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Jeudi
30 novembre 2017

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Thursday 30 November 2017

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 30 novembre 2017

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**STRONGER, FAIRER ONTARIO ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2017**

LOI DE 2017

**POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT
ET PLUS JUSTE**

(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 27, 2017, on the motion for 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 27, 2017, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sousa has moved second reading of Bill 177, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The recorded vote required will be deferred until after question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

SAFER ONTARIO ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017

POUR PLUS DE SÉCURITÉ EN ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 28, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 175, An Act to implement measures with respect to policing, coroners and forensic laboratories and to enact, amend or repeal certain other statutes and revoke a regulation / Projet de loi 175, Loi mettant en oeuvre des mesures concernant les services policiers, les coroners et les laboratoires médico-légaux et édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant certaines autres lois et abrogeant un règlement.

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

Mr. Joe Dickson: Bonjour, mesdames et messieurs. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm pleased to speak this morning on Bill 175. I thought that before I got into the nitty-gritty of the bill I would just mention a couple of quick things. I have the good fortune, as do a number of my colleagues, of going to the annual Durham Regional Police Service's fundraiser with their staff and their volunteers. It's an annual fundraiser and an acknowledgement of the very special work that our Durham police do on a daily basis. I've gone year after year after year, and lo and behold, this past year it fell on the same night as the Cardinal's Dinner. So we have two great events and both of them draw large audiences. Both of them raise money to help the community, and it's on an ongoing basis. I did buy my ticket for the police services, and I want to tell you that anybody who has never gone should go.

I also just want to talk about a couple of little things. I'm going to go to one of the police stations now so I can buy four of the Durham Regional Police Service's dog calendars. I circulate them to a couple of our children so they can show their children. It's just one of those things that brings the community a little closer, and brings the young people of the world out there to understand what a great job the police services do.

Ladies and gentlemen, supporting the sustainability of First Nations policing is major. It's enabling First Nations to choose their policing service and delivery mode, including the option to come under the same legislative framework as the rest of Ontario, and ensuring that First Nations communities receive sustainable, equitable and culturally responsive delivery of police services.

The proposed legislation would also improve Ontario's inquest system through changes to the Coroners Act; create a provincial accreditation framework for forensic laboratories to ensure consistent standards through the new Forensic Laboratories Act; and assist police in responding to missing persons occurrences where there is no evidence of criminal activity under the new Missing Persons Act.

What has changed?

—The complexity of crime has changed. The complexity of crime has increased dramatically, with issues like e-crime, online fraud etc. being driven by rapid changes in technology.

—Civil liberties and human rights issues: Issues relating to civil liberties and human rights are increasingly prominent and have led to strained relationships between police and some marginalized communities and populations.

—Changing demands put on police officers: I think everyone knows that police are increasingly responding to socially complex calls where the first responder may not always need to be a police officer, such as interactions with persons in mental health distress. It's on an ongoing basis, ladies and gentlemen.

I was just looking at how some of these changes may be funded, because you and I both know that the police get a call for everything. There's a problem; call the police. It could even be a parking problem. Nobody stops to think that it's a municipal bylaw parking problem and they should be referencing the municipality. But we have listened to our partners, and are ready to make the changes needed to support modern, effective and efficient policing to help communities develop solutions to local safety and well-being priorities.

This includes developing an outcomes-based funding model to better support our community partners as they implement local initiatives that address priority risks to prevent crime and help build safer and healthier communities. The development of this outcomes-based funding model involves the transformation of our current grant programs to ensure a focus on supporting collaborative partnerships that include police and other sectors such as education, health care and social services.

When we're looking at outlining police responsibilities—as everyone knows but not everyone says so, but I'm proud to say so—we have some of the best-trained officers anywhere. Ontario continues to be one of the safest jurisdictions in North America. Since 2006, Ontario's crime rate has dropped by 29%, and Ontario's violent crime rate dropped by 27%. Since 2005, Ontario continues to report the lowest crime rate amongst provinces and territories. We are proud of these numbers and determined to maintain them and even improve on them. I am certainly proud of the police efforts that go on on a daily basis.

On alternate delivery privatization: I think we should be clear on this. Government is not privatizing policing. When you call 911 and you need a police officer, rest assured, a highly trained officer will be at your door.

The current Police Services Act outlines a number of public safety areas where alternatives to traditional police may be used. Furthermore, our proposed legislation prevents for-profit business corporations from delivering police functions except in highly limited circumstances. I want to make it clear that the Safer Ontario Act does not overwrite anything agreed upon through collective bargaining. Above all, the proposed legislation would ensure that any police officers with disabilities are accommodated as per or above the Human Rights Code. There have been some issues mentioned on the floor; unfortunately, some of them were simply not true, but it's not my fashion to talk about them or discuss them. I just hope people refute them in the future.

0910

What has been a major issue for me on the street is that the current state of suspension with pay has raised a lot of concerns. I never thought about it that often be-

cause I have that much faith in our police services, but when people do raise the question with me they tell me that they are concerned and they can't do it at work, so police officers should not be able to have pay benefits while something is in front of a judicial board of one type or another.

I see that clock up there. About two minutes? Am I good? Just two minutes, eh? Gosh, and I was going to read a couple of passages from the Bible.

I want to talk about two items in my area of the Durham Regional Police Service. One, have you ever seen a takedown?

Interjections.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I don't know, is somebody down there talking? If they want to be quiet, I'll finish.

Have you ever seen a takedown? One afternoon about a year ago, my wife and I decided to go and get something quick at midday in the week and just have—

Interjection.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Do I listen to him or is he supposed to listen, Madam Speaker?

Anyways, we were in what's called the McLean centre plaza; it also has a commercial mall. We were in a little Chinese restaurant having some Chinese food. All of a sudden, I see a couple of police cruisers come up on the west side, and then I see a couple more cruisers go over to the southwest side. I noticed in the background an ambulance. I couldn't quite figure out what was going on. I looked out the window, and I could see a police cruiser driving over to the large grocereria, stopping and then taking the car back to the parking lot, almost blocking, or protecting, a mother and a child taking their groceries back. So I knew there was something wrong.

My wife, being a registered nurse for many years, reacted immediately. She understood that most of the people in the restaurant didn't understand English. She took them all to the back and locked the front door. I, like a fool, just sat there, watching everything. You could tell more cars were coming. They were staying in the back-ground. When people are going out of a grocery store protected by a police cruiser, you know that there's something wrong inside there. I looked, and all of a sudden a young man came running down the street, heaven bent for leather. He had something. It turns out it was part of a gun.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I just want to finish. You never—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Mr. Joe Dickson: —police officer did, and I saw a takedown, and my gosh, I'm thankful for what we have there. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments.

Mrs. Gila Martow: We're speaking this morning on Bill 175, the Safer Ontario Act. I know that this is the first major overhaul of policing, coroners' investigations, forensic labs, missing persons, so this is something that's near and dear to all of us here in the Legislature. We've been talking a lot in the last couple of years about human

trafficking, and I'm sure that we want to focus on that as we go through this bill.

I just want to say that there are a lot of different types of reasons why people call the police and have concerns and even call our offices sometimes with their concerns. I represent the riding of Thornhill, which is the most Jewish riding in all of Canada—not just in Ontario but in all of Canada. The report came out yesterday from, I believe, the RCMP saying that hate crimes against the Jewish community went up again; I believe 26% this time. It had gone up previously in 2016. B'nai Brith does their own research, and they see the same trends. So it's concerning. Actually, they said that it's worse per capita in Canada than it is in the United States. That was, I think, a little bit shocking to many people.

People don't quite know what to do and who to call. So I think that part of what we should be discussing here is what the role of police officers is—when we should call them, when we shouldn't.

The member opposite mentioned parking enforcement, that that's not really a reason to call the police and that each municipality has their enforcement.

We want to get this right. I know we're all in a bit of a rush to see things improved, but we shouldn't be rushed.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House, and in particular on this bill. The reason why I'm concerned about Bill 175 is that I had the opportunity to meet with the president of the police association in my office, with other officers from my area, from Niagara. He was very clear that there are 18,000 police officers, men and women, in the province of Ontario.

Something that seems to come up all the time when we're talking with the Liberals—to make everything better, is to privatize. We saw that yesterday afternoon. We were talking about health care; we're privatizing it. We were talking about hydro; we're privatizing it.

Now, when we should be talking about public safety, and how we make sure that our communities, not only in Niagara but right across Ontario—northern, southern; it doesn't matter where you live—the most important thing when you're dealing with police officers should be public safety.

If you're going to do a bill, you would think that the police officers and their police association would agree with the bill. What they are saying to us is if you go by this bill, it's going to be less safe in our communities. It should concern every one of us, particularly those in Toronto and in some of the bigger communities, that they're saying that they now want to privatize the police services. Think about that. You're going to have private police officers, and you're allowing communities to make those decisions. It makes absolutely no sense in this particular bill.

I'll just read a little bit of what it says. The language surrounding the provision of police services permits the government to contract out the entire policing function on a province-wide basis, with no consideration for local needs. Equally important in this is local—

Hon. Chris Ballard: That's not in the legislation.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It would be interesting if you'd just listen for a change instead of yelling. Let me finish, please, because this is the most important part. Maybe you should listen.

Local collective agreements: You're going into their collective agreements as well, and that's wrong in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to speak for a couple of minutes and respond to the member from Ajax-Pickering, who made some positive comments and gave some positive analysis, I think, of Bill 175.

What I will say, quite frankly, is what I said when I spoke to this bill before: I like to highlight the positive work that has been going on in my region, the region of York, in terms of moving from a purely reactive policing model to a community policing model.

I have seen, from the days when I was a young teenager—and the relationship that I and my peers had with police—an amazing change of the relationship between police in York region today and the youth in York region today. I would love to see that model—and that model is outlined in these changes—spread across the province, because it has made such a remarkable change in how police work with young people in my riding.

Obviously, the context around Bill 175 is that today, our communities are very different from when the policing act was last updated. The nature of policing, community safety—it has changed significantly. The Police Services Act was first introduced in 1990, for heaven's sakes. The issues faced by police services and their members today are far more complex than when that act was developed.

There are police forces and police service boards and police officers all across this province that are getting it right, and we need to support them.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Good morning. I'm going to be speaking at greater length in a few minutes about this particular bill.

I think what underscores why we're here today is the lack of consultation that took place more broadly with the Police Association of Ontario. That was exemplified at recent meetings that I had with members of the Durham Regional Police Association. There were four members that I met with, and I just want to share with you and the other members of the House what they told me. It's their view that the bill puts public safety at risk by allowing some police functions to be outsourced to private security firms. It also concentrates too much disciplinary power in the hands of the minister, and it puts unnecessary burden and red tape on police officers without additional funding to pay for it. This has been a long-standing issue.

0920

The bill, in the estimation, again, of the members of the Durham Regional Police Service and others whom I

have spoken to, also exposes, in their view, the government's distrust, essentially, of police officers. That premise is based, in their view, on not a full and robust consultation taking place, as it should have.

As a party, we're respecting the work of police officers in protecting our safety, not denigrating it. I'll be speaking in greater specificity about aspects of the bill that need to be strengthened going forward. But I would hope that there's a more robust consultation with the people who are looking after our safety in communities across Ontario every day, every month and every year.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Ajax-Pickering to wrap up.

Mr. Joe Dickson: As we were in that little Chinese restaurant, I couldn't help but notice that once that man ran down the street with part of a gun, you knew there was a criminal effort on his part going on. A giant, fast—faster than a deer—police officer took off after him and got him in midstream. Three other police officers were there; they came from nowhere. They picked him up and carried him to the ambulance. It was as if they were taking precautionary measures and doing all of the right things to help the citizens, and have a professional look at them.

I would also be remiss if I didn't mention one item that I've gone to ever since I was on Ajax council: a very special day, what we call Durham Regional Police Service's youth day. A constable, Deb Sabo, has chaired the Children's Games for the challenged. It's run by the association; it's run by the volunteers. The city of Pickering contributed their recreation centre for the entire day. They did that 30-odd years ago. I guess I've been going the last 15 to 20 years. But there you are: another perfect example of how great the police are, and all of the special efforts that they're putting forth to help people in various communities. It's just a joyous thing to see hundreds of students in various colours participate. To me, it's just a special thing.

I was talking about the police service's dinner that I went to, the Cardinal's Dinner, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention chair Blair McArthur, co-chair Moe Pringle, of course the chief of police and all of the other volunteers who helped raise over \$1 million. Of course, the cardinal—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to enter the debate on Bill 175, the Safer Ontario Act. As it's the first major overhaul of the legislation in 20 years, it includes significant updates to police oversight and the complaints system. It's based on recommendations that arise out of an independent police oversight review report headed by Justice Michael Tulloch. It was released earlier this year.

The Ontario Progressive Conservative Party believes that police officers take their oath of service seriously, and that you're never unsafe with the men and women who serve us. It's therefore unfortunate that the proposed measures in the Liberal government's bill before us do not align with this belief. They certainly don't align with

that belief. I would point out that it's not only the members of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus who have serious concerns with Bill 175, but also the Police Association of Ontario and regional police associations, including mine in Durham region.

To illustrate this point, Speaker, on Wednesday, November 15, 2017, the Police Association of Ontario came to Queen's Park, as you know. This gave members of the Legislature an opportunity to honour the good work that the association and its members do every day by keeping their communities safe, but it also gave the association's members an opportunity to share their concerns and perspectives regarding Bill 175.

I'd like to read some portions of the background information provided by the Police Association of Ontario on that day. There's no other organization better positioned to provide feedback to the Legislature on the proposed legislation before us. The Police Association of Ontario was highly critical of the proposed measures in Bill 175. "Unfortunately, contained in these pieces of legislation are some elements that will severely undermine"—Speaker, severely undermine—"the efficient and effective provisions of policing around the province."

Further, in commenting specifically on the proposed measures related to the Police Services Act, the police association stated, "Put simply, passing the act as drafted would usher in a future where Ontarians may not be able to rely on policing services in the manner they do today." On the proposed provisions in Bill 175 related to the Policing Oversight Act, the police association said this: "The legislation appears to presume there is a crisis in policing and oversight in Ontario that must be corrected. Nothing could be further from the truth.

"Police are among the most trusted public institutions in Canada.... Evidence suggests, for the most part, [that] the oversight process is working, despite the need for optimization in some areas such as reporting and efficiency." These quotes from the information provided by the Police Association of Ontario highlight the fundamental flaws in the proposed measures in Bill 175. The Liberal government clearly is risking the safety of many Ontarians through this proposed piece of legislation.

While the Police Association of Ontario was at Queen's Park, I took the opportunity to meet with officers Jamie Brama, Colin Goodwin and Tim Morrison from the Durham Regional Police Association, which represents approximately 900 police officers, men and women, who serve the region of Durham day in and day out. What I heard from them is that Bill 175 is disrespectful of the Durham regional police officers who put their lives on the line every day to keep Durham residents safe.

They told me that the measures proposed in Bill 175 potentially put public safety at risk by allowing some police functions to be outsourced to private security firms. Because Bill 175, as written, does not define the core functions of police officers, serious concerns have been raised about the possibility of outsourcing core duties that are normally carried out by police officers.

The representatives from the Durham Regional Police Association also said that the bill's provisions would concentrate too much disciplinary power in the hands of the minister. Now, while the Liberal government claims to have consulted broadly in crafting this legislation, the reality is that they did not properly engage the people affected most by the proposed changes: front-line police officers. As a whole, Bill 175 exposes the Liberal government's broad distrust of police officers.

But while the representatives from the Durham Regional Police Association and I discussed the many issues that would arise if Bill 175 is passed, as written, we also discussed a very serious and critical issue, and that is mental health. It's no secret that individuals who work in policing are more likely to develop post-traumatic stress injuries than many other occupations in the province. The daily stresses of the job, the exposure to traumatic scenes and events, and the risk of serious injury combine to make policing one of the most mentally taxing occupations in our great province. That's why I was proud to see a commitment for mental health resources in the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party's platform, the People's Guarantee, released last weekend.

0930

Our party recognizes that we have to do more to help families and help those in need, particularly those with mental health needs. The Ontario Progressive Conservative Party's commitment is to invest \$1.9 billion over 10 years to mental health, the largest mental health commitment in Canadian provincial history.

Far too many people who need mental health support, including some police officers here in Ontario, are slipping through the cracks. Ontario needs a comprehensive approach to mental health. It should be treated no differently than physical health.

In fact, we're already hearing from stakeholders across Ontario who are positive about the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party's commitment to mental health in our platform. Rob Jamieson, president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association, tweeted on November 25, 2017: "Great to see such a commitment to mental health. We need to invest more for those in crisis and those requiring adequate support."

In closing, the proposed measures included in Bill 175 clearly are not respectful of police officers and the work they do on a daily basis in Ontario. The Liberal government should have consulted more thoroughly with front-line police officers, the regional police associations and the Police Association of Ontario, particularly given that the proposed legislation will significantly change the face of policing in Ontario.

At the end of the day, Speaker, this is an issue of public safety. All Ontarians deserve to feel safe.

In my riding of Whitby–Oshawa, which I have the privilege of serving, community members support our men and women in policing because they know that police officers are crucial to making sure their communities remain safe.

On September 25, 1963, when addressing the Senate government operations committee, the late former United States Attorney General Robert Kennedy said this: "Every society gets the kind of criminal it deserves. What is equally true is that every community gets the kind of law enforcement it insists on."

Today, the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus and communities across Ontario are insisting that the Liberal government respect Ontario's police officers to ensure that our communities remain safe today, next week, next month and every year. They deserve no less.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure to offer a couple of minutes of comments on the remarks from the member for Whitby–Oshawa with regard to Bill 175, the Safer Ontario Act.

I find it interesting listening to the debate from the members on my right over here. One of the concerns that they have consistently highlighted is about the outsourcing, opening the door to privatization of police services, that is included in this act. It's interesting because we know that that is exactly what Conservatives do: They support privatization. They support outsourcing of services. They support transitioning things from the public sector to the private sector. And yet, here we see them standing up and criticizing the Liberals for doing exactly that.

I also find it interesting to watch what is unfolding in this Legislature, both in this legislation and also in other pieces of legislation that have come before us just in the last couple of months. Bill 160, for example, opens the door to the privatization of health services. We had a debate just yesterday in this Legislature—it has been an ongoing debate—about hydro and electricity planning in this province, and the Liberals continue to defend their decision to privatize Hydro. The Conservatives, in their recent platform announcement, showed themselves to be completely fine with the privatization of Hydro, so frankly, Speaker, I take with a grain of salt what the members over here are saying about this bill, because the privatization agenda is exactly the agenda that they want to follow.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. James J. Bradley: I agree with the previous speaker that that's exactly the pattern that we've seen over the years. This is a departure on behalf of the official opposition to take the new position they are in this particular instance, because they love privatization. All the time, they have loved it.

Anyway, I want to mention that I wanted to see some of the reaction to the bill. I was thinking, is there a Progressive Conservative candidate who has run for the Progressive Conservative Party, was endorsed by their leader and welcomed by others in the Conservative caucus who would agree with this bill? There is an individual who said, "What I've seen so far is positive; let's give credit where credit is due"—André Marin, former Ontario Ombudsman and former PC candidate in

Ottawa–Vanier. Now, he had that attitude toward policing for many years—I think all of us knew that—yet he was a Progressive Conservative candidate in Ottawa–Vanier. It was interesting, because I wanted to see what did the Progressive Conservative candidate in Ottawa–Vanier think of this, and he thinks it’s a step forward.

However, in this discussion that’s going on, for about five years, there has been consultation going on on changes to the police act. I have met with people over the years who have said, “Here’s what we’d like to see changed in the police act.” I’ve met with others over the years who said, “Here are some of the things we don’t want to see in the changes to the police act.” So that consultation has been going on for five years, and I anticipate even further consultation as we go to committee and as we promulgate the regulations that go with this. I’m looking forward to that further consultation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It’s interesting this morning, my friend on my left and my friend over on the other side spending more time talking about Progressive Conservatives than they are talking about themselves. There must be something in the air that has them both—

Interjection: It’s Christmas.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, it’s not Christmas—that has them very concerned. I think it’s something more about, perhaps, next year in June.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): It’s never too early to warn anybody. Let’s have a very healthy, respectful debate.

I will return to the member to speak.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I’m sorry I touched a nerve there, but apparently we get people worked up very easily in this place.

We’ve got the Wall of Honour out there for police, on these grounds, or just outside of them but still in the park. It honours every police officer that lost their life in the line of duty. Sadly, each and every year, names are added to that wall. I think we owe it to those people who have paid that sacrifice in serving and protecting us, and making sure that our province and communities are safe—we owe them something better than what the government has brought forward in this bill.

As my colleague from Whitby–Oshawa said, police are coming back with the reaction that this government is essentially publicly stating that they don’t trust the police. What kind of society could you have, what kind of safety and security could you have in your society if the government says they don’t trust the police and have to have further checks and balances on the police?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was interesting to listen to the member explain that he had had the opportunity to meet with some of the police representatives from his riding. I

did the same thing on the same day that he met with representatives from his riding. I met with Joanne Sanche, Randy Buchowski and Jack Sivazlian. I must say that they really opened my eyes to the bill.

0940

It is clear that in the bill there are provisions that will basically give what municipalities have been asking for for a long time: the desire to contract out professional police services to the private sector in the goal of saving money. We all know what that means. Once you open that door a crack, once the legislation allows for the contracting out of police services to the private sector—it doesn’t matter if the door is only open a crack. The legislation as it is written right now will allow this to happen. Once this door is open, there is no closing it again.

What we will see is that the level of protection that we now have and enjoy, because of the level of professionalism within the policing service, will go down. Is there money to be saved? I don’t know. Is there a risk to public safety? Absolutely.

When the police officers from his riding came and talked to him, I’m sure they gave him the same examples as they gave me. They gave me local examples of how the level of safety in my community will be put at risk. I don’t want anything to do with privatization. I’m with the NDP; you can be clear—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

I return to the member from Whitby–Oshawa to wrap up.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I thank all the members of the Legislature who responded to the 10 minutes that I had to debate Bill 175.

I want to re-emphasize a couple of aspects of my presentation and, to begin with, the consultation process. What was made very plain to me, both in meetings that I took that day with the Police Association of Ontario but more specifically the members of the Durham Regional Police Association was a general lack of consultation, a lack of listening very carefully to the recommendations that arose from those particular associations going forward.

Specifically, they fell into two key areas. One was the bill interjecting an unprecedented level of ministerial discretion into policing decisions, because in the view of the associations—those front-line police officers who are protecting you and me and our families on a day-to-day basis—it lays the groundwork for potential political interference and political decisions. The police officers find that very troubling.

They also spoke at both levels about the outsourcing of certain police functions to private organizations, including security contracts. They raised concerns largely because the details around what constitutes the core function of police officers would only be defined in still-to-be-written regulations.

The questions they ask me: “Why is this not more of a transparent process?” and “Why isn’t it reflected now in the legislation?” And last, the concerns that they ex-

pressed were that many of the changes would require significant funding to implement, and the legislation is silent on that aspect.

Thank you so much, Speaker, for the opportunity to sum up.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure for me to rise today on behalf of my constituents in London West to speak to Bill 175, the Safer Ontario Act.

Throughout this debate, a number of concerns have been raised by the speakers from within my caucus who have addressed this bill. The concern that we have consistently highlighted is around the possibility of outsourcing police services. This act opens the door to the privatization of policing. It says that certain police functions can be outsourced to prescribed entities, including for-profit entities. Those functions that can be outsourced include a broad range of policing tasks. It includes crime prevention, crime scene analysis, forensic identification, canine tracking, collision investigation and reconstruction, physical surveillance, and breath analysis.

There is a wide range of policing functions that can now be handed over to a for-profit business to be involved in. That is a huge concern for our caucus and for people in this province, because when you call the police, when a crime scene investigator shows up onsite, you want to feel confident that that investigator will be acting in an unbiased fashion in the public interest. When that crime scene investigator is employed by a for-profit company, you don't know where those lines of accountability are anymore. Who is that crime scene investigator reporting to? Is it their for-profit employer or is it the government of Ontario?

