families are worried about how they will maintain their standard of living in retirement. Company pensions, especially defined benefit pensions, are no longer the norm. Because of this reality, we have taken action. Our government played a leadership role in achieving a historic agreement to enhance the Canada Pension Plan. This agreement was hammered out in 2016, but will benefit people in Ontario for years to come. Enhancing the CPP took a while, and we had to force the issue. But we were able to find consensus with the other provinces and the new federal government to enhance the CPP. Let's be clear, though: Without Ontario's leadership, CPP enhancement would not have occurred.

We know, however, that more needs to be done to promote greater retirement fairness and security. That is why we have announced a new framework for funding defined benefit pension plans, a framework that this bill helps to make a reality. The framework includes certain measures intended to help protect workers' retirement benefits while enabling businesses to grow and be more competitive.

We also announced a framework for target benefits, helping to ensure multi-employer pension plans are sustainable for the long term. This bill also proposes changes to the Pension Benefits Act that would enable the reform of funding rules for defined benefit plans that we announced in May. Reform would include requiring those plans to fund an additional reserve within the plan to address adverse changes in funding. The bill would also increase the Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund coverage. This fund guarantees the payment of certain benefits from the pension plan should the employer become insolvent or go bankrupt. The increase would raise the guaranteed payment to \$1,500 per month from \$1,000 per month, and remove age and service eligibility requirements for the fund.

In addition, the bill would also create a new regime for certain multi-employer pension plans that wish to offer target benefits. As I mentioned before, we are moving forward with establishing the new financial services regulator, FSRA, and part of the authority's mandate is to protect and safeguard the pension benefits and rights of pension plan beneficiaries.

There are many elements to this bill, and I won't be able to cover them all here. But one of the things I do want to talk about is small business and young people, particularly youth employment. Young people in my riding of Etobicoke Centre have shared with me their anxieties over getting into the workforce, building a successful career for themselves and giving themselves

opportunities to thrive professionally while allowing them to provide for their loved ones. We have heard similar concerns from our future leaders across the province, so we are taking action.

Small businesses have always been significant contributors to the success of our economy. About one third of the jobs in Ontario are small business, and the workers of small businesses are more likely to be younger. Speaker, as you may be aware, I've spent a tremendous amount of time over the last three and a half years since I was elected working hard to advocate and to move forward on reforms that help young people to achieve their potential: to make sure that they are getting the right post-secondary education and to make sure that they're finding jobs when they graduate from post-secondary education.

I am pleased that our government is going to provide \$124 million over three years to help young people get a good start in the workforce. Through this initiative, employers with fewer than 100 employees would receive a \$1,000 incentive for hiring a young worker and another \$1,000 incentive for retaining that worker for six months.

We know that graduates often face challenges landing their first job due to a lack of work-related experience. We're therefore boosting on-the-job learning opportunities through the Career Kick-Start Strategy, which includes expanding specialist high-skills major programs. We're providing funding to help support post-secondary institutions and employers create more experiential learning opportunities, and renewing support for apprenticeships delivered through the Mitacs Accelerate programs and the Ontario Centres of Excellence.

There are many things that I would love to talk about here today, but I know that I'm running low on time. One of the things that I want to allude to is a dark moment in our history. In June of 2012, part of the rooftop parking deck of the Algo Centre Mall in Elliot Lake collapsed, sending tonnes of concrete, steel, glass, drywall and other debris, including one vehicle, onto the floors below. The building had been flawed since it was built, but the collapse itself was sudden and came without warning. Tragically, it claimed two lives and injured 19 people.

Our government is working to ensure that this kind of tragedy never happens again. We continue to work to address the recommendations of the public inquiry into this event. As part of the ongoing commitment to make buildings safer and improve emergency response procedures, this bill proposes amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to strengthen inspections, increase fines for individuals and corporations, and raise employer reporting requirements.

We are also proposing to amend Ontario's Building Code Act to require owners of prescribed buildings to better maintain and evaluate those buildings. The amendments would also enhance municipal enforcement of the building code and require municipalities to develop a complaints policy related to the safety of prescribed buildings and allow for enhanced qualification requirements for people such as building officials and designers who are not architects or engineers.

I spoke in my remarks about where we came from, about the recession, about how our government worked hard and made the necessary investments to recover from that recession, but also to position our economy for success in the years to come. We have done that through investments in health care, education and the many services that the people of Ontario rely on, but also making sure that we're investing in people and the supports to ensure that our economy can prosper in the years to come.

These are some of the reasons that I ran for office. I know that this bill will help us to achieve those goals. I hope that all members of the Legislature support it. The people of Ontario deserve it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's a real pleasure to rise in debate. Of course, this was an excruciating hour to listen to what they believe is success and what they believe is fairness. I need not remind anybody—whether it's a budget, financial update, or otherwise—that this is the government that has brought in the single largest sales tax increase in Ontario's history, which is the HST; the single largest income tax increase in Ontario's history, with the health tax; the single largest eco fee in Ontario's history, with the cap-and-trade; and they have done this all while running up spending in the province of Ontario. They have done it while making us a have-not province. They have done that by becoming the subnational government to have the world's largest accumulated debt.

That is what the legacy of this Liberal government is, and they continue on their path of destruction for our economy. In fact, through the first years that they were in government, they lost over 335,000 manufacturing jobs. They brought in the Green Energy Act, and for every job it created, they lost five more. Now we have the largest hydro rates in North America, which are crippling families in terms of affordability and crippling small business.

**1720**

In addition to that, the government is going to ratchet up the minimum wage in a very quick time frame. We've said we support a \$15 minimum wage, but it has to be done over a period of time that makes it sustainable. What does the government turn around and do? They take from small business on the one hand, and then they give them a little bit back in the next—not enough to sustain them, and certainly not in order to make them successful in the longer term.

Speaker, I think that anybody who is watching today who has watched the Minister of Finance and his parliamentary assistant will not take their word at face value. I think that they will take their record for what it is, and that's 14 years of mismanagement, reckless spending and using the taxpayer as their personal ATM.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I have to say, the disconnect that we often speak of has never been clearer for us, given the

Minister of Finance, who started off his commentary about smokestacks and about environmental leadership and around the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One.

We now know, through Hydro One, through the privatization of that public asset—which actually has not served the people of this province well—that the government is the proud owner of the Colstrip coal plant in eastern Montana, a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, and the proud owner of an 800-acre coal ash waste pond—toxic soup. Congratulations. You know, of course, that those greenhouse emissions are going to stay down south of the border.

This is a government that is a walking contradiction—and no disrespect to Johnny Cash in that.

Also, the premise was that the sell-off and the privatization of Hydro One was going to improve infrastructure investment. When one looks at the public accounts in this place, for the last four years, this government has underfunded infrastructure investment to the tune of \$4 billion. That was the big Liberal myth: “We must sell off Hydro One to invest in infrastructure.”

Meanwhile, today the Toronto board of trade—it’s right in your clippings—indicated that the Toronto-Waterloo corridor is the largest distribution hub in Canada and one of the largest in North America, and that traffic delays and congestion result in the loss of \$500 million to \$650 million per year in higher pricing and not moving goods around.

Regardless of the speech, you’ve got to follow the numbers when you’re following this Liberal government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I’m very pleased to comment on the speeches by the Minister of Finance and by his parliamentary assistant, the member from Etobicoke Centre.

I thought I would speak very briefly—one of the things that happens with the fall economic statement, of course, is that there is a bill tabled which deals with various aspects of the fall economic statement. One of the things that the minister mentioned briefly was the creation of new indigenous institutes. In fact, embedded within that fall bill is a new Indigenous Institutes Act, which would support the sustainability and independence of indigenous institutes in Ontario, of which there are currently nine.

Ontario is working with our indigenous partners to advance the education of indigenous learners, and the indigenous institutes play a unique role in that project. They are culturally responsive. They often enable students to upgrade so that they can go to other post-secondary institutions. But we’re introducing legislation to recognize a new pathway for indigenous students, which is to earn a diploma, certificate or degree right at one of those indigenous institutes.

One of the first indigenous institutes to start down that path is the indigenous institute at Six Nations, which has a partnership with Mohawk. One of the things that they’re doing is offering a diploma in native language

studies, which, as a former Minister of Education, is very interesting to me because it means that we will have a new group of students from indigenous communities who will have qualifications that will enable them, we hope, to move on to teaching careers with indigenous languages.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I’m pleased to rise to speak to this bill and certainly the speeches by the Minister of Finance and his parliamentary assistant.

I’m going to be delivering a letter to the labour minister tomorrow, and I want to read you a few excerpts out of it, because they certainly pertain to what has been talked about here today. It comes from some small businesses in my riding, and it says:

“Since your government introduced Bill 148 last spring, I have heard from dozens of small and medium-sized business owners in Perth–Wellington who are deeply worried about the impact of this legislation. A lot of small businesses already operate with slim profit margins. Business owners in Perth–Wellington have been hammered by rising hydro rates and rising costs of complying with increasing provincial government regulations, and I am told that a sudden spike in labour costs will only make it more difficult for them to remain competitive.”

The next paragraph I’d like to read to you says this:

“As you know, we have also heard warnings from credible, independent bodies about the economic damage that Bill 148 would likely inflict. According to the Financial Accountability Officer, it’s expected that this bill will destroy a minimum of 50,000 jobs. TD Bank recently estimated this number to be around 90,000. The token small business tax cut announced in the recent fall economic statement will do little to curb the negative effects.”

I know this government does not want to listen to the Financial Accountability Officer or the Auditor General, and they are very good at getting rid of jobs. Look back five years ago to the horse racing industry, where there were 20,000 to 30,000 jobs lost. They don’t care about these types of things when it stares them in the face.

So I think we have some real issues about what was just said here in this last hour.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the questions and comments for this round. I return to the member for Etobicoke Centre to reply.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I’d like to thank all of the members who joined the debate on the fall economic statement.

I have to say that when I hear the comments from the members of the PC caucus, particularly the first member—from Ottawa–Nepean, if I’m not mistaken—I just think that I would encourage her to study the facts around our fiscal position here in Ontario.

The minister has announced a balanced budget for this coming year, and we have done that in a very thoughtful and methodical way, the way businesspeople approach these things. And it is a balanced budget. Counter to what



the PC members will have you believe, it is a balanced budget.

The reality is, when you look at those numbers, they are put together by—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Sorry to interrupt. I would ask the members on this side of the House to refrain from heckling the member. He's got the right to speak; he's got the floor.

Member for Etobicoke Centre, I'll give you a few extra seconds.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you very much, Speaker. When you get that heckling from the opposite side, you know that they feel uncomfortable about what they've said because they have been challenged on it.

What I was saying was that I'm someone who, as the members know—I'm educated in business. I studied business. I've counselled large companies. I have two degrees in business, in which I majored in finance. I know a balanced budget when I see one. This is a balanced budget. As much as it's an inconvenient truth for the PC—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Perhaps the members on this side of the House didn't hear what I just said when I asked them to refrain from heckling the member for Etobicoke Centre. He has the floor, and I'm going to give him some extra time, because you've interrupted twice now.

Member for Etobicoke Centre.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you, Speaker.

I know it's upsetting to some of the members of the PC caucus, because when the PC government was last in office, during times of record economic growth, they struggled to balance the budget; in fact, they couldn't balance the budget during good economic times. We have done it during difficult economic times. We have made the investments that people need in the future of our economy and in the services that people rely on, like health care and education, and we have balanced the budget. The PCs were never able to do any of those things.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I would like to ask for unanimous consent to stand down the lead for our PC Party.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to stand down the lead speech from the official opposition. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. They probably did that because they don't want to listen to me for an hour. That's okay. I'll deal with that.

1730

It's a pleasure to stand and speak to Bill 177, An Act to implement Budget measures and enact and amend various statutes, or, as the government likes to call it, the Stronger, Fairer Ontario Act.

Firstly, I want to comment on the fact that this omnibus bill includes a record-breaking 46 schedules. This is significant because the government's last budget measures act had 34 schedules. That was in 2016. In 2015, the budget measures act included 23 schedules. You can see a trend here, Mr. Speaker. In 2014, the act was comprised of 32 schedules. The point is, there must be word of an election in the air, as the Liberal government has recently been handing out money from its virtual forest of debt-ridden money trees.

Despite Bill 177 being the heaviest budget measures legislation since the last election, it is actually the lightest one on the economy. The majority of these 46 schedules are unrelated to finance and really don't belong in the budget measures bill—for example, francophone issues, recommendations from the Elliot Lake mall collapse, the building code, the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, the Child Care and Early Years Act, the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, the Municipal Act, the Education Act and so on. Mr. Speaker, we support a lot of the things in those bills, but that's not really about the fairer economy act that this should be about. When you bring in a financial statement, it should be talking about the pillars of our finance and our economy.

We do not and cannot support the fiscal direction this Liberal government continues to take. This government has yet to take steps towards balancing the books, not saddling future generations with more debt and creating a more prosperous province with better jobs.

I'm going to defer a little bit here because the member from Etobicoke Centre stood up and suggested that he knows better about a balanced budget than the Auditor General of Ontario. Frankly, every Auditor General across the province has said that they've actually changed the accounting principles, the accounting standards, to try to get people to believe they have a balanced budget. They took \$4 billion and put it onto OPG's books so that it wouldn't show on the government of Ontario books. At the end of the day, the people of Ontario are wise to this. They know that there's only one taxpayer. Whether or you call me a taxpayer or an electricity payer, I'm paying the freight on those bills. The government made the decision to borrow that \$4 billion—\$4 billion right off the top that we are going to pay as taxpayers in extra interest that we didn't have to, had they borrowed it as the province of Ontario and not put it through OPG's books. How is that true trust and credibility and giving the people of Ontario hope and sincerity that they're actually doing better things for them as taxpayers?

After 15 years of reckless and wasteful spending, the Ontario public has suffered significant losses of their public services. Just in my six years, Mr. Speaker, they continue to spend more than they bring in. They continue to borrow more money on the backs of these pages in front of you and all the great youth across our province, and they're saddling them with debt that will be paid back by them for generations. Frankly, I'm offended to hear this government call the loss of services fair. The

public is offended to hear those called fair. I'm going to give some examples of what I believe the people of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and, frankly, across the province of Ontario talk about fairness.

What's so fair about your child losing access to an educational assistant? In 2015, I raised concerns about the impact on special-needs students after significant cuts to educational assistants in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and across Ontario. The loss of EAs was prompted by cuts to special education and resulted in a cut of 50 educational assistant jobs on special-needs students in my riding. Mr. Speaker, that child with special needs, the day before they changed the criteria—they're still special needs, but they do not have that special education assistant in there, and that is deplorable.

I even brought to the government's attention particular cases. One of them involved two local boys: Owen, 11, and Noah, 6, diagnosed as autistic. Owen and Noah were kept at home because no public or Catholic school in Hanover could enroll them, not after the Liberal government's budget cut 50 educational assistants in my riding.

Imagine the stress and frustration of those students and their families after the party cut millions from special education. Imagine the opportunities that have been wasted as a result of their cuts to these social programs and services. I don't think the families that have been impacted negatively by those cuts would see this as fair.

That wasn't the only time the Liberal government left people with special needs in the lurch. We believe individuals with disabilities strengthen our workforce, our communities and our province, so we must always uphold the basic belief of equal access, equal opportunity and equal respect for all Ontarians. They make up 15% of our population, but regrettably, the unemployment rate is almost twice that of people without disabilities. So imagine the shock that went through the community when this Liberal government all of a sudden pulled the plug on DREN, a disability employment hub that has served Durham region for 23 years and whose leadership was recognized by the province's special adviser on accessibility, former Lieutenant Governor David Onley.

Mr. Speaker, what's so fair about holding a high unemployment rate for people with disabilities, so high, in fact, that it's considered a national crisis and a national shame? As I always challenge them in question periods, how is it that they can find \$70 million for the defunct Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, \$6 million for Pan Am executives, \$4.5 million for Hydro One's CEO, and \$4 billion for their hydro hocus-pocus re-election plan, but they won't put dollars back into core public services such as special education teachers? How is that fair, Mr. Speaker?

Similar to how they mistreated special education students and vulnerable Ontarians, they showed the same disrespect to students in rural and northern Ontario, where the Liberal government shuttered about 600 schools—record closures in this province's history.

Just last week, I saw an ad in a local paper about the sale of Derby school. Derby school is one of the 600

local schools that the Liberal government closed. That's the Liberal record on education: Sell off community schools.

Similarly, the Liberal record on energy is to sell off Hydro One—shameful. In that case, 85% of Ontarians said, "Do not do this. This is not in the best interests of Ontarians," and they still went ahead. How is that fair when they're democratically elected and don't listen to 85% of the people they represent?

What's fair about displacing thousands of students and shutting down 600 community schools across this great province?

Life is harder under the Liberals. The Liberals have reduced access to education assistants for special needs, closed 600 schools and devastated hundreds of communities.

Let's talk about their "no plan" for seniors. They always want to talk about our plan. The last time I looked, they were in the government; they should have the plan. If they want us to be the government, we'll see what happens in June of next year. Let's talk about that plan, though.

What's fair about wait-listing 32,000 seniors for long-term care? The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore spoke a few minutes ago, and he talked about how wonderful their plan for long-term care is, and that they are going to add 30,000 beds. But Mr. Speaker, we know those were already promised at least once—maybe twice—in their tenure. Less than 30% are actually redeveloped, although they made the promise and the commitment.

He then said they're going to build 5,000 new beds. That's a good sign. It's interesting that in the last two budgets, there wasn't a single cent for new beds, but all of a sudden, six months before an election, they now figure out that "we've got a problem with our seniors. We've got a real issue here, so we'd better throw some money."

He went on to say that it's a first step. How can you say that? You've got 32,000 people on a wait-list that we all know is projected to grow to 50,000, and you're just coming out today to say that's a first step. With 32,000 seniors in the queue for long-term care, and half of long-term-care homes needing redevelopment, aging in Ontario has never been so uncertain.

I have taken great pride in being the critic for our PC Party and holding the government to task, Mr. Speaker. I asked them, and I continue to ask them: Where is your capacity plan? The Premier said two years ago it was done, yet when you ask the Minister of Health where the newly promised nursing beds will go, he does not know. He does not share that with us. So who is telling the truth over there? Or do the Liberals really need longer than 15 years to get a capacity plan released and, more importantly, those beds redeveloped and new beds built?

I have to tell you, I'm deeply concerned that the beds the Liberals just announced exist only on paper. They have not been planned out or mapped out, and no one in government really knows when and where they will be built. So how is this announcement—this election an-

nouncement, which is what it really is—about long-term care, and how much they care about seniors, useful to anybody other than the Liberal Party seeking re-election?

For two years, I've gone to estimates and I have asked what I consider very practical questions. My job in the official opposition is to hold the government to account and to be the devil's advocate on behalf of the people—to hold their feet to the fire.

Mr. Speaker, when they say, "I'm going to redevelop 30,000 new beds," would you not expect that they could hand me a plan that at least said in what areas of Ontario they're going to be built and when they would be finished by? That, I don't think, is an unreasonable request. I don't think that, after 14 years in government, a government shouldn't be able to give you at least that plan. Can it change? Absolutely. But they at least should be able to give me the fundamental plan of where they were planning to build, and give a guarantee to the people who are waiting on those wait-lists that those beds would be completed.

With this recent re-election announcement, I called immediately and said I would like a briefing. I would like to understand where these 5,000 new beds will go. Guess what they said, Mr. Speaker? They said the briefing won't be useful, as "there are no details to share at this time" beyond what was put in the Liberal media release.

If you are going to build 5,000 new beds, would you not think that you're going to know exactly where the capacity is needed, and you're going to put them there?

I find it amazing to still be in this House and asking simple questions like that of a government that prides themselves, after 14 years, on asking us where the plan is, and yet they never have delivered that plan to me for the redeveloped beds or the new beds. Once again, no one on the government side knows when or where those new beds will go. How can they call this a seniors strategy? How can they call that Aging with Confidence?

1740

Ontarians don't trust Kathleen Wynne, and I think the lack of honesty is clear on the seniors file. There are simply too many examples of the Liberals choosing politics over principle and promising things they know they can't deliver. It's simply disingenuous. You can't stand up and say—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the member to withdraw that unparliamentary word.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Withdraw.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the people of Ontario expect that if you're going to stand and say, "I'm going to build 30,000 beds," you should be saying where and when, and you should deliver those beds. You can't keep kicking it down the road. You can't keep blaming other people and going back two or three governments and blaming them. You have to, after 14 years, step up, accept responsibility and accountability, and actually be honest with the people of Ontario.

I wonder, if I asked right today, if they could guarantee that those 30,000 beds would be developed by 2025, totally finished, what they would tell me. I think they'd

say yes, because there's an election coming, but I think if they're honest and sincere, they'll tell the people of Ontario that that's probably not practical. Yet they're coming out and re-announcing it, and they're going to add 5,000. So we couldn't redevelop 30,000 over 14 years, but now we're going to add another 5,000, and we're going to have these all done, ironically, in four years—the new ones—and 10 years for the ones that they haven't been able to do over 14 years. Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario ask a lot of questions, and I think they've lost confidence with this government on that particular issue.

Earlier this year, I introduced a bill to guarantee funding for seniors in long-term care. That was in response to the ongoing struggles with heating. Again, that's gone up 300% and this Liberal government says, "We're going to give you 25% back, and it's all good. Everything is good in your life. It's all wonderful." Last time I noted that if you go up 300% and take 25% off, that's still a 275% increase that you're incurring every day with no relief in sight for the long term.

They borrowed \$25 billion at the drop of a hat to tell you, just before an election, that your hydro bills have come down. They never bring up, when they're talking about this, that they raised them 300%. They never talk about that \$25 billion that's going to cost \$43 billion at the lowest end, and potentially \$93 billion that isn't going into educational assistance, long-term care, people with special needs or people with mental health issues. I can't believe in good conscience that any of them will stand in front of their constituents and say, "This is good for Ontario," other than for electioneering purposes.

The government and minister seemed sympathetic to the cause. They didn't actually put in place that stable, predictable funding to support the needs of those most vulnerable seniors. As such, nursing homes and hospitals will continue to face skyrocketing hydro bills. They've done nothing to truly address the soaring fiscal hydro costs. What they're saying is, "We're going to actually patch it. We're going to borrow \$25 billion on the backs, again, of our pages and all of the youth across our great province, and they're going to pay for that for years and years down the road."

It's a double-edged sword, because not only are they not getting programs and services, but we're not going to continue to develop things that we should be developing with that money that we would have if they would have not done that, and if they would have actually addressed this over their last 14 years and not run deficits. How fair is it for a government to continue to say that the world is rosy? I heard the finance minister saying, "We're wonderful. Our province is just rocketing now." They may not be the exact words he used, but he was virtually rose-coloured: "All is good, we're leading all the indicators."

Mr. Speaker, talk to the people in a riding like Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and ask them if everything is rosy, if their hydro bills are acceptable, if the unemployment rates are acceptable and if the reality of closing 600 schools across our province is fair.

Just eight months ago, I spoke in the House about the predicament facing Grey Bruce Health Services in my riding after they saw their hydro bill rise by \$350,000 a year, a 40% increase in just one year. Sadly, because of this government's disastrous energy schemes, my local hospitals were forced to consider bold cuts, things such as closing the operating room in the Meaford hospital and other cuts to surgical services.

Luckily, they didn't end up having to do that. The government, again, miraculously found money and said, "We're going to give you"—again, a year before an election—"more money this year. We're going to put a little more money into your budget so we don't have that being a headline in Owen Sound or in any of our communities across Ontario." Because it's not only Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound that has this impact coming at them; the rest of the province does as well.

What's so fair about reduced access to health care across small-town communities in Ontario? All of the waste Liberals have had over their 15 years is coming home to roost, and sadly, it's on the backs of our youth in the form of school closings and educational assistants being cut, on seniors' long-term-care homes—32,000 people waiting on a wait-list—and the job creators.

Similar to how aging in Ontario has never been more uncertain, running a business in Ontario has never been so uncertain. Stats show us that in this city alone, 20% of the manufacturing jobs have been wiped out in the last 10 years. Across Ontario, 300,000 such jobs disappeared. Companies like Caterpillar, Kellogg's, Heinz, CCL Industries, Novartis and other big players have moved out of our province.

Do you know what the Premier's response to the job losses was when we raised it in the House, Mr. Speaker? She said it's their fault. They are "very bad actors," she said, because they create emissions. The source of that is the *Globe and Mail*, March 16, 2017.

This is what the leader of Ontario, our province, said about our job creators. She said it's their fault that they couldn't keep up with their skyrocketing hydro rates. The Liberal Party loves to blame others for the problems they've created. It's never their accountability, it's never their issue; it's always someone else.

We know energy rates started spinning out of control when they signed a sole-sourced, shady \$7-billion Samsung contract to kick off the Green Energy Act. Within years, the Liberals' multi-billion dollar colossal energy bungle left Ontario families in poverty and ratepayers on the hook for a lot more, and for a very long time. Since 2009, Ontarians have paid \$37 billion for the Liberals' wind and solar experiments, and are on the hook for an additional \$133 billion in subsidy payments until 2031. What could \$133 billion have provided to our great province and the people who pay the freight?

If we continue with this Green Energy Act: The Liberals have never agreed to actually release Ontario ratepayers from the 20-year contracts for overpriced wind and solar power, energy we don't need. As a result, Ontario has given away \$6 billion in surplus energy to

the United States and Quebec, and will keep doing so year after year. We actually pay them to take our surplus power. That's \$6 billion, Mr. Speaker. Again I ask, is that fair to the taxpayer of Ontario?

The Liberals have also never agreed to put a moratorium on wind turbines, to stop signing more of these bad contracts, to restore democracy to local municipalities and groups like the Multi-Municipal Wind Turbine Working Group that have said, "We don't want these in our backyard. We don't need them. We don't want them. They're not good for our economy. You need to give us the right to make those local decisions." They took that away. They've never restored that back to the municipalities of Ontario. Nor did they agree to stop the fire sale of Hydro One, even though, as I mentioned earlier, 85% of Ontarians said they did not want Hydro One sold. How fair is that?

As my colleague Todd Smith from Prince Edward county is always bringing up, he is asking them to rein in the exorbitant executive compensation in the energy sector, to admit that it's unacceptable. What's fair about the CEO of Hydro One making \$4.5 million a year while Ontarians burn wood to save on their hydro bills? And let's not forget that he points out that the equivalent CEO in BC or at Hydro Québec makes \$450,000, so how is it fair that he deserves 10 times more, and yet the people of Ontario can hardly pay their hydro bills?

Similar to the cannabis legislation, Bill 174, which we debated earlier today, we will be asking that unrelated schedules be separated into different pieces of legislation—not this omnibus stuff, Mr. Speaker. Let's stick to the real focus on the issues as they are—

**Mr. James J. Bradley:** You mean like Mike Harris did.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Mr. Speaker, these are everyday—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Sorry to interrupt—I have to ask one of the members to refrain from heckling, please, for the remainder of the day.

The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Again, these omnibus bills—the hope for the government is that they deflect from the real issues, and I'm bringing those to the fore today. I'm bringing questions about the reality of what we're really talking about.

The Minister of Finance talked about a sustainable future. Well, again, I don't believe doubling our debt to \$350 billion is responsible governance. I don't believe that that's fiscal responsibility. He talked about balancing the budget. Again, why did the government bring in a new accounting principle this year, when they said they would balance? Why has it always been good for the rest of the years we've ever had the Auditor General—a third party, very well-respected, highly regarded, totally arm's-length from any government—saying that this is inappropriate and not an acceptable principle? If that was the case, I challenge the government on why they had to do that. Will they stand up tomorrow and say, "We'll go back to the old accounting principles"? Then we'll see if it's truly balanced.

There is \$4 billion, as I said earlier, on the OPG's books, not on the government's books, so that they could try to say it's a balanced budget. At the end of the day, \$4 billion in debt incurred by the government of Ontario, or OPG, which is owned by the government of Ontario, is still government debt, so at the end of the day, I don't believe that.

The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore talked about children, grandchildren and hope. He said he has all this experience and credentials, and I believe that, but at the end of the day, I don't believe he should be standing in this room saying that it is a balanced budget when he knows full well that if he didn't use the new accounting principles, it is not truly a balanced budget.

I believe, at the end of the day, that this government continues to overspend. I believe they continue to believe, "We'll just go back and tax. We'll try to make sure that the people of Ontario believe that everything is rosy." The people in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound do not believe things are rosy. They're very concerned with the levels of debt. They're very concerned with the highest taxes that we have.

This government, again, remember, said, "We will not raise taxes," and brought in the highest health care tax in our province's history, and it's still on the books. They brought in the highest energy rates. They've got the highest debt levels.

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We need some fairness for the people of Ontario because the people can't trust this government, and they can't take anymore.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound obviously has the record for most words in a speech. I think he may have passed some sort of record today. He covered almost every angle that both the minister and the parliamentary assistant raised about the fall economic statement, about Bill 177.

It is interesting, though, because when the ministers were addressing their environmental record—I referenced this earlier, but it bears repeating. This is a government that completely privatized the Green Energy Act, and I think the long-term effects of that will be felt by future generations. Of course, the Auditor General had indicated that we've already overspent by \$37 billion because of the nature of those contracts. But also, the fact that with the privatization of Hydro One and the broadening of the ownership, so to speak, the province—because the province is a major shareholder in Hydro One—is now the proud owner of an 800-acre coal ash waste pond called a "toxic soup," the Colstrip coal plant.

This is what the Minister of Energy actually said about this: This was "a business decision" of Hydro One—forget principles, forget values, forget the moral responsibility of any government to actually go forward in a responsible way. He says that "the government is pleased at the benefits this will provide" for Ontario, as if those greenhouse gas emissions are going to stay in Montana. You have to shake your head.

Quite honestly, the coal plant that they've now invested in, Hydro One—forget the executive compensation; these are long-term health consequences for the entire country—it's one of the top 20 greenhouse-gas-producing power plants in North America.

Congratulations, you're doing a great job.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's a pleasure to talk about a balanced budget in the province of Ontario. When was the last time Ontario had a balanced budget? Well, in fact, it had three in a row: It had a balanced budget in 2006, 2007 and 2008. With the onset of the recession, Ontario incurred a budget deficit that first year of the recession of \$24.5 billion. But you have to ask yourself, if the Conservatives want to rail against that, why, then, did their leader, when he was in the federal House of Commons, vote in favour of a \$55-billion budget deficit? Well, in both cases, it was the right thing to do. You don't cut your way out of a recession, and the responsible thing for the government of Canada and the government of Ontario to do was to invest in essential infrastructure. Because the great conundrum of Conservative thinking is that, somehow or other, they feel—if business isn't spending and if government isn't spending, then how, I would ask them, is anybody supposed to be able to earn or sell or run a business? It just doesn't add up.

In my local area, that's meant investment in a lot of essential infrastructure—most recently, major upgrades to the Meadowvale GO station, the Cooksville GO station and the Milton GO station. Those are all projects that were planned over the last several years that have improved the ability of people in Mississauga to leave their cars at home, to use modern facilities, to take the train and to contribute to getting to work faster, lower congestion, and a generally better and more prosperous Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have a chance to respond to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who made excellent points about the fact that this government's budget is not balanced.

I heard the minister on the radio last week, on CBC, and he was asked about whether the budget was balanced. The commentator stated how the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario has problems, how the Auditor General has problems, and the finance minister made it sound like some it's some minor accounting dispute. It's not a minor accounting dispute; it's the government inventing their own rules to cook the books. It's unbelievable. If you can't believe—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have not allowed that expression to be used in debate. I would ask the member to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I withdraw that statement.

Mr. Speaker, I just find it astounding—absolutely astounding—that a government can come up with their own rules to make a deficit disappear.

We have heard the Auditor General come and say that the deficit would be \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion at a minimum, if they actually used the public standard accounting rules that everybody else used, but they invented their own rules. How is that fair? It's unbelievable in this province. If you were a company and did this, you would end up in jail.

I find it absolutely astounding. They can stand there and say it's balanced all they like. It's not a balanced budget, and that will come out after the election, when we have to go through the books and see that they're hiding things. It's just not right. I commend the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for bringing it up and pointing this out.

I can see I'm out of time, so I think I'll sit down at this point.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question or comment.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I have to say this afternoon that I have spent in this House is hours I will never get back in my life—the debate that has gone on; the Liberals talking about a balanced budget when we have the Auditor General saying, “Absolutely not, it's not balanced.”

We have a government that just ignores the fact that we have 12,000 children on wait-lists for mental health services—and they want to crow about a balanced budget? What exactly are the dollars of the people of this province supposed to be spent on, if we cannot invest in our children's mental health?

That's our children; that's not talking about adults; it's not talking about the seniors who are 32,000 people long on a wait-list for long-term care; it's not talking about hospitals that are being run in hallways with people with absolutely no dignity when they are at their sickest and most vulnerable time—and we have a government who thinks that balancing the budget is the most important thing that could be happening today.

We have GO stations in Hamilton that they are calling “ghost GO stations,” because they're building brand new big GO stations and we have no trains running in them. I mean, where are the priorities? How out of touch can they actually truly be with the people of this province? I'm astounded, Speaker. I'm absolutely astounded, today more than I was yesterday—and yesterday was a pretty trying day.

It's time for this government to just give up, send us to the election and let us New Democrats do the work that people in this province need done on their behalf. It's time for them to go, and it's certainly not time for a Conservative government either.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound can respond.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I would thank the members from Kitchener–Waterloo, Hamilton Mountain, Mississauga–Streetsville and Parry Sound–Muskoka.

What's fair about a government that spends \$133 billion on the Green Energy Act? What's fair about a government that wasted \$1.2 billion on gas plants? What's fair about a government that spent \$1 billion on eHealth, \$2 billion on smart meters and just borrowed \$25 billion, which we know is going to cost the taxpayers of Ontario, at the lowest end, \$43 billion or, possibly, \$93 billion at the high end?

They moved \$4 billion right off the hop. You, as a taxpayer—every person listening, every person in Ontario who pays taxes, is paying \$4 billion more than they had to because they borrowed it through OPG rather than as the government of Ontario, and they cannot dispute that. They know that right off the hop.

The member from Parry Sound made very good points. The Auditor General has said, “We will not sign off because you did not use public standard accounting rules that have always been used in the province of Ontario.” In fact, they're used by all provinces in Canada, and the other Auditors General agree that they would not have signed off anyway.

The member from Mississauga–Streetsville is proud that they have a balanced budget. I think every member of the Liberal Party, I hope, when they go to the election debates, will stand up and say this: “We actually believe this is the way it should be.” I believe the question should be: “Will you put back the accounting principles that would have shown that it wouldn't be a balanced budget”—had they done that? I think it's a shell game: “We're going to move \$4 billion over here so it doesn't look like it's on our books, and we can say it's a balanced budget.” But it's a not a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker.

Again, let's not forget how much it's going to cost us and what we are not going to get, as the taxpayers of Ontario, because they've wasted billions and billions of dollars for their own political gain. The people of Ontario do not think it's fair. They do not trust this government, particularly when it comes to numbers, because every time they turn around, there's more money being required from them, and it's unbearable.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*







**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.  
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker  
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day  
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)</b>	York South–Weston / York–Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)</b>	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
<b>Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)</b>	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
<b>McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)</b>	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC) <b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	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
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC) <b>Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)</b>	York–Simcoe Halton	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) <b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Essex Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
<b>Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
<b>Wong, Soo (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	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)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Vacant	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Michael Mantha  
Mike Colle, Nathalie Des Rosiers  
Cheri DiNovo, Michael Harris  
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala  
Michael Mantha, Arthur Potts  
Todd Smith  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong  
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett  
Mike Colle, Han Dong  
Victor Fedeli, Ann Hoggarth  
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins  
John Vanthof  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Granville Anderson  
Granville Anderson, Yvan Baker  
Grant Crack, John Fraser  
Lisa Gretzky, Julia Munro  
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile  
Granville Anderson, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
James J. Bradley, Wayne Gates  
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff  
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri  
Daiene Vernile  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Nathalie Des Rosiers  
Amrit Mangat, Jim McDonell  
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri  
Ross Romano, Monique Taylor  
Daiene Vernile  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott  
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley  
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon  
Han Dong, John Fraser  
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield  
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter  
Lisa MacLeod  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi  
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Grant Crack, Jennifer K. French  
Jack MacLaren, Ted McMeekin  
Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio  
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker  
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Vic Dhillon, Joe Dickson  
Harinder Malhi, Gila Martow  
Ted McMeekin, Peter Tabuns  
Monique Taylor  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley