

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 35

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 35

1st Session
42nd Parliament
Tuesday
16 October 2018

1^{re} session
42^e législature
Mardi
16 octobre 2018

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

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111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 16 October 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 16 octobre 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us pause for a moment of silence for personal thought and reflection.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House, when the order of the day is called for resuming the adjourned debate on the amendment to the amendment to government order number 4, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the amendment to the amendment, and the amendment to the motion (as amended, if applicable), which questions shall be decided without further debate or amendment; and

That, except in the case of a recorded division arising from morning orders of the day pursuant to standing order 9(c), no deferral of the vote on the amendment to the amendment or the amendment to the motion (as amended, if applicable), shall be permitted; and

That, in the case of any division on the amendment to the amendment, and the amendment to the motion (as amended, if applicable), the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, has moved government notice of motion number 11.

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Dispense. Further debate.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It appears the government can't even defend its own time allocation motion.

Hon. Todd Smith: I'm just tired because—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, you're just tired. Okay.

Listen, I take no pleasure in getting up on these types of motions. For those who are wondering what we are debating about—amendments to amendments—this has to do with a motion that the government brought to the floor that changes the standing orders in a way that gives the government even more power than it currently has in our standing orders. I think that's really a step in the wrong direction.

What members, especially those members who are here for the first time, wouldn't know, because they don't have

the experience, is that this place worked absolutely okay with the old standing orders that we used to have way back when, when the opposition had some ability to hold the government to account. The government always got its way at the end because that's the way the parliamentary system works. But there had to be some give and some take on the part of the opposition and the government to allow legislation to go forward.

A good example is that we're going to be greeting Mr. McMurtry, a prominent Conservative, we all know, who was part of Bill Davis's cabinet back in the 1970s and early 1980s. The then Attorney General, Mr. McMurtry, would know that in this place, with the rules that existed in the day, there were all kinds of opportunities for the opposition to hold a government to account and slow them down. But the opposition, no matter who it was, never tried to sabotage the government with the use of those rules. In fact, the opposition would use them to great effect in order to be sure that whatever legislation they put forward, in fact, there was respect for the people of Ontario by making sure that there would be some public hearings when it came to the legislation that was put before us.

This had two or three effects. The first thing is that it made for better legislation. If you take the time with bills to put them into committee and engage with the citizenry in order to hear what they have to say about your legislation—for example, the government just did the cannabis bill where there were two days of hearings here in Toronto. Back in the day, there were far more than just two days of hearings. You would have probably had at least four to five days of hearings in Toronto, and you would have had a week or two weeks of hearings on the road in Ontario somewhere. That allowed people in places like Thunder Bay or Cornwall or wherever it might be to come before the committee to say what they thought. What always happened in those cases: The government would hear things and the opposition would hear things that allowed the legislation to be amended so that in the end you made better legislation.

I think that's the ultimate goal of what committees should be all about. It should be about making sure—not just about getting the government's agenda through, but doing that in a way that gives some respect to the people out there, the voters and those interested in the legislation, and to hear what people have to say so that we can strengthen legislation and, if there are problems that were unforeseen in the drafting of the legislation, you could amend it by way of comments that you get from people who come before the committee. That's the obvious thing that was a positive for allowing that type of activity to take place when it came to committee hearings.

The other thing is that it forced the parties to work together, and it wasn't just the Premier's office deciding what the business of the day of the House was and what we, as members, should do. There was a far stronger independence on the part of individual members in the House to be able to affect decisions that this House made.

That's what this Legislature should be all about. We all get elected in our individual ridings. Yeah, everybody understands one is a Conservative and the other is a New Democrat, so therefore we're going to have particular views on certain issues—that's fair and that's democracy; we align ourselves according to parties—but if you don't give individual members the ability to, at times, hold their own government to account, or the opposition members to hold the government to account, or his or her own party, I think that, again, weakens democracy.

There are all kinds of examples in this Legislature over the years where individual members, both within government and outside of government on the opposition bench, were unhappy with particular pieces of legislation and had an effect by being able to utilize the rules in a way that allowed that member to exercise some ability to amend what the government was doing.

I'll give you one recent example. We just went through Bill 5, where the government brought it back and wanted to do the "notwithstanding" clause. I'm willing to bet there were all kinds of members on the government side who didn't like that. I would just bet, because the odds are—just because you're a Conservative doesn't mean to say that you believe in the "notwithstanding" clause and the use of the "notwithstanding" clause. In fact, we know that Mr. Mulroney, who was the Prime Minister of Canada, spent a large part of his premiership trying to get rid of the "notwithstanding" clause, so we certainly know there are Conservatives out there who don't like the idea of the "notwithstanding" clause for a whole host of reasons.

Well, in the Legislature that we used to have before all the standing orders were changed, members on the government side who had problems with that legislation would have been much better able to push back at the government that they felt strongly against it. A member could have said, "Listen, not only am I not going to vote for it, but I may very well get up and speak at some length on that legislation in debate, and you're not going to like what I have to say." Of course, the Premier of the day would have to take that into account, and that would measure what the Premier does or doesn't do when it comes to something like a "notwithstanding" clause.

In today's rules, especially with the changes that we're making today, all of the power is vested in the office of the Premier, and that is a disservice to the people of Ontario and I think a disservice to members. Because, yes, the premiership is an important position within our parliamentary system. I don't think anybody would argue that a Premier should be without power, but I think there have to be limits to power, and that's what the British parliamentary system was all about: It was about making sure that we put in check the power of the King or Queen, when we used to have that type of government where it was essentially the monarch who made all the decisions. Eventually,

when the House of Commons started to take form in the way that we know it now—because the House of Commons has been around for a long time; way before the Glorious Revolution of the early 1700s. The House of Commons existed way back when, and it served a purpose on a number of occasions of great note to the history of Great Britain and of parliamentary democracy overall.

0910

After the Glorious Revolution, when we went to a responsible style of government with a Premier—or a Prime Minister, in England—and a cabinet, there were checks and balances that were put on the cabinet and were put on the Prime Minister. Why? Because when you change the power from the power of the King and you put it in the hands of the Prime Minister and you give them the same power, well, it's still essentially a King except that you elect this one every four years.

So I think it's important in a parliamentary system that we have checks and balances on the Premier and the cabinet. I expect that the government, once they put proposals forward—if they're sound proposals—they should pass and will pass because of the rules of the House and how Parliament was designed. But there was an ability to hold them to account.

I can tell you that as a member of government back in the early 1990s, under the old rules there were times when we had debates in our own caucus about where members were on particular legislation and about what members were prepared to do when it came to that particular legislation. I will hearken back on one.

There was a member—I have to use the name because I don't remember the riding. I won't even say the name, because it wouldn't be fair. You're not allowed to do that. But there were a few members of our caucus who had a very different opinion on the creation of casinos. I personally thought it was a good idea. I didn't have a problem with casinos. I sort of equated that people gamble, people go to Las Vegas and people go to Kuwait and they go to different places. So what? We have a casino in Windsor and a casino in Orillia. As long as it's properly regulated and we do the proper things to guard against some of the problems that casinos cause, why not have them in Ontario? That's something that would be good for Ontarians and certainly good for the treasury.

We had members who were opposed to it. So this particular member—I wish I could remember the riding. It's terrible; I can't remember the name of the riding. It was up in central Ontario. He had a great objection to it on the basis of his own experiences and who he was and what he did for a living. He came to caucus and said, "I will get up in the House and I will rail against this, both publicly and in the House, if the government goes forward." So the Premier of the day, Mr. Rae, had a decision to make. On balance, the caucus was okay with it. There were only one or two members that were offside. So he decided to allow that person to have their say, and that would be that. But that member had the ability to speak to the views that he had, that he thought he represented: people in the province who were opposed, for a host of reasons.

At the end of the day, the legislation passed. But what that did do was cause the government to take pause and to make some things to strengthen the casino legislation in order to take into account some of the things that this gentleman was putting forward. I think that was a good use of the rules.

In the case of the “notwithstanding” clause, I believe there would have been members on the government side that would have said to the Premier of the day, Mr. Ford, “Listen, if you go forward with this, I will speak at length on this particular issue and I will put on the record what I think is wrong with using the ‘notwithstanding’ clause.” I’m sure as heck that there are Conservative members over there who would have rather not voted for the “notwithstanding” clause, should they have been put in that position, than vote for it. I know because I sat in government; I understand the dynamics of that. But because of our system as it is now, individual members don’t have the ability to do that, because all of the power rests in the office of the Prime Minister or the Premier. I think that’s wrong.

I think a good parliamentary system, a good system of government, is one where you don’t entrust all of the power in one office, where in fact the power is shared in a way that makes some sense. That’s what the House is all about. Our main function is to do what? It’s to appropriate dollars to the cabinet in order to run the province and to make sure that the money being spent is wisely spent by the processes that we have both within the House and within committee. But the other one is to deal with on-going legislation that goes through the House and to represent our constituents and our political views and our personal views when it comes to that legislation.

Each time that the government comes to this House with legislation—not legislation; in this case, motions, in order to restrict the power of the House by what you’re doing today—you’re not doing a huge amount of changes, but still there are changes that will give more power to the Premier and less power to you as individual members of the government, and certainly less power to the opposition—the further you strengthen the office of the Premier and the more you diminish the importance of this House and, I believe, the importance that the public puts on us when they vote for us in elections.

How many times have we all heard it? We go knocking on doors, or we go to malls, or we go to public events during an election, and they say, “You know, I want somebody who is going to go there and is not just going to be following the party line. I want to make sure that, yes, you’re a New Democrat or a Conservative, and therefore you believe in certain things, and I get that.” But people expect us to also speak our minds and to try to represent, as best as we can, the views of our constituents. This type of change to the standing orders makes that harder and harder to do. I just think, Mr. Speaker, it’s wrong for the government to go in this direction.

I understand why new members of this House would support what you’re supporting now. I’ve done it. Listen, I was in government when there were rule changes, and as

a government member, I voted for them. I didn’t know any better. I was a brand new member. I had been in this House for two or three years. My government House leader, along with other people, came to me and said, “Here are all of the reasons that we’re going to do this, because we are trying to pass whatever. We got elected by the people, and we have the right to do it, and that’s why we need to do this. We need to change the standing orders.” I didn’t know any better. I just went along.

But it took me a while to figure out that that was a dis-service. That was the wrong thing to do. Governments should not be utilizing the standing orders, and changing them, in order to strengthen the power of the Premier. The standing orders should be about members of the House being able to do their jobs—yes, with the government, at the end, getting what it needs as far as legislation goes. The basic principle of Parliament is that government ‘proposes; opposition proposes and opposes; and the government, at the end, gets their way. You get to make the decision about what goes in legislation and when it’s passed. And it will pass in the end.

But weakening the standings orders, I think, is a very, very bad thing to do, especially today. If you look at the public—the public is pretty disconnected, to a certain extent, but disenchanted with politicians and government overall. I could have a whole speech on that, about how the right wing has been very effective at demonizing politicians and government, for its own reasons. By demonizing politicians and government—the public looks at those institutions and says they’re no good. Then they can rail against it and they can diminish the size of government, which allows them to get to where they want, which is a more libertarian approach to non-government and just the private sector doing what it has to do and individuals doing what they have to do. Certainly, in that system, there are some people who do well; there’s no argument. There are certain people who, with their ability, who they’re born to, how much money they’ve got and what their connections are, will do really well in that type of system. But for the average citizen, that’s not the case.

But back to the motion, Speaker: What this does, when the government goes down this way, is reinforce in the minds of the public that all governments are the same, that they’re really worried about their self-interest. That’s the danger in what the government is doing, and that the government members are taking, when they vote for a motion such as this that further concentrates the power in the office of the Premier.

Should the Premier have the ability to lead the province and do what has to be done? Absolutely, but that should be done through his cabinet, through his caucus and through this House.

All of us were elected. The Premier didn’t get a super-election where he, in his riding, is more important than any individual member of this House. All of us, as members, bring a perspective, and we have a responsibility to represent the people who voted for us.

I think—and this is my wish—that if we were really serious about wanting to find a way to re-engage the public

and to give people faith in this House, one of the things the government could do is refer the standing orders to a committee, the Legislative Assembly committee, and actually look at turning the standing orders back to what they were pre-1987, because that's where everything really started to accelerate when it comes to the change of the standing orders. They started changing under David Peterson and they have been changing ever since. I think that was a mistake, and I think we should trust that the British parliamentary system was designed in such a way to allow us, as a Legislature, to make decisions that are sound decisions for the public and decisions that we can feel good about standing behind.

0920

The opposition, as you know, often will vote with the government on issues. For example, the Conservatives, while they were in opposition to the Liberals, voted 50% of the time for government initiatives. I get a kick out of the Conservatives. They're a little bit like Donald Trump: They have revisionist history when it comes to what the voting record was. They say, "Oh, you voted with the government 97% of the time." No, actually, if you go back and look at the last Parliament, the Conservatives voted for the government 49% of the time. We voted for the government 53% of the time—virtually tied.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: There were 49% for the government, and 53% for the NDP. Why? Because there are certain bills that you can support. There are certain bills that we're going to be able to support when it comes to this government. This is the way the place is supposed to work. It's supposed to be that the government proposes legislation, individual members propose legislation by way of private members' bills, and opposition parties propose ideas. Then the government goes out and decides how they're going to react to that.

A good example of that is what happened with pharmacare—or what didn't happen with pharmacare. Andrea Horwath and New Democrats worked hard and put together a proposal with our good friend the health critic of the day, who is the health critic today, the member for Nickel Belt. They put together a pharmacare program that finally did what Tommy Douglas asked to happen when we created a public health system here in Ontario and across Canada, starting in Saskatchewan, and that was to make sure that drugs were covered by the public health care system. We put together a position that put some pressure on the government, and the government recognized that they had a problem, so they did the program for those over 65 and for those under 25, but the rest of the public were not covered. So the opposition did manage to affect the government in a way that did things that the opposition thought were, at least, a step in the right direction.

Would I have done it the way that the Liberals did? Absolutely not. New Democrats would have done it differently. In the end, it would have been a savings to the health care budget, because if people take their meds, they don't get as sick. They are not in hospitals as often. They are not queuing up at the emergency ward etc.

Back to the standing orders: By having standing orders that are harsher and consolidate power in the office of the Premier, you are in a situation where, in the end, it doesn't serve this House and it doesn't serve the members well.

I know that there are other members in our caucus who want to speak to this. With that, I would say to Mr. Speaker that I look forward to what the government has to say in response to what I just said, and I certainly look forward to what is going to be said by other members of this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: This morning we're talking about a time allocation motion. Just to put it on the record, time allocation means that the government doesn't want us to talk about the issue any more. They want to close debate. The issue that we would like to talk about, and that the government doesn't want to talk about any more, is changes to the standing orders. "Standing orders" is a fancy name that means "the rules under which we can conduct business."

Everybody knows that the Legislative Assembly represents all of Ontario. There are 124 of us; we represent every single area of our province. We come together to make the best decisions possible so that Ontario can prosper and a family can live a safe and fulfilling life. We try our best to make our province as good as it can be. In order to do this, we put in rules about what you can say and not say, how can you move things forward and who can do what. This is all fine. Those are the rules of the House so that we, as a group, can achieve our purpose to make our province as great as it can be.

But over the years, and now in this particular debate, the government has brought in changes to the standing orders, to the rules as to how we will conduct business at the Legislative Assembly. It doesn't take too much effort to realize that the changes that have been brought forward are for one goal, one aim, and that is to give the Premier more power and to give the rest of the ministers, the rest of his caucus—as well as the people in opposition—less power.

If we really think that through, is this really something that we want? Is this really how you get the best decisions made? I would argue that when you take the ideas of 124 people, this is how you get the best ideas coming forward. One person will never have all the truth with a capital T and all the best ideas. We all come from different backgrounds. We all bring something positive to the group of us who are the MPPs for this province. How do we make sure that we respect each other's point of view? We engage in debate.

So when the government puts forward a piece of legislation—a motion, actually—that says, "We will change the rules," I am worried. I wouldn't be as worried if the government said, "We will let a committee look at how we make changes to the rules."

I'm not against change. I fully realize that some of those rules were written in the previous century, the previous millennium—a long time ago—and they may need to be brought up to 2018. I'm fully open to that. But what I'm

not open to is that one person gets to make the changes, and it doesn't matter what the rest of us think. We won't have a chance to be heard. We won't have a chance to effect change. We won't have a chance to make things better. I think this is a step backwards. I don't think this is a step forward.

Do the standing orders need to be changed? Yes, Speaker. I will read you page 2. I realize that reading the standing orders is not always the most fun thing to listen to on a Tuesday morning, but what can I say? I will read the French version of it, so Mr. Translator, there, be ready.

« II. LA PRÉSIDENCE

« Élection du président

« 3. L'élection du président de l'Assemblée se déroule de la façon suivante :

« Mise en candidature d'un député

« a) À l'ouverture de la première session d'une législature, ou lorsque se produit une vacance de la présidence, un député qui n'est ni ministre de la Couronne, ni le chef d'un parti reconnu à l'Assemblée, s'adresse au greffier et propose à l'Assemblée un député candidat à la présidence et propose que ce député "Occupe le fauteuil de l'Assemblée comme président".

« Le député informe l'Assemblée de son acceptation

« b) Un député dont la mise en candidature est appuyée informe l'Assemblée s'il accepte sa mise en candidature...

« c) Le greffier demande... »

Je vais arrêter. Vous avez l'idée de ce que j'ai lu.

I only read you three paragraphs from the standing orders. In those three paragraphs, there are changes that I would like to make. The first one is that we talk about the election of the Speaker—congratulations. You're sitting in the Speaker's chair.

The standing orders are written in a way that only assumes that a man could become Speaker. In French, we say "un président" and if it's a woman, we say "une présidente." The standing orders are written in a way that, apparently, if we were to put forward a woman, we would be going against the standing orders, because right now the standing order says clearly: "élection d'un président." It assumes that we could only elect a man.

Well, it happens that forever on end, the Ontario Legislature has always elected a man as their main Speaker, but I take exception to that. This is 2018. In my caucus, I'm really proud to say that out of 40 MPPs, 20 of us are women. I see women across the aisle and I see women in every part of this. Why are our standing orders written in a way that would say that only a man could have the position of Speaker when, really, it should be open to every MPP?

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It goes on to say that the Clerk—the Clerk used to be a woman; it's now a man. There's nothing wrong with that, but the standing orders are written in a way that the Clerk is a man: "au greffier, à la greffière." Here, again, the name of the person—the way you say "Clerk" in French, you have to assign it "la greffière" or "le greffier," depending on if they are a man or a woman. None of that is in the standing orders. When we had a woman as a Clerk, it

really should not have been allowed because the standing orders are quite specific and there's no going back and forth. It is quite specific that it's "un greffier," not "une greffière."

Same thing: It has to be "un député" who nominates the Speaker; it could not be a woman doing that. Yet, in the last election of the Speaker, it was the member for Thornhill, Gila Martow, who nominated the Speaker—she's a woman—but apparently the standing orders do not allow that. You get the idea. It goes on and on like this.

Would I like a review of the standing orders to bring them up to 2018? Yes, absolutely. How do you do this? You do this with the way that my colleague the member from Timmins had brought forward: You send the standing orders to a committee. You make sure that you have representation on this committee of people who know the standing orders. Let's face it: There are standing orders that exist in every Parliament in this country. Every province has their standing orders, the Canadian Parliament has their standing orders and the Parliaments in the three territories have their standing orders. There are people sitting there right in front of me who know the standing orders inside and out and who could give advice as to how we make them to achieve the goal that we want—that is, to set the rules and procedures for debate that would allow us, in the end, to have the best laws possible so that we achieve a goal that motivates all of us to make sure we have the best province possible for people, for families, for all of us, for businesses big or small and for the environment for all of us to thrive.

This is what we want to do, but this is not at all what we are dealing with. We are dealing with changes to the standing orders that are there for one reason: to give the Premier more power. I have no problem with our parliamentary system. The government has a majority. It doesn't matter what they put forward; they will always cross the finish line. This is the way it works. But, on the way there, sometimes there is room for improvement.

I will give you two examples. The first one is my very first private member's bill. It was the very first co-sponsored private member's bill in this chamber. It was something relatively new; it started about 11 years ago that members from opposite parties were allowed to get together to put private members' bills. Myself and Dave Levac, who was an MPP on the Liberal benches, put forward a private member's bill—it went under my name but we co-sponsored it, myself and Dave Levac, to ban flavoured cigarillos. Flavoured cigarillos are like kind of an oversized cigarette, but they're called "cigarillos." At the time, they came in over 50 different flavours, most of them targeted to young people. You would see bubble gum, you would see chocolate and you would see all sorts of fruit flavours.

We put forward the private member's bill, it went through the process of second reading and it became law. Hey, my very first private member's bill—I was very proud that it became law. But it did not have much time for debate. It did not have much time for people to have a good look at it.

I will tell you that the ink was not dried on the private member's bill when the tobacco industry had found a way forward. When I had described the cigarillo, I had described the cigarillo by the number of grams of tobacco in the cigarillo because I didn't know how else to describe it. What they did was add 0.01 of a gram of tobacco in their cigarillo, so therefore it was not a cigarillo as described in the bill. And they just kept right on selling cigarillos.

I learned from that, Speaker. I learned that had we had more time for debate; had I had time to talk to more people about cigarillos; had I had time to look to and listen to more people, we would have described cigarillos in a different way.

I came back with a cigarillo bill. That time, it did not describe a cigarillo with 20 grams of tobacco or less—no, not 20 grams; I forget how many grams of tobacco. We described them in very broad terms, and now flavoured cigarillos are banned in Ontario. You don't see bubble-gum- and mango-flavoured cigarillos anymore. They are gone.

I'm telling you this story because this was my failing. I'm not blaming anybody. That was me who thought I had done something really good. It was my first private member's bill. I was brand new to this chamber. I thought I had done very well. But had I taken the time to listen more, had I taken the time to consult more with others, we would have banned flavoured cigarillos four years earlier than we actually did in Ontario. I know for a fact that tens of thousands of youth who started to smoke—flavoured cigarillos, when you smoked them, were not harsh. They tasted pretty darn good; they smelled really good. They were a perfect gateway to cigarettes for youth. So had I done that, four years of young people getting hooked on nicotine and getting addicted to tobacco would have been prevented. I learned from that.

My second example would be another private member's bill that I had put forward, which was called calorie labelling. Basically, now, when you go into any big-chain restaurant, you will see the item and the price—pasta, \$12—and you will see the amount of calories in that dish, so that you can make an informed decision if calories are something that you would like to know about.

It also had all sorts of other effects. Once the restaurant industry had to show the number of calories in their preparations, they changed a lot of recipes, because they showed that—you know, a salad with 3,000 calories is pretty hard to sell these days, because most people who eat salad want a light meal. You put enough oil and grease and bacon in it and you have 3,000 calories, which is way more than a person like myself or yourself needs in an entire day, never mind in one salad.

Calorie labelling: I put this bill forward at least five times before it finally reached the finish line. But the idea is that the first time we debated calorie labelling in this chamber—I will always remember it. I was sitting back there at the time. I was looking at the east gallery. The east gallery was packed with people, all with little logos that said the Keg, that said McDonald's. They all had their little shirts on, and they were all from the restaurant industry, and they were all staring me down in the way that—

you know, if looks could kill, I would not be there anymore. That was one of those.

Mr. Michael Mantha: You looked like a cheeseburger.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I looked like—yes, maybe. I don't look like a cheeseburger. Anyway, don't listen to Michael.

That was the set-up for that. When it came time for the vote, I had talked to my colleagues. That was four years later. With my cigarillo bill, I was brand new. With calorie labelling, I had a few years under my belt. I had talked to the people from the Progressive Conservatives. I had talked to the Liberals. At the time, we did not have Greens. Basically, a lot of people got it. The Canadian Cancer Society was on board. The dietitians were on board, and nurses and physicians. The medical association held a big press conference with me. All of the health care system stakeholders were on board, and even a few restaurants were on board.

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When it came time for the vote, I knew that there were some people in the restaurant industry, mainly on the Liberal bench, who felt very uncomfortable about mandating a restaurant to put calories on their menus. So, we actually held a free vote. At the time, the Liberals were sitting on the government bench. Most of them voted in favour of my bill and a few of them actually voted against. The Conservatives were sitting here at the time. When it came time for the Conservatives, it was the same thing. On our bench, the NDP voted in favour. The bill passed, Speaker, with three voices. It was a little bit nerve-racking but it passed.

The idea was really the difference it makes once you take into account—so, I had talked to the restaurant industry. I had talked to the MPPs who had problems with the bill and tried to make changes to it, because I re-introduced it five times.

By the time we reached the finish line, I had put into place things such as having to have at least \$1 million in revenue. Why? Because if you are a small mom-and-pop, you change your recipes every day. You make your vegetable soup with whatever vegetable is in season. It is impossible for them to know the number of calories in their food unless they spend a whole lot of time, effort and money to have this counted. Same thing: If you are not a standard chain, the portions may vary quite a bit, because in one you scooped up more noodles and in the other you scooped up more—so I got that. We got this because we took the time to listen; we took the time to learn. Now you have to have a number of franchises in Ontario; you have to be of a certain size. And it works.

Now, McDonald's will tell you that since they have the calorie labelling, the people in Ontario order, in general, 27% fewer calories per meal than they did before the calorie labelling was there. But interestingly enough, they spend more money than they used to because they choose to make healthy choices. Where it made the biggest difference was when parents were buying food for their children.

The way we had it before, you had the calories but they were not on the menu. They were on a flyer, under the cash, where nobody could find them, or they were on the way to the bathroom. If you remember, on the way to the bathroom, you would have those big posters that told you all of the differences and the number of calories. Who the heck makes a purchase decision on the way to the bathroom? Nobody does that. One in 1,000 used to use it; now it's one in two Ontarians who use this information to inform their purchases.

It works. Parents choose healthier food for their kids. They choose food that has fewer calories. They are more aware of the number of calories their children and themselves should consume in a day.

But it worked, and I'm giving this example, because we had time to talk to one another. We took the time to listen, and we brought forward something—was this exactly what I had wanted when I first introduced it? No. But did it achieve the end goal of making our province better? Yes, absolutely.

I see that I have to leave time on the clock. Coming back to what we're talking about: If you take away debate, if you take away the opportunity to learn from the other side, if you take away the voices of all of the people who are here, whether you are the Premier, whether you are a minister in cabinet, whether you are part of the government without a ministerial portfolio, whether you are in opposition or you sit as an independent—you all have a voice. You deserve to be heard because you represent tens of thousands of Ontarians who, no matter who they voted for, deserve to be heard. This is how we will make better laws. To bring time allocation on a bill that is made to limit debate, to me, is adding insult to injury, and I cannot vote for that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

M. Michael Mantha: Encore, on se retrouve ici, à parler d'un projet où on va ôter les voix, on va ôter les paroles, on va limiter les discussions et puis donner le pouvoir au—

M^{me} France Gélinas: Premier ministre.

M. Michael Mantha: Au premier ministre. Puis on regarde : c'est quoi, essentiellement, qui va arriver? Comment est-ce que ça va impacter les gens de la province? C'est ça qu'on regarde. Puis quand on regarde comment ça va impacter les gens, c'est bien franc : on leur ôte leur voix. Il y a plusieurs des députés qui ont été élus, ici dans la Chambre, des nouveaux députés qui veulent participer aux débats, qui veulent offrir leurs commentaires, qui veulent donner leurs perspectives, en effet, de comment les gens se sentent dans leur région.

Ma collègue de Nickel Belt a donné deux de ces exemples, en effet, de comment c'est important d'avoir les discussions nécessaires sur tous les projets de loi, comment c'est important d'avoir des discussions quand on arrive, quand on est dans nos commissions, comment c'est important d'entendre les voix et puis les paroles des gens d'en dehors de la Chambre.

Moi aussi, je vais ajouter un exemple. Je n'étais pas député dans le temps, mais j'étais dans ma communauté.

On regardait à faire un projet de loi pour aider les personnes sur les « Ski-Doo trails ». On regardait à emporter un projet de loi ou une pièce de législation qui était pour les aider, en effet, à charger des frais pour faire la maintenance des « trails » pour les motoneiges.

Vous allez me pardonner mon français par bouts. C'est un français joual du nord de l'Ontario, ce qui fait que je vais vous donner des nouveaux termes—dans la façon que je décris ma perspective de ce qui se passe—dans mon français du nord de l'Ontario.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Les sentiers de motoneige.

M. Michael Mantha: Ah, les sentiers de motoneige. Merci, France. Merci, ma collègue de Nickel Belt.

Ce qui fait qu'un projet de loi a été déposé. C'était une super grosse et tellement bonne idée que les partis qui étaient ici dans la maison étaient tous d'accord. « C'est une belle affaire. » Puis on était pour le pousser sans discussion, mais avec les discussions qu'on a eues ici dans la maison, il y a eu un accord entre les partis : « Peut-être bien qu'on devrait l'envoyer en comité pour qu'on puisse entendre le public. »

Puis la surprise qui est venue aux gens qui ont participé c'est que les gens ont eu la chance de venir porter leurs expériences, leurs idées. Puis on a entendu toutes sortes d'affaires, en effet, sur le problème qu'il y avait avec le projet de loi tel qu'il était écrit, et puis des propositions pour essayer, pour les gens dans les sentiers de motoneige, d'améliorer les services et de rendre une ressource pour que les gens puissent maintenir les sentiers.

Mais c'est une bonne chance qu'on l'a fait. C'est une bonne chance qu'on est allé dans les sentiers pour avoir des discussions, pour faire certain qu'on améliorerait le projet de loi et qu'on entendait les autres gens à travers la province, entendait les mots des organisations, les gens à qui appartenaient les terrains, les fermiers, les communautés et puis tous les gens qui étaient responsables pour les chemins et qui ont vraiment contribué à faire un projet de loi qui était bon, qui était solide, qui avait été étudié comme il faut. Puis jusqu'à dire aujourd'hui que c'est un projet de loi qui continue à opérer, qui fonctionne bien. Y a-t-il des améliorations que tu peux faire? Oui, il y a des améliorations qui peuvent être faites, pareil comme il y a des améliorations qui peuvent être faites—où est mon livre, là?—à nos règlements de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. Oui, il y a des changements.

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Ma collègue de Nickel Belt a aussi indiqué plusieurs termes qui ne sont pas la même chose de la version anglaise à la version française. Est-ce qu'il y a des changements? Absolument, il y a des changements à faire. Mais les changements qui sont demandés, ou bien donc, les changements qui sont imposés sans discussion—sans grosse discussion pour qu'on entende de plusieurs autres—où ça va donner le pouvoir seulement à une personne pour déterminer le bon fonctionnement de la législation qu'on discute ici en Chambre, ce n'est vraiment pas un des objectifs que nous, comme parti d'opposition, sommes prêts à accepter ou regarder. Oui, on devrait en discuter, mais pas imposer un temps limite sans avoir ces discussions appropriées qui sont absolument nécessaires.

Ça fait qu'on apporte encore de quoi qui va limiter les voix des gens à travers la province de l'Ontario. Est-ce qu'il y a des améliorations? Absolument, il y a des améliorations à faire. Il y a tout le temps de quoi qu'on peut rajouter aux règlements, mais limiter les discussions, ce n'est pas ce qu'on est prêt à regarder, ni continuer à donner le pouvoir à une personne pour implémenter son agenda. On devrait regarder plus à ouvrir les discussions et non pas les limiter à une personne de déterminer ce qu'on va faire ici dans cette Chambre.

En rajoutant les gens, à vraiment retirer les idées, avoir des discussions d'un bord à l'autre—et puis, non, on ne va pas être tout le temps d'accord avec les sujets qu'on discute. Non, on va avoir des différences d'opinion. Non, on ne va pas tout le temps regarder les choses de la même perspective, mais tout de même, une bonne journée ou durant une bonne discussion, il y a une lumière qui va allumer : « Hum! je pense que c'est une bonne idée, ça. »

On a eu plusieurs expériences de ça avec le gouvernement précédent qui était ici, où des projets de loi ont été imposés, les limites ont été coupées et les discussions, les devoirs qu'on aurait pu faire en concession, et les chances de voir le public venir et puis participer à ces discussions-là : savez-vous ce qui est arrivé? Deux ou trois mois plus tard, le même projet de loi a été réintroduit dans la maison pour faire des corrections, parce qu'il y avait eu des erreurs qui avaient été faites. Les mêmes discussions ont eu lieu. Tandis que, si on avait pris le temps de s'asseoir et de dire : « Oui, c'est le temps de l'ouvrir au public et, oui, c'est le temps qu'on s'en parle et qu'on sorte toutes les idées »—comme on dit en bon français, qu'on flush tout en dehors et puis qu'on sorte le bon et le méchant, qu'on fasse de bonnes décisions, non pas seulement pour une personne et son intérêt, mais pour le bien de toute la province—faire des projets de loi ou avoir des discussions basées sur l'avenir, non pas sur quatre ans en l'Ontario, mais à regarder à l'avenir à long terme pour les Ontariens et Ontariennes, à grandeur.

Moi, je suis une personne du nord de l'Ontario. Souvent, on voit des décisions qui sont prises ici à Toronto, et ça marche à Toronto, ça marche dans le sud de l'Ontario, mais l'impact négatif sur une résidence dans le nord de l'Ontario, c'est vraiment de quoi que—il est tellement important qu'on entende la perspective de tous les gens de la province. Puis, je retourne à l'importance de quand on a des projets de loi, nous, comme opposition, oui, on va faire notre devoir. Je vais prendre ma place, et puis je vais regarder l'aigle qui est là, pareil comme le gouvernement va regarder le hibou : eux, pour qu'ils soient sages dans leurs décisions; et moi, pour que je sois vigilant dans les miennes, dans ma fonction ici comme opposition. Puis, oui, je vais m'opposer, mais je ne m'opposerai pas tout le temps juste pour m'opposer; je vais donner mes idées, les miennes, mes suggestions faites de ma perspective de comment ça affecte les gens dans mon coin de la province, et puis, non pas seulement dans mon coin de la province.

Je suis extrêmement fier de représenter les gens d'Algoma-Manitoulin; je ne les oublie jamais. Mon

devoir, premièrement, à tout coup que je me lève de mon siège et que je pèse ma position, c'est pour être porte-parole de la voix des gens de ma circonscription. Mais je suis aussi un porte-parole pour tous les gens de la province, et puis j'écoute les gens. Il y a plusieurs gens qui viennent me visiter ici à mon bureau, et puis, non, ils ne viennent pas seulement d'Algoma-Manitoulin; ils viennent du Sud, ils viennent de Windsor, ils viennent d'Ottawa, ils viennent de Thunder Bay, ils viennent de Kenora, ils viennent de Wawa, et ils viennent de Marathon. Et ces idées-là, quand ils viennent, sont les perspectives nécessaires pour nous, comme députés, pour utiliser les outils à notre disposition pour faire de bonnes décisions. C'est de quoi que je prends extrêmement au sérieux dans mon rôle comme député.

Changer les règlements de l'Assemblée législative et puis les ordres pour donner moins de discussion et pour, effectivement, ôter la parole aux gens de la province, ce n'est pas pour le bien-être de la province pantoute. C'est une erreur qu'on fait. Puis on continue à faire ces erreurs-là; ce n'est pas la première fois que ça arrive juste dans ces derniers mois depuis que ce nouveau gouvernement est rentré.

Il faut que tu te poses la question : « Bien, pourquoi sont-ils en train de faire ça? » Pourquoi est-ce qu'un gouvernement majoritaire, qui vont présenter leur vision pour la province, qui vont présenter leurs idées et les changements qu'ils veulent faire—ils sont un gouvernement majoritaire.

Ne te trompe pas, monsieur le Président, ils vont venir à bout d'accomplir le projet de loi qu'ils veulent faire, et ils vont passer à travers les étapes nécessaires. Ils sont un gouvernement majoritaire. Ce qui fait que, oui, nous autres, on va prendre notre rôle. On va donner des suggestions, on va donner des oppositions, et on va donner des idées pour l'améliorer.

Mais, à la fin de la journée, en mettant des restrictions de temps et en ôtant la parole à tous les députés ici dans la Chambre, ce n'est pas une avenue qui va aider la nouvelle législation qui va rentrer ou les projets de loi qui vont passer à travers cette Chambre. Ça va les affaiblir.

Avoir plus de discussions, avoir plus de discours entre les partis. Même pour les chefs, les « House leaders » des deux partis; il y a des temps où ils peuvent se parler puis avoir des discussions à l'effet de planifier les affaires—avoir une bonne ligne de communication entre les deux « House leaders » des équipes, comme on les appelle. Ils se rencontrent régulièrement, et c'est à ce point-là où tu as les discussions à l'effet du bien-être de la famille—de la Chambre. Moi, je dis tout le temps « famille ». Oui, c'est une famille. C'est de même que tu vas faire avancer les affaires.

Mais sans avoir ces discussions-là et puis de tout le temps dire, « C'est de ma façon; c'est de même qu'on va le faire, et on le fait de même parce qu'on peut le faire de même », ce n'est vraiment pas quelque chose qui va résonner. À un temps ou à un autre, les gens dans la province vont commencer à réaliser que le premier ministre, avec son marteau—ça va être bien plus facile

d'implémenter des changements dans la province avec un coup de main. Sors ta main à la place d'utiliser le marteau. Jase, parle, aie ces discussions. Écoute les autres voix de la province.

Ce que je veux rappeler au gouvernement ici, c'est que, oui, vous avez votre mandat; oui, vous avez un gouvernement majoritaire. J'entends souvent de vous autres, où vous lancez l'idée que, à 97 %, notre parti aurait supporté le gouvernement précédent, les libéraux. Mais, regardez les numéros. Regardez l'histoire. Regardez les faits. Ce gouvernement, le gouvernement conservateur, a supporté le gouvernement libéral dans le temps à 49 %—à 49 %. Le parti NPD a supporté leurs décisions, et quand on a eu des discussions, à 53 % ou 54 %.

Êtes-vous étonné d'entendre ça, monsieur, que le gouvernement conservateur a supporté les initiatives des libéraux à 49 %? C'est quasiment 50 %, ça, monsieur le Président. C'est-tu surprenant? Tu écoutes la façon dont le gouvernement conservateur est en train de parler de « Ô mon Dieu ! quel désastre c'était avec les libéraux », mais ils les ont supportés à 50 %. Il y a eu des idées, il y a eu des discussions et il y a eu temps où—hum—ils étaient d'accord.

Là, la question que je vais te poser, monsieur le Président—puisque'il faudrait qu'on en fasse l'étude—c'est, quel 50 % a supporté les libéraux? Ça serait intéressant de savoir, hein? Je pense qu'on a des gens des fois qui s'asseyent ici dans la maison et qui peuvent la faire, cette étude-là. Mais pour aujourd'hui, je vais vous laisser aller de même.

Je veux revenir à l'idée que, oui, la discussion améliore les projets de loi. Je vois mes collègues de l'autre bord qui rient. Ils le savent bien trop que, tellement, tu peux lâcher la ligne, tu peux envoyer des « flags », et que, simplement parce que tu le dis plusieurs fois, ça ne veut pas dire réellement que ça arrive.

Il y a une expression : « You can throw as much mud on the wall and hopefully, some of it will stick. » Mais en français, on utilise une version différente, puis les termes qu'on utilise en français, je ne peux pas vraiment les dire dans la maison, ici.

Vous autres, vous devez avoir du fun, là-bas, à traduire ce que je suis en train de lancer, parce qu'il y en a, un petit peu, de ces nouveaux mots, dont je suis en train de me faire accroire—les nouveaux mots que je suis en train de sortir.

Mais, je reviens au point que je voulais faire. C'est que limiter nos discussions, limiter le montant de débat qu'on a sur certains projets de loi—et puis, je ne dis pas tous les projets de loi. On l'a vu ici avant. On a eu une bonne idée, on est tous d'accord. Les trois partis étaient d'accord. Je l'ai vu fonctionner dans le gouvernement précédent. Je pense que ça nous est arrivé une ou deux fois, si je ne me trompe pas, ma collègue de Nickel Belt. Je pense que ç'a pris trois jours à passer un projet de loi—trois, quatre jours.

M^{me} France Gélinas: On en a fait un la même journée.

M. Michael Mantha: Ma collègue vient juste de me dire qu'il y avait une journée où tous les trois partis étaient d'accord. Il y a eu tellement de discussion avec les groupes

en dehors des sessions qu'on a eu la chance de passer un projet de loi en une journée. Imagine-toi les bénéfices qu'il y a à avoir des discussions entre les trois partis.

Ce n'est jamais une méchante affaire de se parler. Ce n'est jamais une méchante affaire d'avoir une bonne ligne de communication. Ce n'est jamais une méchante affaire d'écouter l'opposition et puis les autres partis qui sont ici en Chambre. Ce n'est jamais une méchante affaire d'attirer le public et de les impliquer dans nos projets de loi. Ce n'est jamais une méchante affaire de prendre des idées. Ça, c'est un signe de leadership. Ça, c'est un signe de quelqu'un qui est prêt à reconnaître que : « Mes idées sont bonnes. Mais, sais-tu quoi? Ce n'est pas une méchante idée, ce que tu m'as donné. Sais-tu quoi? Je suis ouvert. »

Quand je rencontre des étudiants quand je vais les voir à l'école, je leur dis tout le temps : « On a des oreilles sur le bord de notre tête. Il y a bien des gens qui peuvent écouter avec leurs oreilles. » Je vais le dire en anglais.

We have ears on the sides of our heads. Many people hear with those ears but it takes a good person and a strong person to listen with those ears. There is a difference, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to end off by saying that limiting debate on potential changes that will impact all Ontarians by denying the voices that are amongst each and every one, and the right of each and every one of the members who are in this House—denying the opportunity for stakeholders, farmers, individuals and organizations to come forward and express their concerns when it comes to particular pieces of legislation is wrong.

Again, putting this time allocation is still wrong. It was wrong then and it's wrong today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, has moved government notice of motion number 11 relating to allocation of time on government order number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Orders of the day? The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: No further business, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): No further business. This House stands in recess until question period at 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1004 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today several guests with the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians: the Honourable Roy McMurtry, former Chief Justice of Ontario and

former Attorney General, along with his wife, Ria Jean McMurtry, and also in the gallery today is the Honourable Hugh Segal, former senator. They are joined by several former members of provincial Parliament: Laura Albanese, Bill Barlow, Marcel Beaubien, Marion Boyd, Annamarie Castrilli, Ron Hansen, Karen Haslam, John Hastings, Helena Jaczek, Al Kolyn, Jeff Leal, Tracy MacCharles, Rosario Marchese, Judy Marsales, Doug Moffatt, Jennifer Mossop, Lily Oddie, Lou Rinaldi, John O'Toole, Gillian Sandeman, Joe Spina, Gary Stewart, George Taylor, former Speaker David Warner, and Bob Wong. Welcome back to the Ontario Legislature. It's great to have you here.

He's unfortunately not on my list, but I see him up there: Steve Gilchrist is with us as well today. Have I missed anybody else?

The longest-serving female member in the history of the Ontario Legislature, Julia Munro, is here.

I'm sorry, I see Gerry Phillips is here: Gerry Phillips. And I see Phil Gillies who is here—not on the list.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I hope I've caught everyone.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that they are also joined by several former parliamentarians from Manitoba and Quebec, including former Speaker Daryl Reid from Manitoba. Again, welcome to the Legislature.

Introduction of guests: the member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Speaker, you did introduce those guests, but I was going to point this out: I don't know if it's a good or a bad thing, but you and I know most of those people and served with them.

Mr. Will Bouma: Speaker, you may have mentioned it and I didn't hear it, but my good friend and a former member here, Phil Gillies, is also in the Speaker's gallery.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Today is Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, and the Ontario Coalition For Better Child Care is here: Carolyn Ferns, from the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care; also early childhood educators Kim Mantulak, Sydney Wilson, Sonia Tavares, Alana Powell, Lisa Johnston, Sophia Mohamed, Nancy Santos and Gurjinder Kaur Sidhu. Thank you for the good work you do in the province of Ontario.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Anna Baggio, Eugenia Kwok and Niamh Wall from the Wildlands League. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Rod Phillips: It's my pleasure to rise and acknowledge with us today in the gallery Ben Hendry, the president of PEGO, the Professional Engineers Government of Ontario, who is also an engineer in the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; and Martin Haalstra, who is vice-president of PEGO and an engineer in the Ministry of Transportation. Welcome.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I would like to welcome the grade 4, 5 and 6 students and teachers from St. Teresa Catholic Elementary School in my riding of Kitchener Centre who are visiting Queen's Park today. I look

forward to meeting everybody after question period. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I'm honoured to have two constituents from my riding of Oakville who played a major role in my campaign. I'd like to introduce Alan Boucher and Barbara Greene.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome some friends from the group Water Wells First visiting Queen's Park today: Kevin Jakubec, Mark St. Pierre, Ron Tetrault, Mark Calzavera and Dr. Joel Gagnon. I want to welcome them here today.

Mr. Ross Romano: I'm pleased to rise and welcome the northern Ontario representative for Advocis from my home riding of Sault Ste. Marie, Eric Barton, and from Sudbury, Todd Boyd and Catherine Muir.

I also want to welcome, from the Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology in Sault Ste. Marie, Dr. Ron Common, and the chair of the board of governors, David Zuccato.

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: I would like to welcome, from Marten Falls, Chief Bruce Achneepineskum, Lawrence Baxter, Alanna Downey Baxter and Denise Baxter. I know one of the chief's granddaughters is also a page here. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I have two introductions to make this morning. First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our page, Armita Bhatti. She is serving as a page from Adrienne Clarkson Public School in my riding of Richmond Hill. Welcome. We look forward to working together with you. Thank you for being a page.

For the next introduction I have, it is my privilege to welcome a government and trade delegation from China visiting Queen's Park today for a study tour. Let me welcome three deputy mayors—Mr. Yan Wanglin, the deputy mayor from Zhangjiakou; Ms. Zhang Yuexian, the deputy mayor from Tangshan; and Mr. Xu Fujun, the deputy mayor from Handan—and also directors of the government relationship association, including Mr. Zhang Zefeng, Mr. Miao Bingsong, Mr. Wang Shaohua, Mr. Li Long, Mr. Yang Yibao, Mr. Song Rentang, Mr. Sun Wenxin, Mr. Ma Yuhui, Ms. Zhang Lange, Mr. Xu Xiangdong, Mr. Wang Zhong, Mr. Jiang Jianming, Ms. Hao Weili, Mr. Zhang Qiang, Mr. Jiang Zhigang, Mr. Zhao Wensheng and Mr. Xu Peng. Welcome, all of you who joined this study tour. Welcome.

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Mr. Ian Arthur: I would like to welcome to the Legislature members from my community who are here for Advocis day: Will Britton, Greg Gies and Craig Bouchard, and also extend a warm welcome to a dear friend, Shaunis Sakell, who is visiting the Legislature.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It's always a pleasure to welcome in the House members of Advocis day, especially Kris Birchard, who is here from Orléans—welcome—and also David McGruer, who I will be meeting this afternoon. Welcome to our Legislature.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to welcome two members from my riding: Linda Gratton and Joanne Bedard. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge two former

members who are in your gallery: Mr. Jeff Leal and Mr. Gary Stewart.

Mr. Jeff Burch: I'd like to acknowledge our new page, Olajiire, whose name in Nigerian means "expect something good in the morning," and her proud father, Babatunde, who is here in the gallery today.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I would like to welcome two constituents here for Advocis day today: Sean Lawrence and Rob Stewart.

Miss Monique Taylor: It always gives me great pleasure to welcome Advocis into the House, and to one of my constituents, Grace DiLeo Lindsay: Welcome to Queen's Park. It's always great to meet with you.

M^{le} Amanda Simard: I just spotted him in the gallery, so I wanted to give him a special welcome. It's the former MPP from my riding, Jean-Marc Lalonde, a very well-respected man in the riding but also in this Legislature, I know. Welcome, Jean-Marc.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Today, I stand for the introduction of a special guest. I don't see him here yet, but I know he's coming: Dr. Charles Godfrey. Dr. Godfrey, in addition to serving as a past member of this House, is still active as a celebrated author of many books. He's a renowned military historian, philanthropist, a friend with a wicked sense of humour, a neighbour and a mentor. At the tender age of 101, he's still a practising physician. God bless.

Mr. David Piccini: I just spotted, as well, a former member of provincial Parliament from my riding of Northumberland-Quinte West, Lou Rinaldi, who served with distinction and is a very well-respected member of my community.

Mr. Doug Downey: I'm thrilled to introduce my OLIP intern, Clara Pasieka, who is with us in the gallery today.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the pleasure of introducing a former member for Stoney Creek in the prior Parliaments before the riding changed over. That's MPP Jennifer Mossop, as well as Rick Firth, the president of Hospice Palliative Care Ontario.

Ms. Lindsey Park: It's always my pleasure to acknowledge in the Speaker's gallery the former member for Durham, John O'Toole. He has been a wonderful mentor, and it's great to have him in this place today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The very patient Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Greg Rickford: It's good exercise, actually, Mr. Speaker.

Sophie Sutherland is the page captain here today. She's come all the way from Thunder Bay to offer her services to the Legislature. Sophie is the second young woman from her family to represent Marten Falls First Nation as a page in this Legislature. Sophie has some great support from her family here today while she pursues this exciting opportunity: her mother, Denise Baxter; her grandfather, Lawrence Baxter, and grandmother, Alanna Downey Baxter.

I'd also like to welcome the chief of Marten Falls First Nation, Chief Bruce Achneepineskum, who is also here to support Sophie today. Please join me in thanking Sophie for her service, and welcoming her family and supporters to the Legislature today.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Korreen Bennett, of my riding of York South-Weston, and also former member of provincial Parliament Laura Albanese, and also Ron Hansen.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: In the members' gallery we have two members from North Bay, from our Advocis group, here: Gord Rymal and Greg Briggs.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I wasn't going to, but now that we're introducing them all over again, I notice that David Warner is here, the former Speaker; a good colleague of mine who served in 1990 with me, Karen Haslam; and Rosario Marchese—and unanimous consent to allow him to speak.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, you've already introduced her but I don't think she can be celebrated enough. I'd like to recognize Julia Munro, former MPP for York-Simcoe.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to introduce everybody else in the building. We haven't missed anybody.

Hon. John Yakabuski: Actually, we have missed one—and it's great to get Paul Miller on Hansard. In the members' gallery today, also with the Advocis group, is a gentleman from my riding: Yves Roy. He's here today from Pembroke as part of the Advocis day. Thank you very much for joining us, Yves.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to welcome St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School. They are visiting Parliament today, and I'm very glad to see them. They are from my riding, and hopefully we'll see some of them in Parliament in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The last one: the member for Windsor-Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. I wouldn't want him to go unnoticed because he comes here on a regular basis, but Howard Brown is back. Howard, welcome back to Queen's Park.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is now time to assemble the pages.

I would ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the first session of this 42nd Parliament: Albert Douglas from Windsor West; Amani Altaf, Markham-Unionville; Amber Dickson from Niagara Falls; Andre Zhang, Don Valley West; Andrei Li, Toronto-Danforth; Armita Bhatti, Richmond Hill; Eiliyah Siddiqi, Mississauga Centre; Ethan Gobin, Scarborough Centre; Harry Dai from Oakville; Honora Murphy, York South-Weston; Ian Williams, Peterborough-Kawartha; Jacob Riddell, Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill; Marcel Audi, Etobicoke North; Maya Bevand, York-Simcoe; Olajiire Fowler, Niagara Centre; Richa Pandya from Brampton West; Rongbin Gu from Scarborough-Guildwood; unfortunately, Rose Martin-Chase from Simcoe-Grey is not here today but she'll likely be here tomorrow; Sophia Ruffolo, Perth-Wellington; Sophie LaVasseur, Ottawa South; Sophie Sutherland, Thunder Bay-Superior North; and Taya Graham MacDonald from London West.

Again, please join me in welcoming our pages.

Applause.

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ROY MCMURTRY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next I'm going to recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Todd Smith: I seek unanimous consent that the House pay tribute to Roy McMurtry, 2018 recipient of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians' award for distinguished service, with five minutes allotted to the government, five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, three minutes to the independent Liberal members and two minutes to the independent Green member.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent of the House to pay tribute to the Honourable Roy McMurtry. Agreed? Agreed.

We'll start off with the member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats, we want to take this time—there's not enough time in five minutes, quite frankly—to speak to the accomplishments of the Honourable Roy McMurtry.

Roy came to this place at a very different time, a time when this House was preoccupied with issues that we now take for granted, and he was one of the people, as part of the Legislature of the day, who moved the yardsticks forward on a number of issues that are extremely important—very controversial at the time, but they were the right things to do. I think he demonstrated that it takes courage—it takes courage, quite frankly, sometimes—to stand up to do what's right. Roy was one of those types of MPPs. It was at a time when there were a lot of Progressive Conservatives who were in this place who were trying to do the right thing. Yes, they were fiscal conservatives, but they were trying to move the yardsticks forward on a number of things.

Mr. McMurtry, as you know, came from a pretty distinguished law career before he got here, so it's not as if Mr. McMurtry got here and had to do this job. It was a calling, and he recognized that there were some wrongs, that those wrongs had to be righted and that there had to be progress made on issues that were important to the people of that day, but that we now benefit from. How many members of this House—new, current and those who were there before—could really look back at their career in this place and look back at their time on the bench and say that the types of differences that they made are so far-reaching that they'll outlast us?

A lot of people wouldn't know, *puis c'est quelque chose dont, moi, je suis très fier*: Quand M. McMurtry était procureur général, c'était lui qui a poussé pour s'assurer que les francophones puissent avoir leurs cours en français. Pour nous autres, c'est très important, parce qu'il y a bieu monde en Ontario qui ne parlent pas anglais ou qui ne sont pas confortables à parler anglais, et qui demandent d'avoir leurs services en français.

It was something very controversial at the time, because we all know that our nation and our province are often divided on different issues around language, race and religion. Mr. McMurtry, along with the government of the day, stuck their necks out and did what was right for that community.

When it came to reforming family law—I'm not a lawyer, but if I was a lawyer, that's probably the last law that I would want to advocate on, because it's a very, very tough part of law to deal with, family law, when it comes to what happens to children in case of divorce or separation and what happens to the couple, what happens to that relationship. The then government and Mr. McMurtry, as the Attorney General, started some very significant changes and law reform that led to what we now know as our family law system that we have today. It is a darn sight better than what it was before Mr. McMurtry got here.

Are there still improvements that could be made? Absolutely; I think there are all kinds of things that could be improved upon. But again, it was one of those things where the generation of that time, those who served in this House, recognized that the world was changing, and that we had to change along with the world and along with the values as our society became more modern and became more multicultural. I think that that government of the day, back in the time under Mr. Davis, although not perfect and although there were obviously things that people may have disagreed with, moved those yardsticks forward on things that are so fundamental today that we take them for granted.

Mr. McMurtry was a large, large contributor to that. He was involved and a key player when it came to the negotiations on the Constitution. The former Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney—no, I'm going to skip and go back to the Prime Minister before that. When we were negotiating the Constitution, Mr. McMurtry, along with Bill Davis, Roy Romanow and others, were key architects in deciding how to deal with what we now call the “notwithstanding” clause. Unfortunately we went through an experience in this House not too long ago where it was threatened to be used, and Mr. McMurtry—even today, all these years forward—was brave enough and, I think, a person of his word and conviction that he put in writing what he thought about the use of that clause.

Now, I realize that that doesn't make the government feel comfortable, but I don't think that's what Mr. McMurtry was all about. I don't think Mr. McMurtry was about trying to make us feel comfortable about the things he did back then and the things he does today. It was to make us reflect and think on our actions and to say that if you come to this world and you come to this House or you sit on the bench, try to leave it a better place than you found it. And that means to confront sometimes authority in a way that checks and puts balances in place when it comes to how people are treated in this province.

I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. McMurtry and I just want to say on behalf of New Democrats, Andrea Horwath and the rest of us—and, I would say, a province that has been well served—that we thank you, sir, for the

work that you did. Your legacy will live on forever and we're extremely proud to have had you as a colleague.

Le Président (L'hon. Ted Arnott): La députée d'Ottawa–Vanier.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: It's a pleasure and it's a real honour to rise today to pay tribute to the Honourable Roy McMurtry, a man for whom I personally and, I know, the entire Ontario community have so much admiration. He is a real inspiration for many of us here.

Throughout my career, I had the pleasure of meeting the Honourable Roy McMurtry on several occasions: first, when I was the president of l'AJEFO, l'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario, and we were celebrating the anniversary of the Ontario legal system being bilingual. At the time, the Honourable Mr. McMurtry described how he had travelled to the north of Ontario and seen that plaintiffs, defendants and the judge all spoke French, but because English was the official language of the court system, they all had to translate what they had just said. So he promptly decided that, at that time, the system should become bilingual.

He does mention that when he came back to Toronto, he was not met with a standing ovation by his colleagues, but he stood by and actually convinced his colleagues that this was the right thing to do, so I think he was an inspiration for all of them. C'est pourquoi notre système de droit maintenant est officiellement bilingue. Merci, monsieur McMurtry.

As an Attorney General, the Honourable Mr. McMurtry had a significant impact on the legal system, from better human rights protection to legal aid reform, and a significant role in ensuring our constitutional reform. The promulgation of the charter is something that all of us benefit from. Whether we are immigrants, religious minorities, women, racialized minorities or Indigenous, we all benefit from this and we thank him for that. Our legal system has been better because of the work of the Honourable Mr. McMurtry.

After leaving this House, he went on to become the High Commissioner to the UK and then the Chief Justice of Ontario. The ground-breaking ruling in Halpern guaranteed marriage equality for same-sex couples. We're the better for it. Thank you again.

I had the benefit of working with the Honourable Mr. McMurtry when he tried to improve victim treatment. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board criticized the past Liberal government for using an old statute to decide on the G20 protest. He criticized the current government on the use of the "notwithstanding" clause. He continues to be a voice for reason, a voice for the rule of law in Ontario and in Canada.

I want to celebrate him for everything that he has done. I want to celebrate the fact that his granddaughter was a graduate of the University of Ottawa and I had the pleasure of celebrating with him as a proud grandfather at that time. His memoirs are a work that we should all read. His contribution as a landscape artist also has to be celebrated.

On behalf of the Liberal caucus, past, present and future, and on behalf of all Ontarians, I want to say merci, meegwetch and thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm honoured to rise today on behalf of the Green Party of Ontario to thank the Honourable Roy McMurtry for your distinguished service in this Legislature and for your incredible service on behalf of the people of Ontario.

Mr. McMurtry's career in public service is truly inspiring, spanning many distinguished roles: politician, lawyer, judge, ambassador and, I would say, public intellectual.

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I am particularly thankful for Mr. McMurtry's work in bringing forward the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and I deeply appreciate your continued efforts to defend our charter rights to this very day.

I also want to thank Mr. McMurtry for being part of the court and showing courageous leadership, using our charter rights to extend those rights to same-sex couples to marry in Ontario. Few people have helped shape Ontario in the ways that Mr. McMurtry has, and all of us in this Legislature can learn from your leadership and from your example.

I can truly say as a new MPP representing a new party that I have so much to learn from your courage, your integrity and your leadership about how one conducts themselves in this place. So I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart, Mr. McMurtry, for continuing to lead the way in protecting our rights and freedoms here in Ontario. Merci. Meegwetch. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and a great honour to rise today to pay tribute to the Honourable Roy McMurtry, who is being recognized today by the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians with the Distinguished Service Award.

When it comes to distinguished service, I can think of few former parliamentarians who are as worthy of such a description as Roy McMurtry. He was first elected to the Ontario Legislature in 1975, representing the constituency of Eglinton, during the 30th, 31st and 32nd Parliaments. My riding of Eglinton–Lawrence is one of the successors to that constituency, and I can honestly say that I aspire to serve my constituents to the same high standard that Roy McMurtry set more than 30 years ago.

He had a great education at the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall Law School. While attending university, he played football with a future Premier, Bill Davis.

Prior to entering politics, he practised law as a trial counsel for 17 years, and he would soon draw on that experience as an elected official serving as Attorney General of Ontario in the cabinet of Premier Bill Davis for nearly 10 years. Between 1978 and 1982, he did double duty, serving also as the province's Solicitor General and, I believe, the minister for emergency planning—although in that role, in 1979 when the Mississauga train derailment happened, he had the good sense to defer to Mayor Hazel McCallion.

Some of Roy McMurtry's most significant accomplishments as our province's Attorney General have already been mentioned, but they also include overseeing major reforms in our justice system, particularly in the areas of bilingualism and family law. As a testament to his contributions to our justice system, the current headquarters of the Attorney General of Ontario is, of course, called the McMurtry-Scott Building.

As mentioned, Roy McMurtry has also played an important role in constitutional negotiations that led to the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982. One might even suggest that he cemented his place in Canadian history by hammering out a last-minute deal with then-federal Justice Minister Jean Chrétien and then-Attorney General of Saskatchewan Roy Romanow in what came to be known as the "kitchen accord" of November 6, 1981, arguably the perfect example of the classic Canadian compromise that gave us the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In 1985, he chose not to seek re-election and was appointed the Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, serving in that role for three years before returning to private practice as a lawyer. In 1989 and 1990, he was also the chairman and CEO of the CFL, the Canadian Football League.

But he couldn't stay out of public service for long. In 1991, Roy McMurtry was appointed Associate Chief Justice of the Ontario Superior Court, trial division, and later Chief Justice of that court in 1994. In 1996, he became the Chief Justice of Ontario, leading the Court of Appeal for Ontario until his retirement from the bench in 2007. He was selected as a recipient of the Order of Ontario later that year and made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2009.

After retiring from the bench, as if that wasn't enough, he returned to private legal practice, became chancellor of York University from 2008 to 2014, and continues to practise to this day at Hull and Hull LLP. In his spare time, he has also become a celebrated landscape painter, and savvy art collectors are snapping up his works.

Over the course of his distinguished career as member of provincial Parliament for Eglinton, as the Attorney General of Ontario, as Chief Justice of Ontario, Roy McMurtry has left an indelible imprint on our justice system, and he is certainly most deserving of the recognition for his service to our province.

On behalf of our government and our caucus, it is my distinct pleasure to congratulate Roy McMurtry on receiving the distinguished service award.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Ottawa–Vanier.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I seek unanimous consent to be able to ask a question on behalf of the MPP from Thunder Bay–Superior North today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa–Vanier is seeking the consent of the House to ask a question on behalf of another member. Agreed? Agreed.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, my question to the Acting Premier: Does the Premier's government accept the independent FAO report that cancelling cap-and-trade will cost more than \$3 billion over the next four years?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you: I thank the member from Davenport for the question. Yes, because when we say it cost \$3 billion, that's \$3 billion back in the pockets of Ontario taxpayers.

The FAO report—and I appreciate the chance to speak to it—on page 10 confirms that the elimination of cap-and-trade will save taxpayers \$1.3 billion this year alone and confirms \$264 per year, per family. Also on page 12, the report confirms our \$5 million in terms of a compensation framework. So yes, to the member, we are putting money back in the pockets of taxpayers. That is going to be over \$3 billion at the end of the day.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The FAO reports that \$3 billion could be only the beginning. Although the Premier made it illegal for anyone to sue the government in Ontario, which is a pretty extraordinary step right there, they could still face lawsuits from other countries.

How much does the government expect to pay for international lawsuits?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: As I mentioned, the FAO identified that the compensation framework, which is the basis for the lawsuits that the member is speaking of, has in fact been confirmed at \$5 million. Now, you'll recall during the election there was a lot of hyperbole, a lot of talk about \$3 billion, \$4 billion. In fact, the detailed analysis, which we thank him for, points out that \$5 million is the expected compensation. That's the amount that we put forward.

We committed to the orderly wind-down of this program that was killing jobs, that was regressive, and we will follow that through. It's a promise we made. It's a promise we'll keep.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm sure he read a different report.

Again, back to the minister: People are learning that the Premier's snap decision to cancel cap-and-trade will cost Ontario families and businesses \$3 billion. Did the Premier's office do any due diligence, do any assessment of these costs or figure out what their ideological plan would actually cost the people of Ontario before they ended the cap-and-trade market?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I would recommend that everyone, particularly in this Legislature, read the report.

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The mistake that sometimes the members opposite make is thinking that money for government grows on trees. Money for government comes from people. When we made a commitment about affordability to the people

of Ontario, we made it knowing that that meant that we were going to reduce revenues for government. We were reducing revenues for a program that wasn't working, a regressive job-killing tax.

Some \$264 per family is confirmed in this report today. Yes, that means less money for government. That's more money for families. We'll talk about that all day.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Acting Premier: During the election campaign, the Premier promised that his ideological plan would not cost anything. Now we see that it will add billions to the debt without changing costs to households. Will the minister now admit that the Premier was wrong?

Hon. Rod Phillips: This is only awkward because it's getting ahead of our job questions.

Again, and we'll talk about this all day in this Legislature: When the NDP talks about government money, they don't seem to appreciate that that's people's money. That's taxpayers' money. That's money for businesses.

We understand that that money comes out of the pockets of hard-working taxpayers. When people are making choices between heating and eating, we will focus on the fact that those people need that money, that they can spend that money better than the government.

We're happy to talk about it all day: \$3 billion back in people's pockets. This is a government that will keep its promises. We said that we would cut this tax, and we cut this tax.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, the Financial Accountability Officer was clear today: The government will add \$3 billion to the debt, scrapping programs and paying expensive lawyers. The families will be paying an even higher carbon price and Ontario has no climate plan.

Only this government could spend \$3 billion to not have a plan. Does the Acting Premier think that's something to be proud of?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, \$264 may not be a lot of money to the NDP; that's \$264 that goes back into the pockets.

Now, they've talked about the federal carbon plan. I'd love to go into detail about that. Their party talks about a higher carbon tax even than Trudeau, but our party understands that money best spent is in people's pockets.

We will bring forward a plan, a made-in-Ontario plan, a plan that deals with the real issues, that balances the economy and the environment, and that doesn't punish Ontario families. Why does the NDP want to punish Ontario families?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Here's what the Financial Accountability Officer found: There will be no savings for households, there will be \$3 billion added to the debt and the province has no plan to deal with climate change.

At a time when we need leadership, the government has delivered a \$3-billion mess. When are they going to admit that they were wrong?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I wish if the member was going to quote the FAO, he would quote the page numbers. Let me do that. On page 10: The elimination of cap-and-trade will save \$1.3 billion this year alone. On page 3: A typical household will save \$264. He further confirms on page 13—this has been a question in this House—that the money collected for cap-and-trade will be spent on programs to meet the purpose of the act to fight climate change.

We've been clear. We will wind this program down in a responsible way. We will bring forward a made-in-Ontario plan that balances the economy and the environment. We made this promise and we intend to keep it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre par interim.

One of the communities that tragically has become a symbol of hallway medicine is Brampton, Ontario. Brampton is one of the fastest-growing communities in our province, but its one and lonely full-service hospital is struggling to keep up with demand. Last year, 4,352 patients, some of the sickest, were treated in hallways. Yesterday, they were in code gridlock yet again.

Does the Acting Premier think the community of Brampton deserves a new hospital?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Brampton is, frankly, the example of why our Premier, during the election, and our Deputy Premier and Minister of Health have been working so hard to end hallway medicine in the province of Ontario. We made that commitment, Speaker, because we understand that Peel region and Ottawa and Toronto and Hamilton and London and Thunder Bay—

Interjection.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: —and Kenora all have issues. We made a commitment to do that. There is no one more qualified to lead that study and to lead that change than the Minister of Health. We are very confident that as we move forward—we've already started making announcements. We made an announcement on the surge funding last week.

The people of Ontario sent a very clear message, which is exactly why we have nine MPPs from the PC Party representing the Peel region and—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The people of Brampton deserve better than an underfunded hospital that leaves them treated in hallways.

The Premier made it clear his plan is for cuts. We know where that leads. It leads to closed hospitals, less nurses, more hallway medicine. It means more patients losing their dignity, losing their privacy, as they try to use a commode with five other people in a TV room with them.

It shouldn't have to be that way, Speaker. It should not be that way.

Will the Acting Premier urge his caucus to stand with the New Democrats today and commit to funding a new hospital in Brampton in the upcoming budget?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I couldn't agree more. No one understands more why we need to solve the crisis in health care. I understand that, the Minister of Health understands that, and the Premier understands that, which is exactly why we made the announcement last week.

We are already moving forward on our announcements. We are already putting money, new money, in place for the surge funding to prepare for the flu season. We've already announced long-term-care beds. Many of us understand and appreciate that part of the challenge with the alternate-level-of-care beds is because we don't have the space in long-term care. We are making those commitments. We have started to make those commitments. And I'm proud of the Minister of Health's work on this file.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Lindsey Park: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. I know he's a popular guy this morning—rightly so.

Voters soundly rejected the Liberals' cap-and-trade program in the last election, and it is time for it to come to an end.

Let me be clear: I care deeply about the environment. And I know that our minister is working hard on a made-in-Ontario climate change plan. But our government made a promise to the people of Ontario and, Speaker, we plan to keep it.

As others have referred to this morning, Peter Weltman, the Financial Accountability Officer for Ontario, completed a financial review of the cancellation of the cap-and-trade program, and that review was released this morning.

Can the Minister of the Environment share some of the highlights of this review with us?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member from Durham for that question.

I should again thank the Financial Accountability Officer and his staff for their hard work. Financial accountability is something that we need to return to the government, and his work is much appreciated.

As mentioned, there are some number of highlights about the cancellation. He did confirm, and I've now memorized it, on page 10, that the elimination of the cap-and-trade program will save \$1.3 billion. Page 3: The typical family will save \$264, a number this Legislature has heard before. Very importantly, on page 12, we talked about a compensation framework, that \$5 million will be the likely cost to the government of cancelling that program. Page 13, the money collected for fighting climate change will be used for the purpose it was collected for.

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We've been clear, Mr. Speaker. We are going to cancel this regressive, job-killing program and tax and we are going to replace it with a made-in-Ontario solution.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Lindsey Park: Thank you to the minister for that answer. That's eye-opening information. It seems the voters of Ontario were right. It's great to see that the estimates spoken to in this House by the minister have been confirmed to be accurate by the FAO. I can assure you my constituents in Durham will be pleased to hear that savings are on the way.

But January 1 is fast approaching. This date is a significant one, as it's the day the federal government claims that they will impose their own carbon tax on our province. This is not what Ontario voted for. This is not what the people of Durham voted for.

Can the minister explain to this House what our intentions are as a government to prevent this from happening?

Hon. Rod Phillips: The member raises an excellent point. In fact, on page 3 of the FAO's report, we find the answer to a question that many Canadians have been asking: How much will the Trudeau carbon tax cost families? This is a question they've not been willing to answer, but we have an answer today. The FAO reveals that the Trudeau carbon tax will cost \$648 per family. That's every year, year after year, once it's fully implemented. That's the equivalent of four hydro bills for an average Ontario family.

Families cannot afford \$648 per family. That's why Premier Ford and his government have promised to do everything possible to fight this carbon tax, to stop the imposition of this regressive, job-killing tax. We've been clear to the federal government. We believe and understand that climate change is important. We will bring forward a made-in-Ontario solution. We will not punish Ontario families for that solution.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. For a long time now, families in Chatham-Kent have been dealing with black water coming up from their wells. Water on family farms that surround the Samsung North Kent 1 wind turbine site became black and undrinkable when Samsung began construction of their turbines. The former Liberal government said that the water was safe and that these families were overreacting.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government benches, come to order.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Now the current PC government is acting with the same indifference that the Liberals did.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Sorry to interrupt the member. The government benches have to come to order. The member can ask his question.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, as we can see, the PC government is acting with the same indifference that the former Liberal government worked with. I've seen firsthand what this water looks like, and scientists have confirmed that it contains black shale sediments that are known carcinogens.

Why is this PC government taking the same approach as the old Liberal government and refusing to initiate a health hazard investigation? Where is the health hazard investigation that the Premier promised the people of Chatham-Kent-Essex?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to welcome, on behalf of the government of Ontario, the people from Chatham-Kent who are here today from the organization Water Wells First, who have been actively fighting the expansion of industrial wind turbines in the province of Ontario and have also been fighting for those families who are unable to drink water from their wells because of the expansion of wind turbines.

Our Premier, Doug Ford, myself and the entire PC government are committed to getting to the bottom of this issue. We made a promise in the election and prior to the election to stand with these families and, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that already that work has begun. The Ministry of Health has directed Ontario's chief medical officer to begin reviewing data in past collections and begin getting answers for the impacted families living in Chatham-Kent. We look forward to having more to say on the matter in the weeks ahead.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: These families are not just worried about the quality of the water in their wells for their own sake. They're afraid to report these sediments in their well water for fear of loss of their property values due to environmental stigma.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government benches, come to order.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, I'll ask again: What immediate action is this government undertaking to determine the full nature and the extent of contamination from sediments released in this region's watershed?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound will come to order. I have to be able to hear the question.

Put the question again.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much, Speaker.

The question is simply: What are the immediate actions this government is undertaking to ensure that these people have clean drinking water? Your government seems to work with a matter of speed when it comes to cheap beer, but you can't give these people clean drinking water.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Look, I outlined clearly that the Ministry of Health has directed the Ontario chief medical officer to begin reviewing this data to get answers for these families.

Our government moved quickly and decisively on a number of issues, including introducing legislation to scrap the Green Energy Act in the province of Ontario, a piece of legislation that the member opposite and his party supported, as well as every day at Queen's Park, currently, they're criticizing us for scrapping the Green Energy Act.

Secondly, the Minister of Energy moved quickly and decisively to cancel 758 wasteful and unnecessary energy projects in Ontario, and one of those cancelled projects is the Otter Creek Wind Farm—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Step up, Monte. Put your money where your mouth is.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Essex, come to order.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: —which was planned for the same area as the North Kent Wind farm in Kent county.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say, promises made, promises kept.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The House will come to order.

Hon. John Yakubuski: No turbines, no problems at the wells. You voted for the Green Energy Act.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Transportation, come to order. Minister of Municipal Affairs, come to order.

Start the clock. Next question?

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Parm Gill: My question is for the Minister of Finance. During the last election, I heard a lot about auto insurance rates while knocking on doors, and since, in my great riding of Milton. I heard from countless people in my riding that insurance rates are simply too high. Insurance rates are unfair and discriminatory. People are demanding change to the auto insurance system.

I know our government is committed to building an auto insurance system that puts the needs of drivers first. However, it's unfortunate the Liberals dragged their feet and could not provide relief on this file for the last 15 long years.

Could the minister please explain how the auto insurance system has reached this breaking point?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Milton for the question. For 15 years, drivers in Ontario suffered under the Liberal government. Every aspect of life became more unaffordable, including auto insurance. And what's worse is that the Liberals knew people needed relief and did nothing about it. Rather than propose real solutions to issues in the auto insurance system, the Liberals promised unrealistic stretch goals, and the NDP supported them every single step of the way. The remaining Liberal members would do well to learn from the member from Milton. His thoughtful approach to rate discrimination has resulted in legislation that, if passed, will bring real fairness to the system.

I'd like to once again congratulate the member from Milton on his important work on this file, Speaker.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to thank the minister for his response. It's disappointing that the NDP supported Liberal inaction on this file for so many years. Drivers had to deal with unfair and discriminatory insurance rates for far

too long, and the only help they received was Liberal-NDP stretch goals.

But now the NDP seem to have changed their minds. They say they want to help drivers. Just minutes after I announced my private member's bill yesterday, the member from Brampton East rushed into the media studio to announce his own plan to end the discrimination—perfect timing, Mr. Speaker.

As the only member to put legislation forward on this matter—could the minister please explain to me the importance of acting on affordable insurance rates for all Ontarians?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Well, the member from Brampton East hasn't tabled any legislation yet, so we don't fully know the details of his plan, but I will try my best, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Brampton East wants the GTA to be considered a single geographic area when insurance companies set their rates. However, this will serve only to increase insurance costs across the entire GTA. In fact, the member's plan would cause rates to rise in many of his own caucus colleagues' ridings.

On the other hand, the member from Milton got it right. He took the time to consult, to listen and to develop a plan that will deliver real fairness to the system. If passed, drivers all across Ontario will benefit from the thoughtful plan the member from Milton put forward.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Minister of Education. Today we are joined by early childhood educators from across Ontario. They are hard-working professionals who educate and care for some of the most important people in our province, our children. These professionals play a vital role in the early years of young children across the province. They also contribute to the economy by ensuring that parents can participate in the workforce or finish school.

Today is Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. They get a day. Minister, to say that ECEs across the province are undervalued and underpaid would be an understatement. Is this government still committed to increasing wages for early childhood educators, as you promised to do?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to rise today and welcome our early educators who are here today in Parliament. This is your House, this is where it all starts, and the responsibility for ensuring that you have a good working environment absolutely rests squarely on the shoulders of this PC government, under the leadership of Premier Ford.

We feel very strongly that we have to take every step possible to ensure that the classroom environment is the best it can be for our people on the front lines. We have met with amazing ECEs across not only my riding but the province. We know the valuable work that they bring, and we look forward to working with them in the weeks and months to come, to ensure that the value they bring to the environment in our schools is respected and valued.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, I didn't hear a promise that you are going to appreciate ECEs by actually paying them what they deserve.

Minister, not-for-profit care means that the focus is on children, not multinational profit margins. Any investment in early learning and care should ensure that public money goes to affordable, high-quality care where children can learn and grow, and also to ensure that ECEs have resources to provide the education and the care that they're trained to do, because they are professionals in this province.

Is the government interested at all in high-quality, accountable, affordable public services, or just padding the profit margins of multinational big-box daycare corporations, as you have indicated in the past and even today by not answering this question?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, the easy answer to this question is yes. But I think there's a little bit of concern—I'm feeling a little bit of concern—coming from the focus of the question from the member opposite in the NDP. There's a lot of rhetoric there.

I know a lot of ECEs who work in private daycare facilities who are doing an amazing job—and that's in addition to the facilities that we have in our public institutions. We need to be celebrating them all, and that's what we're doing today.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ma question est également pour le ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs.

This morning, I met with representatives from the Wildlands League, an organization committed to biodiversity.

Ontario has a tremendous, rich, natural heritage. It no longer has a climate change plan, but this government should do something for the environment. We are blessed with a bounty of fresh water, forests and wetlands, but we need to do more.

Can the minister commit today to meeting the national target of protecting 17% of our natural heritage by 2020, as recommended by the national advisory panel report this year?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you, thank you to the member for the question.

We are a government committed to making sure that our air, our land and our water are clean, and of course within parks that Ontarians—10 million last year, and hopefully more in the future can enjoy Ontario parks.

I'd be pleased to meet with the group that you referenced. I'd be pleased to speak to them about their objectives.

Certainly, our objectives are to increase accessibility for Ontarians to our parks and wild spaces while doing that in an ecologically sensitive fashion.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Back to the minister: In my meeting this morning, the Wildlands League provided me

with a blueprint of how we can meet this 17% protection target, working with Indigenous communities. As Liberals, we want to hold the government accountable to that particular objective.

The evidence is in. There are specific projects, such as the north French River, an immense natural wetland, which can help us achieve this target.

So I'm asking the government, will it commit to working with the Moose Cree First Nation to protect the north French River, and commit to that today?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: As I said, we'd be happy to sit and meet, to understand the objectives. This is a government that is committed in terms of our wild spaces, in terms of our parks, both the operating parks and the non-operating parks. As the member would know, of course, there are the sensitivities we must manage with First Nations and others in terms of the expansion of protected areas. But there is a proud PC history of creation of things like the Oak Ridges moraine and other important landmarks from a parks perspective, including our very first parks in this province.

I'd be pleased to meet with the group mentioned.

CANNABIS REGULATION

Mr. Stephen Crawford: My question is for the Attorney General.

In less than 24 hours, the federal Liberal government's decision to legalize cannabis in Ontario and across Canada takes effect. Many families in my riding of Oakville have raised questions about what will be done to keep it out of the hands of their children. They're looking for assurance that the health, well-being and safety of their children is a top priority. Most importantly, they want to know what policies will be in place to protect their children.

I know this government is working hard to protect our young people, and I'm hoping the Attorney General can share with the people of Oakville and all Ontarians what efforts the government is making to keep our children safe.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'd like to thank the member from Oakville for the question.

I'd like to assure the people of Oakville and all across the province that Ontario will be ready on October 17, tomorrow. We will be putting forward an approach that puts the safety of children first.

I'd like to tell you about some of the safeguards that we will have in place to protect our children. Ontarians will have to be 19 years or older to buy, use, possess or grow cannabis. Consumers who purchase cannabis through the online Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. will be required to confirm that they are 19 years of age or older before entering the website. Purchases will be delivered to consumers' homes, and Canada Post will have the ability to check ID to verify the age of the recipient. Packages will not be left at the door. In stores, products cannot be visible or sold to youth, and must be sold from behind the counter. Promotions must be limited to factual information and cannot be appealing to youth.

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While this is a policy that was put forward by the federal Liberal government, I can assure you that our government is doing everything it can to keep recreational cannabis out of the hands of children.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I appreciate the Attorney General providing that information.

As a father myself, I know parents in my riding will also feel relieved to know that our government takes the safety of their children seriously.

I also know that, by establishing the minimum age as 19, Ontario is striking a balance between the health risks of cannabis use for young people and the need to eliminate the illegal market for cannabis. This is also a serious matter of concern to many people in the riding of Oakville who are concerned about the illegal use.

I'm hoping the Attorney General can provide some information on what is being done to combat the illegal market.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for that important question. On October 17, the only legal retailer of recreational cannabis in Ontario is the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp., through its online platform. Anyone found at the time to be selling or allowing their property to be used for the distribution of cannabis can face fines of up to \$1 million and/or up to two years in jail.

I have introduced legislation which, if passed, clarifies that while participation in the illegal market before October 17 will not necessarily preclude someone from potentially participating in the private retail market, continuing to do so after October 17 will.

Mr. Speaker, our message cannot be more clear: Anyone currently participating in the illegal market should stop now.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier. Christine and Marcel Turgeon are constituents of mine in London-Fanshawe. They went through enormous hardship because of the overcrowding crisis in our hospitals and long-term-care facilities.

Marcel suffers from dementia and recently had a heart attack. Following the treatment, he was involuntarily placed into a long-term-care home hours away from his wife, causing him to lose his priority status at London long-term-care facilities. The reason the hospital gave for doing this was that they needed the bed.

Will the minister stop the cuts and provide our health care facilities with the funding they need?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again I will say to the member opposite, your example very eloquently highlights why we need change in the system.

To be clear, there are no cuts in the health care system. We have the most engaged and excellent front-line workers in our health care system and in our long-term-

care facilities. So to suggest that there are cuts to that system I think is really, really inappropriate on the member's side.

We talk about why health care is such an issue in the province of Ontario. We talk about why we've made commitments for long-term-care beds. We've already talked about commitments that we've made on the surge funding. We're doing this work, and I wish that the member opposite would be part of the solution instead of constantly highlighting the issues that frankly show why we need to make these changes.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The minister is incorrect. I have been part of the solution many, many times, suggesting things about how long-term care can be improved. Our party, the NDP, has also suggested how health care can be beneficial to everyone in Ontario by being public and having the infusion it needs to continually provide care for Ontarians.

Speaker, cuts to health care have torn apart this couple. Christine doesn't drive and must depend on the kindness of her friends and neighbours to drive her two hours out of town to visit her husband.

Marcel and Christine have been married for 53 years. The distance between them has put incredible stress on Marcel, who has experienced that stress of being separated from his wife, and now his foot is being amputated.

The chronic underfunding of our health care system hurts seniors and families. Seniors like Marcel are being pushed out of hospital beds because of overcrowding and funding cuts. Will the government do the right thing and make a serious commitment to hospital funding so families can receive the care they need?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I think you and I can agree on one thing, and that is that the system is not properly caring for our seniors, who need the assistance where they live and where their families are.

We made an announcement last week, as you know; in the city of London there is an announcement that has already been made about new long-term-care beds. We need to do better. We get that. But we've made that commitment.

All I'm asking for is that you work with us and make sure that we provide the system and the opportunity for your constituents and all constituents to benefit from the health care system.

There is a reason why Dr. Reuben Devlin has been tasked with this very important work. We understand there are systemic problems. We understand that there need to be system-wide changes. We cannot hive off city against city, municipality against municipality. We need to make sure that the entire system is working, and that's what our Minister of Health is doing.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: My question is to the Minister of Finance. The previous Liberal government strung along the people of Ontario for years—broken

promises, stretch goals and nothing to show for it. Life in Ontario became more unaffordable every step of the way.

People in Ontario deserve a change. People in my riding have suffered from rate discrimination in the auto insurance system for years and deserve better than NDP members who have enabled failed Liberal auto insurance policies. The previous government did nothing to help them.

Could the minister please explain what action is being proposed to address fairness in Ontario's auto insurance system?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Brampton South for the question.

Yesterday we saw exactly what is being proposed to help address fairness in our auto insurance system. The member from Milton introduced his Ending Discrimination in Automobile Insurance Act, 2018. I would like to congratulate again the member for his important work on this file. He got this right.

His proposed legislation is a great way to combat rate discrimination in our auto insurance system. There are nearly 10 million drivers in Ontario who expect us to do everything we can to ensure the auto insurance system is working for them. This is an excellent step forward in building an auto insurance system that serves the needs of the people. Congratulations once again to the member from Milton.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to the minister for his response. It is very exciting to see our caucus taking direct action to support drivers in Ontario. There's no doubt that this legislation brought forward by the member from Milton, if passed, will bring more fairness to our auto insurance system. I'm very happy with the proposed action to combat rate discrimination. We finally have a government that listens to the needs of the people and takes action.

The Liberals let drivers suffer for too long, and for too long the NDP supported their broken promises.

While the opposition sits idle, this minister is taking action to end the war on drivers. Could the minister please update the House on what is being done to address other aspects of the auto insurance system?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: It's clear that the Liberal-NDP system of failed stretch goals on auto insurance is broken. It's yet another Liberal promise that never came to fruition and, sadly, the NDP supported them every single step of the way.

To clean up this mess, our government is looking at the regulatory environment surrounding auto insurance in Ontario. We want to work with industry stakeholders to ensure Ontario has an auto insurance system that serves the needs of the people. We are committed to ensuring fairness in rate setting. We are committed to ending discriminatory rate practices and we are committed to building a system that puts the drivers first.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): If this keeps going, we'll never have lunch.

Start the clock. Next question.

1150

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Acting Premier. London's hallway medicine crisis is being ignored by this Conservative government. The crisis is so serious that earlier this year, London Health Sciences Centre was forced to implement a hallway transfer protocol to deal with the daily, year-round reality of patients lined up for treatment in the hospital hallways. With winter coming, there will be more people going to hospital for cold weather-related illnesses and more patients competing for already limited beds.

Will this government commit today to adding permanent beds to London Health Sciences Centre to help end hallway medicine in my community?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you for that question and thank you for allowing us to highlight our government's recent announcement: 6,000 new long-term-care beds in the province of Ontario, including London.

We all understand that the health care system needs assistance. That's why the Premier has appointed Dr. Rueben Devlin. That's why we have the most capable and talented Deputy Premier and Minister of Health on this file.

We understand there are systemic problems, but we also are taking action. As I said, 6,000 new long-term-care beds were announced last week. Surge funding for hospitals in need in preparation for the flu season was announced.

We're taking action. Where are you?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Systemic problems require more than band-aid, one-time solutions. The flu season is already upon us. This government's flu surge funding won't come close to alleviating the pressures in our health care system. With none of the funding currently allocated to new beds at London Health Sciences Centre, it won't do anything at all for my community of London.

Again to the Acting Premier: Will this government commit today to adding not only flu surge beds to LHSC, but permanent beds as well? Or are Conservatives completely indifferent to the health care needs of Londoners?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: While the NDP continues to play political games with our health care system, I am proud of our government's action on this file. I think that we need to move beyond the rhetoric and actually move to action.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Six thousand new beds.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, I will reinforce: 6,000 new long-term-care beds have been announced. Those are long-term-care beds that will take some pressure off of our hospitals. Alternative level of care is a problem, but 6,000 new long-term-care beds will make a difference.

I just wish the NDP would understand some of the problems and work with us instead of fighting with us.

FRANCOPHONE ENTREPRENEURSHIP ENTREPRENEURIAT FRANCOPHONE

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: My question is for the minister responsible for francophone affairs. Our government was elected with a mandate to create and protect jobs. Unfortunately, the last 15 years under the Liberals have been devastating for the small business community. They have been hit with high taxes, increased employer costs and suffocating red tape, making Ontario uncompetitive.

Our number one priority is ensuring that Ontario is open for business. Our government has been holding a series of round tables across Ontario to hear directly from those who create jobs on how we can help them thrive.

Last week, the minister held a series of round tables to hear directly from francophone business owners. Can the minister inform us on what she learned from local job creators during those round tables?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleague the member from Mississauga Centre for her question. Franco-Ontarians are proud Ontarians whose history and culture are integral parts of our province. They are also important and significant contributors to Ontario's economy.

Last week, the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, my parliamentary assistant, and I heard directly from francophone entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized business owners and representatives from non-profit organizations in Kapuskasing, North Bay, Sudbury and Embrun. At each round table, we heard from job creators who are suffering from overregulation and the anti-business culture that the Liberals allowed to build up across government, and many of them offered constructive solutions to the issues and problems that they are experiencing. We heard that they are now looking forward to a government that finally cares about creating the conditions for them to succeed.

We will continue to engage our Franco-Ontarian business owners, to listen to them and to help them build a more prosperous Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Monsieur le Président, par votre entremise, je remercie l'honorable ministre pour sa réponse. Nous savons à quel point la ministre a à coeur la prospérité de nos entrepreneurs francophones et nous voulons entendre directement de leur part ce que notre gouvernement peut faire pour les aider.

Est-ce que la ministre pourrait informer cette Chambre des prochaines étapes à venir dans sa consultation d'entreprises francophones?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Ces tables rondes sont des occasions pour discuter de la création d'emplois avec les entrepreneurs francophones, pour en apprendre plus au sujet des défis et des possibilités dans leurs communautés. L'Ontario a un potentiel énorme et inexploité, et c'est en rencontrant les entrepreneurs de chez nous que nous

pouvons développer les stratégies nécessaires pour miser sur notre main-d'oeuvre bilingue.

Nos communautés seront plus prospères lorsqu'on diminuera le poids du fardeau administratif qui pèse présentement sur nos entreprises, qui sont les créateurs d'emplois. Nous voulons créer les conditions qui facilitent le démarrage et la croissance d'une entreprise ou l'investissement dans l'Ontario, notamment en réduisant le poids des règlements.

Je suis heureuse d'informer cette Chambre que nous allons continuer ces consultations. Je peux vous dire que nous regardons, en ce moment, d'aller visiter d'autres communautés, notamment Hamilton, Welland et London.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Good morning, Minister.

The doors at Kawartha Downs are closed this morning, and they'll likely stay closed for the rest of the month at least. The employees and their union want to know why, because the minister has said the slot play at Kawartha Downs has been saved.

Speaker, what does the minister have to say to these employees today?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, and good morning to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Our government has kept its commitment to bolster the horse racing industry and repair the damage done by the previous Liberal government, one that you supported.

The member is speaking about the temporary closure at Kawartha Downs in order to reconfigure the slots, in order to keep our commitment and honour the agreement in principle. Kawartha Downs has been advised that no employee has been or will be laid off as a result of this very brief closure. OLG is working with Kawartha Downs to mitigate the impacts of the temporary closure of the Shoreline slots at Kawartha Downs on its employees.

We look forward to the relaunch of Shoreline's slots at Kawartha Downs in approximately two weeks' time and we thank the community for their patience. This is an example of a promise made and a promise kept.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: The minister used to be critical of the casino operator Great Canadian Gaming. He said in this House that their deal with the Liberals for casino contracts didn't pass the "smell test." He suggested the Liberals were sweeping their business contracts under the rug because they were so bad.

The government has cancelled green energy contracts. Are they planning on getting rid of the Great Canadian Gaming contracts as well?

1200

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I would like to say that agreements in principle have now been reached to keep slots operating at Kawartha Downs and Ajax Downs and to provide additional funding to continue horse racing in Fort Erie and Dresden, as they both made a local business decision for additional horse racing support.

But I will say thank you to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and you'll hear why in a moment, Speaker.

On October 8, the Peterborough Examiner quoted Cavan Monaghan mayor Scott McFadden's response to the news that slots would remain at Kawartha Downs. He said, "It's absolutely incredible news." He said, "It's fantastic—the jobs have been saved."

Speaker, they were saved by the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Kaled Rasheed: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. After 15 long years, the outcomes of health care in Ontario lag near the bottom among industrialized countries, while costs are in the top third. While the Liberals were more concerned with bureaucratic systems that benefited well-connected insiders, our patients suffered.

Overcrowding and long wait-lists defined the Liberal record on health care. The Liberals openly attacked our doctors, laid off our nurses, cut residency positions, and disregarded our paramedics and other front-line professionals. They let our hospitals and health care infrastructure crumble without providing much-needed support to fix the problem.

What new initiatives is our government for the people taking to help end the scandal-ridden Liberal record on hallway health care?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to thank the member for that question.

Mr. Speaker, for far too long, we have seen a government that refused to act when it came to crumbling buildings, overcrowded rooms and patients in hallways. I am pleased to share that the dark days of hallway health care are now behind us.

Last Thursday, I was honoured to attend with our Premier a groundbreaking ceremony for the West Park Healthcare Centre. West Park is a new \$1.2-billion rehab hospital complex being built through a public-private partnership.

Our government will stand up for the people of this province by making important health care investments in reliable infrastructure like the new West Park Healthcare Centre. That's because infrastructure is for the people. It's the rinks we skate in, it's the schools we learn in, it's the hospitals our babies are born in, it's the networks we communicate over and it's the roads that bring us back home.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Kaled Rasheed: Minister, that is great news. This announcement shows that the people of this great province finally have a government that gets it and that is on their side when it comes to health care.

The commitment of \$1.2 billion at the West Park Healthcare Centre represents a significant investment into the community of York and Humber River. Promises made—

Interjections:—promises kept.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: It builds upon our call to action of finally addressing the hallway health care crisis in this province.

Minister, can you provide this Legislature with further information about this project and what new innovative features West Park will include?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you again for the question.

Mr. Speaker, this new hospital will be a 314-bed, six-storey facility for patients recovering from serious illness. This represents an increase of 54 more beds than the previous hospital in that region.

The new hospital will serve double the current volume of patients. New innovative features also include 80% single-patient rooms. The rooms will be designed in a way to improve infection control. There will be outdoor spaces and terraces on each floor of the facility to help ensure fresh air and a welcoming and healing environment.

This hospital project represents our commitment to serve the people of our province. Our government is proud to support West Park and health care staff across Ontario because, as I've said, infrastructure is truly for the people.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Faisal Hassan: My question is to the Acting Premier.

While the Conservatives focus on further enriching their wealthy friends, youth unemployment in Ontario increased again in September and is now nearly 11% higher than the national average. Under the Ford Conservatives, Ontario's youth are starting their lives with crushing student debt, a minimum wage which does not even cover their bills, and ever-fewer job opportunities.

Will the Acting Premier join Ontario's NDP in committing to the creation of 27,000 new paid co-op and internship placements so that Ontario's youth can start their careers with less debt and more training?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Thank you very much for the question.

Youth unemployment is very much a concern over here. We want better-paying jobs and good jobs and more jobs in the province of Ontario. We have said time and time again that Ontario is open for business. We're creating a climate where businesses can expand and new businesses can come, and so we're making life more affordable for young people. We're decreasing taxes. We're decreasing the price of gas. We're decreasing hydro. We're making an opportunity for young people to get good-paying jobs in the province of Ontario, as the people elected us to do, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Through you, Mr. Speaker, Ontario's youth should be making plans for bright futures, not fighting for survival.

The Liberals made life in Ontario increasingly unaffordable, and the only solution that the Ford Conservatives propose is to make these hard times even worse by

freezing the minimum wage and eliminating important workplace protections.

Ontario's youth cannot afford to buy backroom access to the Conservatives. But I am here to ask the government, again, on their behalf: Will the Conservatives make a meaningful investment in their future and in the future of this province by creating 27,000 new paid job-training opportunities for young people?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, the PC government was elected to make life more affordable in the province of Ontario, and that's exactly what we're doing. After 15 years of Liberal government and the Liberal government not listening to the people of Ontario saying that they could not afford to stay here, that they could not provide for their families—and they were supported by the NDP opposition party that we have today.

As I said, we are making life more affordable for the people in the province of Ontario. We are decreasing the cost of living, and we will continue to do that.

This is just the first 100 days. There's more to come.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is for the government House leader.

Mr. Speaker, last week our government marked its first 100 days in office. The constituents in my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound are feeling the benefits of the work our government has done so far in delivering our plan for the people.

Can the government House leader provide this Legislature with an update on the great work our government has delivered in its first 100 days?

Hon. Todd Smith: That's a great question from the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound—and I know everybody is a little hungry because we've been here a little long in question period today.

We are ready to work. This government is ready to work, and we've proven that over the first 109 days that we have been in power. We have accomplished so many things.

I want to thank the whip for what a difficult question he has asked today, and I would like to go through a bit of a laundry list of some of the things we've accomplished.

We scrapped Drive Clean. That has made life more affordable. The cap-and-trade, that regressive, job-killing carbon tax—gone, on the way out. Gas prices are going down in Ontario. We're cleaning up the hydro mess in Ontario, renewing the leadership at Hydro One. We're doing a line-by-line review. Our President of the Treasury Board, right here, has done an outstanding job at restoring accountability and trust in government, and we've got much, much more on our agenda to do. We're looking forward—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. That concludes the time we have for question period this afternoon.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for London–Fanshawe has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport concerning health care. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

REPORT, FINANCIAL
ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report entitled Cap and Trade, from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion 11, regarding the allocation of time on government order number 4.

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

The division bells rang from 1210 to 1215.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members please take their seats. Are we seated?

Earlier today Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, moved government notice of motion number 11.

All those in favour of Mr. Smith's motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hillier, Randy	Phillips, Rod
Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Rasheed, Kaleed
Babikian, Aris	Jones, Sylvia	Rickford, Greg
Bailey, Robert	Kanapathi, Logan	Roberts, Jeremy
Barrett, Toby	Karahalios, Belinda	Romano, Ross
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Ke, Vincent	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Khanjin, Andrea	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Kramp, Daryl	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kusendova, Natalia	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Lecce, Stephen	Simard, Amanda
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Martin, Robin	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	Martow, Gila	Smith, Todd
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McDonell, Jim	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	McKenna, Jane	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dunlop, Jill	McNaughton, Monte	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norman	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fee, Amy	Mulroney, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Fullerton, Merrilee	Nicholls, Rick	Walker, Bill
Ghamari, Goldie	Oosterhoff, Sam	Yakabuski, John
Gill, Parm	Pang, Billy	Yurek, Jeff
Hardeman, Ernie	Park, Lindsey	
Harris, Mike	Pettapiece, Randy	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Glover, Chris	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harden, Joel	Sattler, Peggy
Arthur, Ian	Hassan, Faisal	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Hatfield, Percy	Shaw, Sandy
Berns-McGown, Rima	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Sara
Bisson, Gilles	Karpoche, Bhutlia	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Lalonde, Marie-France	Tabuns, Peter
Coteau, Michael	Lindo, Laura Mae	Taylor, Monique
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	West, Jamie
Fraser, John	Miller, Paul	Wynne, Kathleen O.
French, Jennifer K.	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Yarde, Kevin
Gates, Wayne	Morrison, Suze	
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 67; the nays are 43.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): This House stands in recess until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1220 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jamie West: Toronto is the home of Steelworkers International's Women of Steel. I want to introduce three International Women of Steel delegates who came to visit: Aubrey Schenk Martorana from Ohio, the vice-president of Steelworkers Local 652; Monica Badillo from Arizona, USW Local 886; and Stephanie Collene De La Rosa from Pittsburg, California, USW Local 1440.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. John Vanthof: We are coming up to one of the great seasons of northern Ontario: winter. Along with winter—it's a beautiful day here today, but we've had our first snow. We love winter, but sometimes we don't love the road conditions.

Where I'm from, we have one road that goes north: Highway 11. We all do our best to maintain Highway 11—I thank the contractors—but there are parts of Highway 11 that need some serious attention. We're asking the government to look at that.

A big part of Highway 11 is that, when Highway 11 is closed, there's no detour. There is no way to get to medical appointments. There is no way to get to your family. But there could be a way. There used to be a way, and it was called the Northlander; it was called passenger rail.

There are a lot of things that we don't agree with the Conservatives on, but in the election campaign we both campaigned to bring it back. There are a lot of people in the north who are working very hard, putting plans together to bring it back. The government keeps talking

about wanting to work together. Here is one: We'll work together—let's bring back passenger rail service to northeastern Ontario so northerners are treated the same as the rest of the people in this province.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. David Piccini: Next month is Woman Abuse Prevention Month. It is every woman's fundamental right to live in safety and security, free from threats of violence in her own home and in her community.

In Canada, almost half of all femicide victims are killed in their own homes. This means that women are at greatest risk where they should feel safest. In Ontario, 83% of reported spousal violence victims are women, with Indigenous women being 2.5 times more likely to experience spousal violence than their non-Indigenous counterparts.

My own riding is not immune to the impacts of gender-based violence against women. This past year, Cornerstone Family Violence Prevention Centre in Northumberland county provided service to more than 2,000 women, children and youth, operating at an occupancy rate of 127%. The United Nations has designated November 25 as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I encourage folks from throughout Northumberland–Peterborough South to purchase and wear a purple scarf or tie from Cornerstone Family Violence Prevention Centre or another local women's shelter to show women that we support them, that they are not alone and that violence against women is never okay.

ROBIN SIMPSON

Mr. Jamie West: Last week my nails were painted pink, as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and today is Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, so it feels appropriate to share a story about an incredible Sudburian that I recently met. Robin Simpson is an early childhood educator at Ernie Checkers Public School and she's also a breast cancer survivor.

Robin was 35 years old when she noticed an irregularity in her breast. She phoned her best friend, Stacey, and then she phoned her doctor. Three days later, she was at the Health Sciences North breast screening program. They performed a mammogram and an ultrasound, and the radiologist called for an immediate biopsy to verify that it was cancer.

March 8 was a difficult day for Robin. That was the day her family doctor told her that she had stage 3 inflammatory breast cancer. It was seven months after her father, Don, died from leukemia and it was two days before her daughter, Harper, turned two years old. Robin told her family, then she told the staff at the school where she works as an early childhood educator, and then she asked the principal at Ernie Checkers to draft a letter to the students' families.

It sounds like a depressing story, Speaker, but it's not. After 18 weeks of chemotherapy, a double mastectomy

and 25 days of radiation, Robin Simpson is now cancer-free. She had a positive experience. In fact, Robin Simpson might be one of the most positive and upbeat people I've ever had the pleasure to meet. She spoke positively about the staff and the nurses at Health Sciences North and told me about the friends she made while going through cancer treatment. When Robin learned that most people with cancer are older than 40, she started a Facebook group for northern Ontario's under-40 cancer patients.

During her treatment, she visited regularly with her school, Ernie Checkers. She provided updates and shared her story with the students. For many of these students, cancer might have been a story about how people died, but because of Robin, cancer became a story about how Madame Robin lived: how she got sick, how she lost her hair, then she got well and it grew back again. She even dyed her hair rainbow colours because one of the students asked her to.

I asked Robin if there was anything I could share with the assembly, and she said, "Timing is key with breast cancer." Inflammatory breast cancer causes death within 30 months, and because of Sudbury's breast screening program, Robin waited four days to begin treatment.

CARL MILLS

Mr. Vincent Ke: Last week in my riding, I met with many of my constituents. One of them was Mr. Carl Mills, a retired lieutenant-colonel who served in the Royal Canadian Air Force for over 25 years. He is currently a member of the 400 Squadron Historical Society. He highlighted the important work the society is doing and the importance of military history in Canada.

Mr. Mills is organizing a mission to recover the aircraft and the remains of Richard Walter Russell, a flying officer who crashed into Lake Ontario in 1953. He is also currently seeking sponsorships of \$3,000 for 25 paintings of Canadian aviation history to honour the 100th anniversary of 400 Squadron.

Mr. Carl Mills, one of my constituents, is doing important work to remember our men and women in uniform. I am glad to have met him and I am working hard to be of service to him.

EVENTS IN TORONTO–ST. PAUL'S

Ms. Jill Andrew: Today I'd like to give a huge shout-out to two organizations that are all about fostering community in Toronto–St. Paul's.

On October 11, we celebrated International Day of the Girl, and as part of the festivities I had the opportunity to attend Skills for Change's Women Connecting With Women, a TIFF partnership presentation of the film series Stories From Home. These films showcased the lived experience of newcomer and immigrant women who now proudly call St. Paul's home. Skills for Change is an organization that provides employment services, language programs, settlement bridging programs, mentoring programs for women and youth, seniors' programs, as well as

entrepreneurship hubs. Needless to say, they are always very busy, but never too busy to provide a warm welcome to someone new and trying to fit in.

I also got to attend Ebony Toastmasters, my first time ever attending a Toastmasters organization. Again located in the riding, they promote community, public speaking and leadership skills. This is the first time I had ever stood up in a room filled with strangers—because it was my first time attending—and I got to tell them about what brought me to politics: my own experience two years ago of hallway medicine.

1510

I've got to tell you: What a safe space they provided to me, where I was able to speak, they were able to speak, and we were able to hear each other's stories and learn about one another on a deeper level. I really appreciate Gloria Pierre for the very kind and generous invitation.

EVENTS IN ORLÉANS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Recently, during constituency week, I met with Principal Jennifer Coleman of Cairine Wilson Secondary School, who shared exciting news with me. I want to share it with the House today.

Thanks to the staff and the students, Cairine Wilson hosted a very inspirational Relay for Life on May 11, 2018, and raised over \$100,000. In the past year alone, there were 140 Relay for Life events in schools across Canada that raised over \$6 million. I want to recognize that the dedication to the Canadian Cancer Society that Cairine Wilson has shown with the Relay for Life event has been amazing. Last May, a milestone was hit. In the past 15 years, the school has raised a total of over \$800,000 for the fight against cancer. I want to congratulate the staff and the students.

Also, last weekend—I have to share other news. On Saturday, October 13, I was very proud to take part in the Fall Bottle Drive at a local Beer Store, where empty bottles were collected to raise funds for the Ottawa Rotary Home Foundation. I'm a proud Rotarian, Mr. Speaker. The Rotary Home first opened in 1982 and is a family-centred, not-for-profit organization that offers children and adults respite programs.

I want to say thank you to the Beer Store team—Joe, Dave and Doug—and for the generous donations by residents of OrLéans for raising funds for our community.

ADVOCIS

Mr. Jim McDonell: I invite all honourable members to join me in welcoming the many members and staff of Advocis who have joined us here at Queen's Park today.

Advocis is the oldest and largest voluntary professional members' association of financial advisers and planners in Canada, with more than 13,000 members nationwide. Over 6,000 are here in Ontario, in 20 chapters.

The work of a good financial planner is almost invisible. We don't take note of things when all is well, but we certainly take notice of their absence. The data shows

that Ontarians who don't receive financial advice, no matter what their income tax bracket is, are generally worse off.

We know that sound financial advice can change lives. Our government is taking steps to ensure that all Ontarians have access to the supports they need in order to plan for their future. Whether they are planning to send their child to university—as I did a few years ago—buying their first home or saving for retirement, there is no substitute for good advice when it comes to making critical financial planning decisions for your family. That's why this government is committed to ensuring access to financial services, whether somebody lives in Barrie, Scarborough or James Bay. We are committed to ensuring that Ontario is a place where people want to invest and have access to this dedicated group of professionals.

I thank the members of Advocis for being here and for all the work they do for Ontarians throughout the year. I look forward to speaking more with our guests, and invite all honourable members to join them at the reception this evening in the legislative dining room.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: In this House, health and health care have been dominant topics of discussion, and rightly so. It was an important issue that was top of Ontarians' minds during the past election as well. But what I think is that there is a part of health and health care that is missing from our conversations, and that is the social and economic conditions that influence health—the determinants of health. We all know that these conditions are shaped by the amount of money, power and resources that people have, power and resources that are divided along racial lines, along gender lines and many other social constructs.

There is overwhelming research in health that shows that precarity, racism, displacement and colonialism—all of these factors contribute to poor health. For too long, people's health has been viewed as being separate from the structural issues and problems in society. There has been an over-concentration on the bio-psycho mechanisms of health, rather than on the political and economic contexts.

I think that the social-determinants-of-health approach is critical in the work that we do, because social determinants of health are based on equity. That means eliminating poverty, ending all forms of discrimination, fighting unemployment, fighting for free post-secondary education, quality child care, universal pharmacare and dental care for all. Let's work towards making sure that all of these things are also part of the conversation when we talk about health and health care in this province.

BREAST CANCER

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I'm honoured to rise today in the House to discuss breast cancer, a disease that has devastated the lives of so many Ontario patients and their

families. I would like to thank the member from Sudbury for speaking on this important issue today as well.

Breast cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers, affecting women of all ages. We all know that the earlier a woman is diagnosed, the better her chances of survival once she begins treatment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to raise awareness about a significant risk factor that is often overlooked by health care professionals and rarely discussed by the public: breast density. Women are considered to have dense breasts if their breasts contain a higher ratio of glands than fat. Research shows that dense breasts pose a more significant risk factor than a family history of a given cancer. Specifically, cancer is more likely in women with breast density larger than 75%.

I would like to thank the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network for the important work they do on behalf of cancer survivors and their families, and for meeting with me to discuss this important issue, among others.

Currently in Ontario, breast density information post-routine mammogram is not shared with family doctors unless a patient's density is larger than 75%. We can do more for the women of Ontario, and I will continue, together with my colleagues, to advocate for patients in my riding of Mississauga Centre and across Ontario.

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Mike Harris: I wish to say a few words about volunteerism in my great riding of Kitchener–Conestoga. Following the June election, I've spent the summer and fall attending community events in the city of Kitchener and the townships of Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich. This year, as with years previous, I was struck by the hard work and dedication demonstrated by individuals who sacrificed their spare time to sustain our summer Canada Day celebrations, rural fall fairs and hallmark events like Oktoberfest, not to forget the upcoming Remembrance Day commemorations and Christmas activities.

Whether people participate through service clubs such as the Lions, 4-H and the Optimists or of their own initiative, these events, which attract hundreds of thousands of dollars to our communities, would not be possible without their help.

Unfortunately, local organizers who I've met have communicated their apprehension about the growing difficulty of recruiting volunteers and donations in recent years. There was one well-known spring festival that couldn't operate this year due to a lack of volunteers, and a Canada Day festival that for the first time charged admission due to insufficient donations. I will continue my efforts to support hard-working volunteers.

Lastly I must thank the hard-working men and women who step forward and volunteer for my riding's township fire services. They are not only sacrificing their time, but their own lives for our safety. However, this essential service is facing difficulties in recruitment, according to local chiefs. Thankfully, our government is encouraging volunteer fire services by revoking the new fire certification training, which is a financial burden on already well-

trained firefighters, and by making major investments to improve communication equipment and front-line responders.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for members' statements this afternoon.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 36, An Act to enact a new Act and make amendments to various other Acts respecting the use and sale of cannabis and vapour products in Ontario / *Projet de loi 36, Loi édictant une nouvelle loi et modifiant diverses autres lois en ce qui concerne l'utilisation et la vente de cannabis et de produits de vapotage en Ontario.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 3, 2018, the bill is ordered for third reading.

1520

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FREEING HIGHWAYS 412 AND 418 ACT (TOLL HIGHWAY AMENDMENTS), 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'UTILISATION SANS FRAIS DES AUTOROUTES 412 ET 418 (MODIFICATIONS CONCERNANT LES VOIES PUBLIQUES À PÉAGE)

Ms. French moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to amend the Capital Investment Plan Act, 1993 and the Highway 407 East Act, 2012 with respect to toll highways / *Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1993 sur le plan d'investissement et la Loi de 2012 sur l'autoroute 407 Est en ce qui concerne les voies publiques à péage.*

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Oshawa to explain her bill.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Currently, section 47 of the Capital Investment Plan Act, 1993, allows the Ontario Transportation Capital Corp. to make regulations designating certain highways as a toll highway. The bill amends that provision to restrict the corporation from designating

any King's highway that connects Highway 407 East, as defined in the Highway 407 East Act, 2012, to Highway 401.

The bill also amends the definition of "Highway 407 East" in the Highway 407 East Act, 2012, to exclude any King's highway that connects the highway to Highway 401.

ENDING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE
DISCRIMINATION IN THE GREATER
TORONTO AREA ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 METTANT FIN
À LA DISCRIMINATION EN MATIÈRE
D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE
DANS LE GRAND TORONTO

Mr. Singh moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to amend the Insurance Act to prevent discrimination with respect to automobile insurance rates in the Greater Toronto Area / Projet de loi 44, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances pour empêcher la discrimination en ce qui concerne les taux d'assurance-automobile dans le Grand Toronto.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Brampton East to explain his bill.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: The purpose of this bill is to ensure that residents in the greater Toronto area are paying auto insurance rates based on their driving record and not based on where they live. It does this by considering the greater Toronto area as a single geographic region with respect to auto insurance. This bill will make it illegal for any auto insurance company to charge different rates based on where a person lives—be it their neighbourhood, city or postal code.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

POVERTY

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak about the importance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, which will be observed worldwide tomorrow. Sadly, since its inception 25 years ago, we still see poverty across Ontario, from small, rural communities to large, urban centres.

In Ontario, we have the privilege of living in one of the richest provinces within one of the richest countries in the world.

For too many years, Ontario has been heading in the wrong direction. Despite billions of dollars in spending, poverty, under the last Liberal government, worsened. That's not a political statement; that's a fact.

In Ontario, we have nearly two million people living in poverty. That's one in seven of our neighbours. We know that some Ontarians face added challenges that put them at greater risk of poverty. Many of these people rely on my ministry's services: single moms, children and adults with developmental disabilities and other disabilities, women fleeing domestic violence and trafficking, children in need of protection, newcomers and people struggling to get back into the labour force. We truly are, in the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the heart of the people's government. These Ontarians in vulnerable circumstances are top of mind to me.

I'm honoured to serve our Premier and the people's government as the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and the minister responsible for women's issues. It's a role I take very seriously. In this role, I am focused on restoring people's dignity, lifting people out of a cycle of poverty and helping them move back up the ladder towards self-reliance.

Our government is not only working to make life more affordable for Ontarians; we're preparing to develop a more robust social assistance plan for Ontarians. Our motivation is to have the best possible outcome for those who need our help the most and for those who can get back to work. We're going to change and improve the life path of the one million Ontarians who currently rely on some form of government social assistance, and we're going to challenge the status quo of programs that continue to reinforce silos and obstacles. This hasn't worked in the past, so we need to shift our thinking to help more people.

People deserve a system that is working well, one that is focused on the goal of lifting them out of poverty—better yet, preventing them from falling into poverty in the first place. Caring cannot be measured simply by establishing a program or by the sheer number of dollars spent. We must use equal measures of head and heart.

I often tell my ministry staff that when people reach out to us, we are often their last resort. To build a more compassionate society and lift more people out of challenging circumstances, we also need neighbours to help neighbours. Government cannot, and should not, be all things to all people. And we cannot do it alone.

As the minister responsible for poverty reduction, I will engage the private, philanthropic and not-for-profit sectors to be part of the solutions to the problems that we all face. I'll stand shoulder to shoulder with them in fighting for those who need it most, and I encourage all members across this assembly to join me. Together, we can build a better and broader network of support in Ontario that provides real help to more people. The people of Ontario can feel confident that I am putting my heart into this important work and that we will provide a helping hand.

Tomorrow, we will mark an optimistic goal: the elimination of poverty around the world. To do that, we must recognize that the best social safety net is a compassionate and caring society where everyone, not just government, is part of the solution. The best social circumstances are when those who are able are participating in the workforce, and the best social program is a job. I'm confident

that together we can make life better for all people in Ontario.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK
SEMAINE DES ADMINISTRATIONS
LOCALES

Hon. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to recognize Local Government Week. Municipalities are the level of government that are closest to the people. This week recognizes and raises awareness of the critical role that local governments play in communities, large and small, across Ontario.

Cette semaine souligne le travail des administrations locales et fait connaître le rôle qu'elles jouent dans toutes les collectivités de l'Ontario, quelle que soit leur taille.

As members of this House know, municipalities have many responsibilities. They provide a long list of essential services, and Ontarians rely on them to make sound decisions about matters that affect their everyday lives. These governments are expected to deal with complex issues, from reducing traffic gridlock and improving transit networks to managing growth and providing housing, from maintaining water and waste water systems to providing reliable child care and keeping our neighbourhoods safe, not to mention the crucial role they play in building infrastructure to serve their residents today, tomorrow and for generations to come. This week provides an opportunity to reflect on these vital services and the responsibility that rests with Ontario's local governments.

1530

Speaker, Local Government Week also provides an important learning opportunity for Ontario's children and youth. It's a week when those who are not yet old enough to vote can learn more about what local government is all about for their families, their neighbours and their community. Through various activities and events held in locations throughout the province, students can experience first-hand how local governments work.

Here are some examples:

The town of Guelph is inviting students to tour their town hall and visit the Guelph Civic Museum to learn more about their community's history.

Applause.

Hon. Steve Clark: Thank you.

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association has created a Local Government Week kit for use by trustees as they visit classrooms.

The city of Oshawa is posting video blogs of municipal staff explaining the jobs they do. These blogs promote awareness of the roles that municipalities have, and encourage young people to consider careers in local government.

The city of Toronto has produced a microsite called My Local Government—It's for Me. The website offers a variety of resources to encourage the public to stay informed, to provide input and to get involved.

And a number of schools are participating in the Student Vote program run by Civix, Canada's leading civic education leader. The Student Vote initiative gives young people the opportunity to learn more about the electoral process, research their local candidates and issues, and even cast ballots in mock elections. This isn't just a fun activity; it's actually making a difference. An independent evaluation commissioned by Elections Canada reports that the Student Vote program is having a real impact on students, their families and even their teachers. For example, the study notes that 100% of educators said they would like to participate in the Student Vote program again. The vast majority of them said that participating in Student Vote improved their confidence with teaching politics, Canadian cities, and also government in general. The majority of students who were surveyed said that they will vote in the future, and that they believe it's their responsibility as citizens to vote in elections. Clearly, Speaker, the program is having an impact on students today and will produce benefits into the future.

I hope Local Government Week activities like these will help inspire students to get involved in public service. Perhaps they'll decide to serve their communities as a clerk, councillor, school board trustee or even a mayor or a warden.

Speaker, back in the day, I was a civic-minded young person. Back in 1982, at the tender age of 22, I was very fortunate to be elected mayor of the city of Brockville, and now, some 36 years later, I am so very honoured to be Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As the minister, it's very important to me that we ensure local governments work effectively for taxpayers.

En tant que ministre, il m'importe beaucoup de m'assurer que les administrations locales fonctionnent efficacement pour les contribuables.

Speaker, we've committed to conducting a review of regional government. The regional government system has been in place now for some 50 years, and it's time to consider whether changes are needed. It's time to look at whether there are ways to improve municipal governance in these regions where populations have grown or changed, where infrastructure pressures are mounting, where regional priorities may be misaligned with local needs, and where taxpayers' dollars are being stretched. I've asked my ministry to come up with a detailed plan to support this review, and I'm looking forward to being able to share more details very soon.

J'ai demandé à mon ministère de dresser un plan détaillé en vue de cet examen. Je ferai part de précisions à ce sujet sous peu.

Speaker, what I can say is that we'll be seeking input from the public, from municipal staff and from elected officials. We want to make sure that the way regions are governed is working for the people so they can deliver the vital services that people depend on.

Our goal is to ensure that local governments are working as effectively and efficiently as possible, to support the future economic prosperity of their residents and their businesses. We look forward to hearing from the

many stakeholders, including our municipal partners, to determine what is working and what needs to be improved.

As I've said many, many times before in this House, each region is unique. Each regional council and their member municipalities have their very own specific needs. We can help address those needs by working with our municipal partners and listening to what they have to say.

In conclusion, Local Government Week is a time to reflect on the important local services that those local governments provide, to encourage civic engagement and to build awareness about that level of government. I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone that municipal election day in Ontario is just a few days away. Signs are up. Candidates are knocking on doors. Debates are happening in church basements and at kitchen tables. It's an exciting and important time for local government in the province of Ontario. I want to encourage everyone to research the candidates running in their communities and take time to vote on Monday, October 22.

J'invite donc tous les citoyens à se renseigner sur les candidates et candidats en lice dans leurs collectivités et à prendre le temps de voter le lundi 22 octobre.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give you all the praise as a former municipal leader yourself. I know that you know, like I do, that local government is so very important. The opportunity to cast a ballot is a privilege that we should all hold dear, and that opportunity is just around the corner.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): It's time for responses.

POVERTY

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: On the 25th anniversary of the UN's designation of October 17 to recognize the critical importance of eradicating poverty and to take stock of where we are, it is a disgrace that a province as wealthy as Ontario has increasing numbers of vulnerable people sliding deeper and deeper into poverty. The fact is that there are many actions that the government of Ontario could and should be taking to alleviate the systemic reasons that poverty is as deep as it is.

Poverty is what happens when systems fail people. It is the result of, among other things, precarious work; labour conditions that are stacked against people who have to string multiple poorly paying positions, without benefits or protections, together; and the very real barriers that new Canadians face or that confront Black people, Indigenous peoples and other people of colour, as well as people with disabilities, and that women still face in the workplace. It is the result of inadequate mental health supports, of the overpolicing of racialized communities, of school-to-prison pipelines, and of child welfare policies that too often separate children from their families rather than find ways to support families to keep children at home.

Fixing it means tackling these deep, systemic issues. It means more affordable housing, of course, but it also means serious investments in mental health supports, not cuts, and meaningful increases to social assistance like OW and ODSP. It means following through on the Basic Income Pilot project and expanding it across the province.

Eradicating poverty requires expanding the mandate of the Anti-Racism Directorate and giving it teeth, not gutting it, as this government has done. It requires understanding all the ways in which poverty is linked to centuries of colonial governance, including the cultural genocide that is the result of residential schools and other policies like it. So it means becoming serious about reconciliation and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

Eradicating poverty means not rolling back basic labour reforms. Ironically, it is less expensive to fix the root causes of poverty than to clean up the crime and mend the addiction and human suffering that are its side effects.

1540

But the government's actions thus far have done the precise opposite of attacking the root causes of poverty; its actions are worsening the scourge of poverty and dragging us backwards instead of towards a province in which everyone can live with the basic human right that is housing, with food security, and with dignity and fulfillment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further responses?

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

Mr. Jeff Burch: As critic for municipal affairs, I want to acknowledge Local Government Week. This week serves as an educational opportunity for all of us, some to learn about local government and their responsibilities, and others to learn of the successes and challenges that face our municipal and regional governments.

First and foremost, I want to thank local governments across Ontario for all the incredible work they do. They continue to do more with less.

I want to thank the workers who devote their working life to ensuring that services are delivered.

I want to thank all the candidates who give up time with their families, with the goal of improving their community. As a two-term city councillor myself, I know the dedication and sacrifice it takes to be a local representative.

Speaker, municipalities are an essential part of democracy. It is vital that we work with—not against—municipalities to deliver services and reduce the costs and burdens that are placed on our local government. They need consistency.

We have seen this government use constitutional technicalities to railroad the city of Toronto and suddenly change the regional chair elections in Niagara, York, Peel and Muskoka. This government has taken an adversarial approach to local government.

What local governments need is support. They need affordable housing support, long-term-care support, action on the opioid epidemic and investment in infrastructure.

Municipalities are still left in the dark on cannabis legalization that could have an additional \$80-million impact on local police budgets.

Speaker, as this is a week of education, I would suggest this government educate themselves on the needs of

municipalities as opposed to continuing to fulfill their self-indulgent agenda.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The time for responses has expired. It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. This petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I proudly sign this and hand it over to my page, Albert.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly and it’s titled “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.”

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I proudly affix my signature to this and present it to page Andre.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas, like many Ontario communities, the toll that drugs and alcohol have taken on Sarnia–Lambton is tremendous, but we have hope and importantly, we have a plan;

“Whereas a proposal for a permanent withdrawal management facility has been developed with input from many organizations in our community using the most current research available on withdrawal management;

“Whereas our plan is a vision of teamwork: a one-stop hub for addictions services, improving access to services and bringing care partners together for a team approach to caring for our community;

“Whereas a permanent facility would provide day, community and residential withdrawal management services, stabilization services and wraparound services for people who are battling their addictions;

“Whereas there is currently a temporary location providing some of these much-needed services but together we can provide better care and improve access to treatment for clients;

“Whereas our need is urgent, our plan is in place;

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

“That members of the Legislature please help us save lives and support our community members by supporting permanent withdrawal management services in Sarnia-Lambton.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and send it down with Richa.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Ian Arthur: This petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

1550

I will be adding my signature to this collection of over 250 signatures and presenting it to the page Olajiire.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I have a petition from my constituents in Guelph.

“For a Meaningful Climate Action Plan.

“Whereas our planet is undergoing significant warming with adverse consequences for health, for agriculture, for infrastructure and for our children’s future;

“Whereas the costs of inaction are severe, such as extreme weather events causing flooding and drought;

“Whereas Canada has signed the Paris accord, which commits us to acting to keep temperature rises under 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to design a climate action plan with science-based targets that meet our Paris commitment, an action plan to meet those targets and an annual reporting on progress on meeting the targets. We call on the government to commit to providing funding through carbon pricing mechanisms for actions that must be taken to meet these targets.”

I support this petition, will affix my name and ask page Sophie to take it to the table.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas, like many Ontario communities, the toll that drugs and alcohol have taken on Sarnia-Lambton is tremendous, but we have hope and importantly, we have a plan;

“Whereas a proposal for a permanent withdrawal management facility has been developed with input from many organizations in our community using the most current research available on withdrawal management;

“Whereas our plan is a vision of teamwork: a one-stop hub for addictions services, improving access to services and bringing care partners together for a team approach to caring for our community;

“Whereas a permanent facility would provide day, community and residential withdrawal management services, stabilization services and wraparound services for people who are battling their addictions;

“Whereas there is currently a temporary location providing some of these much-needed services but together we can provide better care and improve access to treatment for clients;

“Whereas our need is urgent, our plan is in place;

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

“That members of the Legislature please help us save lives and support our community members by supporting permanent withdrawal management services in Sarnia-Lambton.”

I agree with this and I’ll send it down with Sophie to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further petitions? The member from Whitby.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker, and good afternoon.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, like many Ontario communities, the toll that drugs and alcohol have taken on Sarnia–Lambton is tremendous, but we have hope and importantly, we have a plan;

“Whereas a proposal for a permanent withdrawal management facility has been developed with input from many organizations in our community using the most current research available on withdrawal management;

“Whereas our plan is a vision of teamwork: a one-stop hub for addictions services, improving access to services and bringing care partners together for a team approach to caring for our community;

“Whereas a permanent facility would provide day, community and residential withdrawal management services, stabilization services and wraparound services for people who are battling their addictions;

“Whereas there is currently a temporary location providing some of these much-needed services but together we can provide better care and improve access to treatment for clients;

“Whereas our need is urgent, our plan is in place;

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

“That members of the Legislature please help us save lives and support our community members by supporting permanent withdrawal management services in Sarnia–Lambton.”

I'll affix my signature to this petition and provide it to page Jacob for travel to the table.

OPPOSITION DAY

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I move the following motion:

Whereas hospital overcrowding in Brampton is critical, and in a single year, 4,352 patients were treated in hallways at Brampton Civic Hospital;

Whereas hospital overcrowding is a problem across Peel region;

Therefore the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to provide the necessary funding in the 2019-20 budget for the construction of a new hospital in Brampton.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Ms. Horwath has moved her opposition day motion. I return to Ms. Horwath to lead off the evening.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise to speak to this motion.

Our NDP MPPs representing Brampton Centre and other Brampton ridings were in their community this morning to talk about this important issue. I want to thank the deputy leader, Sara Singh, MPP for Brampton Centre;

Kevin Yarde, MPP for Brampton North; and Gurratan Singh, MPP for Brampton East, for being such great advocates for the health needs that have long been ignored by the previous Liberal government.

It's always a pleasure to visit with the good people of Brampton and the front-line health care staff who work so hard in that community. Although I wasn't able to join my colleagues today, Bramptonians know that I will fight every chance I get for their growing and vibrant city. But I've got to be honest: When it comes to this particular fight, I wish I didn't have to, Speaker.

The overcrowding situation in Brampton leaped to the front pages, as many of us recall, across the province back in April 2017. And that was just the presenting issue of the day. There had been many, many other concerns that had been raised for many years, frankly, that had been ignored by the Liberals. But when Jamie-Lee Ball's story of being trapped in a hallway at Brampton Civic, screaming in pain for five days, actually came out, it was a wake-up call. Well, it should have been a wake-up call for everyone.

When Jamie-Lee was dubbed “Hallway Patient Number 1” during that period of extreme overcrowding—and I just want to take a second to reflect on that: “Hallway Patient Number 1.” I don't know how many MPPs in this chamber have visited an Ontario hospital—particularly the larger community hospitals but, frankly, every hospital these days in the province—but the overcrowding situation is such that now unconventional spaces are being utilized for health care in hospitals. I'm going to be talking a little bit more in this speech a little later on about that.

Particularly shocking is to see, literally, hallways with little handwritten signs along the length of the hallway, saying, “Hallway Patient Number 1” or “Patient Number 1,” “Patient Number 2” or “Hallway Number 3.” This is what's in our hospitals, where literally the hallways are now divvied up for stretchers, for gurneys, for patients, because there's no room, no hospital beds, available. This is the disgraceful legacy of the previous government, the disgraceful legacy of the Liberals.

Anyone in Brampton could tell you that when Jamie-Lee became “Hallway Patient Number 1” she certainly wasn't the first, and, as we all know, sadly, well over a year later, she hasn't been the last. The reality is that Brampton Civic, like hospitals across the province, has been stretched to the breaking point and beyond. Brampton is Canada's second-fastest-growing city—the second-fastest-growing city in the entire nation. Of the 45 new residents who move to the region of Peel each and every day—that's right; 45 new residents move to the region of Peel each and every day—38 of those 45 settle in Brampton. Yet Brampton has only one full-service hospital: Brampton Civic Hospital.

Brampton Civic has one of the busiest emergency rooms in our country. In fact, I believe it has the busiest, not “one of.” It is the busiest emergency room in our country. It was built to serve 90,000 visitors a year, but it experienced more than 138,000 visits last year. So it was built for 90,000, and last year it had 138,000 visitors—unacceptable.

1600

Peel Memorial Centre is an urgent care centre that opened in the spring of 2017, theoretically to try to take some of the pressure off the hospital. It's not a full hospital. It only offers outpatient services and day surgeries at the urgent care centre. It is open just 14 hours a day, and it's already severely underfunded.

In fact, just to go back to Brampton Civic Hospital, the day the hospital opened, its emergency was overcrowded. The very first day it opened, it was already too small to service the community.

When it comes to the shortfall that exists now for the urgent care centre that was supposed to take the pressure off, there's a \$19.2-million shortfall in just its first year of operation. And projections for this year are for 65,000 patient visits, but the ministry has provided funding for only 10,000 visits. The ministry funds 10,000 visits at the urgent care centre which receives 65,000 patients every year.

That's just part of a larger pattern. Right now in Ontario, hospitals are underfunded to the tune of a minimum of \$300 million per year—and I say “minimum” because that \$300 million is just to maintain a broken status quo. The hospital system is broken; there's no doubt about it. Just to maintain that broken system, the system should be funded at least \$300 million more. That's just not acceptable, Speaker.

Of course, how we got there is not a secret. It is not a secret to anyone. It didn't happen overnight. We know that before the Liberals came in and did more damage, the last Conservative government slashed our health care system to the bone. They closed 28 hospitals. They laid off thousands of front-line nurses and health care providers. I think 6,000 or so nurses were laid off—all the while the Premier of the day from the Conservatives saying that nurses were old-fashioned, like the hula hoop. That's how disrespectful Conservatives are of health care workers—shuttering thousands and thousands of beds across the province.

The 15 years of Liberal government that followed largely failed to undo those deep cuts. Liberals, of course, froze hospital funding, leading to front-line cuts year after year across Ontario. Since 2015, 1,600 nursing positions at minimum have been cut. Hospitals have been left struggling to make ends meet as they literally cram patients into every available corner. In Brampton, our health system has been underfunded by \$30 million in the last year alone—\$30 million in underfunding.

During the election campaign, this issue came up everywhere, from Thunder Bay to Windsor to Ottawa and everywhere between. Ontario hospitals are packed to the gills, and staff are being asked to do more and more with less and less.

I know the current Premier is aware of this issue. He certainly talked about fixing it. But, like many Ontarians, I'm very concerned about how his policies will actually impact hospitals like Brampton Civic. The problem is that the only plan this government has come up with so far is more and deeper cuts—\$10 million cut from the flu surge

funding just this year. Last year, the Liberals funded \$100 million for surge funding. This year, the Conservatives, I guess, figure it's going to be less of a problem so they only funded \$90 million in surge flu funding.

It's unfortunate that they won't admit when they're doing something wrong because you can't fix something if you don't admit to your mistakes.

Some \$330 million was cut from mental health and addictions care by this government at a time when we're in an opioid crisis. While mental health was a big talking point for the Conservatives during the campaign, one of the first actions they took was to rip \$330 million out of mental health and addictions funding.

At every turn, ministers have been reminding Ontarians that even deeper cuts are coming. The Premier himself has repeatedly promised to cut over \$6 billion across the board in spending cuts. What kind of cuts are we going to see to the hospital system? That will be devastating to communities. It will mean cuts to Brampton Civic and Peel Memorial. It will mean shuttered schools and hospitals across the province. It will mean further privatization and sell-offs of the services and infrastructure that families in this province have paid into for years.

Let's be very, very clear here: Cuts and privatization caused the problems that people are facing right now. Cuts and privatization that started with Conservatives when they were last in government, and that were followed on by the Liberals when they were in government, have caused the problems that people are facing now. There is no doubt about it. Cuts and privatization are the very reason that Brampton Civic is overcrowded, the reason Ontarians like Jamie-Lee are being left in hallways, broom closets and bathrooms.

No more cuts to health care. Health care cuts are not the answer to the problems Ontarians are facing in our hospitals. If this government goes forward with its plan for deep cuts, families will pay the price. When parents take their sick children to the ER, they will be waiting longer. Seniors will be stuck waiting for appropriate care for longer.

Every MPP in this chamber has a family, and I'd ask them, through the Speaker, if they think that their family members should be waiting even longer when they are sick, in pain and in need of care. Or do they not care, because maybe many of them can afford to pay for their loved ones to go somewhere else to get the care they need, or maybe to a private clinic? Most Ontarians can't afford that, regardless of what some members on the other side may be able to afford.

But I have to say that it's not all doom and gloom. It's not too late to fix all of this. Brampton Civic is often seen as the poster child for hospital overcrowding in Ontario. With this motion, though, we can make Brampton the new kind of example. If all parties come together to support this motion, we can put Brampton at the heart of the re-vitalization of health care in Ontario.

The people of Brampton have been very clear. City council has been very clear. Health experts have been very clear. Now it's time for us to listen to them. We can end

hallway medicine—or, as the Premier likes to call it, hallway health care—in Brampton. We can turn the tide back on generations of cuts to hospitals and cuts to health care across the province. We can give Ontarians hope for the future of their health care system.

Of course, voting for this motion isn't the end of the story. It's easy to promise things; it's much harder to make sure shovels get into the ground. So I'm encouraging all members to support the motion, and then I'm calling on the government to actually take some action. We should be working closely with the city to expedite the planning, funding and building of a new hospital for Brampton, and we should end the underfunding at Peel Memorial immediately. So let's step up to the plate, expand services there, including emergency care, and give the people of Brampton the three full hospitals they need and deserve. And from there, we need to take that political will and spread it across the province.

The Premier always says that when it comes to health care, he's going to listen to the experts. Great, I'm so glad to hear that, and I'm sure he'll be glad to hear the experts have already spoken. Time and time again, the front-line care workers in this province, the administrators and the experts have come to the same conclusion: Hospitals and health care in Ontario are underfunded by hundreds of millions of dollars each and every year. As I mentioned before, hospitals aren't even getting enough funding to maintain a broken status quo.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the status quo right now is Jamie-Lee Ball. The status quo right now is seniors sleeping in bathrooms with their heads inches from a toilet. The status quo is patients without privacy, without dignity, and health care workers without support. The status quo isn't good enough for the people of Ontario, it isn't good enough for the people of Brampton, and you can't fix that with more cutting of our hospitals and health care.

That's why, during the election, New Democrats were calling for real, stable investments in hospitals, including \$19 billion in new hospital construction, because no Ontarian should go through what Jamie-Lee went through. No Ontarian should show up at a hospital with no clue when they might get admitted or get the help that they need. We can do better, Speaker. We have to do better, and Brampton can be the start of that.

I urge all members to support this motion. Let's invest in Brampton and kick-start the real investment in hospitals across this province. Let's make a commitment that there will never be another Jamie-Lee Ball in Ontario. Let's promise every patient and every parent in Ontario that when their child is sick, there will be someone there to care for them. And let's start it today by supporting this motion.

1610

It is high time—and I'm not talking about tomorrow's legislative change when it comes to cannabis—that we actually fix the hospital problems in this province and start with the hospital in Brampton. Brampton Civic is a good hospital. It needs a lot of help. We need another hospital in Brampton and we need an immediate funding boost also to the urgent care centre there.

Thanks so very much. I look forward to everyone's support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate on the opposition day motion introduced by our NDP colleagues across the House. The Leader of the Opposition is speaking to a concern that our Premier and our government take very seriously: ending hallway health care in Ontario's hospitals.

In the election campaign, our leader, Doug Ford, and party campaigned vigorously on this issue. I am proud that, since taking office, we have acted quickly and urgently, and I will speak more about this later.

People in Ontario want to know that their government and health care system are working together. They want us to listen to hospital and health workers, to doctors and nurses and, of course, most importantly, to the patients and their families.

We also have to ensure that we are achieving value for taxpayers' dollars. This does not mean cutting corners; it just means being creative and innovative. It means operating our health care system more efficiently and, at the same time, with great compassion for those in need of care. Perhaps more importantly, it means planning as effectively and thoroughly as we can to make sure that every dollar we spend counts and goes to quality care. For any hospital that would be built, we need to make sure it goes in the right place, offers the right services and has the right staff.

One of the steps we've taken is to ask Dr. Rueben Devlin to advise the Premier and the Minister of Health, the Honourable Christine Elliott, on innovative solutions to end hallway health care and to make the system work better for patients, our seniors and families. Dr. Devlin, as most of you know, holds great experience in this field, having run the Humber River Hospital, among many other accomplishments. I am certain that the health care needs of fast-growing communities such as Brampton and indeed my own constituency will be an important priority in our planning going forward.

We are committed to the highest-quality health care with the lowest wait times achievable. Speaker, let me repeat: We on this side of the House are committed to the highest quality of health care with the lowest wait times achievable. Yet what the official opposition is proposing today is a demand for spending without any appropriate planning.

I truly wish I could join my colleagues in the NDP in supporting this motion. We all want to see people in Ontario receive medical care that is of the highest quality, and medical care that is timely without long waiting lists. No one—and I repeat, no one—should have to receive medical care in a hallway. It is disrespectful, it is demeaning and it's not quality care that our patients and our citizens deserve in Ontario.

People voted for our government to eliminate hallway health care, and we will not betray this commitment. Unfortunately, the official opposition is dealing with the

issue of a new hospital in the wrong way. No application to build a new Brampton hospital has been received by the health ministry, yet the NDP wants funding for the 2019-20 budget for a fiscal year that is now less than six months away. Do they believe that a new hospital can be approved, planned, designed, constructed and started by next April? Now, I understand the NDP promised during the campaign that they would build a new hospital in Brampton if elected, yet I doubt, if they had been elected, they would have been ready to build a new hospital this year, let alone next spring.

On this side of the House, we know that planning for our health care system has to be done properly, thoughtfully and for the long-term betterment of our province and our citizens. We need to carefully determine the future medical needs of Ontario and our entire health care system through careful and comprehensive study based on evidence. We must spend our health dollars wisely because they are the tax dollars of Ontarians who deserve to be treated with respect. That's why our health minister is working on a comprehensive province-wide plan to deal with capacity issues and determine the needs that exist and where they exist. I can assure you that this plan is one of Minister Elliott's top priorities.

For 15 years, the Ontario Liberals were in charge of our health care system, making decisions in isolation and ignoring the broader health care system. And here, in fact, I share the view that the Leader of the Opposition had when she said that the Liberals have left a disgraceful legacy and the system is broken. We have a broken status quo. I agree with all of those sentiments. As Mayor Linda Jeffrey of Brampton pointed out last fall, the Ontario Liberals had invested \$2 billion in Brampton. That's a lot of money. So why is Brampton suffering today from overcrowding in its rather new hospitals? Perhaps part of the answer lies in the fact that the Liberals were better at spending and misspending their money than in properly planning how to spend the money.

Maybe the official opposition needs to take a lesson from this. Building an effective health care system is not just about spending money. It's about spending it where it's needed, and to do that you need to have a plan. We will not adopt the kneejerk reaction of the NDP. Our minister will study Ontario's health needs and take the proper action because we understand on this side of the House that one person treated in Ontario's hallways is one person too many.

We are already acting on immediate needs. I was proud to join the health minister not long ago as she announced \$90 million for hospital beds and new long-term-care beds. This funding will secure more than 1,100 beds across Ontario, of which 640 are new beds and 460 are beds for which funding was running out. Our government is providing this funding to ease the hospital gridlock crisis across the province as communities prepare for the upcoming flu season.

You would also have heard about our announcement that we are moving forward with building 6,000-plus new long-term-care beds of the 15,000 we promised in the

election. You also know that this is to unfold in the next five years with a further commitment of 15,000 beds over the course of 10 years. This is long-term planning. This is investing in our health care system. Fighting hallway health care means, yes, more beds in hospitals, but it also means more spaces in our long-term-care homes.

We all know that patients waiting to go into long-term care are often kept in hospitals because no long-term-care beds are available. We know that this is a crisis, and we are taking action on this front immediately.

1620

We will also work on increasing the proper home care supports that will more efficiently and effectively treat our loved ones where they are most comfortable—at home and not in a hospital room. Time and again, many of us have been told that is the ideal place for people to be, if they can stay in their homes as long as possible. So we were also going to be able to invest in those areas to be able to keep able-bodied citizens living in their homes as long as we can.

We've also made a further commitment—and it's \$3.8 billion—with the federal government in new investments to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system that will also include important housing supports.

All of this together will revitalize the system and should help relieve some of the pressure on emergency departments and hospital beds.

I'm proud to serve as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, working in the long-term-care field. I know that our minister, our Premier, our government and all members on this side of the House are committed to long-term care, and we are proving it.

Candace Chartier, the CEO of the Ontario Long Term Care Association, stated recently—the announcement that was made by Minister Elliott just a week and a half ago—as follows:

"Today's announcement is a big step in the right direction. The investments this government is making to add more capacity to our system will help more homes move forward with their capital plans and will allow for ... critical spaces to open up for seniors who need a long-term-care bed. Long-term care is a critical component to addressing hallway medicine."

In my role as parliamentary assistant and as a member of provincial Parliament for the wonderful riding of Oakville North—Burlington, I've had the opportunity to talk to leaders in our hospital and health care system and in our community, and they have spoken to me of some of the gaps in our system.

When I met with Eric Vandewall, the president and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington, I learned that his hospital faces concerns about the aging population in a city with a much older demographic than average. In fact, I believe he told me that by the year 2026, there will be more seniors over 75 in the community of Burlington than in other parts of Ontario. This requires special consideration and special concerns to go in and support that type of

long-term-care need that they'll be facing. At Joseph Brant, the current top three diseases leading to entry are asthma, diabetes and heart disease. They have funding challenges due to the unique circumstances of this aging community that were not recognized by the previous government.

We all recognize the dismal failure of the previous government, and we are all here with the best intentions, to be able to create a system that will work for all Ontarians.

As well, Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, which is located in Oakville North–Burlington—my constituency—is part of the larger Halton Healthcare system. Their CEO, Denise Hardenne, gave me a tour of the facility recently and provided me with an update on their planning as well as their current system capacity and funding challenges. Halton Healthcare advised that the Mississauga Halton LHIN has the lowest number of long-term-care beds per thousand seniors 75 years of age and over in the province. This is the type of information that's provided to government that helps inform the health minister in her study of capacity issues in Ontario.

I'm not singling out Mississauga and Halton to contrast them with Brampton. I recognize the urgent needs, as well, in Brampton. But I do want to point out to the NDP just how much planning goes into building a successful health care system. It's not something you can do in any resolution debated for a few hours in this House and not something that we can realistically decide on today and then spend in a budget less than six months away.

What the NDP are proposing today is a rushed, poorly planned motion. With no thought of the planning and timing needed, they are demanding we spend taxpayers' money to build a hospital in a rushed time frame. Have they considered other parts of the province when they call for a new hospital in Brampton?

Health care needs to be a seamless system. I've been told, in fact, by stakeholders that the Waterloo region urgently needs temporary accommodation facilities for patients waiting to get into long-term-care homes or receive care. Perhaps the NDP members from Kitchener and Waterloo could have included their community's needs to be recognized in this motion today.

Our government has heard many municipalities at the last AMO conference talking about their own local health care issues and needs. Here are some of the comments they passed on to us:

One rural municipality stated that their municipality is struggling to staff emergency departments with physicians. They can't recruit enough physicians to help their emergency department needs.

One northern city is in a code gridlock every day—every day. All the beds are taken up by patients needing long-term care, and there is a lack of personal support workers to help that hospital.

A group of southern Ontario municipalities indicated that two rebuilds were cancelled by the Liberals in their municipalities. They said that they are facing a race to the bottom, losing staff and physicians.

In the just over three months that I've had the honour to serve as a parliamentary assistant, I've heard again and again of the problems in our health care system. They are real, they are acute, and no one on this side of the House is denying them. They include the hallway health care issues that we've talked about time and again; the very, very long wait times; the challenge of retention of doctors; the challenge of nurses; and of not having enough personal care support workers and not being able to retain them and other front-line care workers and volunteers.

I believe all parties can agree that the previous administration dismally failed our health care system and the people who needed its care. Now we have the opportunity to get this right. We need to look at health care in a holistic way. The issues highlighted in Brampton are only a symptom of the problems faced across Ontario. I believe the NDP is trying to take the easy way out: demanding funding without planning. That's why I cannot support this motion.

The approach that our minister is carrying out is a comprehensive one, followed by comprehensive action, and is based on evidence and good planning to meet everyone's health needs. We have carried out our commitment to start eliminating hallway health care—promise made, promise kept—and we will honour our commitments to improve our health care system for everyone, not the knee-jerk reaction of the NDP, but after careful and thoughtful planning, because we all know in Ontario that our loved ones deserve the best standard of quality care in the world.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

1630

Ms. Sara Singh: It is an absolute honour to rise here. Thank you so much to my leader for bringing this motion forward. To quote her, it is absolutely "high time" that we do this, because I don't know how much more evidence this government needs of a crisis in Brampton.

I appreciate the member from Oakville North–Burlington discussing the needs of our community. But, having been a resident there and having been born and raised in our one and only hospital, I can assure you that this is a community that needs a new hospital. We have thought this through. This isn't something that we're doing as a knee-jerk reaction. It's actually quite upsetting to hear that from this government, knowing that there are patients waiting in the hallway right now at our hospital. To think that this government is not willing to support a motion that will look at trying to alleviate a crisis in a community is astounding to me.

I'm actually so proud to be from Brampton. When I was born 33 years ago, we had one hospital. I was born at the Peel Memorial Hospital. Fast-forward 33 years later, as I said in my inaugural, and we still have one hospital. We've turned that one hospital that we had into an urgent care centre. So now our community has one hospital and an urgent care centre that closes at 10 p.m. That's just not fair. It's unacceptable that this is still happening in our community, and we need to work together on finding a solution.

Brampton is a city that is growing; it's changing and it's thriving. We're now the ninth-largest city in Canada, and yet we have one hospital. While communities like Oakville, Burlington and Mississauga have numerous hospitals that their communities can access, my community still has one.

It's overdue that we have this conversation. The people of Brampton and the people in my community deserve more than waiting hours on end in the hospital on stretchers in the hallway. They deserve better. We pay taxes; those dollars need to come back into our community and be reinvested. That hasn't happened with the Liberal government, and clearly, right now, this government isn't concerned about the people in Brampton either.

Interjection: That's not true.

Ms. Sara Singh: It's pretty true. Your members are not here either, from Brampton, to maybe speak to what we're facing here, but we will because—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Excuse me. The member well knows you cannot say who is here and who isn't here. Please don't do it again.

Ms. Sara Singh: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. It's just a little upsetting; that's all.

We know how hard our front-line health care workers are working every single day. Our doctors, our nurses, our cleaning staff, our porters and administrators show up day after day and push themselves to the limit in order to provide the best care possible to patients. But these folks cannot and should not have to work at this alone. Just like the patients in our hospitals, these health care workers need this government to make proper investments, and they need them now.

Under the Liberals, hospital funding was frozen and cut, causing waits to get longer and longer, and hallway medicine cases to pile up. So far, this government has refused to take any action on the problem. They even warned hospitals and front-line staff that they should prepare for more cuts to come and they should be ready to be "innovative" and do more with less.

My family has lived in Brampton for over 35 years. When I stand here and I speak about the crisis, I'm speaking because this is what I experience every single time I take a family member in to the hospital. I walk past people laying on stretchers waiting for health care. My grandmother laid in the hallways at Brampton Civic waiting for health care. My brother, a cancer patient, waited in Brampton Civic for health care. My father waits for health care in the hallway at Brampton Civic. This is not a news headline; this is the reality of our community and the families in my riding and in our city.

Just last night, my office was on the phone with a fellow Bramptonian, Frank. Frank has had some really difficult health issues over the past decade. He's had two heart attacks since 2008 and has been diagnosed with COPD. He has had to make several visits to our hospital over the years, and the stories that he tells us are frightening. Frank has had to wait hours for the hospital to admit him because we don't have enough bariatric beds in our hospital to

assist him. He is also a high-risk fall patient due to fainting, and needs support if he has to go to the restroom. But do you know what he has to do when he has to go to the restroom at our hospital? He has to wait. He sits there and waits for staff members to be relieved of taking care of other patients so that they can get to him. That is not acceptable.

I will remind the House of another incident in 2014 at Brampton Civic, when a young man voluntarily admitted himself to the mental health unit. He and his family sought care during a crisis. This was a vibrant young man who had his entire life in front of him. He was actually one of my brother's closest friends. I watched him grow up to become an artist and to be a social justice warrior. When he went to that hospital and was placed on 24-hour suicide watch because he was self-harming throughout the night, despite being on a 24-hour mental health watch, this young man was tragically able to commit suicide and take his own life.

This is the crisis that our community is in, so when the government says they need more evidence, I ask you: How many more news headlines do you need to understand that Brampton needs a new hospital? Young people in our city are waiting in crisis, and this government is waiting for additional evidence to make the right decision for a community. It's disgusting and it's unfortunate, and we cannot allow this to continue to happen.

We can start to make sure that mental health units, emergency rooms and programs are properly funded. We can do that. It is a decision, and you have the power to be able to do that. We can make sure that nobody falls through the cracks or endures dangerously long waits or feels like they can't get the help that they desperately need when they go into a hospital. It's not fair that people do not get the care that they need when they go into a place that is supposed to provide them a service, supposed to make them feel safe, supposed to take care of them. It is not okay that this is still happening.

I think that the people in Brampton deserve better. The 4,352 patients who were treated on stretchers in a hallway last year deserve better. I think they deserve to know that when life throws them a curveball and they have to get to the hospital for themselves, a friend, a parent or a child, they don't have to do hurdle after hurdle between stretchers in order to get the care that they need. I think that the hard-working nurses, doctors, environmental service workers and porters deserve to show up to work knowing without worry that they can do their job and take care of the patients that walk through this door.

If this government wants to make a difference to improve the lives of Ontarians, you have an opportunity to do that today, and I urge you to please stand with us. Support our motion. Consider the people of Brampton. Consider the needs of a community that has been in crisis for far too long. Think of what we can do if we work together to ensure that vital services are given to communities that are clearly in crisis. Work with us to ensure that our community gets the health care services that we need and, frankly, we deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I am rising in the House today—and grateful for the opportunity—to discuss the opposition's motion regarding their supposed application for a new hospital in Brampton. It frustrates me to see that instead of working with our government on creating holistic solutions to systemic problems within our health care system, the NDP is busy playing political games by pitting city against city and making false accusations. It saddens me that instead of listening to our health care workers, who live the realities of hallway health care and hallway nursing every day, they have chosen to play politics and point fingers when our government is actively making decisions to help fix our health care crisis.

As some of you may know, I am a registered nurse, and I actually work within the William Osler Health System. I worked at Brampton Civic Hospital during nursing school as a physician navigator, and my mom currently works there in environmental services. Currently, to maintain my skills, I work a few times a month as an emergency room nurse at Etobicoke General Hospital, where I serve patients dealing with physical health challenges, trauma, accidents, mental health issues and suicide.

I see the way that patients are impacted by hallway health care and hallway nursing. I see the way that families are left with too many questions on where their loved ones will be taken care of. I am proud to stand as a member of this government and work day in and day out to fix the mess that was left to us by 15 years of Liberal neglect.

I want to state for the record that the Liberals had not opened a single new long-term-care bed in the 15 years of their mandate. They only opened their eyes when it was too little, too late. Their years of frozen budgets have resulted in nurses being laid off, physician services being cut, operating rooms being closed, patients left without family doctors and, of course, patients being treated in hallways, closets and even washrooms.

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I also want to state on the record that the health care crisis we are in took 15 years to be made, so it cannot be fixed in 100 days. As much as we wish, we do not have a magic wand to fix 15 years of neglect overnight, but let's talk about what we do have.

We have an excellent Minister of Health and Long-Term Care who has multifaceted experience as a Patient Ombudsman, founder of the Abilities Centre for children and a patient herself who has been working hard to deliver on the promises we made to the people of Ontario.

We also have a task force of professionals, led by Dr. Rueben Devlin, which includes nurses, doctors and other health care professionals working on innovative and fiscally efficient solutions to ending hallway nursing.

We also have the most committed, hard-working and compassionate front-line health care workers, nurses, doctors, PSWs, respiratory therapists, paramedics, physiotherapists, crisis workers, lab technicians, pharmacists and allied health care professionals in the world. People do not get into the health care profession for money. They get into

this line of work because they want to improve people's lives, because they want to serve, because they care. I think I can speak for all of us in this House today when I say thank you.

Speaker, I'll be honest with you. I do not envy our Minister of Health's job right now and the mess she has inherited. She probably has the most important and difficult job in this province, which will determine the future of our health care system for generations. She is currently looking at the map of Ontario's health care system, the fragmentation, the inequalities, the challenges, and virtually nearly all communities in Ontario are crying out for help. Her job is to determine the priorities and the plan, what we must do immediately and what can get done tomorrow. Once again, we cannot fix 15 years of neglect overnight.

Let's talk about what we have done in 100 short days. We have announced 6,000 new long-term-care beds, which is 6,000 more than the Liberals in 15 years—

Applause.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you—out of which Brampton received a bed allocation. We have also allocated \$90 million of new funding for surge beds based on highest needs in time for the flu season. These are important first steps as we remain committed to our promises to the people of Ontario, including opening 15,000 new long-term-care beds in five years and 30,000 in 10 years; investing \$1.9 billion into mental health services and supports, matched by \$1.9 billion from the federal government; and taking steps to ending hallway medicine and hallway nursing in Ontario.

We need to look at our health care system as an ecosystem, as a whole functioning organism, and not continue fragmentation and division, pitting municipalities against each other. Not all health care problems will be fixed by simply building new beds. We simply cannot build enough beds in Ontario to host all the patient needs that are coming. We need to work on prevention, home care and addressing the opioid crisis.

As we are well aware, health care spending is close to half of our working budget as a provincial government. It is the largest ticket item. It is also a multifaceted issue with layers upon layers of complexity.

When I meet with stakeholders from across the health care industry, at every point we are met with the recurring themes of red tape, bureaucratic oversight and so many other deep systemic issues that we need to address before we are able to move forward to keep Ontario on track to getting healthier.

This is why it is essential that before we begin to point fingers, we need to truly understand that collaboration and working together in terms of health are more important than simply building a hospital, as the NDP sees fit and where they see fit.

As a nurse, I have some understanding of how the William Osler Health System functions. I know we need to do better by our patients, but we need to do it responsibly and transparently. So let me take a few moments here to debunk some of the disinformation that the NDP has been spreading.

As of today, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has not received any application for a new Brampton hospital. On the campaign trail, we promised to operate an efficient government for the people. Therefore, we believe that the best way to move forward when building new infrastructure is to consult with the experts and determine what is the best use of our limited resources.

In fact, the Leader of the Opposition was wrong: There are busier hospitals in Ontario than Brampton Civic. But look, this is not a competition. These are real patients with real challenges. Had the previous government not saddled the Ontario taxpayers with billions of dollars in deficit spending, culminating in a staggering \$11.9 billion in annual interest payments, we would have significantly more resources at our disposal. Servicing our provincial debt is the fourth-largest ticket item in our budget. How many beds would \$11.9 billion buy?

Let me be abundantly clear: It was the NDP that explicitly promised new hospitals in Brampton during the campaign. The NDP are too busy playing political games, pitting municipalities against one another, to even consider working with the government to find a bipartisan solution to our province's broken health care system. We are here to deliver on our promises, not the NDP's promises.

On June 7, voters did not simply choose between PC and NDP; they chose between continuing a 15-year Liberal tradition of unrealistic promises followed by reckless spending and a pragmatic government that values the long-term viability of infrastructure investments long after the next election cycle. The voters soundly rejected the failed Liberal/NDP ideology, where throwing money at it is a solution to a problem. Our government is steadfast in our commitment to respect the taxpayer dollar, and that means we will not resort to careless spending without careful consultation and consideration.

As I said, our government announced 6,000 new hospital beds to be distributed across Ontario, allocated based on which areas demonstrate the most urgent need for expansion. As you know, Brampton received 40 beds out of the 6,000. The ministry will continue to work with communities and hospitals, including those within the William Osler Health System, and we will work to address the health care crisis.

In order to move forward from the past 15 years, we need to fully understand just how broken our system has become. Only a comprehensive, province-wide capacity plan will reveal the extent of the need that exists. For too long, the Liberals made decisions in isolation. Their inability to make decisions in the context of the broader system has left the distribution of health care services and dollars uneven and unable to meet the province's demands. The Liberals failed to take into account the needs of our aging population. They refused to make the necessary investments in order to offset the increasing demand, and thus wait times have skyrocketed.

In my experience as a nurse, how many times did I see patients who had differing access to health care just based on geographical location? If they lived on one side of the

LHIN, they received a certain amount of hours of support care; if they lived on the other side, they received less. Our system is fragmented, and we must do better.

This motion demonstrates the carelessness and short-sightedness of the opposition's governing vision. Once again, this motion shows that optimistic headlines and sound bites prevail over effective, calculated policy. The opposition did not provide anything close to the specifics of what this Brampton hospital would entail. They have said nothing regarding how much a new hospital would cost, what type of hospital it would be, what specialty wings should be designated nor the location of where this hospital would be built.

Mr. Speaker, in my time over the past couple of years working in the emergency room, I learned that health care is not merely an issue that you can throw money at and expect things to solve themselves. Our hospital systems are an integrated network of thousands of workers and trained professionals working hard to make Ontario healthier every single day. Our system is a living organism with an ecosystem to match.

What this means is that solutions for an ever-aging population, increases in immigration and the skyrocketing of mental health hospitalizations in this province need to be holistic and systematic. They need to be based in an understanding of the context, and we cannot work in silos. If you have spent any time working in our provincial health care system, you would understand that the way to keep Ontarians healthy is by increasing equitable access to health care across the province. You would also know that we currently have patients in our hospitals taking up precious acute-care beds who could be better treated in other facilities or even at home.

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The issues within our health care system are systemic. They are a result of years and years of mismanagement. It is up to us—all of us—to come up with solutions that are long-lasting, that will keep generations healthy across Ontario. I invite my colleagues across the aisle to work with us to come up with solutions. Together, we can listen to patients, caregivers and front-line staff, doctors and nurses, to come up with innovative and effective solutions.

Speaker, I would like to conclude with a quote from Minister Elliott:

“We have a health care challenge that extends beyond hospitals and alternate level of care. We need to initially take a deeper look at key areas across the health care continuum, including primary care, mental health and addictions, home and community care, long-term care, digital health and innovations, along with acute care. This is an opportunity to significantly change the way we think about and deliver health care in Ontario, by bringing integrated health care to our province. We need to transform the way Ontarians receive health services and experience relationships with health care providers.

“At every step of the way, we must deliver health care in the most modern and effective way possible, get better outcomes for patients, while improving productivity. Now the work begins.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: I'd like to thank my leader for bringing forth this motion. I'd also like to thank the member from Brampton Centre for her amazing words about this motion here.

The member across from Mississauga Centre says that she is a former nurse and that right now they don't have a magic wand to fix this problem. Well, I ask the government, do you have a heart to fix this problem?

The member from Mississauga Centre mentioned that there's no money to fix the health care system. Well, perhaps the 30% reduction in WSIB premiums—you could find that money and put it toward the health care system.

Once again, a lot of sad stories are coming out of Brampton and across southern Ontario. One of my constituents had no choice but to go to a hospital in Mississauga for a life-saving appendix-removing surgery. She was not able to risk going to Brampton Civic Hospital because she thought that she would be sitting there for hours and hours, waiting to be helped. This is sad, Mr. Speaker. This is the sad reality of the people of Brampton. Despite having a hospital in my own riding, people feel compelled to drive to Orangeville and to Mississauga, as well as to Georgetown, for timely service and for emergency care.

Brampton is Canada's second-fastest-growing city. Of the 45 new residents who move to the region of Peel every day, 38 of them settle in Brampton. Yet Brampton has only one full-service hospital: Brampton Civic Hospital. Brampton Civic Hospital has one of the busiest emergency rooms in Canada. It was built to serve 90,000 people per year but experienced more than 138,000 visits just last year. Do you know what that has led to, Mr. Speaker? It has led to overcrowding and hallway medicine.

Peel Memorial is already severely underfunded. There was a funding shortfall of \$19.2 million in just the first year of its operations. Projections for this year are for 65,000 patient visits, but the ministry has provided funding for only 10,000. That is not right, Mr. Speaker. On top of that, the Central West LHIN is underfunded by \$1,000 per resident compared to LHINs in other jurisdictions.

All of that leads to a health care system in Brampton which is at capacity, overcrowded and underfunded, with long wait times for people who visit. Families in Brampton have suffered way too long from overcrowding, hallway medicine and some of the longest wait times in the province. Thousands of Bramptonians every year get the care that they need and deserve. Yes, they get it, but they get it in hallways. Bramptonians deserve better.

One hospital is not the way to go, and it's not going to solve the ongoing health care crisis in Brampton. We need to invest in health care systems in Brampton, and we need more than just one full-time hospital if we're going to end hallway medicine and increasing wait times.

The two PCs from Brampton, the members from Brampton South and Brampton West—I'm not going to

say anything further—have recognized Brampton's health care needs but have not committed to the construction of a new hospital. The PCs do not have a serious plan for health care and are gearing up to deliver cuts.

The Premier has committed to building 6,000 new long-term-care beds over five years, the same commitment the Liberals had been making, but they haven't made any commitments for hospital expansion. That's the key, right there. The recent \$90-million commitment for flu season support made no mention of Brampton.

The Premier has committed to \$6 billion in annual budget cuts, which would have a devastating impact on the health care system. The last time the PCs were in power—we all remember that—they ordered 28 hospitals closed and fired 6,000 nurses. I'm sure the member from Mississauga Centre remembers that as well.

In fact, the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Health stated that our hospitals will need to be more efficient and are going to have to be more innovative.

The people of Brampton are counting on the government to invest in health care, so they can deliver the services in a timely manner. More cuts and inaction are not something that Bramptonians can afford. The taxpayers deserve dignified, timely and highly qualified care from our health care system. Right now, those Bramptonians are being let down by the underfunded health care which produces long wait times, overcrowding and hallway medicine.

We, the New Democrats, have been backing local voices calling for solutions to rectify this problem for a very, very long time. As our leader mentioned, we are calling for the government to provide the necessary funding in the 2019-20 budget for the construction of a new hospital in Brampton, to make sure that over 4,000 Bramptonians—right now, they're not receiving the care that they need—don't receive hallway medicine anymore. The city of Brampton needs a third hospital.

Even the municipal governments—this is something I think you should all listen to—are in agreement with this. I'm going to give you a quote here from Linda Jeffrey, the mayor of Brampton. She said, "Over the long term it is critical we move forward on a third hospital immediately, as by 2041 we will be a city of nearly one million residents.

"We at the city of Brampton have initiated the planning in order to protect the lands we will need for our future third hospital. We need a commitment by the province of Ontario to expedite the funding and planning for this facility."

In fact, in these municipal elections which are coming up, both of the leading mayoral candidates have publicly stated that Brampton has been left behind, and the people of Brampton feel the same way. In fact, cities of similar populations in Ontario already have three or more hospitals: cities like Windsor, Hamilton and Mississauga, as well as London. Yet Brampton, with a population of over 600,000, has only one full-time hospital.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Brampton feel they have been left behind and they are being neglected again and

again. Health care is more than just the care they receive. It also involves the dignity with which they receive that care. It is inherently wrong that we have over 4,500 Bramptonians who receive their health care in the hallways and face some of the longest wait times in the country because the health care system in Brampton is overworked, burdened, underfunded and in the middle of a crisis. Brampton needs investment in their health care system, and they need it now.

This is why we brought this motion today: because Brampton needs a third hospital, and the government needs to commit to funding that hospital now. We can no longer neglect Brampton and its health care needs, so I'm hoping that every member here can come together and help bring the services, the dignity and the timely care that the people of Brampton so direly need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

1700

Mrs. Nina Tangri: First of all, I would like to acknowledge the great work being done by our Minister of Health in addressing the needs of a better health care system in Ontario. Having said that, we are spending a vast amount of time listening to our constituents and the needs of the community, including the needs of our hospitals.

I would like to begin by talking about the time I served as a member of the board of directors of Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga. I served on the board for six years in many capacities: vice-chair of the board, chair of corporate governance, resources committee, patient quality committee, amongst many other roles.

As a fairly new board member at the time, I remember a letter we received by Dalton McGuinty, the Premier at the time, notifying us that we had to lay off nurses and the funds had been allocated to pay for their severance. We immediately responded, notifying him of the new cancer care facility about to open and that nurses would be needed—thus savings for the taxpayer. Unfortunately, our voices were not heard and we were forced to lay off those nurses—just to hire nurses back a few short months later. What a complete waste of hard-earned taxpayers' dollars and desperately needed nurses no longer available for our patients.

As I said, I served in many capacities on the board and saw first-hand as I visited patients, met with physicians and spent a great amount of time with the amazing nurses. But I also witnessed the demoralization of our health care workers due to cuts by the Liberals, poor policies by the government and a lack of support to ensure that our patients are treated with respect.

My vast knowledge of how the hospital was run, how efficiently it was run, and our passing all accreditations with flying colours proved that you can only do so much to be the best with the resources you have.

We had to establish strategic direction, have excellent management, ensure program quality and effectiveness and ensure financial viability. But most of all, we had to make sure the patients had the best possible care.

I, myself, was a hallway patient. I spent over 24 hours in a holding area, whilst in severe pain, listening to a small child on one side constantly crying and a senior on the other side of me who was having so much difficulty just explaining what he was feeling and how hurt he was. There was so much complete frustration for the health care workers as they needed to get each of us into a bed, but there was no room. They were unable to discharge people as there were no long-term-care beds or at-home care available to them.

My time on the board also opened my eyes on ways we can do better—a better urgent care system where people can go for faster treatment, a better proactive approach and investments to assist those with mental health conditions.

We're talking about Brampton a lot today. I have many family and friends who work at William Osler and I hear them and I understand what they have to go through. I also know many patients at William Osler and understand what they've had to go through—and trying to work with the best resources that they have.

Mr. Speaker, we have hit the ground running. Last week, Brampton also received a number of the long-term-care beds we announced. And beds still have to be allocated based on the highest-need areas. The ministry is working with communities and hospitals, including William Osler Health System, to confirm the final location of those beds and spaces.

But let me go back, Mr. Speaker. To date, the ministry has not received any applications for a new Brampton hospital.

We all know that the Liberals have left the health care system in complete disarray—and I can see none of them are here with us this afternoon.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member well knows the rules of the House. You are not to comment on who is here and who isn't here. Thank you.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I apologize.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I know you won't do it again, or we will just move along with the debate. Thank you.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Our hospital and health care systems have been left in complete disarray, and only a comprehensive, province-wide capacity plan can reveal the extent of the need that exists. Working on that capacity plan has been one of our minister's top priorities.

The people of Ontario and our providers in the health care sector need a responsible, sustainable, effective health care system that provides patients with the care they need and deserve. Only last week, this government announced 6,000 new long-term-care beds as part of our promise to add 15,000 new long-term-care beds in five years. Promise made, promise kept. We know this is only the first step toward ending hallway health care.

When the people of this great province voted us into a majority, they told us loud and clear to treat their tax dollars with respect. All decisions must be made from evidence and facts.

The opposition leader and her NDP are only interested in playing political games with our health care system by pitting city against city. However, our government for the people is working hard to address the need for a comprehensive approach to ending hallway medicine. The NDP is playing politics with this motion, providing no actual plan or details, when they should be working with us to find real solutions.

We witnessed what happened in Ontario after 15 years of a Liberal government making decisions without a plan. Brampton deserves better. This province deserves better. Ontario needs a real plan. That's what our government for the people was elected to do, and that's what we will do.

Back in the 1990s, the NDP closed 9,645 hospital beds—your record. They created a doctor shortage, caused by Bob Rae's cap on medical school enrolment, sending some of our brightest students to the United States to practise. Ontario has had enough of band-aid solutions and needs a real, proactive plan to address the enormous challenge that we face.

Emergency department volumes are on the rise, Mr. Speaker. Patients who need an alternative level of care continue to wait for long-term care and supervised or assisted living. By moving those patients, we free up desperately needed beds in the hospital. We are looking for and finding real solutions. Hallways and storage closets are not the place to receive treatment in a hospital, or for a health professional to deliver the best quality health care. Home care support can be the most optimal and most efficient, and it is where many patients prefer to be.

My time on the board also opened my eyes on ways we can do better. We must do better, and we can do better.

If you recall, Mr. Speaker, it was the previous PC government that built the William Osler hospital. We recognized the need then. We understood that the hospital needed to be built, and we got it built. In fact, many people who live in south Brampton actually go to the Credit Valley Hospital location of the Trillium Health Partners Foundation. That is because many of them live closer to that hospital. So when they talk about the Brampton population all going to Osler, that is not the case today. Many, many of them are coming either to the Credit Valley location, to the Milton location or the Georgetown location. Even many on the east end will go to the Etobicoke location. I've seen that and I understand that first-hand.

But as I said, we must do better and we can do better. Our government for the people will find those necessary solutions to reduce and eventually end hallway health care. I urge the NDP to join us in finding solutions that make sense and solutions that work.

1710

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to share with you a story. Earlier this year, in September, I arrived at Queen's Park and I received a text that no son ever wants to see. I received a text from someone who works at

my father's office, saying, "I think your father is having a stroke." Immediately, I jumped in my car and I drove straight to Brampton. He was being sent to Brampton Civic via ambulance.

I arrived at Brampton Civic—and I want to take this opportunity to thank publicly the front-line workers there. The nurses, the paramedics, the doctors: They provided amazing, amazing care for my father in his very, very desperate situation in this time that we were in. He received amazing care from these individuals, but despite that, for four days my father was held in the emergency ward. For four days they never had a bed for my father in any other area except for this busy, loud space, where he had to walk outside of his room to go to the bathroom. There was no privacy.

For four days I visited my father. Ironically, my father is a doctor. He's a psychiatrist who services Brampton. In this circumstance, I saw first-hand four days of people being brought in and brought out. I had to see my own father being put into a situation that's not the most comfortable at all, a situation which often I would look at and feel very terribly for, for everyone who was in this medical institution who was unable to get the privacy and the dignity that they needed and they deserved.

It was through this process that I really began to understand and experience how bad this hallway crisis is—and we need to understand this as a crisis, because if people are unable to get the care that they deserve, if they're unable to access the care without fear of long wait times, without the fear of having to receive treatment in a hallway, this ultimately inhibits their ability to access a service that we desperately, desperately need.

This is reflected when I door-knock in Brampton. It's reflected when I have conversations with community members. People feel pain. When you talk to them about the health care system in Brampton, it's almost like they're traumatized in the sense that everyone has heard of a neighbour, of a friend, of a family member who has had to go to Brampton and face these huge wait lines, has had to face this overcrowding or had to wait long, long hours in hallways. The result of it is a community now that, as we've heard, as has been described, goes to different hospitals. They go to Orangeville. They go to Mississauga.

The member opposite from Mississauga—Streetsville almost is justifying the fact: It's okay for people to go to hospitals in Mississauga. It's okay for them to Georgetown. This is wrong. If you are a Bramptonian, you should have the dignity and the ability to access health care in your own city. That is a right, and it's incumbent upon government, to provide that access and that support to the residents of Brampton.

That's why I was incredibly proud during this election that when I went door to door and we spoke to individuals, we campaigned on what Brampton doesn't just deserve but what they so desperately need. We need to bring the funding of Brampton Civic up to speed immediately. We need to turn Peel Memorial, which is right now a health urgent care centre—it is not a hospital. It is not open 24 hours; it's 14 hours a day. We need that turned into a full

hospital. Brampton deserves and needs a third hospital. This is something that we so, so desperately need in our city.

The member opposite also described this lack of a plan, this lack of an idea, where we put forth something haphazard. Well, we campaigned on a plan. We had a platform. I'm holding it in my hand right now. We had a plan to bring the funding, to bring the support, to bring health care up to speed. To turn it back: Throughout this whole day I've been hearing the language that the members opposite have been using to describe our remarks. They've been using this language of "knee-jerk." They've been using this language of "rushed." They've been using this language of "haphazard." I'll tell you right now, it's not that our plan is rushed, it's that the government has not kept up with Brampton's health care needs. That's the situation.

When you're in a situation of crisis, you don't operate in the status quo. You don't continue business as usual. You need immediate action. You need to overcompensate for 20 years plus of Brampton being left behind. You need to overcompensate for Brampton always having received the short end of the stick.

Health care is just the tip of the iceberg. Across the board, when you talk about organizations like Fair Share for Peel, we know Brampton is always receiving less funding across the board. Respectfully, Mr. Speaker, the actions taken by the government right now are exacerbating the situation. They're causing this to get worse and worse. When you talk about things like \$300 million in cuts to health care, when you talk about the fact that they are very proud of this \$90 million being earmarked for funding, but that \$90 million doesn't address Brampton—actually, not any of that money is earmarked for Brampton, a city that's in a health care crisis—this is exacerbating our situation. It's creating a situation where health care is getting worse and worse. We need this motion. We need to act immediately to bring health care to where it needs to be in Brampton. This motion speaks directly to the heart of the people of Brampton. This motion, actually, despite the fact the members opposite describe it as rushed or knee-jerk, is what Bramptonians need and want.

If you knock on doors in my riding of Brampton East or my colleagues' ridings of Brampton Centre and Brampton North, they'll tell you very much the same thing. This is not knee-jerk, what this opposition day motion is putting forward. This is not something that is haphazard. This is, instead, something that we deserve and we need. This is something that we must continually put forward, we must continually push for.

I'm so proud of our leader today, Andrea Horwath. I'm so proud of all the members who have come together on this opposition day motion to ensure that Brampton has the voice that it needs, that it has the advocates that it needs. We're going to continue to push, we're going to continue to fight, because we were sent here to not just sit in seats, but we were sent here to make life better for everyday Ontarians. This is a mission, this is our goal, this is what

drives us. We were sent here to fight to make sure lives are better, and it starts when people are no longer afraid to access health care. It starts when people are able to access hospitals and not wait in long wait times. It starts when people can access health care and get the dignity and respect they need in getting care and rooms they deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Parm Gill: I appreciate the opportunity of being able to rise this afternoon and speak to this opposition day motion.

I'm honestly not normally the one to get disappointed. I understand the game that we have to play, the business that we're in. But it is certainly disappointing, the level that sometimes the opposition can drop down to. It is extremely disappointing.

The members opposite spoke, and they talked about our record. I was not going to get into this record, but I can't really help myself because they talked about numbers and they talked about what and how the Conservatives have really let Ontarians down in the past. Speaking of records, I do like to remind the opposition of their record. The one and only time when they were in government in Ontario—we all make mistakes sometimes, and Ontarians also made a mistake by giving them the reins of our great province. Never again.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you their record back when they were in power—like I said, just for one term. This is just an example of it. There are many, many examples, but this is just one year alone and the announcements that they made in terms of health care and the cuts in terms of health care to our province.

Some \$53 million in cuts to 10 of Ontario's psychiatric hospitals—let me tell you where the impact was in some of the cities that were impacted by this, places like Hamilton—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Order, please.

1720

Mr. Parm Gill: —Kingston, Thunder Bay, London, North Bay, Penetang, Toronto, St. Thomas, Whitby. All of this represented up to 17% cuts in operating budgets of some of these hospitals: \$4.7 million cut in Hamilton alone; \$5 million cut in Whitby alone; \$6.3 million in Kingston.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member from Timmins will come to order, please.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you, Speaker. I needed that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I know you needed that and, please, remain in order. Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I will, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I return to the member from Milton.

Mr. Parm Gill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know sometimes the truth hurts. Sometimes you don't like to be reminded of the dark times that Ontarians faced under the NDP.

I could go on and on forever. Like I said, I'm not the type of guy who would normally do this, normally talk about past records, but having heard the members opposite, I'm sorry, I can't really help myself.

Interjection: Frustration boils over.

Mr. Parm Gill: I am frustrated.

I represented Brampton federally as a member of Parliament.

Ms. Sara Singh: Oh, we know. Thank you for that.

Mr. Parm Gill: And I appreciate that.

The Brampton Civic Hospital was actually located in Brampton—Springdale, and that hospital, I like to remind the members opposite, was announced under the previous PC government. At the time, we only had one hospital, which was Peel Memorial Hospital. So we announced the new hospital, the Brampton Civic Hospital, in Brampton. That was the Ontario Conservative government at the time. Sure enough, the Liberals came to power in 2003 and the new hospital was built. As soon as that was up and running, what did the Liberals do, Mr. Speaker? They shut down Peel Memorial Hospital.

There were protests. There were Liberal Party candidates running leading up to an election holding signs in front of Peel Memorial Hospital saying that this was going to open as a full-fledged hospital. They were actually going to revamp it, they were going to rebuild it and they were going to put that hospital in operation. I saw that firsthand, Mr. Speaker.

Like I said, I was the federal representative at the time and the provincial Liberal candidates and representatives also played politics with this health care issue, which was extremely disappointing—all of this while the community was protesting. I attended some of those protests. I appreciate that some of the NDP members at the time were possibly not active and I did not see them around at the time at these protests while the community was up in arms, trying to figure out how we can get this other hospital up and running. It was disappointing to see the Liberals playing politics and the billions of dollars in health care cuts that they made, and it's now disappointing for me to see the official NDP opposition pretty much playing the same politics with people's health care.

The NDP, of course, we know hasn't been in government for the past two decades and it will probably remain that way for a long, long—and I certainly hope that we never see another NDP government with the chaos that they created the last time they were in power.

As my colleagues mentioned, it's disappointing to see that they've brought forward this motion, which is great, and to an extent, yes, play politics. We all understand. But to introduce a motion literally with no details, no information, no facts whatsoever, literally written on the back of a napkin, a rush job, the kind of announcement yesterday we saw from a member on the auto insurance policy—when I made an announcement at 9 o'clock that I would be introducing a private member's bill to help Ontarians, and of course Bramptonians, with auto insurance rates, for which they pay one of the highest premiums in the country, what did we see at that time? We saw, literally

half an hour later, a member of the NDP make the same announcement, that they will be tabling a private member's bill in the House at 1:30—which didn't take place, actually, yesterday; it was tabled today.

I am a strong believer that you only commit to and make promises that are achievable, that are thoughtful and that the government has the ability to deliver. I understand that in opposition, especially sometimes when you're in a third party, it is easy to promise everybody the moon, because you're not accountable. You don't have to deliver. You can say, "Oh, you know what? It's the government that's not doing this."

The NDP is aware and knows full well the kind of hole we're in, the kind of hole that the Liberals have put this province in. But do you know what's worse? Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, had the NDP been elected into power—

Mr. Paul Calandra: No, no, stop it. Stop it. Come on, don't.

Interjection: Stop scaring him; it's not Halloween yet.

Mr. Paul Calandra: The pages are brand new. They're far too young.

Mr. Parm Gill: Look at the reaction from my colleagues on this end. This would be a similar reaction that you could expect from most Ontarians, because they would never want to see what happened with the previous NDP government repeated again.

None of this is not to say that one patient that's treated in hallway health care is one patient too many, which is why our government, elected only a few months ago, has hit the ground running. We all know we sat through the summer months, we sat through the weekends, we sat through nights and we mean business, because that's what Ontarians expect from us. That's why we were elected. That's the mandate that we were given. We will continue to work on behalf of Ontarians, because they expect that from the Ontario PC government, under the leadership of our Premier, Doug Ford.

I'd also like to thank the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. She has got tremendous experience, and I don't think we could have picked a better person in the entire province to really lead the Ministry of Health, which is so important and affects every single Ontarian. I want to thank her, and I want to appreciate all of the hard work that she is doing every single day to fix the mess that the Liberals have left us in.

We recently announced a \$90-million investment, we all know, and when we say something, like I mentioned earlier, we mean it, Mr. Speaker. This is absolutely new money. This isn't a recycled announcement, kind of what the Liberals were used to; this is brand new money in the health care system to secure 1,100 beds and spaces to ease the hospital gridlock across our province. Ontario communities are preparing for the upcoming flu season. We understand that there's going to be strain on hospitals. They need the help, and we're going to provide that.

We're moving forward with building 6,000 new long-term-care beds. That was also part of the announcement. These new beds represent the first wave of more than

15,000 long-term-care beds that the government has committed to build over the next five years, while we continue to develop a long-term transformational strategy to address hallway health care.

It's unfortunate—like I said, I'm still trying to get over the fact—that the members of the NDP are playing these political games with the lives of people. It's unfortunate. Any time you or your family member has to end up in a hospital and wish—

Miss Monique Taylor: Sixty per cent of the province voted against you.

Mr. Parm Gill: I appreciate the heckling, you know. I appreciate the heckling, but do you know what? I think Ontarians would really appreciate if you guys were actually working on behalf of them, working with our government. If you mean good for the Ontario people, try working with us on some of our proposals, some of our announcements that are all geared to put money back in the pockets of Ontario's people, to make Ontario a better place not only for us, for this generation and for our seniors but also our future generations.

1730

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you a little bit about myself. I'm a proud father of three kids. I've got a beautiful daughter and two boys, and they're part of the reason why I'm here, because I'm concerned about their future. I was concerned about the direction this province was headed in. Anybody and everybody, especially now, with the hole that the Liberals have left us in, Mr. Speaker—every kid who is born today is born with thousands and thousands of dollars' worth of debt on their shoulders.

Ontario used to be the economic engine of our country. The Liberals have really ruined us, to the point where Ontario has become a have-not province. It is so disappointing to see.

I am so thankful, and of course I think most Ontarians are so happy, that the Ontario PC government was given a mandate on June 7. We formed a majority government, 76 MPPs strong, and every single one of the members of our caucus is working hard every single day to live up to the expectations that Ontarians have from us.

Going back to long-term health care—

Interjection.

Mr. Parm Gill: I appreciate the heckling from my colleague, my friend from Brampton Centre, but I would really appreciate it if you would pay attention. If you listen to what our government has to say, if you work with us, if you really care about your constituents and Bramptonians in general, then work with us.

We are delivering relief. We're making the right investments. We will continue to do that. We will not rest until we are able to deliver the results that people expect from us. Under the leadership of our Premier, Doug Ford, we're going to get things done. Believe us, we will make it happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm happy to add a few comments on the record regarding the motion that my leader has brought forward for a new hospital in Brampton.

I've had the immense privilege to be the health critic for my party for the last 11 years. For five of those years, the current Minister of Health was actually the health critic for her party, and she and I worked together a lot.

I can tell you that way back when Elizabeth Witmer was there, and then when the current Minister of Health was health critic for the Progressive Conservatives, starting back in 2007, we had started to talk about a new hospital for Brampton. Through all of those years—and through everybody who served as health critic, because the present member left the Legislative Assembly for a while, and now came back as Minister of Health—during all of those years, we have been talking about the needs of this growing community.

When the LHIN, the local health integration network, says that 772 in-patient beds are needed, there is no way to incorporate that amount of beds into the existing infrastructure in Brampton. The only way you can meet the needs of the people who live there is through a new hospital, which is what my leader has put forward in her motion.

I want people to realize that the people from the Progressive Conservatives—you are the government. You are the stewards of our health care system. You have resources in place that can already tell you where the burning areas of need are within our province. You are responsible for our health care system as a whole, but you are also responsible for our hospital system. That responsibility is on your shoulders. You don't have to reinvent the wheel. You have over 22,000 people who work for the Ministry of Health; talk to them. You have the South West—I always call the wrong LHIN—the South West LHIN who has documented where the areas of need are. Everybody knows.

To come back to us and say that we pulled that out of a napkin—it has been 11 years that the need for a new hospital in Brampton has been coming forward. It comes forward through reports that the LHINs put forward. It comes forward when we look at the occupancy rates of our hospitals. It comes forward when we look at—every night, hospitals report how busy they are, as in how many patients there are versus how many beds they're funded for. This comes to the Ministry of Health every single night. We have and you have—we all have—the data. We all know that the need for a new hospital in Brampton is not new. We all know that the stats are only getting worse.

When you read things such as that 4,352 people last year were admitted into Brampton Civic but never got treated into a bed, this is awful. For people, it means their privacy, it means their self-worth, it means that everything they expect from our hospital is not there. It means that you will be put in a room that used to be a TV room. The TV will be great, but there won't be oxygen there; there won't be a bathroom; there won't be a place for staff to wash their hands before they care for you; there won't be any division between you and the other four or five people

who are crammed into that TV room with you. That means that every time you have to go to the bathroom, you do this on a commode with four other people listening in, and your dignity goes out the window. This is what the people of Brampton have been facing. This is what 4,352 people in Brampton—this is how we cared for them last year.

Is there overcrowding elsewhere? Absolutely. I stand up in this House all the time: 50% of our hospitals right here, right now, as we speak, are in overcapacity, including Brampton Civic. What we also know is that it is very bad in Sudbury, where I'm from, it is very bad in Thunder Bay and it is very bad in many areas, but for Brampton, it has been bad for longer and it has been getting worse. They have reopened the old Peel Memorial Hospital and made it into an urgent care centre because they couldn't handle it anymore. That was the only infrastructure that was there ready to go. But the need for a third hospital in the fastest-growing areas of our province is well documented. Anybody who follows the health care system knows that.

When the people from the National and people from elsewhere in Canada want to talk about overcrowding, do you know where they go? They go to Brampton Civic, because they know that this hospital is going to be overcrowded. This is a badge of shame on Ontario. This is a badge of shame on all of us.

We have, in front of you right now, an opportunity to change this. Some of the members from the government who have come forward have said, "Oh, but we need a mental health strategy." Yes, absolutely, we do need a mental health strategy. How I wish we would have implemented the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions' 23 recommendations. We still need this. Do we need more long-term-care beds? Yes, absolutely. We do need more mental health beds. But once you are the government, once you are responsible for the health care system as a whole, you have to be able to move all those things forward together. You have to be able to build more long-term-care homes. You have to be able to cut the wait times for people to finally gain access to mental health services. And you have to be able to build new hospitals where they are needed.

1740

Right now, the proposal that is in front of you doesn't say, "We don't want long-term care, we don't want"—it doesn't say any of this. It just says that since 2007 the need for a third site—there was only one and then they reopened Peel—for hospital care in Brampton has been documented. It has been known. It has been repeated. Certainly, my leader and I have stood in front of that hospital—I don't know how many times, Leader, but very many times in the last 11 years—to say that something needs to be done.

This afternoon, you have an opportunity to vote. You have an opportunity to give the people of Brampton hope that for all those years, for all those thousands of people who continue to be cared for in a way that is completely undignified, that you understand, that you know that given the size of the community, given the number of acute care

beds that are needed—and when the estimate goes up for 772 acute care beds, they take into account that there would be zero ALC, zero alternate level of care. If we ever get to zero alternate level of care, Speaker, I am going to be beyond myself, I will be so happy. So the 772 beds that have been identified as needed in Brampton—those are at a very minimum. We've known this for a long time. This information is there.

Give people hope. Tell them that you have been listening to them for all those years, that you realize that they do need health care, they do need long-term care, they do need more home care, mental health, primary care—all of this doesn't go away—but that you have listened to them, that you have seen the evidence growing over the years, that you understand that the size, the magnitude, of the number of in-patient beds that are needed to serve those people can very well be met with a new hospital.

Are we going to hire the bulldozer that the Premier and the Minister of Finance were going to drive to the Ring of Fire? Absolutely not. Andrea and I are not going to jump onto a bulldozer and get that started. That's not what we do at all.

What we will do is we will bring the voice of the people forward. We will say that all of the body of evidence that has been building over the years shows us that we need over 772 acute care beds in Brampton, and that this can be best accommodated with a new site so that people would have three different sites to serve quite a big geographical area of Brampton, that we have listened to them.

Is there due process to get to build a hospital? Yes, there is. But a budget is a really good opportunity to send hope. Put it in the budget. Name it in the budget. Say that you understand, you've listened to them, you've heard them, you want to do something for them, you understand that being treated in a hallway is not acceptable, and give them that hope.

You can do that today by voting in favour of a motion that will get the wheels in motion to make sure that those people feel heard and that we start to address this issue of the need for more acute care beds to serve the people of Brampton. It's as simple as that. It is doable. We have an opportunity to speak loudly today, to send the message to everybody in Brampton who has been waiting for that for at least 11 years.

I thank you for your time, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We return to the leader of the official opposition for her right of reply.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to start by saying how shocked I am that someone in this Legislature would actually describe the important work we do here fighting for the health care needs of the people in Brampton and all of Ontario as nothing but a game. Shame, shame. This is no game. New Democrats have been fighting for health care for people for years, and we will continue to do that proudly, strongly, vocally and in opposition of any government that wants to whittle down even further the quality of health care and hospital care that residents in any part of Ontario receive.

I also want to give a newsflash to those members of the government side who refuse to acknowledge the reality

that Brampton faces. I've mentioned it and other members of my caucus have mentioned it because it is absolutely the truth. Brampton is the second-fastest-growing community in the entire country. It has a hospital that was built in 2007. The day that hospital opened its doors, it was already overcrowded. It is now 2018. There are almost 40 people a day still moving to the city of Brampton. This is not about politics; this is about people—something you people said you cared about.

Look, I've visited that hospital, as France said. I've stood on the front steps of that hospital. I have gone through that hospital. I have sat at round table discussions with the administrators and the front-line workers together in that hospital. I have met with the mayor, who is currently running for re-election, to talk about the problems with that hospital. What's happening in Brampton is wrong. It needs to be fixed. The Liberals ignored it for years. The Conservatives screwed it up—sorry; the Conservatives messed it up in the first place because when they built the Brampton hospital, they decided that they were going to waste public money and put it in the pockets of their friends instead.

I'm going to talk a little bit about that because these are the “innovations” that this government likes to talk about. These are the transformations that they use in terms of their language, and the reality hits hard when it hits the ground in communities like Brampton. With the hospital that's there now, that was opened in 2007, there were originally supposed to be 716 beds, and that hospital was supposed to come in at around \$500 million in terms of cost.

Well, fast-forward to what really happened because the Conservatives decided that they were going to line the pockets of their friends, just like the Liberals had done for 15 years. They were going to put a P3 hospital in place, so they did. And guess what happened? You can look at the 2008 Auditor General's report. I actually was at the table hearing the evidence that came from the auditor's team about that P3 model, and it was shameful, Speaker. In 2008, I sat around that table and heard about Brampton Civic Hospital. And you know what the Auditor General found? Again, I just Googled it to remind myself of the specifics. The bottom line is, the Conservatives gave away the farm to their friends. They gave away public money to their friends in the P3 model. The alternative finance and procurement model is what the Liberals renamed it because they were so ashamed of the fact that they were still using the same model that the Conservatives used. As a result, instead of 716 beds, only 608 beds ended up coming out at the end of the wash: 108 beds fewer than what they were supposed to get in the first place. Then, to add insult to injury—listen up, Conservatives, because this is the road that your leader is going to take you on—over 100 beds less and over \$100 million more in costs. And you wonder why we are 11 years later, in 2018, and the people of Brampton still don't have the hospital services that they deserve.

The bottom line is that transformation, innovation, all of these pieces that the Conservatives talk about, are no

better than what the Liberals have already provided, and we can all see how inadequate that is and how it lines the pockets of their friends and their well-connected insiders. And who pays the price? Everyday people pay the price. While this Premier and his government decide that they are going—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Excuse me. Will you please sit down? You're blocking the camera. You know what you're doing. And please don't do it again.

I return to the member.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Wow. What dirty tricks those people play. How disgraceful, Speaker. Is that what we do around here? Get into the mud in that regard? Shameful, shameful, shameful.

Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate that.

Look, they're going to be cutting taxes for their friends. They are going to be cutting taxes—

Mr. Paul Calandra: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Point of order, the member from Markham–Stouffville.

Mr. Paul Calandra: The member clearly did not realize that she was standing in front of the camera. I would ask that the—

Interjections.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The bottom line is this, Speaker: They are going to cut taxes for the wealthy so their friends get richer, and everyday people are going to stay lined up in hospitals because Conservatives care about the rich and the corporate sector and they don't give a darn about everyday people, whether they be in Brampton or anywhere else in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Order, please. All members will assume their assigned seats. Thank you.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 1. All those in favour of the motion will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Harden, Joel	Schreiner, Mike
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hassan, Faisal	Shaw, Sandy
Arthur, Ian	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Gurratan
Bell, Jessica	Karpoche, Bhutla	Singh, Sara
Berns-McGown, Rima	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bisson, Gilles	Lindo, Laura Mae	Stiles, Marit
Bourgouin, Guy	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique

Fife, Catherine	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Vanhof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Morrison, Suze	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	Yarde, Kevin
Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): All those opposed to the motion will now stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Hillier, Randy	Rasheed, Kaleed
Baber, Roman	Jones, Sylvia	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Karahalios, Belinda	Roberts, Jeremy
Bailey, Robert	Ke, Vincent	Romano, Ross
Barrett, Toby	Khanjin, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Kramp, Daryl	Scott, Laurie
Bouma, Will	Kusendova, Natalia	Simard, Amanda
Calandra, Paul	Lecce, Stephen	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Stan	Martin, Robin	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Smith, Todd
Coe, Lorne	McKenna, Jane	Surma, Kinga
Crawford, Stephen	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Miller, Norman	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Downey, Doug	Mulrone, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dunlop, Jill	Nicholls, Rick	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fee, Amy	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
Fullerton, Merrilee	Park, Lindsey	Walker, Bill
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Pam	Pettapiece, Randy	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Rod	Yurek, Jeff
Harris, Mike	Piccini, David	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 35; the nays are 65.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

HOSPITAL FUNDING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for London–Fanshawe has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

I recognize the member for London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: You know, the late show is a wonderful tool for us to bring stories of our constituents to this Legislature. The reason I do this today is because during question period, I don't really believe the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport heard what I was saying. The answer we got was really a political answer. I really wanted to highlight the struggles the couple in my riding are facing. That was the purpose of bringing it.

I thought about whether or not I wanted to do this today, but I thought, I have to advocate for Christine and Marcel Turgeon. They've been married for 53 years. Marcel has dementia, and oftentimes the psychotherapist who comes to the home and the PSW—because he has that illness, he refuses to let them in. He sometimes misses his medication. His wife, Christine, has her own health concerns. Let's face it, Speaker: It's very difficult to care for someone else. They're in their eighties. You're usually caring for your own health issues, and then to add that burden onto a partner or a caregiver you live with—that's a lot of work. She's willing to do that work, but his health progressed into a different phase. She couldn't do it anymore.

What happened was, Marcel had a heart attack in March and he was admitted to London Health Sciences Centre, the Victoria campus. When he was to be discharged, Christine told the hospital staff that she couldn't care for him, that he couldn't come home. She said, "I can't do it." And it's reasonable to think that that's possible in people's lives. The hospital agreed she could keep Marcel in an alternative care bed for about the same price of a long-term-care bed. We know why that happened. We all know that there is a huge backlog for people who are wanting to get into long-term care. There's a wait-list that's exorbitant. So what ends up happening is people like Christine and Marcel try their best. They have the home care come in, but then at some point in time, the illness progresses and it becomes a crisis situation at home, and they can no longer continue that care. Do you know what? I have never yet once heard of someone who's been married 53 years, 63 years, 73 years who wants their partner to leave their home.

But what happened in this case was Marcel was released—not into a London long-term-care home facility, but in a long-term-care home that was hours away. Christine does not drive. She's at the mercy of the kindness of her neighbours and friends to go see her husband of 53 years. That is unacceptable.

That's why I asked the question. I wanted the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport to understand that's what I was talking about. I'm not criticizing what they're doing or what they haven't done. I am advocating for Christine and Marcel so that they can have their relationship of 53 years continue. It's really hard on people, if you think about it, when your loved one is taken away for circumstances beyond her control.

1810

Yes, the government needs to do better when it comes to long-term care. We need to plan for the future. We know that seniors are going to be the highest population in Ontario, so we need that leadership.

The minister talked about how she wants to work with us. I am probably one of the most congenial people you'd want to work with, and I am happy to work with the minister. Anything they would like to collaborate on, I'm happy to work with the minister. We may not always agree on how to solve the problem.

I have brought many solutions and suggestions with regard to long-term care in the past and with regard to

public inquiry. She talked about systemic problems in long-term care. I brought a motion to this House to expand the public inquiry that was going on at the time into a phase 2 to deal with systemic issues. Those systemic issues were very thoughtful and detailed because, over the years, we had heard stories upon stories. One of the stories is of people being separated after years of being married. We even had a plan of how to continue to keep couples together in the same long-term-care home.

I am pleading with this government—and hopefully the health care minister—to intervene and help Christine and Marcel. Bring Marcel to a London long-term-care bed. Let them enjoy their years together in some semblance of happiness.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The minister's parliamentary assistant, the member for Don Valley North, has five minutes to reply.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the concerns of the member from London-Fanshawe on behalf of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

We must do everything we can to help families like Mr. and Mrs. Turgeon. I hope that the medical authorities in London are soon able to place Mr. Turgeon in a facility close to home.

Many of us in this House know from experiences in our own families that helping a loved one return to health is not only about good care by doctors and nurses. It is also about having family members near and easily able to visit. This matter shows why our government is right to work to end hallway health care and create more long-term-care beds. We were elected to do this, and we are doing it.

Let me repeat what the minister said in question period earlier today: There have been no cuts to health care under our government. There have only been increases in health care funding and the number of beds.

I was proud when the health minister announced \$90 million for hospital and long-term-care beds. This will secure more than 1,100 beds across Ontario: 640 are new beds and 460 are beds for which funding was running out.

Our government is providing this funding to relieve the hospital gridlock crisis across Ontario as communities prepare for the flu season. We are moving forward by building 6,000 new long-term-care beds out of the 15,000 we have promised in the election.

Fighting hallway health care means more beds in hospitals. It also means more spaces in long-term-care homes. I understand that Elmwood Place in London will be getting 50 new beds at their facility, centrally located in the city. I hope this early investment will help Londoners who need care. Securing these investments right now is important.

They are only a first step. Our government also knows that we need to plan for the future health needs of Ontarians. We need to determine the future medical needs of Ontarians through careful and comprehensive study based on evidence.

We must spend our health dollars wisely. They are the tax dollars of Ontarians, who deserve to be treated with respect. We need to see that every penny of value goes to good health care. That is why our health minister is working on a comprehensive, province-wide capacity plan. This plan is one of her top priorities.

We have been asking Dr. Rueben Devlin to advise the Premier and the Minister of Health on innovative solutions to end hallway health care and make the system work better for patients, seniors and families. Dr. Devlin holds great experience in the field, including having run the Humber River regional hospital.

Our approach to improving health care is comprehensive, and the work the health minister is doing on her capacity plan will be followed by comprehensive action. This will be based on evidence and good planning, to meet everyone's health needs. We want to help—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you.

There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1817.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
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Karahalios, Belinda (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
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Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
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Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
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Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	

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Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Stephen Crawford
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Stephen Crawford, Doug Downey
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Dave Smith
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, Lorne Coe
Chris Glover, Christine Hogarth
Logan Kanapathi, Daryl Kramp
Natalia Kusendova, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Dave Smith
Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Michael Coteau, Mike Harris
Faisal Hassan, Jane McKenna
Christina Maria Mitas, Sam Oosterhoff
Amanda Simard, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Catherine Fife, Goldie Ghamari
Jim McDonell, Norman Miller
Suze Morrison, Michael Parsa
Peggy Sattler, Kinga Surma
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kaleed Rasheed
Toby Barrett, Will Bouma
Mike Harris, Randy Hillier
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

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Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
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Select Committee on Financial Transparency / Comité spécial sur la transparence financière

Chair / Président: Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
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Roman Baber, Doug Downey
Catherine Fife, Robin Martin
Lindsey Park, Ross Romano
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John Vanthof
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