Ontario citizens would like to see that accountability, because that's the whole purpose of this act. This act was developed in the wake of Justice Tulloch's sweeping review of police accountability in this province. That is what is so frustrating about the approach that the Liberals have taken on this legislation and many other pieces of legislation. There is a very clear and important purpose to be served by the legislation that they bring forward and yet within that legislation they include things that are highly problematic, that are red flags for many people in this province, not just the police association but citizens who want to feel secure and confident that the police services they rely on are truly acting in the public interest.

I represent the riding of London West. My community of London was the only city in this province that had asked our police service to scrap carding altogether. We are a community that had been highlighted as having one of the highest rates of carding in the province. Concerns, in particular, were raised about the carding practices of our police service because in 2014 the London police were carding at a rate about three times that of Hamilton and Ottawa. The people who were carded, whose identification information was collected, were much more likely to be black or indigenous than how those populations were reflected within our community.

This concern about carding led to provincial legislation, but it also led to those bigger questions about public oversight of police bodies. I want to do a shout-out to the London Police Service for the work they have done on carding and to be responsive to the community. In particular, the London Police Services Board passed a motion unanimously in May. When there were two additional seats on the London Police Services Board, they passed a unanimous motion that there be an appointment to one of those seats by an indigenous representative. My community recognized that indigenous people are vastly overrepresented in the justice system. There is a legacy of colonialism and residential schools and other issues that have created significant distrust between the indigenous community and police services. So my community recognized the importance of having indigenous representation on the London Police Services Board.

The other seat that was created on the police services board has now been filled by one of our councillors, a black councillor, who spoke emotionally about his own experience of having been carded: Councillor Mo Salih. He is now the elected council representative on the London Police Services Board.

0950

The other signal of responsiveness that has been demonstrated by the London Police Service is around unfounded statistics, which is another issue that has had high profile in the media relating to police activity in this province. London had been found to have one of the highest rates of "unfoundeds" with sexual assaults. Cases that are coded unfounded are considered not to have enough evidence to carry investigations forward. In London, the unfounded rate had been 33%, one of the highest in Canada, but following extensive consultation with the community and a comprehensive review of these unfounded statistics, that rate was reduced to 6%, which is now one of the lowest in Canada. And the police service has committed, on an ongoing way, to completely change its approach to dealing with sexual assault and the classification of sexual assault.

I raise these things, Speaker, because I want to emphasize how much we value, in my community, the role of the London Police Service and the role of the London Police Services Board in being responsive to the concerns of the community and the priorities of the community.

Unfortunately, this legislation, while it does make explicit reference to the need to ensure that police services boards are reflective of the diversity of the community, it includes these other changes that are highly problematic: as I mentioned, the outsourcing, the privatization of police sources.

The other problematic issue, and we have seen this regularly in Liberal legislation, is with regard to the fact that much of the substance of this act is left to regulations, and we won't know what those regulations are until after the act is passed and the regulations are developed and implemented.

Of course, the other concern, as always, is around resources. When you enhance, when you enlarge and

expand the mandate of any bodies, you need to ensure that the resources are there in order to be able to implement that enhanced mandate. We haven't heard a word from the Liberals about this massive influx of resources that is going to be needed to implement some of the reforms included in this bill. This raises the question about what the motive of this bill was. Was it actually to privatize police services in order to allow municipalities to save money? Was that the underlying motivation? Because that is a legitimate question that needs to be asked. We know that First Nations police services, which are now contemplated in this legislation, will need significant resources in order to fulfill the mandate that will now be given to them.

With that, my time is up, Speaker, so I will conclude my comments.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I want to respond to this whole notion of privatization because it is certain that what the legislation does is look for ways to do policing smarter, to do it better. That means that we want to focus our sworn officers on doing real policing work, so that the legislation, for the first time ever, actually defines the core duties of a police officer.

What it also does is allow certain functions to be done by others, for example, special constables. Just because work is being done by a special constable, as opposed to a sworn officer, doesn't mean it's being privatized. Lots of the OPP folks that you see around here are special constables, not sworn officers. When I go to my cottage, lots of the people who are out on the lake in the summer doing marine patrol are special constables, not sworn officers. If you go back in the bush and you're on a snowmobile trail and you run into somebody who is OPP, it's usually a special constable, not a sworn officer.

There are all sorts of things that we already do. If I think of the "police" at the University of Guelph, they're public employees, they're University of Guelph employees. They are not really sworn officers, but there's lots of work they can do at the University of Guelph to keep things down to sort of—you know, on weekends and various pranks and whatever, to deal with that.

We already in Ontario have all sorts of things that happen which aren't done by sworn officers. If you have a call to your house, that you think you've got a break in or something, it's a sworn officer. That doesn't change.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: We're just doing questions and comments now on Bill 175, the Safer Ontario Act. I was just reading Martin Regg Cohn from the Toronto Star this morning. I'm quoting him: "Police are like the press—exasperating but essential. Can't live with cops, can't live without them."

What he was stressing is about our local high schools in the Toronto District School Board, not the separate school board but the public schools. They have voted to remove, I guess, sworn police officers, because we've

just been hearing from the member from the government about the difference between special police and sworn officers.

There's a lot more that can be done in our communities with community policing. I think we need to have that discussion about suicide prevention, preventing human trafficking and just visibly seeing—it doesn't matter if it's sworn officers, it doesn't matter if it's special police, it doesn't matter if it's campus police, it doesn't matter if it's in the high schools—that they're there in our communities, in our schools, on our campuses, and that the kids feel comfortable going and talking to them and saying they have a problem; that I feel comfortable and you feel comfortable, Madam Speaker.

I think that's really what everybody wants in our communities, whether it's in the enforcement community or it's in the political community, the business community, the school community. Everybody wants to feel that we're all working together to make our communities safe because that's really the whole point of policing. We don't want it to just be that police are called after somebody is dead or hurt or injured or raped. We want it to be before that they are involved in keeping our communities healthy, strong and safe.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I want to talk to the member from Guelph really quick. I'm not saying this; this is coming from the police. On the privatization of the police services: Bill 175 opens the door to widespread privatization of police services. That's coming from the police. It's not coming from me. I just wanted to say that. Your argument was kind of interesting to me.

Then I took a look at the member—I'm not sure of the riding, but the member over here talked about a lot changing since 1990. I'm going to give him a lot of credit. Yes, a lot has changed since 1990. I've gotten older, for sure. But here's what happened in policing, because policing has changed a lot since 1990. Our lives have changed a lot since 1990. Why is that? I take a look at what they're saying to us. They're talking about terrorism. Whoever heard of that in 1990? Very little. It wasn't talked about. But today it's talked about all the time. And then you take a look at the other thing you talk about: mental health assistance—I'll go back to that in my last 30 seconds. Cybercrime, identity theft, other modern ways that individuals make others less safe; yes, a lot has changed since 1990, but, I'm telling you, not for the better. The only way we're going to make sure the public is safe is by making sure we don't have private police officers in the province of Ontario.

There was a little bit of talk from the PC Party on mental health. I had the privilege to do a ride-out with police officers in my riding in Niagara Falls. We might have had 10, 12 calls that night; it was pretty busy. They were showing me the ins and outs of everything that's done on the shift. Do you know what? Three of those calls were mental health calls. And then, do you know what happened the rest of the shift? They take that person

to the hospital in the MPP for St. Catharines' riding, the hospital there, because that's where mental health is, and they spend most of their shift in the hospital taking care of mental health things. I'd like to talk to that longer, but I've run out of time.

1000

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Granville Anderson: I'm listening with interest as the members—for every bill in this House that we try to change or try to improve and make better, the issue of privatization comes up.

Madam Speaker, let me first acknowledge the great work that's being done by police services all across Ontario, especially the one in Durham. I think we have the best police service in Durham, quite frankly. I have a good rapport with them, and we work together. We have a great, safe community because of the work they do, so I'm very appreciative of that and thankful for the work they do in our community.

We have some of the best-trained police officers anywhere in North America right here in Ontario, and we also have one of the safest jurisdictions because of that. Yes, things have changed: Our community has become safer; there is less crime over the last decade or so in this province, and it's because of the great work that our police services do.

That doesn't mean that we cannot look at things or we should just stand still and not try and change things and make things better and make our community even safer.

I drive on the streets. With the construction, thanks to our government, that happens, we have to look at if it is necessary to have a police officer standing at a road repair site. We've had to look at those things. We wouldn't be doing our job as legislators if we didn't look at things and cost savings, if it's possible.

That doesn't mean we are compromising safety or we are compromising the work of police officers. We're just doing the correct thing as legislators, to make sure taxpayers' money is well-spent.

So I'm surprised, coming from the opposition, that they don't want taxpayers' money to be properly spent in this province. That's what we are doing, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member for London West to wrap up.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the comments that were made by all parties with regard to my remarks.

I want to respond directly to the member for Durham about cost savings. Clearly, Speaker, this section of the bill that opens up the option to contract out police services, as he has acknowledged, is a measure that was included to provide some cost savings for municipalities and possibly the OPP.

I have a suggestion, and this comes right from our own chief of police in the London Police Service. This is in regard to mental health. He says, "For many years we've said that this is a health issue, not a policing issue." I'm talking here about police responding to mental health calls. He goes on to say, "We've always

believed that an investment in programs related to mental health and addictions would reduce the cost associated with police having to respond."

Speaker, the chief of police's comments were made in response to statistics showing a 50% increase in calls that police are responding to, to deal with youth who are in mental health distress. That was a doubling of those calls in just six years, between 2010 and 2016.

We know that that doubling, that 50% increase in calls, is because there has been no significant investment in mental health services for children and youth in this province in more than two decades.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 175, the Safer Ontario Act.

First of all, I wanted to say that I was very involved early this year in the overhaul of the Child Welfare Act. That also made a lot of changes to a lot of other acts, so I see a few similarities in the process—not in the discussions, of course.

In the child welfare overhaul, the government put forward over 300 amendments, so basically we were rewriting all of the legislation in committee. That was a bit of a mess. We have seen the government have to come back later on in other bills and fix some of the consequences, because that's what happens when you have such a big overhaul. I'm not necessarily blaming the government when we are having to make all the changes, but when the government is creating 300 amendments for their own bill, that does raise some red flags and concern me.

We are seeing a lot of things in this act that are going to be affected, including policing, coroners' reports, forensic labs, missing persons etc., and I want to try to touch on as many as I can during my time at the microphone.

First of all, they are trying to ensure that police officers will be able to apply for an order to get records—telephone and banking records, for example—to aid in finding a missing person. We see too often in our newspapers that somebody who has dementia, perhaps, or is having a mental health concern is missing from their home, their community, their job. Sometimes they are found frozen in a snow bank in an area where they're weren't seen, and people think, "Well, if only we would have been able to retrace their steps or follow their phone call records."

We just heard from the member from London West that youth calls to police for mental health issues doubled in just six years. To me, all of this goes together: that the police are having to be counsellors, psychologists and first responders for things that maybe when they went into policing they weren't perhaps expecting or trained to do. They are professionals, and they understand what being a professional is, but I think we need to give them the tools to carry out their own profession and to do it without overstepping the bounds of their profession.

When we hear from parents that they want the social media companies to give out passwords if their child is

missing or, worse, if they have been found to be deceased due to a drug overdose or suicide, that the parents want to retrace their steps, I'm sure the police would like to also know if there are other people involved. Maybe we can help those other people. This is where we get into that tug-of-war and that balance, just as we're discussing here: The balance between the profession of policing and the municipalities.

Everybody wants to do what is the most efficient, expedient, less expensive; it's easier to manage scheduling—it's all very nice to say sometimes here in the Legislature that, whether it has to be special police or sworn officers or things like that—it also depends on who's available and what area of the province. There are areas of this province where it's very inaccessible, especially in the winter, and maybe we do need some discussion on that flexibility.

I would certainly prefer to see our police professionals sit down with the municipal partners, with us—and hash it out so that we are not having this war in the media or among ourselves, saying, “This is unfair,” or, “That is unfair.”

We want to work together to ensure that our first responders feel safe and that our community workers feel safe. We're hearing of people who, if they have overdosed on fentanyl or some kind of opiate, if you just touch their exposed skin—and we're not even talking about giving them mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, Madam Speaker; just touching somebody—and, obviously, if their fingertips touched a drug, that would probably be the least safe place. We're hearing that if you touch their skin you could have a reaction to that drug and possibly die of consequences.

So what are we doing to ensure that our first responders are safe? What are we doing to ensure that people in the community—because there isn't always a trained professional around. We're counting on people in the community to help out, to learn CPR, to update their St. John Ambulance course—which I believe I'm due to do—to be able to feel confident that they can help somebody in distress, that they can help if there's a missing person.

We have now the Amber Alert system. I think everybody understands how it works. I think we, as a community, almost enjoy trying to help out. Social media has been—there are the pluses and the minuses, as we know here in politics, but social media has been an incredible tool to help locate missing persons or people who may be in some kind of difficulty.

We spoke earlier about having a police presence in our schools. Unfortunately, again, I think that the discussion with the Toronto District School Board involved having the students answer a survey and say if they felt comfortable. All I can say is I try to drive within the bounds of the law, but my heart always skips a beat when I look in my rear-view mirror and I see a police car behind me, especially if it's on the highway. I think I'm not the only one who feels that way sometimes. So you can just imagine how high school students feel when they see a

uniformed police officer, because we're always kind of taken aback for that split second—“Did I do something wrong?”—then we calm down and we realize that we haven't. And then we think, “Well, did somebody around me do something wrong? Am I in a safe place?”

We all have that sort of heartbeat second where we concern ourselves with what's going on in our environment. I'm sure that the students oftentimes did feel uncomfortable having that police presence in their schools, but were there more pluses than minuses? I think the majority of the students felt that there were. I think it's unfortunate if students aren't exposed to police professionals in their life.

I was very fortunate growing up. My mother was a CEGEP teacher, which is a type of college in Quebec that was free—a real free college degree. She would often invite people from different communities over for dinner. We got to meet people from the Korean community, from all kinds of different religions and backgrounds, and different professions often as well, because college teachers, as we know, weren't always training to be teachers the way elementary and high school teachers do. They come from so many backgrounds.

We live in such a multicultural and cosmopolitan community in the greater Toronto area that we want to ensure that as many of us as possible, starting from as young an age as possible, get to meet so many different professionals and different community members. That's why somebody, in their brilliant wisdom, came up with the idea of job shadowing and taking your kids to work and things like that. For my kids, I think those were some really fantastic experiences that they had.

I wonder how many kids want to go to work and job-shadow with first responders. I'm sure it's a difficult thing to allow them to do. I can't imagine that too many of the first responder professions allow children to do job shadowing, but maybe that would be beneficial. Maybe we can come up with some kind of program. I know that we have volunteer youth firefighters in Vaughan. I think they have to apply through an essay-writing contest. They get to volunteer to be fire chief even or police chief for the day. They do come up with programs.

With day-to-day safety in the schools, we want the kids to be involved. We want them to be exposed to what our professional police do and the challenges of their jobs—and get to know them. I don't think that the officers were just in the schools to look for crimes being committed. I think they were there to help the kids develop better understanding and better communication and to help prevent kids from getting into trouble with gangs or, perhaps, human trafficking.

I just wanted to mention very quickly that there were some concerns with mental health and addictions and how that—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing as it's 10:15, I will be recessing the House until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Today I would like to welcome my constituency assistant, Brian MacKay, and my office's wonderful co-op student from St. Peter's Catholic Secondary School in Barrie, Sophie Ashworth. Thank you.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to warn all members today that we've got some reporters in here who may scrum you as you leave. It doesn't matter which party you're in or if you're a minister or if you're not minister. We've got reporters from Valley Park and their VPtv. Do you guys want to stand up for a second? They're doing a great job, and they're going to be scrumming people today. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to welcome representatives from Anduhyaun: Lisa Powell and Jenne Finley. It's an organization that supports indigenous women and children. They are here for our annual shoebox drive. Please welcome them. They're in the east members' gallery. I encourage all members to drop by room 340 at Queen's Park to meet those representatives.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to welcome several guests today. I'd like to welcome guests here from the Toronto Trans Coalition—Susan Gapka, Martine Stonehouse, Andrew Fraser, Davina Hader and Stephen Lauzon—and from the Toronto Trans Alliance, Boyd Kodak. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I'd also like to welcome Lisa Powell and Jenne Finley from Anduhyan Inc., which is an indigenous women's shelter here in Toronto. Lisa and Jenne are here as part of the members' shoebox drive to support women who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. All members can bring their shoeboxes to the Speaker's apartment today at 1 o'clock. I'm looking forward to having and seeing everyone there. Lisa and Jenne, welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to welcome the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research to the Legislature today. They're a national charitable foundation raising awareness to generate funds for research into all aspects of HIV infection and AIDS. Thank you for all that you do and welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I also want to welcome Susan Gapka of the Trans Lobby Group. The minister has introduced the other groups. They will be here this afternoon for the debate. We'll have a full gallery hoping to make Trans Day of Remembrance law for the first time in the world in this province.

I also want to welcome forthwith Andrew Stevenson, our page, his father, Graham Stevenson, and Stacie Thompson.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome my friend Susan Gapka here, whom I have had the great honour of working with on important issues around trans rights. I just want to thank Susan for her advocacy and all the great work she does.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome Janet Spreitzer to Queen's Park today—first-time visit. Welcome.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: On a point of order: I thought somebody might mention it, but last night I was at a soccer game in Toronto, and Toronto FC is going once again to the North American Soccer League finals—Ontario's team.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome the players to the House. Further introductions?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: On behalf of the member from Burlington, I want to welcome the family of page captain Sean Reynolds. Please welcome Sean's father, Steve Reynolds, grandmother Marie Reynolds, grandfather Gerald Reynolds and friends Cathy and Dave Weatherick. They're here in the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

I would like to introduce to you a guest of mine who has come from the riding. In the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Bob Fraser is here with his son for a little lunch this afternoon. Welcome, Bob, and thank you for being here.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I just got a last-moment point of order from the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear red ribbons in recognition of World AIDS Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Health is seeking unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear red ribbons in recognition of World AIDS Day. Do we agree? Agreed. Thank you.

Now it is time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Deputy Premier. For 14 years this government has played fast and loose with the rules, bending and breaking many of them. The fact of the matter is that this Liberal government is untrustworthy. The Wynne Liberals gave access to cabinet ministers and strong-armed companies that do business with Ontario for the benefit of the Liberal Party. They reward those donors by granting them expensive contracts and corporate handouts.

Mr. Speaker, will the Liberal government stand with the People's Guarantee and support the fact that we have to stop ministers from fundraising off their stakeholders?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We've been talking about the so-called People's Guarantee a lot this week, and I think we'll continue to be talking about it, because there is a lot to discuss. So far, what we've learned is that this is a party that cannot be trusted. They will say anything to anybody to try to fool them, to get elected. The people

of Ontario know better. They know who you are. They know what's in your DNA. They know you will cut the services that people rely on. The proof is in the fine print: over \$12 billion in cuts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the Deputy Premier: It doesn't matter what the Deputy Premier says. Clearly the untrustworthiness of the Liberal government goes far and wide. We've seen this revolving door of Liberal insiders to government lobbyists over the last 14 years. Just look at the time the Minister of the Environment let his right-hand man go right to a job with Tesla. The People's Guarantee will restore trust by closing that loophole.

Why won't the government lock this revolving door, the one that opens in the minister's office and closes in the lobbyists' office?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, what the People's Guarantee will do is guarantee a cut of \$6 billion in programs and services and another \$6 billion in programs that support lower energy costs and GHG reductions.

But that's not all. A signature promise in the People's Guarantee is a 22.5% cut in income taxes. It simply is not true, Speaker. It is not true. Cutting one bracket by 22.5% does not mean a 22.5% cut in income taxes. It is simply not true. If the people of Ontario are looking for somebody to trust, they must not look there.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Again, back to the Deputy Premier: This government should know their role. It should be to restore the trust between the people of Ontario and this place, this chamber.

Our leader, Patrick Brown, and the Ontario PC Party will introduce legislation that will make government accountable. In that legislation, we're going to restore government advertising oversight to the Auditor General. ORPP, climate change, hydro: There isn't a government ad they won't use for partisan purposes. It's appalling.

Mr. Speaker, why won't they restore the Auditor General's oversight role? Will they continue to use government resources to campaign?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What we've got is a \$12-billion cut and a promise to reduce income tax by 22.5%, which isn't true. In addition to that, we have the proposal of a carbon tax that will add \$1,200 to the cost of families in this province.

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Speaker, this is a platform we're happy to talk more about. As long as they want to talk about it, trust me, we want to talk about it. But just remember: It's \$12 billion in cuts, it's a bogus cut on income tax of 22.5%, and it's additional costs of \$1,200 for every family without reducing GHGs one bit.

We've got a plan. It's about fairness—

Interjections.

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

As I have done in the past, I'll move to warnings, particularly for one side that was a bit noisier than the other.

New question.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Minister of Health. The People's Guarantee promises the largest investment in mental health in Canadian provincial history: \$1.9 billion earmarked to build the most comprehensive and integrated mental health system in our province's history.

From what I hear from the government, they'll want to continue to attack us.

But let me be perfectly clear: We need a simple answer from this government. Will the government back a \$1.9-billion investment in mental health? Will they commit to the same investment? And will the minister sign the People's Guarantee?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, of course, to this government and this party, mental health is an—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll do it. The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, to this government and this party, mental health is an absolute priority. We view mental health and physical health as being two sides of the same coin. There can be no health without mental health. It's that important. Our investments—including this past year, but going back to the beginning of our time in government in 2003—demonstrate how high a priority it is for this government.

We continue to make those important investments across the province in a variety of ways, including introducing the country's first cognitive behavioural therapy program for individuals with mood disorders like anxiety and depression, creating youth wellness hubs across the province, and many other investments that our stakeholders, patients and clients are asking for.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That's a lot of platitudes. The Auditor General even said that you haven't improved the children's mental health system in 13 years, but of course you'll fight with her too.

The biggest gap in our health care system is the treatment of mental illness. I know that too well. Mental health should be treated no differently than a physical ailment.

Just look at some of the initiatives that the largest investment in political history could go to, directed toward—

Interjection.

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

The member from Beaches–East York is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Another comment? I'll take it further.

Carry on.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —targeted investments in youth and children's mental health. We could have supports for those on Ontario's college and university campuses. We could have crisis outreach and support teams as a pilot project. We could invest in mental health services for in-

digenous populations through a preventive mental health system that provides culturally sensitive care.

My question is, will the Liberal Party match the commitment in the People's Guarantee?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, we are making unprecedented investments in mental health across this province.

I have to say, when it comes to the People's Guarantee, I honestly was quite intrigued by the title and I wanted to see if in fact it had been used elsewhere. I wanted to understand the inspiration behind the People's Guarantee.

I scoured the Internet high and low, far and wide, and I kid you not, I could not find a single reference to any other People's Guarantee, until I went all the way back to 1893. Yes, it has all been done before. Here is their inspiration: the People's Guarantee Savings Bank of Kansas City, Missouri, a fledgling group of conservative-minded people.

I'm happy to continue in the supplementary.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. A gentle reminder: When the Speaker stands, it stops—and it didn't.

As I was about to say before everyone continued, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is warned, and I've got about five others that I'm ready to do right now.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I asked the Minister of Health for a commitment, and he took me on a time travel back to 1893. Do your job. We are asking for a \$1.9-billion commitment into mental health.

David Lindsay, the president and CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities, had this to say: "Student mental health got a big boost this weekend when the"—Ontario PC Party—"platform included a \$1.9-billion commitment to mental health."

Kimberly Moran, CEO of Children's Mental Health Ontario, added, "So pleased to see topping up elementary and secondary school supports for services targeted at improving mental health and well-being, including funding awareness...."

Addictions and Mental Health Ontario tweeted, "A potentially historic investment for the province."

The question, Minister: Will you meet that \$1.9-billion commitment, this historic commitment, or will you continue to play partisan politics?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In 1893, Mr. Speaker, the People's Guarantee Savings Bank of Kansas—

Interjection.

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

Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, a fledgling group of conservative-minded people who just months earlier had earned the confidence of their constituents, who trusted them with their hard-earned money and their savings—until only months later, after earning that confidence, the

People's Guarantee Savings Bank completely ran out of money and were forced to shut their doors and close.

Promises and trust broken, Mr. Speaker, and lives shattered: The parallels are staggering. A platform that embeds a \$12-billion cut is just as doomed to fail as the fledgling People's Guarantee Savings Bank of Kansas City, Missouri. People, I guarantee it.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. The privatized Hydro One recently redesigned people's hydro bills to include a message from the Liberal Party about the impact of their \$40-billion borrowing scheme. Clearly the Liberals still have enough sway over Hydro One that they forced the company to include campaign messaging on people's bills. Why doesn't the Acting Premier use that sway to direct the privatized Hydro One not to install prepay hydro meters that will hurt families struggling to keep up with their skyrocketing electricity bills?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, I'm pleased to rise and to reiterate what Hydro One has said when it comes to prepaid meters: that none of this will be forced on to customers. No customer will be forced to take a prepaid meter. It will be their choice, if—and that's a big if, Mr. Speaker—the Ontario Energy Board brings forward and allows the application brought forward by Hydro One to actually come forward.

As Hydro One has said numerous times in the media, as Hydro One has said numerous times out in the community and as I have said in this House many times, this would be, if it passes, an opt-in program for customers.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday, the Society of Energy Professionals came out against any further privatization of our hydro system. Scott Travers, president of the society, said this—and I agree with every word of it: "Privatization is a bad deal for ratepayers, a bad deal for taxpayers, and it puts the security of a life-and-death necessity in the hands of a corporation accountable only to its shareholders." Why won't the Liberal government listen to the experts, stand up for the people of this province and reverse their decision to sell off Hydro One?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The broadening of ownership of Hydro One has generated \$9 billion through the IPO. The government still remains the single largest shareholder of Hydro One, and rates will continue to be regulated by the Ontario Energy Board.

But let's look at what we were able to do with the money that we were able to generate from that, Mr. Speaker. I know that we kept the Minister of Transportation quite busy with that, because we started off with \$13.5 billion in the GTHA with GO regional express, looking to quadruple the number of weekly trips to 6,000. Keeping the Minister of Transportation even busier: \$5.3 billion in the Eglinton Crosstown LRT. I know that \$1

billion is also going into the great city of Ottawa to help them with LRT as well, plus \$43 million in Waterloo regional transit. We were able to find ways to continue to build Ontario up.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Mr. Travers also said—I'm going to quote him again: "Privatizing a natural monopoly is never in the public interest." I couldn't agree more again.

The private Hydro One has undertaken partisan political advertising on people's bills, applied for multiple rate increases, invested in dirty coal-burning American companies, and is proposing to install prepaid meters. This Liberal government sold off our vital public utility with no mandate and against the wishes of 80% of Ontario families, and now they're turning their backs on the damage that this company is doing to our province.

Will the Acting Premier explain why her government continues to stand by this sell-off when we know that it was the wrong decision for families and businesses?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The only wrong decision, Mr. Speaker, was made by that party in the opposition voting against the fair hydro plan, which brought forward a 25% reduction for all families. Those Hydro One customers have seen reductions anywhere from 30% and 40%, and all the way up to 50% possibly. Those are the things that we've actually done to help families.

Want to talk about helping families? We are building Ontario up. We're creating jobs right across the province by building infrastructure. I know that I talked about some of the programs that have kept the Minister of Transportation busy, but I know that we're also tripling the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund to \$300 million, and that's keeping the Minister of Infrastructure busy. We have made sure that the dollars that we have made, the billions of dollars, have been invested in making sure that we can look at programs, we can look at infrastructure and continue to build Ontario up—something the opposition parties continue to vote against.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier. Our hydro system should be putting people first, not private profits, and the same is true in our health care system. The NDP will put forward an amendment to Bill 160, the Premier's health care privatization bill, to mandate that private clinics—or, as the Liberals now call them, community health facilities—be operated on a not-for-profit basis. Will this government support the NDP amendment or will they just continue to support private for-profit clinics, just like the Conservatives?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know that the legislation is being discussed in committee as we speak, over the course of this week. I look forward to being able to con-

tinue the debate here in the Legislature, including schedule 9, which is the aspect that the leader of the third party has referenced, which calls for greater oversight, greater accountability and greater transparency and plugging any gaps that might exist where the level of oversight or the level of accountability is insufficient for those health premises that exist outside of the hospital environment. Of course, we're not talking about family health teams or community health centres; we're talking about places like X-ray facilities, where they do radiology.

It's critically important that we have a regime that Ontarians can have confidence in and that provides that necessary oversight so we can be assured of the highest quality of care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Privatization of our health care system is not in the best interests of Ontarians. But Bill 160 makes it easier for companies to open private clinics in Ontario. That's what Bill 160 does. That's why we are calling it the Liberal health care privatization bill.

This government refuses to support our NDP amendments to make sure that all private clinics are not-for-profit facilities. People should not be profiting and companies should not be profiting on the health care of Ontario families.

Why is this government clearing the way for more private for-profit clinics instead of improving the public health care of Ontario families?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would welcome the leader of the third party to show me precisely where in schedule 9 it does, according to her, make it easier for the establishment of private clinics. It does not, Mr. Speaker, and it eliminates the possibility of any future private hospitals. We have had a moratorium, in this government, for many, many years on the establishment of any out-of-hospital for-profit entities, including clinics, the alleged private clinics that the member opposite purports to be so concerned about. In fact, since 2011—I don't have the data going back further, but in 2011, there were only five licences provided for out-of-hospital premises, all of them not-for-profit. That's less than one a year and all for not-for-profit. So I'm not exactly sure—I suspect that it is, additionally, her efforts to fearmonger about our health care system across Ontario.

We are not changing our approach: We've had a moratorium, we're eliminating the possibility of any future private hospitals, and we're bringing all these regimes under a common, highly accountable system.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Whether the health minister wants to acknowledge it or not, there are now 1,000 private for-profit clinics operating in the province of Ontario because of decisions that Conservatives and Liberals have made over the last number of years.

Bill 160, the Premier's—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is warned.

Carry on, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Bill 160, this Premier's health care privatization bill, is another huge disappointment for the people of Ontario. Despite everything they say, when this government has a chance to stop for-profit clinics and support not-for-profit care, they won't commit to doing it.

Why is the Liberal government working so hard to expand privatization in health care, just like they did in our hydro system, instead of improving health care for people who need it?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I think it's interesting that, earlier in this week, including yesterday, the leader of the third party was concerned about the establishment of private hospitals—but, obviously, she had another look at our legislation, she talked to her stakeholders, including the Ontario Health Coalition, and realized that she was wrong. We are absolutely clear in our intent to ban any future private hospitals. So now she's moved on to something else—

Interjection.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We have defended universal health care in this province since coming into government in 2003. We will continue to defend universal health care.

Schedule 9 provides for higher quality care, higher oversight, more accountability and more transparency of all of those facilities that do exist outside of our hospital system, many of which, by the way, were created by the NDP or licensed by the PCs.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Health. My colleague and my friend, the member for Nepean–Carleton, asked you a very serious question about mental health in the province of Ontario today. And you came back with some ridiculous story from 1893.

Minister of Health, I want an answer—we want an answer: Do you believe that mental health in the province of Ontario needs the support now, not in 1893?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

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Hon. Eric Hoskins: Our record on mental health proves that it has been a priority for this government since we came into office in 2003. We have increased our funding for mental health and addiction services by—we almost doubled it since coming into office. Our plan is to increase funding by an additional \$220 million over the next three years. We have provided support and investments that provide for more than 50,000 additional children and youth to have access to mental health and addiction services. We are creating youth wellness hubs

which provide wraparound supports. We have created, in the last two years, over 2,000 new supportive housing units for individuals with mental health challenges, and the first-ever-in-this-country cognitive behavioural therapy program for Ontarians. There's a long list, and I think probably every one they opposed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: You turned a question from Lisa MacLeod into a joke. You laughed. You were not taking it seriously. I don't know why. Why? Because she asked the question? Because you don't think that we understand that mental health is a crisis in the province of Ontario? You were dismissive and you were rude, and you need to apologize.

Interjections.

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

Just to remind members: ridings, and speak to the Chair—third person, to the Chair. There's a purpose for that.

Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: That party was talking about their platform, and I was talking about their platform.

I created a minister's mental health and addictions leadership advisory council as Minister of Health. More than 25 individuals—the most exceptional individuals, including many of them with lived experience, and advocates and experts across the hospitals, in the communities, academics—everyone imaginable that would be able to provide the best possible advice to this ministry and to me as minister, and we listened. Every year they produce an annual report. In fact, the next one is due shortly, in the coming weeks, and every year we respond in a tangible way to the advice that they provide us: 2,000 more supportive housing units, youth wellness hubs across the province. Cognitive behavioural therapy, which was their number one ask, we introduced.

We are making unprecedented investments. There can be no health without mental health.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development. With the December 5 deadline for college tuition refunds fast approaching, the chaos and confusion continue. Faculty concerned about students achieving required competencies in a shortened semester are being suspended. Students who want a fresh start and their tuition refunded risk losing their program entirely. Students are being forced to jump through impossible hoops to access the hardship fund. The College Student Alliance said this week: "We've been in contact with the [government] daily, shooting questions almost non-stop because there is so much left unanswered."

Will the minister take responsibility and clarify options for students so that college students can make informed decisions about their futures?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very happy to report that students are back in the classroom. Of course, had the NDP been in office, they would still be on strike.

Overwhelmingly, programs are up and running. Students are in the midst of completing their semesters. I want to take the opportunity to congratulate and thank the faculty members who have made this possible.

There is an opportunity—if students wish, if they do not feel confident that they can complete, they can withdraw. They will get a full tuition refund, and there will be no academic penalty for doing that.

We did, for the first time in history, establish a fund for students who have experienced exceptional hardship as a result of the strike. We will know more about that in coming days.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member for Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Again to the minister, who could have acted long before the five-week mark to get the colleges back to the bargaining table: My constituent Angelica, a student at St. Clair College, emailed the minister asking about this very issue, and would really appreciate some answers.

Angelica was part of a work-study program. She specifically chose work-study because these programs are very accommodating for students. But when she went to her financial aid office to receive compensation for lost wages under the hardship fund, she was denied.

When anyone, student or otherwise, is hired for a job, there's an expectation that in the event of a layoff, the employee will be compensated. Angelica was actually quoted in a CBC article as saying, "I feel like I've been forgotten by the Ministry of Education."

Will the minister respond to Angelica's email immediately? What plan does this government have to make sure that Angelica and hundreds of other students will get the compensation they deserve?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There are obviously many situations that we are dealing with on a daily basis. The CSA, College Student Alliance, does have a specific point person in my office. They have been communicating daily. The vast majority of the questions have been answered. We have worked very closely with students through this whole strike, to make sure that they are front and centre.

I would suggest to the member opposite, if there's a specific concern about a specific student—first of all, they must work with their college. That is who is distributing the funds. If my office can help, we would be more than happy to do that.

INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

RENOUVELLEMENT DE L'INFRASTRUCTURE

M. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour le ministre de l'Infrastructure, the Honourable Bob Chiarelli.

Speaker, I'd like to appreciate the minister's 2011 long-term infrastructure plan, Building Together, and the diligent work that has been proceeding. This includes a \$400-million expansion, in my own riding, of Etobicoke

General Hospital, which will eventually quadruple the floor space.

The 2017 long-term infrastructure plan is entitled Building Better Lives and, of course, it embodies a number of the government's core values. These developments shape who we are and help the people of Ontario live life to the fullest.

This includes, by the way, a \$2-billion expansion of the Finch LRT, with eight stops in my own riding. The Minister of Transportation was in my riding yesterday and, together, we made a related announcement.

I know a number of details of the current plan, Building Better Lives, and I'd ask the minister to please detail some of those.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Thanks to the member for the question. Our new plan builds from a position of strength: \$190 billion, the largest infrastructure investment in the province's history, averaging \$12 billion per year.

We have carried out 100 major hospital projects, with 35 more in plan or under construction. We're investing almost \$20 billion in GO Transit expansion. For smaller and rural municipalities, we tripled OCIF to \$300 million annually and invested \$490 million in broadband. In partnership with the federal government, we are delivering 600 transit projects and 1,300 clean water and waste water projects. And we are the first Ontario government to invest in rural natural gas expansion, with a \$100-million program, which the Conservatives have cancelled in their plan.

Mr. Speaker, I'll have more details in my supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I commend the minister on that array of projects that he has listed. In particular, I think it's important that folks across Ontario have access to broadband, so the broadband strategy and the related community pilot projects, I think, will have a material impact on the quality of life for people across Ontario.

I know as well that the long-term infrastructure plan also includes measures to make infrastructure greener as well as keep community needs at the heart of decision-making.

The plan is going to guide our unprecedented investment in public infrastructure and make sure that we're building the right thing at the right place at the right time for the right reasons.

Speaker, this is, as you might imagine, more important than ever as Ontario faces climate change, destructive technologies and an aging population.

In my own riding, as I've mentioned, whether it's the hospital, the college, the infrastructure, roads or highways, we have an extraordinary amount of development. I'd like to thank the minister personally.

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My question is: Est-ce que le ministre peut élaborer sur le travail et les mesures que notre gouvernement fait?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Speaker, our infrastructure investments support 125,000 jobs per year. And it's much

more than bricks and mortar; it's an investment in people and is about building better lives.

Our new plan announces a new broadband strategy and expands community benefit programs. It will phase in life cycle assessment to reduce our carbon footprint, and the sale of surplus property will include a social purpose analysis.

In their last year, the Conservatives invested just \$1.9 billion in infrastructure, not even enough for maintenance of existing infrastructure, and invested next to nothing in the energy sector. They promise billions in new spending, and buried on page 76 is \$12 billion in cuts that they're promising the people of Ontario. Those are just the cuts they're being upfront about. Speaker, all of that is sleight of hand by the Conservatives.

CHILD CARE

Mrs. Gila Martow: My question is to the minister responsible for early years and child care. The minister is obviously very close with Martha Friendly, the founder and executive director of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Yesterday, Friendly said that delivery of child care relief is a "waste of taxpayer money."

We here on the PC side profoundly disagree with Martha Friendly. That's why the People's Guarantee refunds up to 75% of a family's child care expenses or up to \$6,750 per child. Supporting families isn't a waste to us.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister disavow Ms. Friendly's comments that child care relief is a waste of taxpayer money?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I really want to thank the member opposite for this question because it gives me a chance to talk about the amazing work that we're doing when it comes to child care in this province.

I want to start out by saying that band-aid solutions are not a solution. What we are working on here, on this side of the House, are real solutions, solutions that are going to transform the way we deliver child care in this province. That starts by building a solid foundation, which is what we're doing.

So we're not doing these cash grabs—"Here's money upfront." What we're doing, essentially, is a deep dive into those changes that need to happen when it comes to fees, when it comes to quality, when it comes to affordability. The plan coming from the other side of the House does none of those things. They're not doing anything to reduce fees. They're not doing anything to build quality spaces. They're not making child care more affordable. They're not doing anything for the workforce.

We need 20,000 more early childhood educators. We have a plan in place. We're doing everything we can to ensure that we're building a solid system. We're not just saying that we're going to give people a certain amount of money upfront and that's it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Back to the minister: I noticed the minister didn't comment on Ms. Friendly's comments, but respected economist Kevin Milligan did. He said,

"Martha Friendly gets many of the policy details wrong." Let me repeat that: wrong. This is coming from someone who is close to a government that says facts still matter.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell her friend Martha Friendly that she is wrong and that child care relief is not a waste of taxpayer money?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Speaker, I'm not going to get into an argument about which person said what and which comment is more on track than others.

What I will say is this: When it comes to child care and affordability, we know well enough on this side of the House to trust the experts in the field. That's why I have a table that actually informs us. It's called MEYAC. It's made up of 60 different organizations, or more, that are really experts on many different levels, that are informing us about what they think should be happening.

The reality is this: The plan that the PCs have put forward doesn't do anything when it comes to building the system. We know, in fact, that what they've chosen to do is recycle Stephen Harper's infamous child care scheme, one that saw rich families benefit while middle- and low-income families were left behind.

Where is this funding coming from that they're talking about? They're going to cut \$12 billion out of the system. We are putting money into the system because we get it. Investments are how you build.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Acting Premier. After years of frozen hospital budgets, this government just keeps on cutting health care. Niagara public health now expects its provincial funding to be frozen for a fourth straight year. Funding has been frozen under this Premier since 2015 and, as a direct result, Niagara public health is being forced to lay off crucial public health workers. As Mayor Dave Augustyn from Pelham says, this Liberal government has "cut to the bone and now we're cutting bone."

Why is this government forcing Niagara public health to lay off workers who keep our families healthy and our communities safe?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We absolutely value our public health units, the hard-working health care professionals and all staff that work within those entities to provide critically important care, especially on the prevention side, but also help us when we are facing public health crises like the one we are facing with opioids today. In fact, Niagara public health received substantial new funding this year so they could hire more full-time workers to work specifically on the opioid crisis.

We have dramatically increased our funding for public health since we came into office; in fact, an increase of roughly half a billion dollars, more than doubling our contribution, and we continue to make those important investments because we believe so strongly in the work that they do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Speaker, we all know public health is incredibly important. They provide exceptional support for everyone from new moms to little ones to health and safety inspections to emergency dental care for our most vulnerable. I agree with my local medical officer of health that public health deserves to get more funding, not less. But for four straight years, this Premier has frozen public health funding, forcing cuts of almost 2% per year, cuts that our local councillors in Niagara call disturbing.

Will this Liberal government stop acting like the Conservatives, stop cutting public health in Niagara and save the jobs of our public health workers and the services that our families in Niagara count on?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We increased public health funding last year and we increased public health funding this year. I'm a public health doctor myself. I understand just how critically important that work is to our province.

We're making the requisite investments: Healthy Smiles Ontario, where almost 400,000 children benefit each year, is 100% funded by the province; our 180 infectious disease control staff across the province through our public health units, 100% funded by the Ministry of Health; our Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy, where our public health units are critically important in that work, 100% funded by the provincial government.

We fund 147 nursing positions, including chief nursing officers, infection prevention and control nurses, and public health nurses. We provide 100% of that funding.

We will continue to make those important investments.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is to the minister responsible for accessibility. Our government has made it a priority to increase accessibility and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. I have constituents in my riding of Davenport who have raised questions about what we are doing to remove barriers and make Ontario a more accessible place to live. As well, this coming Sunday marks the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The theme this year is "Transformation Towards Sustainable and Resilient Society for All."

Could the minister please tell us what this government is doing to support this worthy goal?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member from Davenport for her very important question this morning. Key to the foundation of a sustainable, resilient society, of course, is a strong economy. Our government has taken several steps to ensure our economy is fuelled by people with diverse skills and talents.

To that end, in June we launched a comprehensive new plan to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. It's called Access Talent. We have five existing accessibility standards for areas including transportation, customer service and employment, and we're working towards two new accessibility standards in education and health care.

The education standard in particular will meet a serious and growing need in our educational system. With close to 400,000 students in Ontario who are identified as having disabilities, being exceptional or receiving special education programs, the significance of this new standard is clear. I look forward to providing more information in the supplemental.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you, Minister. This government's stellar record in making Ontario accessible is undeniable. With the passing of the landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, or AODA, Ontario became the model for other jurisdictions to follow.

Last month, the federal Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, the Honourable Kent Hehr, indicated that the federal government has decided to accede to the optional protocol in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. My question for the minister is: Will this government commit this House to joining our federal counterparts in adopting the optional protocol in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, I am very delighted and pleased to inform the House today that our government has officially given its support to the federal government on the optional protocol in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is very significant. We are tireless in our efforts to make every aspect of everyday living easier for people with disabilities and we're firmly committed to building on the momentum from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Our government committed to making this province accessible by 2025, and our support of Canada's inclusion in the UN's optional protocol is a clear signal that our determination is unwavering and steadfast. Accessibility is a main priority for our government, Speaker, and we are propelling a positive shift towards fairness and opportunity for people of all abilities.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Deputy Premier. In It Together, a report co-authored by Colleges Ontario, the Council of Ontario Universities, the College Student Alliance and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, highlights the mental health crisis on post-secondary campuses throughout Ontario. This report clearly documents the critical need for mental health supports and services for students.

That is why Patrick Brown and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party have committed \$1.9 billion over 10 years to implement mental health services and supports across the province. Speaker, will the Liberal government match today the Ontario PC Party's commitment for mental health services and supports?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I think we all agree that the

demand for mental health services on campuses is increasing and we must be there to support students who are facing mental health challenges. That's exactly why we added an additional \$6 million annually on top of the \$9 million we were already investing, to bring the total investment in campus mental health to \$15 million.

I have to say I was very supportive and very happy to see that those four organizations joined together to create one report that really shines a light on the importance of investing in mental health services for people on our campuses. I'm proud of that initiative, but I know there is more to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Back to the Deputy Premier: Speaker, I'd like to share a quote from a leader in Ontario's post-secondary education sector. Here's what she had to say: "We're very pleased to see the commitment by Ontario PC leader Patrick Brown to increase funding for mental health services for post-secondary students. This is a huge priority on our campuses." Who said that, Speaker? The president and chief executive officer of Colleges Ontario, Linda Franklin.

The Ontario PC Party will make the largest mental health investment in Canadian provincial history: \$1.9 billion. Speaker, will the Liberal government agree to match the PC Party's commitment today and address the mental health crisis that exists on Ontario's post-secondary campuses?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, as I said, we're absolutely committed to improving mental health services on campuses, in addition to what we've already done. One way that we are reducing stress on students, Speaker, is by taking financial burden off their shoulders through the new OSAP. We know that money can be a real mental health stressor. This is an important step towards easing some of that burden.

But I have to come back to the \$12 billion in cuts that party has put inside their platform—\$12 billion. It is impossible to find that kind of money without cutting health services, including mental health services. So yes, Speaker, these are guaranteed cuts.

LABOUR DISPUTE

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Acting Premier. Members of the Sudbury community, particularly the francophone community, are experiencing hardship and the loss of the services they need due to the prolonged labour dispute at the Sudbury Counselling Centre. Twelve members of USW Local 2020—all of them women—have been on strike for seven long weeks. I visited the picket line on Friday and Mr. Tim Worton came to talk to me. Mr. Worton is a survivor of serious trauma and a client of the centre. He's having a really tough time right now. He needs access to care and he has nowhere else to turn.

Why is this government leaving people in my area, like Mr. Worton, without the care they need for seven long weeks?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. She has spoken to me about this issue before as well. We are of course mindful of the fact that there is a labour disruption, or strike, that is taking place and, as a result, services are interrupted. The commitment of my ministry is to make sure that those very important vital services that are necessary for individuals who need these court-mandated services or victim services in both official languages, French and English, are provided. We're hopeful that the parties will resume negotiations and get back to the table and are able to come to an agreement, because as we know, Speaker, it is the best way of making sure that those services resume.

In the meantime, we are mindful and we are concerned as well that those important services aren't disrupted, and we are hopeful that they can resume as soon as possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The workers at the Sudbury Counselling Centre provide counselling, psychotherapy, employee assistance programs, partner assault response both for men and for women, counselling for women experiencing domestic violence, and assistance for male survivors of sexual violence. They even counsel some of our youngest citizens—little kids—before they need to sit as witnesses on the witness stand before a judge and jury. Nine of those 13 programs they provide are unique. They are not available anywhere else in our area.

Can the minister please explain why he's leaving some of Sudbury's and Nickel Belt's most vulnerable residents and the people who depend on them literally out in the cold?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for that very, very important question. I was in Sudbury just last week with the Minister of Energy and obviously this was an issue that came up as we toured through the community.

I can tell you that in the province of Ontario, Speaker, about 98% of all collective agreements are reached without having to resort to a strike, without having to resort to a lockout. The labour relations regime in this province is second to none.

From time to time, unfortunately, sides cannot come to agreement. That's where the staff from the Ministry of Labour come in. The mediators and arbitrators we have on staff are amongst the best in the world. We have a number of mediators that are working on this case and I'm pleased to report to the House that the sides have agreed to return to the table in early December.

We know that the best agreements are those that are reached at the table. Negotiating, by nature, is tough. It's supposed to be tough. We hope that, if cooler heads prevail here, we can get an agreement that serves the people of Sudbury.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Ontario is well known as a leader in the field of innovation and new, emerging technologies, especially clean and sustainable technologies. Just a few weeks ago, the long-term energy plan made a solemn commitment to Ontarians to continue building an affordable and clean electricity system in which customers are given more choices in their energy use, like with net metering. That demonstrates that Ontarians and their families continue to be at the centre of our plan.

The plan also talked about how innovative technologies have the potential to transform Ontario's energy system.

1130

To keep up with these changing technologies, Ontario has relaunched the Smart Grid Fund. It will support the growth and advancement of the province's electricity grid in as smart, clean and sustainable a way as possible.

Will the minister please provide more information to the House about the Smart Grid Fund and how it is helping Ontario innovators and our energy system as a whole?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I want to thank the member for Beaches–East York for his constant advocacy for hydrogen and many other instances that help us with our Smart Grid Fund.

Mr. Speaker, the Smart Grid Fund was launched in 2011 to support innovation in Ontario's electricity sector. Ontario's innovation has produced a wide range of technologies, such as home energy management; grid automation; energy storage, which is a game-changer; micro-grids; cyber security; and electric vehicle integration. Through this fund, Ontario companies have solved problems on distribution grids, and utilities have increased their understanding of how the smart grid can benefit the system and their customers.

Just last week, NRStor secured funding from the Swiss-based SUSI energy storage fund to roll out innovative behind-the-meter energy storage solutions at commercial, industrial and institutional sites in Canada. I want to congratulate NRStor.

I look forward to adding more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thanks to the minister for the incredible work he is doing to help transform our electrical system into the best it can possibly be into the future.

Through the Smart Grid Fund, our government continues to support jobs, growth and innovation. There are tremendous opportunities, as the minister noted, with hydrogen technologies and other power-to-fuel technologies, particularly around areas like smart electric vehicle chargers—and there's more.

A number of the previously successful recipients of the Smart Grid Fund and the products that they have developed are now gaining traction in foreign markets, including N-Dimension Solutions, a cyber security firm which can boast over 100 utility companies using their services in North America. Utilismart's distribution

system is a monitoring software that has been installed by over 140 utility companies. And there's a new transformer sensor, which is manufactured in Ontario by GRID20/20, and it has been tested in 11 countries.

Would the minister please inform the House as to how the government will continue to support local innovators through the Smart Grid Fund?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, thank you to the member for the question.

As part of our government's grid modernization strategy, now is the right time to build on this success by renewing and enhancing the Smart Grid Fund. That is why our 2017 long-term energy plan, entitled Delivering Fairness and Choice, committed \$60 million in new smart grid funding, and we intend to launch a call for applications before the end of the year. This will continue our government's strong support of Ontario's innovation sector and help overcome barriers to electricity grid modernization.

An enhanced Smart Grid Fund will focus on encouraging a culture of innovation within the electricity sector that explores new solutions for integrating technologies, tests new business models, incorporates electricity and other energy resources, and generates new ideas for advancing grid modernization. I'm very pleased to be able to launch this program.

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Mr. Speaker, in March 2015, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund gave \$4 million to California-based Rentech to convert two sawmills in Wawa and Atikokan into wood pellet manufacturing plants. It sounded like good news. It was projected to create 60 jobs in these communities.

In February of this year—less than two years later—Rentech closed the Wawa plant, and now they have the Atikokan plant up for sale. News coverage says the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund is asking the company to pay \$2.5 million back, but Rentech seems to believe they have complied with their commitments.

Will the Deputy Premier please tell Ontarians how this government is going to make sure this company doesn't leave Ontario without repaying the money?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Energy, please.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm always pleased to rise and talk about the great work that's happening in northern Ontario and a lot of the accomplishments that are happening thanks to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund is continuing to invest in creating a diverse economy in northern Ontario, and one that's creating jobs.

Just last week in my riding of Sudbury, when I had the Minister of Agriculture and small business and the Minister of Labour with me in Sudbury, we talked about some of the programs that the NOHFC has been bringing forward to help mining companies, to help forestry companies, to help the movie sector. We are creating

more film and television programs in northeastern and northwestern Ontario. That is creating over 1,200 jobs. We are making sure through our due diligence that northern Ontario is continuing to grow and prosper thanks to the investments that this government is making to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Norm Miller: The minister didn't seem to understand my question. This is not the first time that the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund has invested in companies only to see them leave before their commitments were fulfilled. Earlier this year, Great Lakes Graphite left Ontario just 10 months after the government gave the company \$400,000.

Our leader has committed to penalize companies that take advantage of government programs and then leave town.

What has this government done to ensure future Northern Ontario Heritage Fund grants don't go to companies that are not committed to staying in northern Ontario?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, I'm very pleased to stand and talk about the \$100-million-a-year investments that we are making to ensure that the priorities of northerners are being met. Since 2003, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund has invested \$1.2 billion, which has directly created over 32,000 jobs across northern Ontario, helping northerners live, work and build careers in the north.

Let's talk about a few of those things: We've expanded broadband to 100,000 more people in northern Ontario—\$32 million of that has been invested to support the expansion of broadband infrastructure into 21 remote First Nations communities; \$6 billion invested since 2003 in our northern highways program. Keeping the Minister of Transportation busy, we're continuing to finish the expansion of Highway 69, making our roads safer and bringing more economic development to northern Ontario.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE REBATES

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question this morning is for the Deputy Premier. Good morning.

The Liberals grabbed the headlines with a rebate for people buying new electric vehicles, fuel-efficient vehicles. Here's a new headline: The Liberals Are Deadbeats. They're not paying their bills. Some new car dealers are owed as much as half a million dollars. I have a dealer in my riding who is owed \$300,000, a small business fronting these guys over here who aren't paying their bills. Dealers front the rebate off the top. They file the paperwork to get it back, and it takes seven months or more for that to happen—seven months or more. Sometimes they're told, "Oh, you made a mistake in the form. Start all over again."

In the spirit of being open and transparent, when will these deadbeat Liberals start paying the rebates to new car dealers in a timely fashion?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, good morning, and to the Minister of Transportation.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's never too late to get a warning.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Windsor for his interesting question.

Obviously, our government is very proud of the fact that we provide generous incentives through the Electric Vehicle Incentive Program for those individuals who are both purchasing or leasing—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Windsor West is warned.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I was saying, we're very proud of the fact that through the Electric Vehicle Incentive Program, both for the purchase and lease of vehicles and also to support the purchase of home-based charging infrastructure, our government provides very generous incentives.

The member is right: There have been some challenges within the processing of payment for those, in some cases dealers and in some cases individuals, to receive their rebate. I can assure the member that the government and the Ministry of Transportation are working very hard to fix some of the challenges. I anticipate that the individual or the dealer that he's talking about will receive the rebate soon.

I will also point out really quickly that all of this really and truly underscores how successful these programs—

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

VISITORS

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

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I'd like to introduce the family and friends of today's page captain, Sean Reynolds, from my riding of Burlington: Steve; Marie Reynolds and Gerry Reynolds—I think, grandma and grandpa; Cathy Weutherick and Dave Weutherick. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Ottawa-Vanier.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I'd like to welcome David Sweanor, who is a big contributor to the University of Ottawa. Welcome to Queen's Park.

DEFERRED VOTES

STRONGER, FAIRER ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2017

LOI DE 2017

POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT ET PLUS JUSTE (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Deferred vote on the motion for 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1140 to 1145.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members, take your seats, please.

On November 20, 2017, Mr. Sousa moved second reading of Bill 177, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

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

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor
Anderson, Granville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Fraser, John	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Chiarelli, Bob	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	MacCharles, Tracy	Thibeault, Glenn
Delaney, Bob	Malhi, Harinder	Vernile, Daiene
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Mangat, Amrit	Wong, Soo
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	Zimmer, David
Dickson, Joe	Matthews, Deborah	
Dong, Han	McGary, Kathryn	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Oosterhoff, Sam
Bisson, Gilles	Hillier, Randy	Pettapiece, Randy
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Horwath, Andrea	Romano, Ross
Clark, Steve	Jones, Sylvia	Sattler, Peggy
Coe, Lorne	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Fedeli, Victor	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
French, Jennifer K.	McDonnell, Jim	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 46; the nays are 39.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 29, 2017, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1148 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure today to introduce to the House Samantha Simon, who has made

the trek from the Durham region. She works in Bruce county. The reason she is here is I'm tabling a motion with regard to putting ticks on the map, because her two-year-old daughter has contracted Lyme disease.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, and welcome.

Further introductions? Last call for introductions. Therefore, it's time for members' statements—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, I'm not. I'm mistaken. I didn't see the member stand. The member will stand for an introduction. I'm sorry.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, you were standing to introduce some guests.

Mr. Norm Miller: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that. I wanted to welcome the Hymers and Haddads down from Parry Sound–Muskoka who are down for lunch with their MPP today. So please welcome them; they're in the members' west gallery.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. We're glad you're with us. Thank you.

I believe that takes care of all the introductions. Again, I apologize to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

It is now time for statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FEAST OF ST. ANDREW

Mr. Toby Barrett: Today is a special day for Ontario's Orthodox Christian community. November 30 is the Feast of St. Andrew, the first-called apostle. Andrew is the patron saint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Notwithstanding continued religious persecution, the Patriarchate perseveres. This is principally the result of the extraordinary vision, the leadership and the strong faith of one man.

Since 1991, the spiritual leader of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church has been his All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. His All-Holiness is truly a unique and transformational religious leader. Rabbi David Rosen of the American Jewish community calls Bartholomew not only "an inspiring example for his own flock and faith, but indeed for all religious communities and for all of society."

The Ecumenical Patriarch has worked tirelessly to foster better understanding and peaceful coexistence between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The message of love and tolerance from Patriarch Bartholomew is especially needed in the Holy Lands and the Middle East where the persecution of Christians is most acute.

As hundreds of thousands who confess the Orthodox faith here in Ontario—led by His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios—celebrate the Feast of St. Andrew today, let us remember and work towards improving religious freedom and protecting persecuted minorities around the world.

MARK AWUKU AND DARREN CARGILL

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I am so pleased to rise today to honour two incredible members of the Windsor community. Both Dr. Mark Awuku and Dr. Darren Cargill received prestigious awards for their outstanding work.

Dr. Mark Awuku was named the 2017 Ontario Pediatrician of the Year by the Pediatricians Alliance of Ontario. Dr. Awuku is a comedy—a community pediatrician; maybe he's a comedy pediatrician too. As well, he's a professor at the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry. He was also chair of pediatrics at the Hôtel-Dieu Grace hospital in Windsor for six years.

In the words of the PAO's president, Dr. Awuku is “a multi-talented physician, mentor and community leader. He embodies the grace, patience and scholarly accomplishments that is found in many of our 1,400 pediatricians in Ontario.”

Dr. Darren Cargill also received recognition for his invaluable work and was presented with the Award of Excellence by the Ontario College of Family Physicians. Dr. Cargill was recognized for his extensive leadership in palliative and end-of-life care, acting as the voice of hospice palliative care in Windsor. I have seen his dedication and hard work first-hand, when I worked with Dr. Cargill on my private member's bill, Dan's Law. He has been an outstanding advocate for the rights of people in hospice care, and I am grateful for having the opportunity to work with him and get to know him.

Congratulations to both of these outstanding Windsor doctors.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Most children do love funny doctors. Thank you.

Further members' statements.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Mike Colle: It's by coincidence that I am going to make an announcement about the opening of the Yonge-University subway line up into York region. One of the persons mainly responsible for putting this together is here. That's Karen Stintz, the former TTC chair and a constituent. Let's hear it for Karen. Great work, Karen. This is coincidental.

Anyway, this line is going to open on December 17. There's going to be an open house, and everybody is welcome. The beautiful thing about this line—as you know, the Conservatives filled in subways, but the Liberals are building them.

We're going to have a new station at Downsview Park to serve the students. Finch West will have a station, and York University—after all these years, the students of York University are going to be able to get on a subway train and go north or south. This is going to be a fantastic boon to York University. Another beautiful station—they're all architectural masterpieces: Pioneer Village is going to have a station, and that's very important in opening up that transit corridor for people who live in that northwest part of the city, who were deprived of

rapid transit. Now they're going to have it. There's going to be a station at the 407 also. Then, to top it all off, for the first time in history we're going to inter-regional subways, from the city of Toronto to York region.

On December 17, come on out. Karen Stintz is buying.

HOUSING POLICY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise this afternoon to recognize the work of Durham Regional Council and their recently issued report from the task force on affordable and seniors' housing.

Speaker, this task force focused on three key areas: committee education, which educated committee members on what planning and financial tools were available to support the maintenance of existing rental housing; discussion on the implementation of the region's corporate strategic plan, regional official plan, and other matters that would further the region's goals related to affordable and seniors' housing; and third, identifying potential collaborative partnerships with the federal and provincial governments, area municipalities, financial and housing development industries, and residents of the region of Durham.

This particular initiative aligns with the 10-year housing plan that was launched and implemented approximately two and a half years ago under the leadership of Roger Anderson, who is the CEO and regional chair of Durham region.

My sincere hope, Speaker, is that the recommendations made in this very important report will further contribute to ensuring that no one in Durham region goes to sleep at night without a roof over their head.

HOME CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's always a pleasure to rise as the MPP for London-Fanshawe in the Legislature on behalf of my constituents. This summer, I met with Barb, and she shared the home care experience that her husband, Ron, received.

Barb told us that Ron was experiencing heart failure, kidney failure, liver issues and diabetes when he was admitted to hospital in June 2017. After a 10-day stay in hospital, five of those days being in critical care, Ron was released from hospital with the understanding that he was to receive adequate medical and community care. He was released from hospital on July 7. Their expectation was that Ron was to receive home care very quickly. Much to their surprise and disappointment, it took three weeks for Ron to be seen by a nurse at home. Barb took action. She sent pictures of Ron's failing body to several people, including the family physician, at which point Ron began to receive the care that he needed.

She is concerned and wants to advocate for others. She wants her voice to be heard and she wants things to change. First, she thinks that people should receive mandatory home care 48 hours after they've been released from hospital. Coincidentally, I actually presented a similar solution to the Legislature on April 25, 2013,

asking the government to implement a five-day home care guarantee. She also thinks that consumers of home care services should only have to tell their stories once, and communication needs to be improved between medical professionals, both in hospital and in the community.

The care that Ron did not receive in his final days placed a monumental burden on Barb. As the caregiver and a grieving wife, she knew he was dying. Barb lost her husband on August 4.

More and more people are coming forward with their experiences with home care, just like Barb and Ron's, and it's time that we listened to what people need.

VARIETY VILLAGE

Mr. Arthur Potts: Today I want to celebrate Variety Village, an amazing charitable organization dedicated to supporting persons with disabilities.

A few weeks back, I had the pleasure of touring the facility at Kingston Road and Danforth Avenue with the president, Karen Stintz, and the director of communications, Lynda Elmy, both of whom are here today. We welcome you to Queen's Park.

1310

Variety Village was the first institution of its kind in Canada, designed to provide a better life and more abundant opportunities for persons with physical disabilities.

The land on which the facility stands was donated by the Ontario government, and the Premier of the day, the Honourable George Drew, opened it in 1948.

For almost 70 years, Variety—the Children's Charity and Variety Village have provided specialized programs and inclusive education. Nurses from across the province, along with the Ontario Society for Crippled Children, welcomed the first 40 students in the fall of 1949. They began with 15 support staff, three teachers, two house mothers and a cook.

A lot has changed, and Variety Village has since become the single greatest provider of accessible recreation and sports programming in Canada, currently providing over 1.4 million hours of programming to over 30,000 people, over 15,000 of whom have a physical disability.

For nearly 70 years, they've given young, eager individuals the help and confidence they need to overcome barriers to access. Many Paralympic athletes began their training at Variety Village, and we're all very proud of the young people when they experience sport and fitness for the first time.

Variety Village is a very unique community. I encourage my fellow members to share the success stories with anyone they meet who might benefit.

I thank Karen, Lynda and all the staff and volunteers who are making a great big difference in the lives of so many.

YUMMIES IN A JAR

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise today to recognize the 25th anniversary of a business in my riding of Parry Sound—

Muskoka—a business with the most descriptive name—Yummies in a Jar. Yummies in a Jar makes just what it sounds like: jams, jellies, salad dressings, flavoured maple syrup and other preserves.

Lynn Murden started the business in 1992, making jams in her kitchen at home and selling at the local farmers' market. In the year 2000, Lynn and her husband, John, put an addition on their home and added a commercial kitchen. To this day, all the products are produced in that kitchen. Lynn now has a few part-time staff who work two or three days a week.

Lynn responded to my business survey this summer and told me that some of the labour changes would be a challenge. For example, she schedules when to cook based on orders and sales, and sometimes cancels or adds shifts with less than 48 hours' notice. She also commented that the increased minimum wage would cause her to do more of the work herself.

Small businesses like Yummies in a Jar will need help to adjust to the new rules and increased minimum wage, and I do hope that this government is listening.

Not only does Lynn run a great business; she and her husband, John, a local artist, give back to the community. Just two weeks ago, they held a Christmas open house which was also a fundraiser for the local SPCA.

Congratulations to Lynn Murden and Yummies in a Jar on 25 years of running a successful business. Please think of them when you shop locally this Christmas season.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Mr. John Fraser: Most of us have heard this last week of the transaction between Torstar and Postmedia involving 41 local, daily and weekly newspapers. We soon learned that many of these papers would close—papers that served small towns and communities and neighbourhoods; papers that reported on things like a proposed local development, a local volunteer or celebration or a new community initiative, like the new community kitchen in my riding that the Ottawa South News reported just this week.

At a time when the Internet and social media have brought the world so close to us, it is even more important that we stay connected to the community that is closest to us. That's what local papers do. Local papers build community. They inform us. They connect us. They help young journalists and writers hone their craft.

Speaker, it is sad news that the Ottawa South News will soon print their last edition in my riding. It has been part of our local community for many years, once called The News, under publisher Michael Wollock, then The News EMC to, most recently, the Ottawa South News.

I'd like to recognize reporter Erin McCracken, who has been reporting on news there since I became an MPP. And I'd like to thank everyone who has worked in community news and continues to work in community news, for the work that you do to build our communities.

NEGEV DINNER

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm so thrilled to rise today and just mention that this past Sunday was the JNF, the Jewish National Fund, Negev dinner. The entertainment was Howie Mandel, who grew up in Toronto, and there are a lot of funny stories about Howie causing a lot of trouble. In fact, I think the Pickle Barrel restaurant on Leslie Street had his picture and he was banned from entering because he used to like to do pranks such as going up to a table with a pad of paper and a pen and taking people's orders when he wasn't even a server. You can imagine how that went over when you're trying to run a business. So Howie was, of course, somewhat inappropriate but very hysterical.

I want to give a shout-out to Lance Davis, who has taken over the Negev dinner from Josh Cooper and did a great job, and Vardit Feldman from my riding—well, from just south of my riding, to be fair—who was one of the volunteers. The evening benefited Brothers for Life, which is Achim L'Chaim, to help Israeli soldiers helping each other. They have even met with some of the Canadian soldiers.

Limore Twena from my riding sang the national anthems of Canada and Israel. She has managed a fairly aggressive cancer over the last few years and has an organization called Aggressive Positivity. She's a painter. She painted a painting, Blessing for Health, and gave it to Chief Saunders this year, who we know underwent a kidney transplant. As Limore says, music is her therapy.

Thank you to Limore, thank you to Howie Mandel, thank you to JNF, and thank you especially to Brothers for Life.

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

PETITIONS

GUIDE AND SERVICE ANIMALS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 indicates, 'If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the provider of goods or services shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises;' and

"Whereas the Ontario Human Rights Code speaks to the 'duty to accommodate persons with disabilities ... in a manner that most respects the dignity of the person;' and

"Whereas, despite these provisions, many who require, have been medically recommended for and own professional, trained service dogs, including children with autism, PTSD sufferers and others, continue to be denied access to public places; and

"Whereas, in one such case of a Kitchener boy with autism being denied access to have his professional, trained service dog at a Waterloo Catholic District School Board school, an Ontario Human Rights Tribunal ruled against specified accommodations for the boy and his dog at school...."

I'm going to skip over a few of the other "whereases," because it is a long petition and I want to give time to everybody else.

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

"Open access to registered service dogs and owners:

"Endorse the legislative requirements of Bill 80, the Ontario Service Dog Act, to end continued discrimination and ensure those requiring service dogs are no longer denied the essential public access they should already be guaranteed."

Of course, I'm affixing my signature and giving it to a page whose hair is covering her nametag—Isabelle.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES
FOR YOUTH

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to thank Tom White from Lively in my riding for the petition, and 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

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"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 via cabinet;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly 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, will affix my name to it and ask page Emma to bring it to the Clerk.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here signed by so many of my constituents.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are over 200 species at risk in Ontario that need meaningful protections to prevent their extinction;

“Whereas protecting special concern, threatened and endangered species is critical to maintaining Ontario’s biodiversity and meeting its commitments under the international convention on biodiversity;

“Whereas making sure species at risk are protected is central to achieving sustainability objectives in the province;

“Whereas there was multi-partisan support for the Endangered Species Act in 2007;

“Whereas support for the act has been wavering as of late with proposals to water down the Endangered Species Act either through private members’ bills or an omnibus budget bill;

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

“To reaffirm your support for stopping threats to and promoting the recovery of species at risk in Ontario through the implementation of the Endangered Species Act in keeping with the spirit and intent and purposes of the act.”

I’m happy to put my name to it and send it down with page Natalie.

HYDRO RATES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further petitions? I recognize the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. Good afternoon to you.

For time, I’ve edited this petition called “Energy Poverty.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas our hydro rates have tripled since Conservative governments started privatizing our electricity system; and

“Whereas since Premier Wynne took office, peak hydro rates have increased by more than 50%” which is 10 times the rate of inflation; and

“Whereas the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) reports skyrocketing numbers of hydro accounts in arrears; and

“Whereas in Windsor this increase in arrears has tripled to more than 6,000 accounts; and

“Whereas the Ontario Chamber of Commerce claims one in 20 businesses will shut down in the next five years because of high energy costs; and

“Whereas the Energy Minister has the power under the Ontario Energy Board Act to issue directives to the OEB with respect to fees and pricing, especially as it pertains to fairness, efficiency and transparency;

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

“To take immediate and tangible steps to reduce the costs of energy, taking into account the needs of low-income families and small businesses, since high hydro costs are driving them into energy poverty; and

“To stop the sale of Hydro One.”

I fully agree. I will affix my name and send it up to the front with Vanditha.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

“Whereas there are over 200 species at risk in Ontario that need meaningful protections to prevent their extinction;

“Whereas protecting special concern, threatened and endangered species is critical to maintaining Ontario’s biodiversity and meeting its commitments under the international convention on biodiversity;

“Whereas making sure species at risk are protected is central to achieving sustainability objectives in the province;

“Whereas there was multi-partisan support for the Endangered Species Act in 2007;

“Whereas support for the act has been wavering as of late with proposals to water down the Endangered Species Act either through private members’ bills or an omnibus budget bill;

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

“To reaffirm your support for stopping threats to and promoting the recovery of species at risk in Ontario through the implementation of the Endangered Species Act in keeping with the spirit and intent and purposes of the act.”

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

DRIVER LICENCES

Mrs. Gila Martow: 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

“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 affix my signature and give it to page Zunairah.

PROVINCIAL TRUTH
AND RECONCILIATION DAY

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas June 21 is recognized as the summer solstice and holds cultural significance for many indigenous cultures; and

“Whereas in 1982, the National Indian Brotherhood ... called for the creation of a National Aboriginal Solidarity Day to be celebrated on June 21; and

“Whereas in 1990, Québec recognized June 21 as a day to celebrate the achievements and cultures of indigenous peoples;

“Whereas in 1995, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recommended that a National First Peoples Day be designated;

“Whereas in 1996, the Governor General of Canada proclaimed June 21 as National Aboriginal Day in response to these calls;

“Whereas in 2001, Northwest Territories became the first province or territory to recognize June 21 as a statutory holiday; and

“Whereas in 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendation number 80 called on the federal government, in collaboration with aboriginal peoples, to establish a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a statutory holiday;

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

“To designate June 21 of each year as a legal statutory holiday to be kept and observed throughout Ontario. This day should serve to create and strengthen opportunities for reconciliation and cultural exchange among Ontarians. The day should facilitate connections between indigenous and non-indigenous Ontarians in positive and meaningful ways. This day should solidify the original intent of National Aboriginal Day as a day for Ontarians to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.”

I fully support this petition and sign it and give it to page Devon.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

“Whereas there are over 200 species at risk in Ontario that need meaningful protections to prevent their extinction;

“Whereas protecting special concern, threatened and endangered species is critical to maintaining Ontario’s biodiversity and meeting its commitments under the international convention on biodiversity;

“Whereas making sure species at risk are protected is central to achieving sustainability objectives in the province;

“Whereas there was multi-partisan support for the Endangered Species Act in 2007;

“Whereas support for the act has been wavering as of late with proposals to water down the Endangered Species Act either through private members’ bills or an omnibus budget bill;

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

“To reaffirm your support for stopping threats to and promoting the recovery of species at risk in Ontario through the implementation of the Endangered Species Act in keeping with the spirit and intent and purposes of the act.”

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

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over northeastern Ontario, and I’d like to thank Estelle Lâbre from Hanmer in my riding. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

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

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

1330

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I just found another one of the petitions that I had just read and will read it now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are over 200 species at risk in Ontario that need meaningful protections to prevent their extinction;

“Whereas protecting special concern, threatened and endangered species is critical to maintaining Ontario’s biodiversity and meeting its commitments under the international convention on biodiversity;

“Whereas making sure species at risk are protected is central to achieving sustainability objectives in the province;

“Whereas there was multi-partisan support for the Endangered Species Act in 2007;

“Whereas support for the act has been wavering as of late with proposals to water down the Endangered Species Act either through private members’ bills or an omnibus budget bill;

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

“To reaffirm your support for stopping threats to and promoting the recovery of species at risk in Ontario through the implementation of the Endangered Species Act in keeping with the spirit and intent and purposes of the act.”

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good afternoon, Speaker.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas for all Ontarians—no matter who they are, or where they live—the health of their family comes first, and it should come first for the government of Ontario, but unfortunately Liberal political self-interest comes first;

“Whereas 1,200 nurses have been fired since January 2015;

“Whereas hospital beds are being closed across Ontario; and

“Whereas hospital budgets have been frozen for four years, and increases this year will not keep up with inflation or a growing population;

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

“Stop the Liberal cuts to hospitals, and ensure that, at a minimum, hospital funding keeps up with the growing costs of inflation and population growth, each and every year.”

I fully agree, Speaker. I will affix my name and give it to Emma to bring up to the table.

PROVINCIAL TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION DAY

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: This petition is so important, I’m going to read it again.

To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas June 21 is recognized as the summer solstice and holds cultural significance for many indigenous cultures; and

“Whereas in 1982, the National Indian Brotherhood ... called for the creation of a National Aboriginal Solidarity Day to be celebrated on June 21; and

“Whereas in 1990, Québec recognized June 21 as a day to celebrate the achievements and cultures of indigenous peoples;

“Whereas in 1995, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recommended that a National First Peoples Day be designated;

“Whereas in 1996, the Governor General of Canada proclaimed June 21 as National Aboriginal Day in response to these calls;

“Whereas in 2001, Northwest Territories became the first province or territory to recognize June 21 as a statutory holiday; and

“Whereas in 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendation number 80 called on the federal government, in collaboration with aboriginal peoples, to establish a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a statutory holiday;

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

“To designate June 21 of each year as a legal statutory holiday to be kept and observed throughout Ontario. This day should serve to create and strengthen opportunities for reconciliation and cultural exchange among Ontarians. The day should facilitate connections between indigenous and non-indigenous Ontarians in positive and meaningful ways. This day should solidify the original intent of National Aboriginal Day as a day for Ontarians to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.”

I fully support this petition and give it to page Vanditha to deliver.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time allocated for petitions has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I move that, in the opinion of this House, recognizing the overwhelming opposition to the proposed transfer of long-term-care beds out of the county of Perth, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care should immediately halt the process to consider this bed relocation until the government reviews and updates its metrics, and should not consider any further bed relocations out of the county until other long-term-care operators in the county are given the opportunity to accept those beds.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: For dozens of my constituents, Hillside Manor, a 90-bed, long-term-care home in the township of Perth East, is home. It’s where their families come to visit; it’s where they will spend the final years of their lives. For others, Hillside Manor is where they work hard every day for the residents. Even in trying circumstances, they do it because they care.

Over the last seven months, however, Hillside became a symbol. Some saw it as a symbol of decline, the declining state of long-term care in rural Ontario, and the

beds we stood to lose. That's because in April it was announced that Hillside would close and the beds moved to London. Many believed it was a foregone conclusion.

Today, however, Hillside is a different sort of symbol. It's a symbol of the power of community: people who came together and said, "No, we won't accept it." By the hundreds they made themselves heard. Just a week before today's debate, in a hastily written statement from the office of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, we got the good news. Hillside and its 90 beds would stay in the community. It is good news and we thank the minister for his decision. But the outcome came in spite of the process, not because of it.

There are four areas that need attention: how the process undervalues communities and lacks public confidence; how the process is unfair to rural and small-town Ontario; how long-term care has been neglected; and some solutions to strengthen long-term care instead of transferring the beds we already have.

I want to acknowledge some of those who worked so hard to save the Hillside beds, starting with our elected municipal officials and staff who spoke up united; the county of Perth, whose work directly inspired the wording of my resolution; the township of Perth East; the municipality of West Perth; the municipality of North Perth; the township of Perth South; the town of St. Marys; and the city of Stratford.

I thank the staff at Hillside Manor, residents and their families for speaking up. I thank those who wrote letters, signed petitions, and attended and spoke at public meetings. I thank the long-term-care operators across our riding, including Revera, for working with us. I thank our local media for shining a spotlight on this issue.

Together our collective efforts made all the difference. It's so unfortunate that throughout the process, many of my constituents felt the community and their interests were being undervalued—people like Robert Good, who wrote, "In 2016, my wife was hospitalized for three weeks in Victoria Hospital, London, before she passed away. Again and again we made the daily trip to London to visit her. I can't imagine not being able to see her every day. How can you think of uprooting seniors from their communities where family can support them on a daily basis?"

Elaine Young wrote, "Moving 50 long-term-care beds out of this area to any other area is both foolish and irresponsible. Such a decision would be irreparable and have negative, long-lasting effects...."

They are right.

Although the government came around to our view, they stumbled along the way. They showed throughout the process they didn't understand our community. Here are a few examples:

In April, when the bad news broke, the government informed neither the municipalities nor my office. To advertise the first public meeting, the government ran one small ad in one paper stating incorrect information for a meeting in a room designed for about a dozen people. This led many to believe the consultation process wasn't

serious and wouldn't change the decision. But the community came out to the public meetings in force. They showed we would never be underestimated.

Many wondered how the government could ask for feedback without providing any clear understanding of its process or planning. Many came with relevant, thoughtful questions about the process, about the beds themselves and the future of long-term care in Perth county, but they received no good answers.

At the second public meeting, the government tried to bar local media from recording the proceedings. They tried to prevent them from attending a public event. The mayor, meanwhile, had to stand outside in the rain with about a dozen others because the hall was filled to capacity.

And then, last week, to communicate the minister's decision, his press secretary emailed the media but again shut out our elected representatives.

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So the next time this government decides to consult, I hope they will be better prepared. I hope they will respect the communities affected, and communicate with them.

Next, I want to discuss how the process, and the metrics used to evaluate bed transfer proposals, are not working for rural Ontario.

The main metric used to evaluate bed transfers, as we understand it, is the bed ratio—that is, the number of beds per 1,000 people at least 75 years of age.

The Stratford area, we're told, has more beds, according to this ratio, than other parts of the South West LHIN. But that doesn't tell the whole story. In this case, the bed ratios were based on the 2011 census, and they were badly out of date.

Bed ratios do not account for demographic shifts. Increasingly, retirees are moving from high-cost urban areas to communities like ours.

Bed ratios do not account for the growing population under age 75, people who also need long-term care because of chronic illness, disability and so on.

Bed ratios do not account for added costs to smaller local hospitals and municipal ambulance services, which would have to transport patients over greater distances.

Bed ratios do not consider the devastating economic impact of closing a long-term-care facility. In some communities I represent, these homes are the largest employers.

Lastly, bed ratios do not account for long travel distances, sometimes in dangerous winter conditions, that families would be forced to drive just to visit their loved ones. Over and over, my constituents made this point.

Retired nurse Dianne Smale wrote, "Why would anyone even suggest moving these local beds away from the rural community and small towns and destroy what families feel fortunate to have?"

Gayle Beattie recognized an inherent contradiction. She wrote, "If the [ministry's] main goal is patient-centred care and care close to home, please explain how this model of transferring long-term-care beds in a

smaller rural area to a large urban centre fulfills those promises?"

My very first motion, which passed with all-party support, called on the government to re-evaluate policies negatively affecting rural Ontario. This might be a good place for them to start.

This leads me to my third point. For too long, this government has mismanaged long-term care. On the local level, here's what that means. Long-term-care operators tell us the need keeps growing but government dollars do not. One operator told me, "Most homes are now running mini-hospitals. Residents are more frail, more complex."

Finding and hiring qualified staff, especially PSWs, is even harder in rural Ontario. And waiting lists? They are long and growing. In Stratford, Spruce Lodge and Greenwood Court already have well over 100 people on their waiting lists.

Even our hospitals are feeling the pinch. I am told that about 10% to 12% of occupied hospital beds in the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance are filled with people waiting to get out. They need long-term care or home care, not hospital beds. It's the wrong setting for them and an expensive one for taxpayers.

I'm encouraged that our leader, Patrick Brown, would not only match the government's commitment for 30,000 new long-term-care beds over 10 years, but would also make 15,000 of those available in the first five years. We need those beds and we need them now.

This leads me to my final point. Solutions do exist. Through the Hillside Manor debacle, we've come up with some common-sense solutions.

The government could start by using relevant, up-to-date data. Outdated bed ratios are not good enough. They could gather complete information and consider other homes' intentions when considering bed transfers. When a bed transfer is proposed, they could communicate properly with the communities affected and their elected representatives, no matter their political stripe.

Most importantly, they could stop pitting region against region. They could ensure that no community, especially those with already long waiting lists, gets hit with bed or service reductions.

Ken Faust, a constituent, wrote to me with a proposal: "The long-term-care act should state that existing beds should not be moved out of the county" in "which they reside. If another part of Ontario is short of beds, then the province should step up and fund this shortfall." What a novel idea. The province should finally start adding the new beds they promised, not take them from other places.

One long-term-care operator wrote to me, "If all existing homes were given the additional necessary beds to make their new builds operationally and financially viable, then there would be no need to transfer any beds out of an area."

I agree. They should do it for the homes across my riding which will soon have no choice but to modernize. They should do it for Hillside Manor. They should do it for peopleCare Stratford, which has been in limbo since

2015. People are asking, "What's going on?" and "What's taking so long?" The minister could put an end to this endless uncertainty. He has the power to give them the beds that they need to modernize and rebuild. We ask him to get moving.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, it's so encouraging that when a community comes together, good things happen. Our experience tells us that the voice of a community, even a small one, can be heard at Queen's Park.

But the story doesn't end here. Unless we start planning for better long-term care everywhere in Ontario, unless we improve the process, learning from the mistakes of the past, and unless we finally get serious about investing in new beds in the sector that supports them, long-term care will deteriorate. Many more beds will be at risk and many more people won't get the care they deserve.

I ask all members for their support and I look forward to their comments.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House, and today to speak on motion 68, a review of the Perth long-term-care-bed relocation plan, brought forward by the member from Perth-Wellington.

I would first like to say I fully support this motion. The member from Perth-Wellington and I have often had discussions that people who live in rural Ontario, regardless of party affiliation, often share the same issues.

I'd like to start off by saying that my mom is in a long-term-care home, in Haileybury—Extendicare in Haileybury. I'd like to first say that, until you go through that, you don't realize how hard the people work who work in long-term care. Their residents are not always easy to deal with. My mom would be included in that. They face incredible challenges. So I'd like to shout out to all the people who work in long-term care.

The member from Perth-Wellington talked about his area, and I'll talk about mine. In one of my towns, Englehart, we have one of the D homes left in the province. Long-term-care homes are rated A, B, C and D. Northland Lodge is a D home. Once again, the staff is A++, but the home is old. It's old. The community is doing everything in their power to keep those beds in Englehart. The home needs to be rebuilt. They're doing everything they can. They're working with the current owner of the home.

The stumbling block—and I have spoken to the minister about this—is that that home is, I believe, under 50 beds. Anyone in the long-term-care-home business knows that 50 beds isn't profitable under the current model. So what tends to happen is, to remain profitable for a private home, they try to aggregate beds for economies of scale. That doesn't work for rural Ontario, because if you move those beds, you not only move people away from their families; you move them to places where they don't know anyone. In my part of the world they could conceivably move those beds to North Bay, which is two hours away.

That shouldn't happen in our Ontario. It shouldn't happen in Perth–Wellington. I'm happy to hear that it won't happen in the case of the member—I commend the member for bringing this issue forward—but every area of rural Ontario faces this issue. Just because not all population centres in rural Ontario are growing does not mean that what they provide to the province is disappearing. They deserve to have an equivalent service level. Part of that service level is that after someone has worked their whole life to help build up this province, at the sunset of their lives, if they need long-term care, they should be able to have access to that long-term care close to home. I believe that's one of the government's tag lines: health care close to home. It's very important.

1350

I would like to thank the government. One of my long-term-care homes, South Centennial Manor in Iroquois Falls, it's been announced they are going to redevelop. That's good news. It's our job to hold the government to account. It's our job also to acknowledge when the government does a good thing. Redeveloping South Centennial Manor is a good thing and I give credit where credit is due.

But we're still left—and it's still my job—to push for redevelopment of other homes and to push for redevelopment where those people—where their families are and where they need to live. So, if you look at Northland Lodge in Englehart, it's a D home. It needs to be redeveloped. The community is doing everything they can to work with the operator to perhaps join it with the local hospital. The idea has been batted around, perhaps because there is no specific service in our part of the world for dementia patients.

My mom suffers from dementia and I would be thrilled if people like my mom could actually have access to, in northeastern Ontario, close to home, actual planned dementia services in a modern home. Maybe we could start there. That's what we need to do.

But it is concerning that the member from Perth–Wellington, myself, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, and I'm sure every other member from rural Ontario, is facing the same issue. There is a tendency, when you redevelop, to make homes bigger and make them farther away from people's families. That's something we have to recognize and something that we hopefully can put a stop to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from London West. Oh, sorry—

Mr. John Fraser: Ottawa.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): My apologies. Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's okay. I guess I look like I'm from London. Maybe it's a banker—we'll leave it at that.

It's really a pleasure to respond to the member from Perth–Wellington. I want to acknowledge his advocacy on behalf of his community, which I know all members of this House do.

I also want to say I share the same family experience as the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. I have family that is in long-term care and I do want to give, right now before I say few words, a shout-out to all of the people who work in long-term care. There is really great long-term care happening in our province. It requires a lot of work to ensure that people live well. It's not just about maintaining somebody's health, but it's also about trying to give them a community experience in a place so they can live, because they're living in a home—it's their home now—in a place that's a community. I want to congratulate all of those people out there and thank all of those people out there who work in long-term care to build a community inside of those homes so that people are well cared for.

As the member from Perth–Wellington said, no, the beds are not moving. He did find out last week that they will not move from Hillside Manor and leave the community, which is very good news—excellent news, I know, for him.

What I do want to point out, though, and I think the member knows this, but I want to add more to it, is that no beds from a long-term-care home can leave a community without the express consent of the Minister of Health. What that means is that what the member opposite was able to do for his community is secured by that fact that he has a political recourse to do that in this House and working with the government or with his colleagues to ensure that doesn't happen, and that's what happened in this case.

I'd also like to add that I was in Arnprior earlier this month, which is in the riding of the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, to announce the redevelopment of the Grove. The Grove is a long-term-care home in Arnprior that has, I believe, 62 or 64 beds. It was a redevelopment, as we've been talking about; we had the B and C redevelopment.

One of the challenges with the redevelopments—the members opposite would know—is that you have a facility that is, as the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane said, 50 beds. So if you're going to rebuild those facilities, those homes, you actually have to right-size them so that they meet how we deliver care in long-term-care homes. The pods are about 32.

That was the first announcement of new beds that were added to a redevelopment. If you look at the 5,000-and-some additional beds that are there, that will provide the ability for communities to redevelop, so that pressure that was there to shift beds around will change. That's the opportunity that exists there, to add those 16, 10 or 20 beds that you need to actually make sure that it works, and that it's a sustainable way to deliver that care.

There are complexities. We do have private ownership that exists in long-term-care homes. It's very, very highly regulated. That's why we have those throttles, like how only the minister can approve the movement of beds.

I appreciate what the member says about the consultative process. We've all seen that in our communities. I saw that in 2002, before I became a member, while I was

working for the member who came before me, when they were going to close the CHEO cardiac unit in Ottawa. There were only two cardiac programs. At that time, I was not satisfied with that process of consultation, so working with the member and other members in the area, we were able to reverse that. We were able to make sure that the community's voice got heard.

That's why I want to congratulate the member, because that's a really important part of our job, to give expression to the concerns of the community. I know that the member did this.

I do want to say a few words about the additional commitment that the opposite side has made in their document. I won't go any further other than to say that you need to take a look at the numbers that you attached to those 15,000 beds before you get too excited about it. We all know that we have to build more long-term-care spaces here in the province. It's expensive. It's more expensive than you think. I know, because I've seen your policy document. So take a hard look at that, because it's important that this thing is right, that we get it right.

The other thing that we have to look at is that there's another level of care that exists between home and long-term-care homes. We need to find a way to help people transition to live in a more community-like setting, so that they can support each other and be more easily supported.

One of the factors that really affects people's health is isolation. We all have family members and friends—friends of ours, or friends' parents—who continue to live in their home, who continue to live in a bungalow, like my mother- and father-in-law did, on the corner of Prospect and Kilborn in Ottawa South. It was great for them to be in their home that they'd been in for 60 years, but they did not fully realize the degree to which isolation can affect one's health.

We all need to live in community. We all need to live together in community. We need each other. We need to be able to draw from each other to give purpose and meaning to life. I say this to say that we also have to focus on how we can provide housing and living solutions for us as we grow older.

1400

Long-term-care spaces are not the only solution. We need them, but what we need to do is to try to keep people healthier longer, by providing them opportunities to live together in community, by their own choice, with the kind of privacy and things they need so that they can care for each other and, more importantly, we can provide that care in a way that is effective and serves that population, serves those people who served us so well through our lives—that we find a way to do that.

I'd like to suggest that to the member opposite and, again, I'd like to thank him for his advocacy. I was hearing what he was saying in terms of not being happy with the process. We've all been there. Again, I can't emphasize enough the fact that the minister has the ultimate decision on that, and that's a decision that you can impact in this House more than anybody else in your

riding. You can work with your colleagues like you are today. You don't have to do it today, now. You're doing it today to say, "I shouldn't have to do this." The reality is, that one caveat is the thing that enables all of us to fight on behalf of our communities to ensure those things that are important to our communities, like spaces in a long-term-care home, are taken care of.

It's interesting. I think you'll find that the first announcement of new beds in the province was last June, as I said, at the Grove in Arnprior, which is a rural community, as some of my colleagues from eastern Ontario know, in eastern Ontario just northwest of Ottawa. I think if you take a look—

Interjection: The Prior.

Mr. John Fraser: The Prior, yes. If you take a look at the investments over the course of 15 years, 14 years, made in rural hospitals, and if you take a look at the B and C redevelopments, that's where a lot of the focus is. So I don't agree with the argument that—I know there are challenges in rural Ontario, like there are challenges getting heard anywhere for all of us, but I really do believe that this government has taken a very strong stance on ensuring that those things that are needed in those communities are there. At least that's my experience in eastern Ontario over the last 10 years, if I look at a place like Winchester or the redevelopment that's happening in Hawkesbury. I don't want to belabour the point, but I did want to point that out.

I don't concur with some of the things that were said with relation to this government's record on rural Ontario, but I support the motion. I support the member's efforts and congratulate him and thank him for bringing it forward in this Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further comments?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Good afternoon, Speaker. I'm pleased to enter the debate on my colleague's motion before us today. In some aspects, it's similar to the objectives of the previous motion debated in the Legislature from the member of Simcoe—Grey, which was adopted unanimously, as you'll recall. Both resolutions—or motions, rather—seek to ensure, as they should, a high standard of long-term care in communities.

I'd like to commend my colleague, as, because of the considerable advocacy efforts that he has made—and his local community members—the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care agreed to leave the beds in Perth county.

But what's really clear is that Ontario seniors are entering long-term-care homes when they're older, more frail, and require both medical and personal care more so than ever before. The current wait-list to enter a local long-term-care home is sufficiently long that seniors are suffering. Many are being forced to travel outside of their own communities to find a space. Speaker, this is a real crisis throughout Ontario that the Liberal government has failed to address over 14 long years.

My local health integration network, which is the Central East, is the second-largest in Ontario and has the

highest number of patients waiting for a long-term-care placement compared to the other 13 local health integration networks. It also has highest time-to-placement days for long-term care when compared to the other local health integration networks. I share this information because it's indicative of the long-term-care demands in the region of Durham, where the Central East Local Health Integration Network is located. These types of demands will be faced in the coming decades. These pressures stem from the lack of long-term-care beds in the region and, by extension, in the province of Ontario, with more than 32,000 seniors on the waiting list for a long-term-care bed in the province.

I feel it's necessary to acknowledge, in part, the re-announcement that government made early in November, but I would note that this reannouncement is simply the Liberal government promising anything to keep themselves in power. All of their promises are calculated to help them win the next election. The reality is that the Liberal government has had 14 years to fulfill their promises, in particular related to long-term care, and they failed. They've completely failed Ontarians consistently.

In particular, the Liberal government previously committed to the redevelopment of 35,000 outdated long-term-care beds, yet they've only completed one third—one third—of those beds over 14 long years. They also committed to accommodate the 32,000 seniors who continue to languish on the long-term-care bed wait-list, a list that is projected to reach 50,000 seniors by 2021.

I have two other speakers who will be speaking after me, so I'm going to wrap up.

While the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus is pleased, in part, that the minister decided to leave long-term-care beds in the county of Perth, seniors in many communities, including mine, deserve more than long wait times and neglect. This is about enhancing seniors' quality of life and supporting their needs and values in our communities. After all, they built the communities we live in today. We owe them no less.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's a pleasure to be here today to debate the member from Perth–Wellington's motion to review the Perth long-term-care bed reallocation plan. He has brought this motion forward, and, of course, he wants to represent his constituents and he wants to represent his riding in the best way possible.

One of the things that I had heard about Hillside Manor at one point—I was contacted by people in that riding, and they asked me to do a town hall because they had heard that beds were going to be transferred out of Hillside Manor into Stratford and the London area. They were gravely concerned about the implications of what that meant for residents and seniors in long-term care.

We had the town hall meeting, and people were very enthusiastic about pushing this government not to do that. They asked, at the end of the meeting, "What else can we do to get this government to change its mind?" I said, "You know, you just have to keep fighting, because there are times when this government does listen."

Lo and behold, on November 23, the member from Perth–Wellington asked the question of the minister, and this was the minister's response: "I understand just how critically important it is that we have all sorts of health care options available, including long-term-care beds as close to home, as close to their current residences as possible, partly because of the transportation challenges that exist and partly because it's important that their family, loved ones, caregivers and care partners are able to maintain that close relationship and visit them on a regular basis."

Then he went on to say, "The member knows as well"—referring, of course, to the member from Perth–Wellington—"that there will be no change to the situation at Hillside without my explicit written approval." Well, we've just heard from the member from Perth–Wellington that he didn't realize that that was the case because, when the minister decided to keep the beds at Hillside, he communicated that with the media through an email from his ministry but did not inform the member that the beds were going to remain in his community.

Let's talk about what we can do to improve long-term care. We're talking about capacity, accessibility and availability. That just happens to be one of the items that I have been fighting for: for this government to expand the public inquiry into a phase 2. It will actually look at capacity, availability and accessibility in the regions. That's what we need to do. We need to examine, throughout all regions, what is happening with long-term care. Because when we have rural and northern communities, when we're saying we're going to take those beds out and move them to places further away, it truly does impact the families and their loved ones. It's like you're ripping that family apart.

1410

That is the most horrifying kind of experience you could have when you are a caregiver—or your wife or your grandchildren. You have to come to terms with your grandparent or your loved one being uprooted out of their community and being placed somewhere else. Then the challenges become, as the minister said, transportation and other types of situations.

I had presented that motion, and it had passed in the House. There are so many things in it about long-term care. It's very complicated, like many portfolios. But there were actual items, we said, that need to be examined under long-term care. This government has that opportunity to do that.

We, of course, believe that the front-line workers in long-term care are run off their feet. They're so dedicated, and they're doing the best they can. They work so hard, and they are committed to their job. I think you have to be a special person—you have to have a calling—to want to nurture and look after someone in their time of need. So we take our hats off to the front-line workers. I think we all agree on that in the House.

When we're talking about long-term care, there are things that we need to do, as legislators, to make things better for the people who are working in long-term care at the front lines, as well as the residents.

Those topics that we talked about, those items of terms of reference to look at—the public inquiry and expanding phase 2—are quality of care. We've heard many of those stories. I had a statement this afternoon about that. We had funding levels on that list; we had staffing levels. We had the capacity, availability and accessibility. We had for-profit. How do for-profit long-term-care homes—what's the impact on our system for that? We had the actions and inactions of government not taking those recommendations from coroners' inquests, like the Casa Verde. We also had the enforcement and regulation inspections, and how those things are happening.

So if we actually take the time to address long-term care in a fulsome way, and we open up the public inquiry into a phase 2 to examine these issues, this type of motion would be addressed. We can actually look to the future, so we're not causing anxiety or worry for families because they think their city, their rural community or their northern community is next for this shuffling of beds.

We owe it to the residents, we owe it to the front-line workers and we owe it to families of loved ones to get it right so that we can all breathe easy, spend our time going to visit our loved ones and enjoy the time that we have with them, and give them the respect and dignity that they deserve, because we know they've given back to us in so many ways. All they're asking is to live in a place they can call home. That should be the long-term-care home where they enter the next phase of their life.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further comments?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I'm proud to rise today on behalf of the residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry to speak to this motion from my colleague from Perth–Wellington.

The shortage of long-term-care beds that he is referring to in his riding is the same issue that you would hear in most constituency offices across the province.

We are constantly dealing with the issue in my riding. There is a shortage of long-term-care beds.

Last spring, if you picked up a copy of the *Toronto Star*, you would have seen an article talking about the massive bed shortage in hospitals, partially caused by the shortage of long-term-care beds. The article highlighted the Cornwall Community Hospital and a severe case of hallway medicine. Patients could be found on stretchers in hallways, empty offices and any nook and cranny.

In addition to the stress on patients and staff, scheduled surgeries were cancelled because of the shortage of beds. To be fair, the problem is far worse in the spring because of the flu season, but it is a year-round problem. We see it in people waiting months for a bed for a loved one, or in spouses being split up into different locations and with severely ill patients being sent home not because they are able to, but because there is no bed.

One of my constituents came into our office to recount a personal story that he didn't want to make a big deal of, but something that should never happen in Ontario. But unfortunately I believe it is all too common.

Early one morning, his wife became very ill, and he sent her to one of our local hospitals. At 3 o'clock they wanted to release her to go home, over his objections. The next morning, the home care nurse arrived and directed them to immediately take her back to the hospital by ambulance. The same day at 3 o'clock, they informed him that they were again sending her home, but he refused to take her home.

Speaker, she passed away just a few days later, so obviously she was in no condition to go home.

Sadly, these are not isolated cases. A few years ago, the Auditor General reported that our area was the worst in Ontario for patients waiting for long-term-care beds, with some of them waiting over three years. At the time, our local LHIN was closing 37 alternate-level-of-care beds at the former Cornwall General Hospital, temporarily created because of the serious bed situation. When I contacted the CCAC to get an explanation, I was informed that we had more beds than we needed, and that despite the dismal record highlighted by the Auditor General and the fact that our seniors' population is scheduled to double by 2030, they had already counted these in the number and we didn't need the beds. The response was astounding but something that I've grown to expect since coming here. After rechecking their numbers, including the doubling of the requirements, they showed that we did not need any more long-term-care beds beyond 2030.

How do you explain this? We have double the beds that we need if their numbers are right, and we still have a problem. So are they not giving us the right numbers or are they just doing a really bad job? There's nothing in between, because if you're doing that kind of a job where the Auditor General says you're in that bad a shape—and you have double the resources.

People are being told to take their parents or their loved ones into the emergency room and just walk away. That's something we're seeing in our hospitals. It's not the way that things should be.

They haven't built any net new long-term-care beds in 14 years.

I know that you have to be careful with numbers, and I think that our People's Guarantee of building 30,000 new long-term-care beds is a reasonable response in the short term—and to the aging population.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: We're speaking today on a motion put forward by my colleague from Perth–Wellington. He has been very concerned for the last couple of months, in his riding, that there were plans to move long-term-care beds to a larger urban centre. He's in a more rural riding. It would mean that the family members have to travel further and the people in the long-term-care beds would not have the social interactions that they need to have a better quality of life.

I'm surprised that there isn't more of an uprising from people who work in the long-term-care industry to say, "We need these family members and friends visiting

often because they're so helpful, not just for the little tasks that they do but also in terms of entertainment and social supports that they do."

Speaking of social supports, I just wanted to mention 70-year-old Esa Lehmusjurri. He passed away, unfortunately, trying to escape his illegal group home last year, right here in the GTA. He was locked in the house. They locked him in, even though he was being picked up by a friend and he wanted to go out and meet his friend. So he managed to get out the back door, tried to climb a fence into the neighbour's yard, and fell and injured himself. He was found dead 24 hours later. It points to a much greater problem that we have in our communities.

There are consequences to government action and there are consequences to inaction. When we have hospital beds that are full of patients who are on waiting lists to get into long-term-care beds, that means that people who aren't that interested in the long-term-care bed situation in Ontario should care about it because it means that they and their loved ones and friends can't get into hospital beds because of the shortage of long-term-care beds. We hear that it's pitting region against region because it's a competition to try to get some attention on the issue.

I just want to highlight the PC platform. I know we've been hearing about it a lot this week here in the House and in the media. One of the things from the People's Guarantee is that we'll have a dental program for low-income seniors. I think that this is what we have to address, as well: that in our long-term-care beds, when we have a loved one who does get into a spot, a lot of times there are difficulties because the person may not have the resources to get dental care, and that makes it difficult for the long-term-care facility and for our emergency rooms.

1420

Patrick Brown and the Ontario PCs have said in their platform that they will build 30,000 new long-term-care beds over the next 10 years, should they form government, including 15,000 in the first five years. We know, Madam Speaker, that doctors and other health care professionals feel underappreciated and disrespected right now by this Liberal government, and are looking forward to some changes in the future.

We want to restore the \$50 million that this government cut from seniors' therapy, which is often preventive and therapeutic—for example, physiotherapy. We all hear about that in our constituency offices.

We want to fund oral cancer drugs. Many of those drugs will be going to seniors, and isn't it easier to give them their medication in the long-term-care facility, not having to transfer them to hospitals?

We also want to allow the renewal of health cards online, which helps the long-term-care facilities, because don't they have a problem on their hands when seniors don't have health cards?

We have a tendency, as we heard, to think bigger and further away, as the member from the NDP said just before, but there are consequences to all of this.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Perth–Wellington to wrap up.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I want to thank all those who spoke on this motion: the members from Timiskaming–Cochrane, London–Fanshawe, Ottawa South, Whitby–Oshawa, Thornhill and—

Mr. Jim McDonell: Stormont.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Stormont–Dundas and Glengarry.

Mrs. Gila Martow: South Glengarry.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: South Glengarry.

I want to thank all of the groups who were involved in this thing, because without the support I had in my community and in my riding, this wouldn't have happened. From health care workers to the general public to municipal governments, they all jumped in and helped me with this successful conclusion of getting the long-term-care beds to stay in Perth county.

But I want to address something that was said here by the member from Ottawa South. It was the process that really hurt. People in my riding, when this first started, rented a room for the first meeting that would hold about 30 people, and 300 showed up. For the second one, we had people standing outside of the second place. We asked them to go to a bigger spot, and it was, "No, we can't do this now," so we had people standing out in the rain, and they tried to bar the press from going in, for gosh sakes.

There's got to be something fixed in long-term care. I appreciate the minister for what he did in letting them keep the beds in Perth county, but we were never told—none of our municipal officials were kept in the loop. I wasn't kept in the loop at all. Any time there was an announcement about this thing, it was in the paper somewhere. That's deplorable. That's awful. And I would suggest that the ministry, and any ministry that does these types of things, stop that, because I'll tell you something: The people in Perth–Wellington didn't appreciate the way this thing was handled altogether. They were very disgusted with the way that the ministry handled this whole thing.

Anyway, thank you for your support.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA JOURNÉE DU SOUVENIR TRANS

Ms. DiNovo moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 74, An Act to proclaim the Trans Day of Remembrance / Projet de loi 74, Loi proclamant la Journée du souvenir trans.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I first want to introduce all of the groups and people who are here: the Toronto Trans Alliance, the Toronto Trans Coalition Project, the Trans Lobby Group, Helen Kennedy was here earlier from Egale, the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, the Trans Human Rights Campaign, the Trans Women's Association, Unite Here Local 75 and Heartbeat Media Inc.

The individuals: Nichola Ward; Melissa Hudson; Susan Gapka; Chris Karas; Martine Stonehouse; Davina Hader; Stephanie Woolley; Antonia Stevens; Tina Read; Gerrit Hammond; Jessica, Stella and Darwin Skinner; Bobbi Dare; Josh Cuasay; and Flordeliza Eronico. Welcome all to Queen's Park.

It's an emotional day for me, Speaker. In part, it has been an emotional week. I was lucky enough to be in the gallery in the federal Parliament on Tuesday when the historic moment of the official apology happened—a long time coming. I think the last time I was there on LGBTQ2SI business was 46 years ago, when I was there for the first “We Demand” gay rights demonstration in Canada. I was the only woman who signed on then. It was the first year of Pride, as well, on the island. We said there were 200; I think there were probably 50. I was there with my girlfriend at the time.

This is going to be my last private member's bill and the last time I stand here doing second reading, after 11 years and four elections. I have to say, we've accomplished a lot, certainly where queer advocacy has been concerned: first, with Toby's Law, that took five tablings and six years to finally get all-party support to become law, which added gender identity and gender expression to the Ontario Human Rights Code; banning conversion therapy; parent equality—which was originally Cy and Ruby's Act; and, in 2015, the first day that we recognized the Trans Day of Remembrance. We had a moment of silence here. Thank you, all. We had a flag-raising in front. We've done it every year since.

What this bill does is just enshrine that in law so that, no matter who gets elected after the next election or who's here in these seats, this keeps going, because it's so important. Every year, thousands of trans folk around the world lose their lives from transphobic violence—either violence that comes from outside or violence that comes from within. Every year, about 43% in the trans community, according to Trans Pulse, try to kill themselves. About 97% experience transphobia in some way, shape or form. About 25% are the victims of sexual or other assault. It is the most oppressed community and minority in the world right now, and we owe it to them to do something.

We also owe it to activists, of which many are in the stands here, to recognize the activism that has got us to this place.

On my radio show on Monday, we had a young woman phone in—she couldn't be here today: Bri, 17, who said, “I'm lucky. I'm trans, and I've really never experienced any transphobia.” She's in a very supportive community, supportive family, supportive school. So we

stand here in hope, too, that one day every trans child growing up will be like that.

We have a perfect example of that with Stella, right here. Stella is 11 years old. Stella was the Inspire champion of last year.

Stella is not alone. There are many children now who will never know anything but their true gender or their true gender expression. This is so exciting, and this didn't happen by accident. This happened because the people you see here have been pushing and advocating and struggling against all odds for this time, for this moment. So I want to thank them.

I stand here with a collar on, too. I want to mention that. The reason I'm wearing my collar is because it's very important to make the point that all people of faith, all faiths, if they're truly faithful, are inclusive of LGBTQ2SI people.

I want to talk about the person who inspired Toby's Law, which was what we initially got done here in this place. Again, all parties signed on. It was named after Toby Dancer, who was the music director at my church at the time, Emmanuel Howard Park United Church. Toby died of an overdose—not an unusual death for trans folk, sadly. Toby, under her male name in a previous life before transitioning, was one of Canada's top music producers. By the time I met her, Toby had been on the streets, had been homeless and eventually became our music director before her tragic ending. That death really affected an entire community—I would say the entire west end of Toronto—who knew Toby and loved Toby. At Toby's funeral, I said—because by that time, we had erected a stained glass window of Toby playing the piano in our sanctuary—that we were probably the only church in the world that had a stained glass window of a trans person in their sanctuary, and one of Toby's guests at that day yelled out, “What about Joan of Arc?” What about Joan of Arc, indeed.

1430

People who are trans have always been with us. The very first Christian convert in the Bible is a trans person—if you don't believe me, read Acts—and a person of colour as well: an Ethiopian eunuch. If you look at the Rembrandt painting, you'll see a person of colour who was trans—the very first convert.

Trans folk have always been part of makeup of our world; it's just that we've never acknowledged that. It's just that we have been transphobic. It's just that we've never remembered them and we've never celebrated them, so Trans Day of Remembrance, hopefully, will do all of that.

I want to say that it's not just about death, Madam Speaker, although there is a lot of it. It's not just about death; it's actually about life. It's about life going forward. It's about Stella's life and it's about Bri's life. It's about the life of the activists. It's about all of our lives. It's about our willingness and our ability to accept difference in our communities, and I have to say that some communities are better at that than others.

We still have a problem in our schools with children. Helen Kennedy was here earlier at the press conference,

from Egale. We all know Helen now because she was on the front page of the *Globe* this morning, hugging one of the recipients of the apology in Ottawa. About 97% of kids in most communities say that they experience violence and they experience abuse when they go to school. They can't learn. Another woman on my radio show, Christine Newman, said that—and she's not young; she's an older woman—she routinely takes her hearing aids out when she goes out in public in downtown Toronto. If she doesn't, she'll hear abuse, inevitably, somewhere that she walks.

We must stop this. This is something we can stop, and we are stopping it. We are working in our schools; we are changing our laws. We are creating a new world. We are creating that new world. I want to thank everyone here for being part of that.

One of the beautiful aspects of the historic apology—one of its aspects, which we have been asking for—is that there was money behind it; it was not just words—but it was to hear every party get up—which I hope to hear this afternoon—and be on the same page. We have a lot to apologize for in terms of what we've done in places like this.

When I did the first legalized same-sex marriage, before the law changed—two women of colour—this was the place that threatened to take away my licence. The government of the day threatened to take away my licence. Luckily, I had a good lawyer—the same lawyer who was in Ottawa—Doug Elliott. CBC and the *Toronto Star* helped stop that. About a year later the law changed, so I was okay. But that is the power of government for good or ill.

I am proud to say that we have accomplished a great deal of good in the last 11 years in this place. We accomplished even more good, I think, out on the streets in terms of the day-by-day work that so many activists do. Again, I just want to acknowledge everyone here because you truly are my heroes and heroines. You are incredible. Thank you for keeping on keeping on for so many years. Give them another round of applause.

Applause.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Changing the laws—and I hope that, of course, this passes and I hope it becomes law; that is my request to Santa Claus for this Christmas: that this become law—doesn't do all the work. It's just the first step, as we learned when Joshua Ferguson came—just a few days ago, really—and said, “Even though Toby's law has passed, I still can't get a birth certificate with an X marker on it in the province.” Thankfully, the minister said that by spring—we now have a date; not an exact date, but—

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: No later than.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: No later than spring—okay—of next year.

But, really, it has been six years since Toby's Law passed. It's not only changing the laws; it's also putting the laws into effect and changing our lives. That is the work going forward, even when the bill passes.

Again, what is this about? This is about commemorating this day once a year to acknowledge all of those

trans folk who have died in the previous year, and, by the way, last year was one of the worst on record. We will keep doing that and keep raising the flag until not one trans person dies of transphobia, and hopefully, Stella, you'll see that day in your lifetime, when we gather not to mourn the passing but to celebrate all of the accomplishments, and only celebrate.

Hopefully, we'll get to that point in my lifetime. Certainly, we'll get to it in Stella's lifetime; there's no question about that, if we keep going and if we're vigilant. That means every one of us, in every aspect of our lives. If we hear a comment, if we see somebody being hurt, if we notice somebody being excluded, if we know that there's a law or regulation that needs to be changed, if we know that there's a document that needs to be produced—everywhere we go, whether at prayer or at work or here, we need to be cognizant, and we need to fight on until transphobia, biphobia and homophobia are gone from every place in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further comments?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It is a great pleasure to rise today to talk about this bill.

I do want to acknowledge the member from Parkdale–High Park for her work, and her advocacy that always has been there. It has been steadfast. You have pushed forward, and we are very, very proud to consider you a colleague. Thank you for that.

Many of these pieces of legislation that we talk about and debate in this House become personal to us, and it's important that they become personal to us. It's important that we tell the stories that are relevant and that make sense and that make these pieces of legislation come to life. I have one such story myself.

My brother-in-law, who, unfortunately, I didn't have the opportunity to meet, was in the reserves. Unfortunately, he was there at a time that was very transgender-phobic. He was transgender, or he was trying to transgender at the time. This was quite some time ago. He was found out about, and persecuted for 15 days in solitary confinement, and had a dishonourable discharge from the military. A short time after that, he travelled across Canada, and he died by suicide. He died by sitting on train tracks and waiting.

We know that this is important legislation. We know that we need to move from a period of time, as the member from Parkdale–High Park said, where we are acknowledging those who have passed, to a time when we acknowledge and celebrate the accomplishments that have been made.

I'm pleased about many of the accomplishments that are within this bill. I'm just going to very quickly highlight a few of those.

There is one section that I was very pleased about—not in the bill, but a piece of government legislation in 2015 for our correctional services. Individuals who were trans who were placed in a correctional facility were to be placed in a facility that was gender-appropriate for their own gender expression—that was a very important

piece that I was very proud of—and they were also to be referred to by their preferred name and gender pronoun. This is progress. This is small, but this is progress and we need to get there. They were also able to choose the gender of staff performing searches.

Again, that is not part of the legislation that we're talking about today, and I do want to focus on that.

We have worked very hard to put into place programs in our health care system that reflect and support transgendered individuals in our communities.

In June, the legislation passed—the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, which I was part of as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Once proclaimed, it would provide a modern, child- and youth-centred legislative framework to strengthen services and help protect and care for some of Ontario's most vulnerable young people, and that includes youth who are transgenerating.

I'm very pleased. I'm very proud of my colleague from Parkdale–High Park. Thank you, thank you, thank you so much for all your work, and thank you to the activists who have joined us here today and who are supportive of this bill. *Merci beaucoup.*

1440

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm going to cry, because Cheri DiNovo, the member for Parkdale–High Park, has been a very close colleague and friend of mine since she arrived here shortly after I arrived here—both, by the way, in by-elections. Look, I'm a Conservative and she's a New Democrat; we probably don't agree on very much. But we have become amazing friends, and I admire her courage. She's a very courageous woman. If you don't mind, I'm actually going to talk a little bit about you before I get into my remarks. I find that this is an opportunity for me to give a tribute to you, and I do hope that we have that opportunity.

She has come here and she has advanced initiatives that maybe were not mainstream. Maybe she was 20 years ahead of the rest of the country and definitely certain parts of the world. She has been, I think, one of the strongest, if not the strongest advocate for LGBTQ in this entire province. I want to thank her for doing that and opening our eyes to the struggles of that community.

To my friend Susan Gapka, who's here and has been here since I arrived almost 12 years ago: She has, with Cheri, been an effective lobbyist in opening so many people's eyes. You are a star. It's important for me to speak to this and support this motion because of all of that strong work and strong advocacy over a number of years. Thank you, Susan, for being here. I see my friend Melissa is also here. She has been a very strong advocate in our Progressive Conservative Party. Thank you.

Some of the stories that I have heard, of course, over the years—I've been an anti-bullying advocate, and some of the kids who are most bullied happen to be our kids that are LGBTQ. One of my pieces of legislation that I brought forward on the floor of this assembly was as a

result of a young gay man in Ottawa who took his own life because, when he was 15 years old, he was on the bus and some bullies decided they were going to take some AC/DC batteries and stuff them down his throat. He took his own life. He suffered from mental health issues. That, of course, was Jamie Hubley. His father and I are still friends to this day. But I'm always reminded of him and that struggle.

I know I don't want to name the person's name, but I did talk to one of my friends who is transgender, and she told me that in her former life, she had been a successful businessman. But then, when she came out to her family, she lost everything. A very strong, strong woman—I'm so proud of her.

When we were growing up, all of us here, it was a different time. We didn't understand things, probably. But at the beginning of this school year, my daughter, Victoria—she's 12. I talk about her a lot here. She has grown up on the floor of this assembly. I dropped her off at—they closed the middle school and they put all the kids into high school. I have no problem with that. It's across the street. It's quicker for me to get her to school and pick her up. I'm dropping her off and she starts talking to this kid, and I'm like, "Who is that?" "Oh, Mom, you remember. Kate used to stay overnight at our house." I say, "Oh, okay." She said, "But Kate is a boy now." And I thought, it just rolled off the tongue so easily, that there is that level of acceptance today in our schools, thanks in part because of little Stella there.

You're doing great things when you are advocates and you're doing great things when you are who you are. No one has ever followed someone who wasn't. So always remember that, okay? Be a leader. You're following a really strong leader in Cheri DiNovo.

I know I'm not supposed to use names, but I think you'll indulge me this one time. Cheri, when you leave this place, it doesn't mean that you have lost any of your influence. I know that you're going to continue to come to Queen's Park and you're going to continue to fight for what you believe is right. We'll all continue to follow you as a strong leader. I know that you have many supporters in the gallery who are grateful for all of the work, all of the heart, all of the dedication you have put in, not just to this issue but predominantly this issue, and taking it to the floor of the assembly.

You, my friend—I am grateful to have worked with you, I'm grateful to know you and I look forward to following your career outside of this place. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is my privilege to rise today and speak in support of An Act to proclaim the Trans Day of Remembrance, brought forward by the esteemed member from Parkdale–High Park. I would like to recognize all of the LGBTQ community activists, partners and trans friends who are joining us today in the Legislature. Welcome.

To my friend Susan Gapka, who reminded me today that it has taken about 20 years of heavy lifting to get this

far, and to all of those bearing the weight of the work for such important social and systemic change, thank you. I am very proud to stand in this Legislature and learn from all of you and help you build very strong bridges.

I also want to thank the member for Parkdale–High Park, who has used her political career to make the world measurably better. She has been a trailblazer for the LGBTQ community, but has also been a foundation builder. It will fall on all the rest of us to ensure that what we build on those foundations of equity and human rights will be bold, will be fair and will be strong.

Over the past 11 years she has championed a number of issues alongside the trans community. She was named the first-ever LGBTQ critic in Ontario. Toby's Law passed in 2012 and amended the Ontario Human Rights Code to include gender identity and gender expression. It was also her bill that prohibits conversion therapy for youth in Ontario. She continues to fight for parental recognition for LGBTQ families, and holds this government to account when they haven't yet followed through on all of their commitments to non-binary Ontarians. Thank you, Cheri.

Bill 74 is An Act to proclaim the Trans Day of Remembrance. I'm going to read directly from the preamble because it's just so clear:

"Trans people in Ontario face not only indifference, prejudice and hatred, but also anti-trans violence.

"By proclaiming November 20 in each year as the Trans Day of Remembrance, the province of Ontario publicly mourns and honours the lives of those who might otherwise be forgotten and gives trans people and their allies a chance to stand together in vigil. The Trans Day of Remembrance is an opportunity to raise public awareness of hate crimes committed against trans people.

"By observing a moment of silence, we express our respect for trans people in the face of indifference, prejudice and hatred and memorialize those who have died as a result of anti-trans violence."

What does the Trans Day of Remembrance mean, Speaker? I am honoured to share letters from three dynamic LGBTQ-identifying youth in my community. They told me what Trans Day of Remembrance means to them, and I would like to share their words.

"Trans Day of Remembrance is not a day of celebration, but a day of mourning for all of the bright, beautiful people we have lost throughout our history as a direct result of transphobia. We also acknowledge the people that we have lost and will continue to lose due to transphobia in the present day. The lives lost have a deep impact within our community. For me, this day connects me to those who have helped me find power and pride in my identity, as I mourn the fact that they cannot see the progress that they made for us. Seeing the community that I live in show such a great interest in preserving and acknowledging the struggles of those who came before me affirms my belief that people really do care, which is what this day means to me. It's about transgender people finding the strength to live on through times of struggle because we know that we have the support of those around us."

Another letter, Speaker: "Trans Day of Remembrance, for me, is a reminder that our country is not as safe and equal as we say it is. Trans Day of Remembrance is a day of mourning for the people we have lost due to transphobia, and it is a reminder that we need to fight like crazy for the people who experience acts of transphobia every single day. Trans Day of Remembrance is a day to reflect on what we can do to make trans people feel safe, loved, and cared about in their schools, their cities, and communities."

There's a lot of power in sharing the youth voice.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: You're doing fine.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It's one thing to use our own voices in this Legislature, but it is so much more powerful when they're not ours.

Here is the last of the letters: "What Trans Day of Remembrance means to me? This is a huge question but I'll try to keep it short and simple. As a trans man coming out in today's society, I feel extremely lucky and extremely scared. Lucky because the world is becoming a more educated place. Scared because there are articles coming out saying that 2017 was the most deadly year for trans people. This is not something that should be headlining the news. My brothers and sisters are being assaulted and murdered just for being who they are. This is why Trans Day of Remembrance is so important. It gives our community time to mourn the loss of those we knew and those we never had a chance to meet. It gives us time to talk about the struggles faced in our community and, most of all, it gives us a way to show those around us that, even in times of trouble, we stand strong as a community that supports their own."

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I would like to applaud those youth for having the courage to share their thoughts with us here in this Legislature. Young people need to grow up in a society where they know that they belong. Legislation and social policy influence our society. That is why we are all here: to play our part in creating a better world.

Finally, in my office hangs a beautiful professional photo collage that was done of my former students. It's a collage that shares their artistic messages of hope. I love that their words and faces are represented here in the Legislature, especially when their words can have an impact.

Susan and I were having a visit, and she was struck by the message, "Never give up on hope." "Never give up on hope" is a powerful message, especially today. I'm also going to share a few other words that aren't mine, from my chat with Susan earlier. She'll have to forgive me—sorry.

"Growing up in a military family, there was no space for different.... It took us 20 years of heavy lifting to get this far. There are still a lot of not-nice people.... We still have those people lurking right around the corner. We still need to do more.

"For younger people wondering, or anyone wondering who they are, it's really important to know that the government and society is supporting them and taking care

of them. It's important for them to know that they are loved and protected.

"There are laws against assault, bullying and murder, but it still happens. We want to send a strong message from this Legislature that you are protected. We have to tell society that anti-trans violence, hatred and discrimination is wrong.

"Hate crimes, gay bashing and trans bashing—there is hatred and extra violence involved. It's brutal. If you just think about all the brutal violence, that's not a hopeful message. That's why we are fighting to make systemic change so people have a future growing up.

"When we look at Trans Day of Remembrance we want to be inspiring hope in younger people.... When they are wondering who they are ... they need to know they are supported."

Thanks, Susan.

We must love, protect and support our trans friends and neighbours in Ontario. We must unanimously support this act to proclaim the Trans Day of Remembrance, and we must never give up on hope.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It really is a pleasure to have the opportunity this afternoon to speak to Bill 74, the Trans Day of Remembrance Act. I want to thank the member for bringing it forward. I want to thank everybody who is here in the gallery, not just for being here today but for your courage and your strength and your perseverance and your advocacy, and for being who you are.

Just a little anecdote: I have a good friend who is a public officer of health—not in Ontario. I remember him telling me 20 years ago that he was meeting with people in the trans community. He told me about some of the places where he had to meet, where people felt safe, which are places that are really out of the way, where we wouldn't meet with people generally. I remember always being struck by that. That pales in comparison with the kind of suffering that people have endured over many, many years, and continue to endure. This day is important to recognize and remember that.

There are a lot of forces in our world that continue to drive that message of hate or intolerance or non-acceptance of difference or the other. That's why this bill is also really important. So I really want to congratulate the member.

I probably won't get another opportunity to say this. I've had an opportunity to say it to you personally, but I haven't said it publicly. The member from Parkdale–High Park has made an incredible difference here in this Legislature—a really incredible difference. I asked the table to get me a list of all the member's bills, and I think she has made 44 introductions, so it's about four and a half or five a year. She taught me, "Don't just do one bill a session. You can do two or three."

The interesting thing is, with things like Toby's Act, she continues to reintroduce them. PTSD, trans day: She stuck with the things that she believes are really import-

ant. She has really supported her community and all the communities really well.

I'd like to thank her on behalf of the people of Ottawa South, not just transgendered or LGBTQ but everyone in Ottawa South.

It's important that we all hold together in this world. There are a lot of forces that drive us apart, and we have to be able to recognize and appreciate and celebrate each other's differences.

I live in a community that has families from 125 countries, First Nations and Inuit. They speak 90 languages and have dozens of faiths, and it works. But it takes work to make that work.

Just in closing: Cheri, you've always acted in compassion and love and mercy as a fierce advocate for those things that you believe need to be done. I know that's not going to stop. I really enjoyed being here for the four years or whatever it is that I've been working with you. Coming in here, I'm so glad you're right there. You're always smiling and welcoming and gracious and thoughtful. I want to congratulate you on a really incredible career. It's not always easy getting as much done as you got done sitting on that side. It's incredible. I want to thank you very much, and I want to thank those in the gallery for allowing me to say those few words.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today to speak to a bill to declare November 20 as Trans Day of Remembrance, so that it should be a day to memorialize those who have been murdered as a result of transphobia, and to draw attention to the continued violence endured by the transgender community. It has turned into a bit of a de facto celebration of the member from High Park, who introduced this bill, and her career here and all of the great work she has been doing for communities across Ontario.

I just want to talk a little bit about somebody I met last year at the Pride flag-raising right here at Queen's Park. I don't know why, but we always have such great weather for Pride flag-raising. It was a beautiful day, and I believe it was the first time that the trans flag was flown here, as well, so it was a double celebration.

I met Biko Beattah, who I think is somewhat well known in the trans community. She is a transgender human rights activist, a social justice warrior and founder of @TransWorkforce. She was at that time, and I think she still is, on the board of Pride Toronto. She has a sunny personality, but I know that in the depths, having been a refugee from Kenya only 11 years ago, Biko has faced hardship, but gets inspiration from the difficult times, and is now designing jewellery: @bikodesigns if you want to follow her, as I do, on social media.

In an article in NOW Toronto in 2016, Biko described Canada as a "magic fairy tale land" and decided to devote her life to giving a voice to refugees. Well, I think she gives a voice to a lot more than refugees, because this year she hosted a job fair. It was called Trans Workforce. Some of the companies that were involved were the

Canadian Armed Forces, the Toronto-Dominion Bank and Indigo. There was a lot of help from the LGBT community as well. It was to address the fact that there is an absence of transgender people in the general workforce.

There is a hashtag, #Transolution, which is a solution for trans people by trans people, and I think that that's what we advocate here so often—that different communities do the best work when they're the ones who are advocating for their community with our help, as opposed to us leading the way. We're kind of the wind in their sails, and I think that that is what we are here to help with today.

I want to read something that Biko wrote:

“Trans Workforce: The World's First Job Fair Geared Towards People Who Identify as Trans and Gender Non-Conforming.

“Eleven years ago, I sought refuge in this great country because it was illegal to be who I am in almost all countries in Africa, which is where I come from. For me, Canada offered hope in a bleak landscape.

“But despite the cultural and policy advances we have experienced, we still live in a world where too often being transgender is to live in the shadows—on the margins of society. To paraphrase an American congressman, the T in LGBT is still ‘an afterthought.’

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“We in the transgender community face hurdles that cisgender people can't quite fathom. Society may applaud and praise Caitlyn Jenner as ‘a hero’ for living her truth, but it turns a blind eye to the routine humiliations of the average trans person who doesn't drive around in luxury vehicles surrounded by burly security guards.

“Many of us would be happy just to have a decent job. If you look at any major corporation today, you will find many out and proud gays and lesbians. Why? Because those corporations have strict policies against harassment and discrimination—which have attracted a talented, hard-working gay and lesbian workforce. Such protections have in turn allowed many gays and lesbians—in the developed world—to become upwardly mobile, have good jobs, get married, raise families, live dignified lives as contributing members of society.

“But why, I ask you, don't we see, in those same corporate offices, the faces of people who identify as trans, or gender-non-conforming? Why is that?

“We all know it was trans-identifying and gender-non-conforming people who ignited the gay liberation movement at Stonewall. Brick by brick, we helped lay the foundations for the freedoms that gays and lesbians now enjoy....”

I just want to mention that I was taught, as I was raised by my parents, that there are two ways to feel elevated in this world. One is to do something that you're proud of, that makes you feel elevated, and it's something proud for yourself, for your family, for your community—education, sports or whatever that may be. Unfortunately, the other way is to somehow put some-

body else down. It was made very clear to me at a very young age that we do not elevate ourselves in our household by putting anybody else down. If we want to feel proud, we do something to make us feel proud.

I just want to end by quoting my own leader, Patrick Brown, from the Progressive Conservatives, who has been heard many times saying that, “In today's Ontario PC Party, it doesn't matter who you love, where you're born, what the colour of your skin is, what your faith is, whether you belong to a union or not; you have a home in our PC Party.”

I want to welcome everybody to join in our PC Party. We have unleashed quite a platform this week. We have what we call our People's Guarantee. We had input from every corner of the province, every age, every gender, every profession. I'm looking forward to meeting many people across the province and hearing their thoughts. Whether positive or negative, we want to hear from you.

It's so much easier to get in touch with your elected officials of all three parties here in the Legislature. We are available through email, through phone calls and through old-fashioned snail mail, and now, of course, we have social media. We all know there are the positives and negatives of social media. I think that a lot of what we're talking about today, in terms of bullying and in terms of violence—sometimes the worst bullying, if I can even go so far as to call it non-physical violence, is on our social media platforms.

We have to take the good with the bad sometimes in this world. I'm not a great believer in blocking anybody on social media. As long as somebody doesn't threaten violence of a physical nature, I try to put up with whatever I can possibly manage.

I'm really looking forward to celebrating a lot of successes with many of my colleagues here in the Legislature. I want to thank the member for Parkdale–High Park for all of her great work, and to congratulate her.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is truly a privilege for me to be able to rise today to speak to Bill 74, the Trans Day of Remembrance Act.

I want to start out by saying that I echo all of the accolades that have been expressed for the work of my colleague the member for Parkdale–High Park, and her unwavering commitment to advancing social justice, particularly to advance the rights of LGBTQ2 people in this province.

I also want to pay tribute to the member for Parkdale–High Park for another one of her initiatives, and that is Girls Government. She worked with Equal Voice to bring that program to MPPs in this Legislature. This year, my Girls Government group had a very thoughtful debate about the issue that they wanted to advance. One of the girls talked about gender stereotyping and the oppressiveness for young people who feel that if you're a girl, you're supposed to act this way, and if you're a boy, you're supposed to act that way, and what this does to a

young person when you're put into these very inflexible, rigid gender boxes.

Another one of the girls wants to deal with youth suicide prevention. During the debate that we had on the different issues that our government was going to look at, we settled on youth suicide prevention. The reason we did that is because these girls around the table were sharing stories of their friends who were struggling with gender stereotyping, who were in the body of a girl but their brain was telling them they were a boy. They knew the statistics about suicide rates of children who are forced into these non-binary identities and what this does to a young person. These girls want to make a difference. They want to advance policies and legislative changes that are going to make the world safe for all young people to feel that they can express the gender that they know they are.

That's why this bill, the Trans Day of Remembrance Act, is so important. We have to acknowledge the violence and the harm that is inflicted on people whose bodies do not match their gender identity. We have to honour and recognize the losses that we have all experienced in Ontario and around the world when people feel that they have no other option but to take their own lives. At the same time, we have to identify what we must do to advance this issue, move the issue forward, to make a province that is safe for everyone.

There was some research that was just done at Western University, and the main finding was, "People often think that it is being transgender itself that is causing suicidal thoughts or attempts, but it's not that simple. It's the social marginalization."

We need to work with our education system to make young people understand what being trans means and to become more accepting. We need to work with the business community. We need to work through our health system to make sure that the health services that trans people need are there and that they can access those services without fear of stigma or discrimination or rejection. We need to work with our legal system and our social services systems to make sure that we are inclusive and that we respect people's gender identity and gender expression and do not force people into feeling that they have to be who they are not.

I'm so glad to be able to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I, too, want to join my colleagues in wishing the member from Parkdale–High Park all the best in her life after politics. Her life has always included more than just being here day in and out and doing all the great work we've heard about. I've heard her on the radio.

I also think of Girls Government. In fact, just today I got an email from one of my staff who said that your staff, Cheri, have been so generous with their time, in making sure that we have all the information to carry on Girls Government after you leave this place. Before I speak about the bill, I'll just say that Girls Government

isn't a one-day event. This is a process that, I would say, takes the better part of the year, to engage young women and girls, to make sure they have time with their member of Parliament; that their issues come forward, as mentioned by the previous speaker; that they get to come to Queen's Park; and that they get their voices heard. I think it's a very unique program, and I want to thank you for bringing that program forward.

In terms of the bill, of course, Trans Day of Remembrance, I just saw on TV—was it just a week or two ago?—the Trans Day of Remembrance march that happened here in Toronto, which brought the necessary profile to this issue. It's very important.

I want to acknowledge the guests who are here today, for what you have done thus far and what you continue to do. You have a great advocate in MPP DiNovo, for sure.

I do want to pick up on what the member said about the work this government is doing to make sure that everyone in Ontario has a right to be recognized for who they are—not just who they want to be, but who they are—whether it was the action that was taken earlier for a different option on health cards and drivers' licences or the actions we are going to take on birth certificates no later than the spring of 2018. It's incredibly important that we do that and that hopefully all jurisdictions in Canada do that. A couple of small ones have done that, a couple of small jurisdictions, but I'm very hopeful, from what I've been hearing and learning, that other jurisdictions will continue with that.

1510

I would also say to the member—she doesn't bring one bill at a time. She really brings related bills together, and she has done an incredible job of advocating for the trans community, LGBTQ—I think of her when my daughter talks about the work she's doing in her placement at McMaster University in the Hamilton community for the LGBTQ+ communities. I think of you whenever my daughter tells me about the work she is doing in her placement, so I thank you.

If you haven't seen the member from Parkdale–High Park being interviewed by Steve Paikin several weeks ago on *The Agenda* talking about her career in this place, talking about the work she has done and, I would say, the co-operation, the leadership she has shown across all the parties, check out that episode of *The Agenda*. I believe it's online. She is very resolute and strong in terms of what needs to be done, and challenging, but she is very hopeful. That's what I got out of watching that. I watched that a few weeks ago.

You should be proud of the work you have done. You are leaving a legacy here that's going to inspire others. Of course, this bill, which recognizes the Trans Day of Remembrance, is a very important one: just another piece of great work that you have done for your community and the entire province.

I just want to say thank you, thank you, thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I will return to the member from Parkdale–High Park to wrap up.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Kingston and the Islands, Nepean–Carleton, Oshawa, Ottawa South,

Thornhill, London West and Minister, for your kind words and for your support for this bill.

Because of the work that many of us have done, but mainly because of the work of activists like those in our gallery, it is absolutely true that we live here in one of the most forward-thinking, safest places for people in the queer community. That's not the case in the rest of the world. There are 80 countries in this world where it's illegal to be queer, and 10 of those have the death penalty. So there is a lot of work to do internationally, which I'm also somewhat engaged in now.

We still need documentation. I listened to the minister. I'm happy that it's going to happen in the spring. We also need to have transition surgery and to have real medical care in this province for everyone so that trans folk don't have to go to Thailand or to Montreal even. We also need doctors to stop choosing the gender for intersex babies. We need that too.

Queen's Park is part of my parish. I'm just at Bloor and Spadina, and I will be back until all of those things get done; mark my words.

To my colleagues for all the kind words they've said—I have eight days left here, but who's counting?—I just want to say thank you for your co-operation. The world doesn't know how hard you work—trust me, I will let them know—and what you do on behalf of your constituents. All parties work so hard. We may disagree, but I take a great deal of respect for all of you with me as I walk out of this place. Remember, the only people who can fire you are your constituents, so have the strength of your convictions, stand on principle, and have some courage. And best of luck.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Housing should reverse the government's long-standing policy of denying provincial funding for rehabilitative capital repairs of municipal social housing, and immediately start funding at least one third of the cost of these capital repairs in partnership with municipalities and the federal government, with the goal of saving thousands of affordable homes at risk of closure.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm proud to stand today as the MPP for London—Fanshawe on behalf of my constituents on this very important issue of housing.

Before I begin, I would like, of course, to thank my Queen's Park staff, from research to communications, and Sarah McConnell in my Queen's Park office for working along with me on this motion.

We are asking the Minister of Housing to look at reversing the government's long-standing policy on re-

habilitative repairs that we need to have in social housing.

Housing is an issue throughout the province and, quite frankly, throughout our country, and it's not surprising. The federal government, just a few days ago, announced a national housing strategy. In London, it's not a new topic, and many people struggle with regard to housing.

I'd like to first share with you Carol Tysoe's story and her experience. She is a resident of London, and she went public recently. She's a 62-year-old woman, and she struggles to pay her rent. Carol has tried looking for a job, but as you can only imagine, she has faced difficulty finding employment. She said no one will hire her because of her age, and she won't be eligible for any seniors' benefits until another few years, so she struggles financially every day. She knows from the past what it's like to be homeless.

Having been homeless before, she explained that in order to keep her apartment as long as she can, she is on a strict budget. After she pays her rent, she only has \$130 left for the rest of the month. She has been living in her apartment for about three years, which she calls home. Her reality is that she will no longer be living in that apartment in less than a year. She says, "I don't know what I'm going to do." She has gone to drastic measures, and she has decided pretty much to stop eating. With only \$130 left after paying her rent for the entire month—\$130 doesn't go very far to buy food.

It's not just Carol; it's thousands of people who have been forced to choose between their health, by not eating or by not filling prescriptions—in order to have a roof over their head. These are decisions that Carol and others should not be forced to make. No one in Ontario should have to make that decision between paying the rent or buying groceries so they can eat. Stories like Carol's are the reason why it's important that we discuss the crucial role that social housing plays in our communities.

As MPPs, we are all here to support our constituents like Carol in our own respective ridings, and we strive to ensure that all Ontarians receive the basic necessities of life. One key principle for people living a healthy life is sustainable housing, and one way, as a province, that we can do that is to provide adequate social housing that offers individuals and families an affordable living space based on one's household gross monthly income.

Most social housing in Ontario was built between the 1960s and the 1990s through a combination of federal, provincial and joint federal-provincial cost-shared programs. Community groups also built non-profit and co-operative housing during the 1980s and 1990s, with more emphasis on smaller projects that included units with rent at market rates alongside those with rent geared to income. London has benefited from those initiatives.

We know that sufficient and affordable housing can also have a significant impact on the health and safety of those Ontarians who depend on subsidized housing for a place to call home, such as stability in their well-being, safety in the privacy of their homes, potential to maintain financial stability, ability to seek employment—and the list goes on.

As these units get older, it is also critical that social housing be maintained in good condition. During the summer, this government promised that the province would invest up to \$650 million for repairs and retrofits to social housing apartment buildings over five years. The investment is in place to help to improve the lives of low-income and vulnerable tenants, with upgrades to social housing buildings, such as new energy-efficient heating, improved insulation and window replacements.

Although it's a step in the right direction in fighting against climate change, there is a key piece of social housing that this investment overlooks. The investment applies only to energy-efficient retrofits for social housing, with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This program does not address the demands from municipalities for provincial funding for social housing repairs because this program does not apply to rehabilitative repairs of social housing and will not save homes at risk of closure due to disrepair, whether now or in the future.

1520

Repair backlog on these properties in some Ontario cities has risen so high that the investment is almost too late to change the outcome of those units. In London alone, in the next five to 10 years, there will be hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of repairs that must be completed in order that these buildings are safe and livable for individuals and families to reside in. With another recent announcement of the government's injection of \$1.3 million in the London region to lift people out of poverty, it seems that we will be taking a step in the right direction, and we're grateful for those investments.

We cannot forget, however, the role that social housing has and should continue to play in homelessness prevention and, as such, rehabilitative repairs for these houses must be recognized and fully funded appropriately. These buildings are aging and the demand for accommodations, programs and care is growing. With funding for new social housing development projects ending in 1995 under the NDP government, it is well overdue that this government look into expanding the investment toward social housing to include the repair backlog and new social housing development projects and supportive programs.

As the MPP for London—Fanshawe, it is clear and no surprise that social housing in London is in high demand. With 40% of Londoners as renters, a significant number of those are living in social housing. The current vacancy rate in London is 2.1%. Low vacancy and rising prices put an even greater pressure on social and affordable housing resources.

Recently, our leader, Andrea Horwath, MPP Peggy Sattler and myself met with London officials and the mayor, and this was one of the topics that London wanted to prioritize. They told us that there were severe issues with repair backlog in the social housing stock that the city is responsible for, and that they have alerted government officials about these concerns.

During the meeting, David Purdy, housing manager for the city of London, reported that based on condition assessments of 3,261 London and Middlesex Housing Corp. units, the budget for repair of London's stock of social housing is presently being managed. We also discussed the concern, though, with regard to social housing with respect to rehabilitative repair and the backlog that is coming. We know that most of the social housing was built in the 1950s and 1960s, which now means that the buildings are about 50 years old.

What city of London officials told us was that five years from now, London has estimated that the bill to repair the maintenance backlog—London will be facing an approximate \$230 million in repairs. Currently, we have to acknowledge that five years from now, we will be facing a repair crisis and that's just the London and Middlesex Housing Corp. units. If we don't do something about this, we're going to end up with a chronic issue of having homes in disrepair.

This is not just in London. These are issues in cities all across Ontario, which are expressing the same concerns. We need to plan now if people in the city of London and throughout Ontario are to remain supported by social housing.

Housing units managed by the LMHC represent approximately 3,300 units of a total of approximately 8,000 units in the housing system in the London community. Although the city is currently finalizing a building condition assessment study for the other social housing provider facilities, representing the remainder of the units in the city, it is reasonable to presume that there may be similar repair or renovation needs for the other social housing units in the next five years.

If London has assessed 3,300 homes, then it is reasonable to say that the other 5,000 housing units which they are also in the process of assessing will require the same investments, because several clusters of social housing developments were developed around the same time as those at the LMHC and therefore are aging and in need of repair and renewal.

Social housing providers have had to rely mainly on ad hoc provincial capital initiatives and use funding from limited capital reserves to complete much-needed capital repairs. Although social housing providers are required by the Housing Services Act to maintain fully funded capital reserves, and receive funding to do so, the anticipated costs of needed repairs are likely to exceed the amount of funding currently in the reserves.

Speaker, I have so much more to say, and I have to condense my remarks.

In London, we have a housing-first approach that offers permanent affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. On top of that, they provide supportive services and connections to community-based supports for people who need to keep their homes and avoid returning to homelessness. It's a great initiative. The housing-first approach takes into consideration many, many aspects when they acknowledge that the needs for people are not

just based on a home; they need to have information about food security, health care, employment, education, and support services when they are in crisis.

With the aging infrastructure in London—and many other cities, as well, are developing a plan for regeneration, which not only requires the support of the provincial government with infrastructure, but also supports toward accommodation strategies as homes are required. We all know that social housing impacts thousands of families and people, and as such, we simply cannot just let the units be shut down.

As noted by the Liberal government's Supportive Housing Policy Framework, the policy for supportive housing is as follows: "Every person in need has quality, safe and affordable supportive housing, feels empowered to live as independently as possible, and flourishes in the community of their choice." That's what that program says. If this government's vision is that, they are not meeting those goals. I ask this Liberal government to recognize the need that exists in our social housing and plan to budget for a funding increase towards mid-sized cities like London.

Just last week, the federal government announced a housing strategy, including their co-investment fund, which indicates that new social housing will be built if the provincial government agrees to partner with the fund. I hope I can hear that commitment from the government today. If this Liberal government is going to follow in their footsteps and wholly fund and support social housing in Ontario, that's what we want to know.

Again, the \$657 million towards social housing and fighting climate change is indeed important. However, the cities are telling us that they have solutions. With that being said, what our cities like London need is predictable, long-term funding that provides flexibility to access local priorities like rehabilitative repairs and restarting social housing development.

London and many other cities have explicitly told us what they need; it's time that we finally listen. The NDP believes that we should not lose any social housing units, as the demand for units is so high that we cannot afford to lose a single unit.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'll be sharing my time with the member for Trinity–Spadina.

I want to thank the member for London–Fanshawe for bringing this motion forward today to ensure that this House has a debate about housing, social housing and the province's approach to housing supply. It's a very timely debate to have, given last week was a much-awaited announcement for the national housing strategy. Many of us have been calling for a National Housing Strategy for a number of years. It was a key request from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and from mayors, reeves and others across the country, and certainly from provinces.

I'm very pleased to stand up and speak to the issue of the retrofit and repair of our social housing stock. It was my great privilege as a new Minister of Housing that one

of my first acts was to stand with Mayor Tory and announce \$657 million in social housing repair funds, money that would be distributed in communities across the province, and certainly a significant amount in Toronto to address the Toronto Community Housing Corp.'s housing repair backlog.

The source of those funds is through our cap-and-trade revenues, where we can take the monies for greenhouse gas emissions and invest them wisely in different communities for key needs. Certainly, the repair of social housing to ensure that leaky walls, leaky roofs, broken-down boilers, old windows and doors can be replaced to make those units safe, comfortable and secure, lower the operating costs of those units and ensure that those buildings can continue to be habitable for many years and decades to come is very important. But of course, you need a source of funding to pay for that. I might get into a little bit of that later as to what we've seen from others.

1530

But, Madam Speaker, we haven't just concentrated on this one particular program. We also have been investing in the SHAIP program, which is initiatives to fund social housing repairs and retrofit programs across the province—a separate pool of money that we've invested.

We're also investing in creating new homes for those who are in situations where either they are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless in various precarious housing situations.

Our government has invested \$200 million in our Home for Good program, which will ensure that we have homes being created throughout this province, with supports to assist people to get into a home and stay in that home, because their other needs are also being met.

All of these initiatives are part of what we're doing to support social housing and affordable housing throughout the province each and every day. We're currently spending over a billion dollars a year on these programs, and that amount is going to increase.

Last week, I was pleased to be able to be at Prime Minister Trudeau's announcement of the National Housing Strategy, a \$40-billion strategy countrywide to assist in the retention of our existing affordable housing stock; to create up to 100,000 new units of affordable housing; and bring in a national portable housing benefit.

The National Housing Strategy ties in perfectly with our Ontario Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy. It's going to help support us in the work that we are doing in communities across this province.

A key part of our negotiations with the federal government around the National Housing Strategy was to ensure that when the end-of-agreement funding—these are the funds that were going to the federally supported projects that were built 20, 30 or 40 years ago—when those agreements were coming to their end, the money that the federal government was contributing to those projects, to those buildings, would stay in place.

Madam Speaker, this was Ontario's number one concern, going into those negotiations. We knew that there would be money for new housing, but without protecting what we already have, it wouldn't be much of a strategy.

I was delighted to hear that we were successful in our advocacy with the federal government, and that 100% of the money that Ontario non-profits and co-ops have been receiving will continue to come to those non-profits and co-ops. That means that those older buildings will be able to reinvest in repairing and retrofitting their buildings. They'll be able to continue to invest in the rent-geared-to-income supports that they provide to the residents and that our existing stock of social housing is going to be protected.

But also with that strategy was funding to build new homes and support the construction of new homes—very, very important. The federal program is to support 100,000 new units across the country. Ontario will no doubt get its fair share of that. But that also supplements the work that we've been doing through our Fair Housing Plan, which focused on ensuring fairness, equity and opportunity for Ontarians and their housing needs.

We have introduced the concept that provincially owned surplus lands should be put to some social purpose. We have identified a number of sites already that are going to create up to 3,000 units of purpose-built rental and affordable housing.

Those are the three sites we've announced already. There are more in the pipeline, Madam Speaker.

Those kinds of initiatives, coupled with the National Housing Strategy, are going to make a serious dent in our challenge to create more housing supply, more rental supply and more affordable supply. That's very crucial, Madam Speaker, because we are investing in our existing stock of affordable housing, but we're also building more.

Another key initiative that we're pursuing—and again, I'm very pleased that the federal National Housing Strategy aligns perfectly with our own strategy—is around the portable housing benefit. The portable housing benefit is going to ensure that for those individuals who find themselves sometimes in the most precarious and the most vulnerable situations, we will be able to provide them with housing when and where they need it: victims of domestic violence, victims of human trafficking, individuals with mental health needs, individuals with certain developmental disabilities. We will be in a position to provide them with housing when and where they need it, in the community of their choice, and in many cases with the supports that they also need—also a very important part of the puzzle.

As I stood side by side with the Prime Minister and Mayor Tory and Councillor Ana Bailão last week, that announcement was in the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood of Toronto, which is not unlike other neighbourhoods that were developed in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s with social housing. There is a need to take those communities and reinvest in them, to take the old housing stock and, in some cases, refurbish and retrofit what exists, and, in many cases, take the amount of land that is there and create new housing, replace the old housing stock and add more housing to build up those communities. Between our initiatives and the National Housing Strategy, I'm pleased to tell this House we are now in a

position to be able to do much more of that across this province.

I thank the member from London–Fanshawe for this motion. We agree: We need to be supporting our housing. We can't afford to have a party that has a plan that is silent on housing policy—as the Progressive Conservative Party is. Their policy is silent on housing. Our policy is not just policy; it is action.

I welcome the opportunity that I've had to discuss that today, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to add my voice to the motion put forward by the member from London–Fanshawe. I support this motion to ensure that there are repairs made to municipal social housing to help provide a safe and affordable home for the most vulnerable in our population.

As I have spoken about many times in this Legislature, there is a housing crisis in this province, and it continues to get worse. Currently, there are over 171,000 families on the waiting list for affordable housing in Ontario, and every year, the list grows longer.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. recently released its annual report, which said that rental costs have been going up, with the average two-bedroom apartment costing \$1,404 per month in Toronto. At the same time, the greater Toronto area's vacancy rate has dropped to only 1.1%.

The Ontario Association of Food Banks' recent report also highlighted the need for more affordable housing, with Daily Bread Food Bank users spending 70% of their income on housing. Provincially, more than 45% of food bank clients have less than \$100 left each month after paying their basic expenses, like housing, forcing them to cut costs of other essentials, like food and transportation.

According to Toronto's social housing waiting lists report, so far this year, there are 90,141 families waiting for social housing to become available. This means that to clear the wait-list, the TCHC would require almost double the amount of units it currently has. Unfortunately, rather than adding new units, the TCHC is being forced to close units that are in desperate need of repairs. It's cheaper to repair existing units than to build new ones, but the longer we put that off, the more expensive they become.

When our leader, Patrick Brown, sat with Toronto mayor John Tory earlier this year, they talked about social housing. Patrick said that a PC government would be a partner that Toronto can depend on, adding: "Toronto needs a partner they can trust and rely on. Who honours commitments that have been made."

We need to address the housing supply and ensure that low-income Ontarians are able to access the housing they need. As part of our platform, the People's Guarantee, we put forward a number of policies to help increase the housing supply, including affordable housing, and to reduce the waste and mismanagement of social housing dollars.

Some of these commitments include using the air rights over GO and provincial transit stations to increase housing supply or to make it available to municipalities to build more affordable housing.

We would also review the province's real estate portfolio to increase housing supply or municipally led affordable housing. As we know from the government documents, there is housing that is sitting vacant, housing that could be used to reduce the long waiting lists for affordable housing and reduce the pressure on existing resources.

A PC government would also allow housing providers to opt out of the Housing Services Corp.—something that I have been advocating for as the PC housing critic for some time.

1540

As you know, Madam Speaker, the waste and mismanagement of social housing dollars is an issue I have continually raised in the Legislature. When looking at the spending of the Housing Services Corp., which is responsible for providing natural gas and insurance on social housing units, I found they were overcharging housing providers for their services and spending money on vacations in Europe and South Africa, luxury dinners with expensive bottles of wine, and an executive who was being paid for two full-time jobs at the same time.

I put forward a private member's bill, the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act, to address this wasteful spending. This act would give housing providers the ability to choose where they purchase natural gas and insurance, and ensure that it is at the best price, whether the price is through the Housing Services Corp., a partnership with their municipality through AMO, or directly from service providers.

We need to ensure that housing providers aren't wasting scarce resource dollars on paying too much for services our social housing units require. We need to ensure that housing money is used appropriately to have the greatest impact. Madam Speaker, if we were to make this kind of change, the Toronto Community Housing Corp. could save \$6.3 million in one year alone, money that could be used to help pay for the repairs that their units require or to help purchase new units.

We also need to ensure that our housing policies are helping to develop new affordable housing rather than hurting it. We need to give municipalities the tools and resources required to increase housing, and allow them to build the housing that works best for their communities. We need new resources to help solve the affordable housing problem rather than just continue to announce new funding.

Madam Speaker, we need to ensure that there is a solution that works for all types of housing to meet the needs of Ontarians. I support this motion to help create more affordable housing in Ontario by repairing existing units. But it is only one part of the solution for Ontario's housing problem.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Windsor—Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker, and good afternoon to you.

This motion was put in front of us by my friend and colleague from London—Fanshawe, Ms. Armstrong. It calls on the Liberal government to spend more money on repairing the social housing units in Ontario. I think, as the member from Oxford just said, we can all agree that we have a housing crisis in this province. In fact, there is a crisis in affordable housing right across our great country.

Here in Toronto, as I understand it, the city's social services department oversees more than 93,000 units of social housing. Across the province, I understand that there are 170,000 people on a waiting list for affordable housing. The food banks in this province provided support to half a million men, women and children last year; in fact, one third of those clients were children.

The latest Hunger Report tells us that those with limited income are spending way too much money on their rent, and so, in growing numbers, they rely on our local food banks. Finding an affordable place to live is becoming more and more difficult for many of our citizens. I think a one-bedroom apartment in Ontario, on average, goes for \$972 a month these days. If you're a single person on Ontario Works, you simply can't afford that. You would have less than \$30 a month left over with which to pay the rest of your bills and put food on the table.

The Hunger Report tells us that in my community of Windsor, we have more than 22,000 clients visiting our food banks. That's 10% of the population. If there's good news in there, it's that our average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Windsor is \$706, compared to that Ontario average of \$972.

So let's take a minute to look at the Windsor Essex Community Housing Corp. It's just one of 34 social housing providers in Windsor and Essex county, yet the CHC provides 54% of all social housing in my region. In total, counting all of the units from all of the providers, we have more than 8,700 subsidized housing units, with a waiting list of 3,800 people. Out of that mix, our city-run community housing provider is Ontario's fifth-largest provider of such services. They have more than 4,200 units in the city and nearly 500 out in Essex county, and when it comes to rent geared to income, the CHC has nearly 3,900 units while more than 800 are there for market rent and those in the affordable-income bracket. I used to be on the board of directors there, Speaker, when I was a city councillor.

Despite having more than 4,700 units available, there were still more than 3,000 households on the waiting list to get in, and don't forget that 3,800-person waiting list for all available units, out of the total of 8,750.

It might take four and a half years if you're part of a large family and need a four-bedroom home. The wait for a one-bedroom is more than two years, but you may be able to get into a bachelor apartment within 18 months.

Now let's look at the shape these units are in.

Don't forget that our friends, the Conservatives, downloaded social housing onto the municipal books

nearly 20 years ago, with absolutely no money to pay for the maintenance and upkeep. Of course, that was compounded when, a few years ago, the Wynne Liberals cut the \$129 million a year that used to help pay for housing programs. But that's another story for another day.

Much of Windsor's social housing stock is 40 to 50 years old. The property management department issued more than 18,000 work orders last year, Speaker—18,342 orders for maintenance and repair. Those work orders are over and above the work that is required to be done under the capital or asset management portfolios.

We were talking about social housing in the city of Toronto earlier. They're in much worse shape. A few months ago at the CBC, there was a story stating that without major new investments, one half of Toronto Community Housing buildings will be in a critical state within the next five years. Thirty are already in serious disrepair. Hundreds of units were closed this year, and another 1,000 could be shuttered by this time next year, unless the money is found somewhere.

I know that my friend the housing minister re-announced some funding potential back in August—and thank you—but that money has a hook. It's supposed to be used for energy retrofits and perhaps won't do a whole lot for the \$2.6 billion that's needed by the city of Toronto to make the necessary repairs on its social housing units. I know that my leader, Andrea Horwath, the member from Hamilton Centre, has promised to pay Ontario's share of one third of that cost, and says that will be honoured if we have the opportunity of forming a government next June. We will pay one third of all the costs of renovations needed for social housing in Ontario. I haven't heard boo on that from the leaders of the other parties.

I know that in Windsor, we're hoping to get about 3.2% of any funding for retrofits. It may not sound like a lot, but it works out to about \$4 million a year. I must say, our mayor says we could use 10 years to get caught up and \$9 million a year to do it.

I just want to say in closing that Windsor social housing needs \$100 million in repairs and capital improvements. Spread it out over 10 years, and that's one heck of an unfunded capital liability. So much time and money is spent just protecting the properties now from further deterioration that there's no time or money left for quality-of-life upgrades. That's why this motion is so important to my community.

Thank you very much for your time this afternoon, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Han Dong: It's my pleasure to debate this motion brought forward by the member from London–Fanshawe.

I was listening to the members opposite when they talked about this motion. The member from Oxford said that there is a crisis in housing affordability in this province. But he went on to talk about, and referred to, some numbers in the hundred thousands and maybe a couple of million dollars to resolve the situation.

Here on this side, we think the problem needs real action. That's why the government has been spending over \$1 billion a year on various housing affordability programs.

I want to go back to what the minister was talking about—committing \$657 million in five years to help social housing become more energy-efficient.

Over the weekend, I was canvassing and talking to residents in social housing projects about this plan. They love it, because they know that's going to drive down their energy costs. They recognize that energy costs was one of the bigger items of expenditure over the years, but they said that this summer they noticed it's been going down. With this plan, going forward, it's going to make it even less—what they have to pay for hydro, for example.

1550

The other thing it does is it actually frees up funds for social housing projects so they can use the money to fix something else. I talk to residents from TCHC properties on a regular basis. One of the biggest items they bring forward to me, especially the seniors, is the elevators, because every time they go out—and they go out quite frequently—they have wait for a long time for them to be repaired. Some of these elevators are over 25 years of age or more. So what this does is it actually frees up money so some of these buildings can start to invest in maybe fixing up their elevators.

It's only possible because of the proceeds that we get from cap-and-trade. The party opposite, the PC Party, has promised to cut the cap-and-trade system. With that, the proceeds will no longer be available to fund programs like this.

Very quickly: They did not mention anything about housing in their People Magazine. That is putting all the affordable housing projects that we are proposing, and that we are implementing, at serious risk.

I look forward to their support on this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to join the debate to discuss the member from London–Fanshawe's motion. The motion is timely, Speaker. As previous speakers before me indicated, the federal government announced its National Housing Strategy, which would be implemented in 2019 and 2020.

A feature of that strategy, Speaker, is a new housing fund which will include the provision of low-cost loans for social housing repair, renewal and new development. However, in the news release that was issued by the federal government, it's very unclear what specific assistance would be allocated to the province, with the details left to be worked out. It's important that municipalities and their residents receive clarity on this issue from either the federal or Liberal government as affordable housing needs in maintenance and repair continue to grow.

It grows in the region of Durham and it certainly grows in the town of Whitby. The region of Durham, through its At Home in Durham housing plan, has allocated \$5.5 million, under the Social Infrastructure

Fund and the Social Housing Improvement Program, for critical repair and renovation work at 14 social housing projects, including the two Durham local housing corporations, which I was the president of whilst a regional councillor for two years.

What's clear, through the work that the region of Durham is doing, is that government at all levels should take into consideration other options to strengthen the social housing sector. These should include:

- development of a policy to sustain the social housing supply post-expiration of operating agreements and mortgage maturity;

- the development of long-term, asset-management and financial strategies;

- the completion of building condition assessments for all social housing, with a view to helping housing providers in understanding the role of these assessments and their value in long-term capital planning; and

- the provision of supports to the volunteer boards of directors of non-profit and co-operative housing providers to strengthen their capacity to effectively manage their housing communities and to develop long-term asset-management and financial strategies.

Speaker, asset management—out of my experience, again, as the president of the Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corp.—is an absolutely critical concern for all local housing corporations, no matter what structure they operate under. Speaker, most local housing corporation housing stock was built prior to the 1970s, and much of it has reached, or is fast approaching, the end of its useful lifetime. These buildings represent decades of public investment. They have provided thousands of low- to mid-income Ontarians with safe and affordable housing, so it's vitally important that these assets are preserved and maintained for future generations.

While municipally owned social housing infrastructure is usually incorporated into the municipal plans of those areas operating internal local housing corporations, this is not regularly the case. Social housing is a vital part of municipal infrastructure, and the province must take additional measures to ensure that municipalities are supported in their ability to maintain these assets.

In its effort to address the many challenges of housing, including the maintenance of its existing social housing stock in the region of Durham—which is quite expansive, Speaker—the region of Durham struck an Affordable and Seniors' Housing Task Force. This task force made 34 recommendations focused on those actions that could be taken by the regional municipality of Durham directly. And—this is very important—they also identified a number of supplementary actions that partners, other levels of government, would be encouraged to embrace, as no single organization can address these challenges alone.

Ultimately, the success of meeting the needs of residents we serve related to housing, in particular the rehabilitative capital repairs of municipal social housing, is contingent on the strength and commitment of housing partners, all of whom have a unique role to play, whether they be federal or provincial governments, upper-tier

governments, area municipalities and community partners, including non-profit agencies and non-profit and co-operative housing providers.

My sincere hope is that by supporting the resolution before us today, we will be able to extend the long-term sustainability of the existing social housing stock, better the health and safety of tenants, and provide service optimization and program continuity of social housing sites throughout the province.

All Ontarians deserve housing that is safe and adequate. We need to work together toward that common goal, Speaker.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on this motion. I look forward to supporting it when the vote is called.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion. Just to remind those who were perhaps focusing on other things when this motion was introduced, it is:

“That, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Housing should reverse the government's long-standing policy of denying provincial funding for rehabilitative capital repairs of municipal social housing and immediately start funding at least one third of the cost of these capital repairs in partnership with municipalities and the federal government, with the goal of saving thousands of affordable homes at risk of closure.”

I want to thank the member from London–Fanshawe for bringing this forward. I know that she has talked in some detail about the impact on her city, the city of London, of this lack of funds and the ongoing reduction in the availability of social housing stock.

Speaker, you are well aware, because you have lived in Toronto–Danforth, of the population that lives there: people who I increasingly see coming into my office who are on the verge of retirement, and realizing that their retirement incomes are in no way going to be able to pay the rents that they have to pay for a unit that's now going for \$1,000 or \$1,200 a month. They desperately need to move into social housing, and they want to stay in the neighbourhood that they have lived in, in many cases, for quite literally decades.

I have to say to them, “You have to put your name on the waiting list if you want social housing, and your chances of getting anything within a decade or a decade and a half are not great. You are probably going to have at least 15 years before you can get into any housing,” which is a total shock to them, Speaker, because they have an understanding that social housing exists, but they don't understand the perilous financial state that we are facing here.

I'll talk about Toronto, but my colleagues have spoken about Windsor and London and spoken well. The problems are similar. The numbers are a bit different, but the fundamental quandary is the same.

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Speaker, the member from Oxford said that in order to meet the 180,000-person waiting list, Toronto Commu-

ity Housing would have to more than double its portfolio, and he's right.

We're in a situation in Toronto where we've seen an ongoing retreat of this Liberal provincial government from putting funding into housing. In 2015, the province cut \$150 million that had previously gone to the city of Toronto to help with its social housing, and that was not the only time there had been a cut. That cut had been in the budget for a number of years running. So the city of Toronto, which has a very large population of people in social housing and a very long list of people waiting to get into that housing, has been seeing a decrease in the funds available.

As some of my colleagues have mentioned, and as the Toronto Star reported last year, the city of Toronto wants to spend \$2.6 billion over 10 years to deal with repairs needed to keep units open. They have been willing to put in a third of it themselves, and they asked for a third from the federal government and a third from the provincial government. I'm not going to talk about the federal government today. This provincial government has not stepped up, has not put the money in, and that is a consequential decision.

The city of Toronto needs to spend \$350 million for repairs in 2018 to keep units open. If it doesn't spend that money, it will close 600 units, just as in 2017 it's closing 400 units. That's a thousand units of housing desperately needed and lost because money is not being put in for repairs.

When the Conservatives downloaded housing, they paid no attention to the real costs that cities could not absorb. Property taxes were never meant to be a wealth transfer, an income transfer or an equalization mechanism. They were meant to provide fundamental, basic services like roads, police, fire etc. The federal government and the provincial government have largely abandoned this field, and because of the pressures on municipal governments, they have not been able to carry that burden.

So the city of Toronto is looking at boarding up 7,500 homes over the next number of years, even in a situation where the demand for social housing continues to grow, even in a situation where we have unmanageable wait-lists—lists that are so daunting to many who come into my office when I tell them what the numbers are. Many of them realize very quickly that they will be dead before they are ever offered a unit, and certainly dead before they're ever offered a unit in the community they've lived most of their lives in.

Speaker, this is something that the province can correct. It is something that the province should correct. The member for London–Fanshawe has hit the nail on the head with her motion. This is something the province should be doing, so that people can live decent lives and so the city of Toronto and other cities have the support that they need.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from London–Fanshawe to wrap up.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Housing and minister responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as the members from Oxford, Trinity–Spadina, Windsor–Tecumseh, Whitby–Oshawa and Toronto–Danforth.

I think we all agree that we need to do better when it comes to social housing. Again, the motion that I brought forward specifically talks about repairs and rehabilitative costs happening in social housing. I know the government announced their original funding proposal in 2016, and they reannounced it in August 2017, but the thrust of their funding in social housing is truly to help with energy-efficient retrofits, not the rehabilitative repairs that are needed in social housing.

The members talked about their issues in social housing. So you see, Speaker, it's spread throughout the province; it's not just in London. It's coming to a critical point, where we need to do something and actually look for ways to invest in that, because as the member from Toronto–Danforth said, these places will be shuttered.

In the city of London, we released a report on October 31, 2017, and it states that there are 3,400 people and families on the waiting list for social housing. The wait-list for that is such that they triage people when they're on a wait-list. Of course, they have people who are fleeing abuse, and it's a three-to-six-month wait-list. It's one to two years for people who have urgent status. Then applicants with high needs are three to eight years, for people who are on a chronological list.

So you see there is great need. We need to do better when it comes to social housing. We have to keep what we have repaired and rehabilitated, but we also need to plan for the future and build more social housing to accommodate the needs of our communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

LONG-TERM CARE

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will first deal with ballot item number 16, standing in the name of Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Pettapiece has moved private member's notice of motion number 68. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried." Congratulations.

Motion agreed to.

TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA JOURNÉE DU SOUVENIR TRANS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. DiNovo has moved second reading of Bill 74, An Act to proclaim the Trans Day of Remembrance. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member to identify a standing committee that the bill is going to be referred to.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Social policy, thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? I hear "agreed." Congratulations.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Armstrong has moved private member's notice of motion number 75. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to recognize the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Madam Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the meeting schedule for the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the meeting schedule for the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Agreed? I hear "agreed."

I recognize the minister.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I move that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, on Thursday, December 14, 2017, for the purpose of conducting pre-budget consultations; and

That during the winter adjournment, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to five days for the purpose of conducting pre-budget consultations and for up to three days for the purpose of report writing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The minister has moved that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I hear "dispense." All right? Okay, dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

The House will be adjourned until Monday, December 4, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1608.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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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

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Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
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Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	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	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	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	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	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	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	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	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	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	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	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	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	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	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	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
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	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	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	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
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of 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	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	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 Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	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	
Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB)	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) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC) Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	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
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	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	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	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	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	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
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	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	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	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	

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Soo Wong
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Soo Wong
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Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod
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Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio
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Harinder Malhi, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Peter Tabuns
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley