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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 30 October 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 30 octobre 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us pray.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CAP AND TRADE
CANCELLATION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 ANNULANT LE PROGRAMME
DE PLAFONNEMENT ET D'ÉCHANGE

Mr. Phillips moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016 / *Projet de loi 4, Loi concernant l'élaboration d'un plan sur le changement climatique, prévoyant la liquidation du programme de plafonnement et d'échange et abrogeant la Loi de 2016 sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et une économie sobre en carbone.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the minister care to lead off the debate?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to begin third and final reading of Bill 4, the proposed Cap and Trade Cancellation Act.

Our government was elected with a clear mandate, a mandate to make lives more affordable for Ontario families. We made a promise to the people of Ontario, a promise that we would scrap the carbon tax cap-and-trade program imposed by the previous Liberal government. It's a punishing tax that forces poor and middle-class families to pay more for basic things: heating, housing, and fuelling their cars. As the Auditor General confirmed, the program would lead to Ontarians paying about \$8 billion more to the government over four years for their fossil fuel needs. On top of this, the Auditor General asserted that even after these heavy costs were foisted on the backs of Ontarians, the majority of reductions in greenhouse gases would not happen in Ontario but outside.

Mr. Speaker, \$8 billion is a very large sum to pay for measures that won't do what they are intended to do: actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Ontario emitters. This is why, upon taking office, we took swift action to fulfill our promise to Ontario families and Ontario businesses. We revoked the cap-and-trade program regulation and ended cap-and-trade trading and emissions allowances. We initiated the process of withdrawal from all agreements related to the Western Climate

Initiative, Inc. We began the cancellation of all programs funded from cap-and-trade carbon tax proceeds, including the Green Ontario Fund. As part of our promise to Ontarians, we used every tool at our disposal to fight this unfair, unconstitutional tax, which has included challenging the federal government's plan to impose a carbon tax on Ontario families in the Ontario Court of Appeal.

Instead of creating and protecting jobs, the federal government announced last week their plan to impose this tax on Ontario and three other provinces. We should be clear: This tax will burden Ontario's economy with a carbon tax and chase jobs out of the province. The FAO has commented that there will be over \$800 of costs by 2022 for the average Ontario family. This is why Premier Ford has announced that Ontario will not only have its own challenge but will also join Saskatchewan's court challenge of the federal government's carbon plan.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of introducing this bill we are discussing today, Bill 4, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, on July 25. This was our first step in fulfilling our promise to make Ontario more affordable for families and businesses. The orderly and transparent wind-down of the cap-and-trade program will benefit all Ontarians. It will ensure that no additional cap-and-trade costs are passed on by suppliers to consumers and, therefore, more costs for families. This is real action that the Financial Accountability Office has confirmed will save the average family \$264 annually.

If the proposed bill is passed, it is estimated that in 2019, it would lower the cost of purchasing gasoline by 4.5 cents per litre, and diesel by 5.5 cents per litre. Mr. Speaker, with the cancelling of the regulation, we've already seen changes of that magnitude come into place. The estimated direct savings for all sectors in 2019 will be over \$1.9 billion.

The end of the carbon tax era means lower costs for businesses and lower costs for households. This, in turn, means more money for businesses and more disposable income for households, which will boost consumption, exports, output, business investment and employment.

The end of this regressive tax will also result in a boost to the Ontario economy. If the proposed bill is passed, cancelling the cap-and-trade program is estimated to increase our gross domestic product by 0.13%, supporting 8,000 net new jobs by 2021. For these reasons and more, the proposed Cap and Trade Cancellation Act is necessary.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the proposed bill sets out the legal framework for the wind-down of the greenhouse gas cap-and-trade program, including the compensation framework. Key elements of the bill are:

- repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016;
- the retirement and cancellation of cap-and-trade instruments—for example, allowances and credits;
- a compensation framework;
- immunizing the crown from domestic civil liability;
- a requirement for the government to set greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets;
- a requirement for the minister to prepare a climate change plan; and
- addressing proceeds credited to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Account.

A number of amendments have been made to Bill 4 during the legislative process. I should say that it was my pleasure to attend the reading of the clause-by-clause. Although I thought many of the amendments proposed by the opposition were more appropriately suggestions for the climate plan that will be coming next month, it was a very useful process that I would commend to my ministerial colleagues.

The amendments that we will be going forward with include:

- allowing the minister to appoint an advisory panel for the purpose of taking any steps with respect to the climate change plan—for example, providing advice on implementing or revising the plan;
- providing clarification regarding regulation-making authority for prescribing amounts of compensation;
- clarifying the scope of regulation-making authority to limit the compensation for eligible participants;
- making electricity generators ineligible for compensation, as they had the ability to recover their costs under the program; and
- authorizing the reimbursement of expenditures in relation to the wind-down that will be incurred by the crown prior to the enactment of the bill.

Bill 4 was also posted on the Environmental Registry for the 30-day public consultation that closed on October 11. We received many comments from a wide range of interested stakeholders, including members of the public, business, industry organizations, environmental organizations and municipalities. We also heard from industry associations, environmental organizations, investment experts and labour councils through the public hearing process for the legislation. All comments were received and were considered by the ministry as part of our consultation process.

Mr. Speaker, our decision to wind down the cap-and-trade program is being guided by several principles. We want to swiftly remove the carbon price from energy prices paid by Ontario consumers. We want to minimize the impacts to taxpayers of possible compensation and legal liability. Indeed, our current estimate is that total compensation will be approximately \$5 million. We are putting the people of Ontario first and taking care to ensure taxpayers are protected from unnecessary exposures.

Finally, we want to provide a responsible, measured framework for compensation. The proposed compensation framework aims to minimize the impact to capped

participants that were not in a position to recover their costs from consumers.

We are also proposing that the act include provisions that, if passed, would allow and enable the government to set targets to reduce emissions in the province. The legislation would also require me, as the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to prepare a new plan to address climate change.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to putting in place a better plan: a made-in-Ontario solution to address environmental challenges we face while respecting the taxpayers of the province. This government is committed to protecting the Ontario we know and love, and ensuring that the pristine beauties and the strong communities we enjoy now can be enjoyed in the future.

We know that climate change is a serious, global problem. We are seeing more severe storms, resulting in flooded basements, structural damages and costly clean-ups. If you look at the insured losses we've suffered in Ontario this year alone, you get a very good picture of the consequences.

0910

In February, a storm caused more than \$46 million of insured damage in Brantford, Cambridge, London and the GTA. In April, a storm in southern Ontario resulted in almost \$80 million in costs. The winds and rains that hit Hamilton and the greater Toronto area in May have caused over \$500 million in damage—the biggest storm since the billion-dollar flood that hit Toronto in 2013. And in August, a rainstorm in Toronto caused \$80 million in damage. Most recently, of course, we saw the destruction left in the wake of the Ottawa tornadoes.

These events disrupt our communities, threaten our health and safety, and cost families not only out-of-pocket expenses associated with cleanup but also cost them in terms of higher insurance premiums.

Climate change is a reality, and our environmental legacy will to a large extent be based on our ability to adapt and to prevent the worst consequences from becoming a reality. At the same time, our government for the people is committed to protecting the environment in a responsible and balanced way that creates jobs, respects taxpayers and grows the economy.

Mr. Speaker, next month our government will release a made-in-Ontario environmental plan. It will be tailored to meet the needs of Ontarians by protecting and conserving our air, land and water; addressing urban litter and waste; building resilience to the impacts of climate change, in particular extreme weather; and helping us all do our part to slow down climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Addressing environmental challenges, such as climate change, provides us with an opportunity as a society to innovate, transform and strengthen environmental safeguards while creating jobs, respecting hard-working taxpayers and growing the economy.

Earlier this month, we issued an invitation to the public to submit ideas on some of the key areas of focus for our

upcoming climate plan. If anyone is interested in submitting, the consultation is still open at ontario.ca/climatechange. We have asked for thoughts on building climate change resiliency, pollution reduction and how the government can better partner with the private sector for sustainable solutions.

We have also had over 100 meetings in terms of consultations with stakeholder groups, environmental groups and business groups. We've also consulted globally with people who have had successful programs internationally, people like the UK carbon fund, the New York Green Bank and the Australian reverse-auction plan. So we've been consulting with the people of Ontario; we've also been consulting globally; we've also been consulting with other provinces, learning from the experience of provinces that have a plan in place. We believe that this ongoing public dialogue will help us find the most effective and innovative solutions to the environmental challenges we face today.

In the meantime, it is important that we pass Bill 4, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act. This proposed legislation gives us an opportunity to usher in a new era of fiscally prudent and effective environmental action in the province of Ontario. It's an era that begins with the cancellation of the cap-and-trade program. This is the right thing to do, it's a good thing to do, and it's another example of a promise made and a promise kept. I urge the members to support this important piece of legislation.

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

Mr. Ian Arthur: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be sharing my time with the member from Toronto–Danforth.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): With all due respect, you will not be sharing your time. There is no sharing of time in this debate. You will be speaking, and then we'll rotate to somebody else.

Mr. Ian Arthur: That sounds great as well. So thank you again.

No matter if one supports a carbon tax, a cap-and-trade system or regulation, there is absolutely no doubt that we need to take action and create policy to fight climate change. Whether it is the footage of the tornado in Ottawa, the fires across northern Ontario or the floods in Gatineau and Toronto, the signs of new extreme weather events are all around us. Recent summers have seen Ontario's worst drought followed by one of the wettest springs in recorded history.

In Kingston, our new cancer treatment centre at Kingston General Hospital flooded just after it was built, when Lake Ontario rose to unprecedented levels. Climate change is here and now, and it is something that my constituents in Kingston and the Islands, as well as those from across Ontario, care about very deeply.

Marilyn Kennedy writes, "I urge the government of Ontario to legislate strong action to reduce its carbon pollution in line with the commitments Canada has made under the Paris climate agreement."

Marilyn continues: "Bill 4, as it stands, will take us backwards. It eliminates the legislative framework to

address climate change—without doing anything to replace it."

Philip Jacobi writes about his fears about man-made climate change: "I'm really worried about the future of my kids and grandkids and I know you'll agree with me when I say that we need to do something now to make life better for them in the future."

Heather Schreiner writes about the specific effects Bill 4 will have on Kingston: "Support for renewable energy infrastructure—from geothermal heating, to rooftop solar systems, to electric vehicles, including transit buses—has been curtailed. Kingston was to receive money to retrofit certain social housing buildings to increase their energy efficiency. All of these necessary programs for saving energy and using green energy have now lost this support."

As you can hear, Mr. Speaker, there are many constituents who write passionately and eloquently on this matter. I applaud their efforts and encourage them to continue sending me their thoughts.

I share the same anxieties that Mr. Jacobi expressed in his letter. I cannot help but think of how my generation is inheriting a world that is burning, and I worry that the consequences of not taking immediate action will be catastrophic.

It is a sentiment shared around the world, and indeed by the United Nations itself. On September 10, the UN Secretary-General told the world that we have less than two years to avoid runaway climate change.

"Climate change is the defining issue of our time," said the UN, "and we are at a defining moment..."

"Far too many leaders have refused to listen..."

"The time has come for our leaders to show they care about the people whose fate they hold in their hands."

I fear that this government is filled with the very members the above statement is about, and that the ideology will win out over intelligent policy. I fear that enough won't be done, and that it will fall on my generation to move from this course of history. These future struggles will be more difficult because we will have to do more with less.

Bill 4 is directly related to our ability to deal with climate change and extreme weather events. It repeals an internationally recognized, market-based method that has proven to be successful in reducing emissions.

I remind this chamber that the cap-and-trade system was pioneered by Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. In the case of President Bush, in 1990 his Republican government introduced amendments to the Clean Air Act, using a cap-and-trade system to target sulphur dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants. As a result, by 1995 these emissions had fallen by three million tonnes. This example of actions taken by a conservative leader is a good one for this government to take note of.

Sometimes the obvious must be stated: Cap-and-trade is a market-based system put in place to provide economic incentives to market agents or participants to reduce the level of pollutants in their emissions. This is a policy that

was put in place so that the market—the market—could combat the ever-worsening effects of climate change.

I want to make it clear that by eliminating cap-and-trade and putting nothing in its place, this government is removing the only market incentive it had for lowering GHG emissions. This government is ruining both our business and environmental reputations, taking us from leadership to pariah. Sadly, Ontario has become the laughingstock of so many of our major trade partners who are all pricing carbon. This bill has already irreversibly harmed our international reputation, hurting our competitiveness and ability to attract business.

Businesses require certainty. Businesses plan in decades, and the actions taken by this government have made it very clear that they cannot rely on Ontario to provide a stable and transparent environment for business. Businesses manage risk—it's what they do—but no business can prepare for the stroke-of-pen risk that has been forced upon them by this government.

This doesn't even touch on that they're reducing revenue long before they have a hope of balancing the budget, and in fact are adding, at the bare minimum, \$3 billion to the deficit over the next four years.

Some in this government call the cap-and-trade program a Liberal slush fund, but to me, that's actually missing the point. That the Liberals allegedly misused the funds generated by this program does not mean that this government would have to do the same. There is an opportunity to take that money and create a new legacy, a legacy of leadership and meaningful action on the most pressing issue of our time.

0920

Instead, in a time of fiscal uncertainty and massive debt, the government is forgoing that much-needed revenue. It is more than a little like putting the cart before the horse. Tackling climate change and paying for the already increasing costs associated with the effects of global warming is going to be a massive financial burden. Dare I ask what funds this government is planning to use to help Ontarians with the effects of climate change?

In addition to forgoing the revenue needed to combat climate change, there is a complete lack of targets in this legislation. Any legislation not based on the Paris agreement lacks both credibility and the bare minimum of targets needed to avoid catastrophic, runaway climate change within the next 10 years. Where there was once guidance, there is now a void that the minister promises will be filled by his yet-to-be-unveiled silver bullet climate plan. It's good to know that the minister is so much smarter than the nations, scientists and experts from across the world who developed the Paris climate accord over the last 30 years.

This is what Bill 4 represents to me: this government's aversion to anything other than their own dogma, their aversion to environmental and fiscal stewardship, and any acknowledgment that cap-and-trade could have been a tool for good. Cap-and-trade was the tool that government could have used to meaningfully combat climate change while also leveraging the market to create prosperity.

Instead, it was rejected for nothing more than simple laissez-faire philosophy. The people of Ontario deserve better.

The Ford government has instituted a market transition that is incredibly complex, but the rhetoric of cancelling the carbon tax has obscured the complexity of the issues this simplistic legislation is attempting to deal with. Cap-and-trade is a market, and it should be treated as such. And cap-and-trade was working. Businesses from all over the world wanted to invest in Ontario's cap-and-trade market—businesses with money looking for opportunities. Six months ago, Toronto was poised to be the green finance capital of the Americas, and now no one will even look at us.

Incidentally, this government talks about all the money that left Ontario during cap-and-trade, but it's actually the opposite that was true. There was over \$200 million in Ontario allowances that were purchased by California. We have \$225 million of California's money here, and we only sent out \$13 million. Perhaps the government could share with us what they are planning to do with all of that money.

Now, I'm aware that Bill 4, An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2018, will pass. So let's discuss the promises made for the preparation of the new climate change plan.

For any replacement to cap-and-trade to be successful, there are two requirements:

(1) There must be clear and binding targets informed by credible scientific sources, and these targets must adhere to the Paris climate agreement. There are currently 195 nations attached to the Paris climate agreement under a variety of targets. We must do our part. But no part of this legislation makes any sort of commitment to any of those targets.

(2) There needs to be an assurance that the policies put in place will create prosperity. It is more constructive to think of environmental market instruments like cap-and-trade as great opportunities for both innovation and job creation, rather than burdens on everyone.

The data coming out of California right now says that cap-and-trade was a quarter of the cost of other alternatives to achieve the same environmental progress that they did under a cap-and-trade system. This leads me to what I feel to be one of the worst and saddest aspects of this legislation: the massive loss of economic activity and business opportunities that we are about to experience.

During the October 15 meeting of the Standing Committee on General Government, I had the opportunity to listen to some incredibly insightful testimony. Lisa DeMarco, of the law firm DeMarco Allan, stated, "It's my strong view, based on 20 years of history in and around climate policy both domestically and internationally, acting for governments of all policy bents, of all prescriptives, that climate is an absolute imperative we must act on now, and that good climate policy is actually extraordinarily good for the economy, for labour, for people in general."

Katie Sullivan, the managing director of the International Emissions Trading Association, spoke of how “flexible, environmental market instruments like Ontario’s cap-and-trade system are not taxes or levies; they are markets. These are commodity markets with tradable assets, assets holding compliance and financial value. Think of them like any other commodity market: power, coal, gas, wheat, soybeans. For years, the low-cost nature and efficiencies of markets have spurred business engagement to tackle a variety of environmental issues, from acid rain and ozone-depleting substances to leaded gasoline and now, increasingly, carbon.”

She went on to say that this government continues to stress that Ontario is open for business. “IETA applauds and supports this sentiment, but, in recent months, how the province has moved in dismantling the cap-and-trade and related programs and communicating this has been perceived as rushed and challenging.... These actions have ... undermined confidence in Ontario as being ‘open for business’ across industry, investors and trade partners.

“All of these players are carefully watching....”

Andrew Heintzman, the CEO of a venture capital fund that invests in sustainable companies, stated: “My experience has taught me that leveraging the power of the market is the best way to truly tackle the issue of climate change. But the right policies have to be in place to leverage this engine for change, and putting a price on carbon is the trigger to leveraging the transformative power of the market economy. It works in part by mobilizing an army of one of our society’s most creative classes of citizens, our entrepreneurs, to focus their ingenuity, tenacity and intelligence to solve the problem of reducing carbon emissions. The market price is the spark for this ingenuity.”

I was struck during the testimony by the number of self-professed conservatives and others who talked about how they could not believe this government was abandoning a market-based solution that fostered growth in emerging fields. Nearly all who spoke argued that Bill 4’s goal of cancelling cap-and-trade is highly problematic. These are directors and policy makers, educated people who believe in market-based solutions, and they say the bill does not make sense.

Frankly, I shouldn’t be surprised. This legislation was written for the benefit of the old and the few, whose lack of foresight has shut them out of these growing opportunities. They are a group that is heavily invested in government’s protecting their short-sighted investments in fossil-fuel sunset industries.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to the recent report from the Financial Accountability Office on the financial repercussions of Bill 4. Their report highlighted a number of issues around Bill 4 that are worth repeating: There will be \$3 billion added to the deficit from this loss of revenue. The \$5-million compensation scheme excludes 99% of companies who partook in the market. The \$500 million in program spending, which is about 25% of planned program spending of the revenues from cap-and-trade, will continue. And without a meaningful plan, we

will forgo \$420 million in federal transfers that rely on us having a climate plan.

Let’s talk a little about what this means.

On the \$3 billion added to Ontario’s deficit, the report states: “Overall, the province’s budget balance worsens because the loss of cap-and-trade revenue from ending the auction of emission allowances is greater than the savings ... from cancelling cap-and-trade-related spending programs.”

When the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks stood here and read a portion of the cap-and-trade balance sheet found on page 8, I thought we might actually get some meaningful discussion on this report. He began, and I sat here waiting for him to finish reading aloud the rest of the balance sheet, but he stopped reading after the savings, neglecting to mention the ongoing program and compensation costs displayed on that very table. Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that the minister didn’t even read the bottom line. This government doesn’t seem to have a problem shifting those costs onto the people of Ontario.

On top of the \$3 billion being added to the deficit, there is \$500 million in ongoing expenditures associated with cap-and-trade-revenue-funded programs which will remain on the books. But, and again I quote the report: “The FAO cannot disclose the remaining cap-and-trade-related spending programs as the province has deemed this information to be a cabinet record.”

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Additionally, the report states, “The FAO cannot identify the programs that funded infrastructure projects,” as this is also a cabinet record.

The government has deemed telling the people of Ontario what programs are being funded as unnecessary? How can this government claim transparency when they refuse to tell the people of Ontario what they’re doing with their own slush fund money?

Additionally, the current proposed compensation scheme under Bill 4 excludes 99% of firms that purchased carbon credits. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that those costs will absolutely be passed down to Ontarians.

I cannot help but ask how this government can claim to be putting money back in the pockets of Ontarians when their own pockets are so filled with holes.

Finally, on the topic of the report, it does not speak of the other potential liabilities that will be there if this legislation is passed. It is delusional to think that these companies that have been burned by this government’s actions are not going to take action themselves.

I’d like to take a moment to talk about what environmental leadership really looks like. Let’s start with our former partner in the cap-and-trade program, California. Under Jerry Brown, the state has led the world in environmental policy. I understand that Ontario is not California—we have our own unique circumstances—but I think it is rational to look at what other states and countries have done in this area.

California’s climate and anti-emissions policies remain popular: A poll last year by the Public Policy Institute of

California found that almost three quarters of voters say they favour their state's aggressive carbon emission cutting mandate and the green policies that drive these reductions. An article in the *Globe and Mail* by Doug Saunders states that since Jerry Brown regained the leadership in 2011, he "has not just delivered some of the country's most progressive politics, but also among its most economically conservative, fiscally restrained leadership."

Let that sink in: progressive, economically conservative, fiscally restrained leadership, with a key environmental component being a market-based cap-and-trade system. To the old Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, the one that was there before Ford Nation, before Ontario News Now, before rhetoric and narrow agendas began trumping sound policy, this must have sounded too good to be true.

Jerry Brown "was elected on a promise to terminate" debt incurred by the free-spending ways of a previous government. "He paid it down, without losing popularity or abandoning his climate pledges, leaving a US\$6.1-billion surplus...."

Throughout this period—in fact, since 2011—California outstripped Texas in growth. Again, let me repeat: A state with significant debt led the world in progressive environmental policy that was centred on a cap-and-trade regime, eliminated a deficit and created a surplus, all the while outstripping an oil-based economy in growth.

Unfortunately, for this to happen in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, it would require some real leadership, the likes of which I have not yet seen—dedicated leadership through a period of uncertainty and a willingness to think both outside the box and over the long term. I guess we are just not aiming high. Again and again, I have seen this government choose the path of immediate political gain at the expense of the planet—and the future of my generation and our children.

We have heard many times in this chamber how this government did not like the cap-and-trade system, and we have also heard many times how they feel about regulations in general. But the success of other jurisdictions in combatting climate change is based on either taxation, market incentives, regulation or some combination of those three. If this government is against all of these, how can they hope to possibly take meaningful action?

Mr. Speaker, as we debate the cancellation of cap-and-trade, we are really debating whether this government accepts responsibility for the effects of climate change and recognizes their responsibility to fight against it.

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

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I have to say, I really appreciated the conversation, the debate, from the member from Humber River–Black Creek. He made reference—

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Kingston and the Islands.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Oh, sorry; Kingston and the Islands. I apologize. It's Joel who was not there. I'm so sorry.

Mr. Randy Hillier: They're all interchangeable.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: No, actually. You know what? Sometimes this chamber needs good debate. Sometimes this chamber needs thoughtful, meaningful, factual debate. I really appreciated the member from Kingston and the Islands debating on the climate change issues that he's seeing as being a part of the government's lack of initiative—or, actually, too much initiative, in this case.

It is always a pleasure to speak in this chamber on behalf of the members of Orléans, who I have the great pleasure of representing. When the announcement came that cap-and-trade was going to be cancelled, in all fairness, I received several emails. I actually have about 30 people who physically came to my constituency office, which was very unusual, I have to say. Since 2014, I have had the great pleasure of representing this riding. They were distressed. They were truthfully distressed about this lack of insight in the new government's decisions to eliminate a plan to challenge, to bring forward a model that was going to help reduce GHG emissions. It's important to put into context—de mettre en contexte ce matin que ce projet de loi, ce qu'il fait vraiment, c'est qu'il élimine un plan, le plan qui était ici en Ontario pour lutter contre les changements climatiques, en le remplaçant par, je vous dirais, une vague promesse qui va être dévoilée plus tard.

In my perspective—and, I think, in our perspective for many members of this Legislature—it really makes no sense to eliminate a climate action plan such as cap-and-trade without having presented to the people of Ontario what the government wants to do. Really, right now, I would say that I don't think that doing nothing is an option.

We've also heard the minister reflecting on the fact that he is consulting with the broader public. Wouldn't it be interesting, before passing third reading, if we heard comments that were collected by the new government, that they would show transparency with all comments that were shared with the new government regarding their thoughts on climate change initiatives that should be a part of Ontario. I also feel strongly—and I think we, collectively, feel strongly—that passing a bill without sharing the plan is probably not in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

If we pass this bill at third reading, it will actually leave Ontarians without any response to the most important challenge of our generation: addressing climate change. We've heard very nicely from the member for Kingston and the Islands some of the factual dollar amounts that are going to be lost revenues, that are going to be incurred—new costs of over \$3 billion, according to the FAO report.

But I also saw last year—and I think members of this Legislature were impacted with flooding in Ontario, in the eastern part of Ontario. We saw first-hand the impact of those weather events that are a little bit out of context but happening more and more on our planet and here in Ontario. I went to Rockland—j'ai été me promener dans la petite communauté de L'Original—and I went to Cumberland just outside of the wonderful riding of Orléans. The amount of destruction, the amount of loss, what that costs for all of us from an insurance perspective

and just in the trauma of having dealt with this, is very sad, Mr. Speaker.

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I think it's very sad to see that this government had a plan, a cap-and-trade program that was not only helping to reduce GHG emissions but that also had a significant impact in returning those revenues back to social issues, such as the repair of our school system and bringing an incentive to change from a gas vehicle to an electric vehicle. I had residents coming to my riding office in distress because of the program cancellation that affected them in their decision to upgrade their windows for better energy conservation in their house.

This was the reality of this government in my community. It really impacted us, and it will continue to impact us, particularly the fact that we may pass this bill without having a plan. This government has not shared any—what they're saying really is just promises, promises, promises, with no clear action. I'm very distressed about that, because I believe in good governance. Good governance means you review things—I agree that new government likes to review and change things—but you don't change things without having a plan in place. This is what this government is doing today, and actually over the last few weeks.

I also want to share another thought. This is, I guess, something I don't understand. Many of the now MPPs in this Legislature were part of the People's Guarantee—you could call it a magazine or you could call it a platform. This was something that many of those MPPs, and actually even the now Minister of the Environment, moved forward in the last years in pledging, very loudly, very elaborately, a taxation—a carbon tax suggestion. I was actually at their AGM a couple of years ago when they pledged to address carbon pricing in the province of Ontario. In their People's Guarantee magazine—actually, most candidates signed that magazine, and very, very visually, I have to say, over the last years. So it's troubling for me that—

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: They changed their mind.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Yes, my colleague is saying they're changing their mind. I don't think they are changing their mind. I really think that they have, unfortunately—politicizing? Is that it? On a politisé, pretty much, the situation, the reality—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Niagara West will come to order, please. I'll give one warning and then I'll name you. Thank you.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: —instead of looking at the facts that have been presented by so many individuals.

Now we have no plan. We now know that this decision will cost taxpayers more than \$3 billion and all the programs, which have been sadly, sadly eliminated, to help so many individuals in Ontario. I hope that at one point in our new government—along with some of our PC caucus members that were eager to sign that pledge—there will be a voice of reason and we will really, really find solutions for addressing climate change in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate? I recognize the member for Toronto–Danforth. Or are we going to the Green Party?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We're going to the member from Guelph first. Thank you.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise today to defend the people and places we love in Ontario, to stand up for our children, our grandchildren and future generations. We are already feeling the effects of climate change, and the crisis will only get worse. Bill 4 puts the final nail in the coffin of Ontario's climate change plans.

I want to be clear, with all due respect to my Liberal colleagues: The previous government's climate plan was flawed, but at least it was a plan. What has the Ford government delivered on climate change:

—no plan;

—an additional \$3 billion to our budget deficit;

—a complete waste of taxpayer dollars on a politically motivated lawsuit against the federal government that has no hope of winning;

—an employment program for lawyers to defend this province from lawsuits from companies holding assets that are now worthless;

—a “closed for business” sign to the fastest-growing sector of the global economy, the clean economy; and

—ripped-up contracts that even have the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Business Council of Canada criticizing this government for its anti-business agenda.

The Premier's irresponsible actions hurt Ontario's economy, environment and our communities, but most importantly, they put people's lives, livelihoods and way of life at risk.

I'm going to put this in terms that maybe this government will understand: Climate change is nature's tax on everything, and it's costing us big time. According to the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, in the first six months of this year alone, extreme weather events due to climate change cost every Ontarian over \$350. Let's be clear about that: That's putting us on a pace of climate change costing us over \$700 per person in this year alone. Flooded basements, roofs blown off, infrastructure destroyed, ice damage, forest fires, crop losses—it all adds up. According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, in the first six months of this year alone, there was \$1 billion in insurable losses due to climate change. The cost of disaster relief in this country in one generation has gone from a few million dollars a year to now billions of dollars every year.

Let's be clear: Scientists don't agree on much, but the one thing they do agree on is that the damage we're facing today is the tip of the iceberg of what we're going to face in the next 12 years. If we don't push the trajectory of pollution down by 2020—which is a year away—the damage will escalate and the costs will balloon out of control. Let's be clear: No government can call itself fiscally responsible unless it takes action to prevent these costs.

No business would fail to protect itself from such extreme risk. No government that is for the people would

fail to defend the people and places we love in Ontario. But that is exactly what the Ford government is doing by getting rid of Ontario's climate plan and having no plan to replace it.

Mr. Speaker, the numbers tell one story; the people of Ontario tell another story. Last night—12 hours ago—I put out an email asking people, “What would you want to tell the Premier?” I’ve received almost 2,000 responses in less than 12 hours. I want to share a few of them with you.

Ann from Toronto says: “We know how to mitigate climate change. Respect the knowledge of Nobel laureates, of scientists, of economists and of ordinary people by taking responsibility. Business will not thrive in the uncertainty of climate change. Business will not thrive as climate crises destroy vital infrastructure. The future—jobs and healthy people—is in alternative energy. We urge you to turn to the future, not to the past—to turn towards the people of Ontario, rather than look away.”

John from London asked me to say, “Doing nothing will only hurt all our children and grandchildren, plus tell them that this generation was too lazy to do the right thing. I value doing the right thing far more than a few pennies at the pump.”

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Bronwen from my riding of Guelph wrote: “Mr. Ford, I would like you to think twice about passing Bill 4 which will cancel pollution pricing and erase emissions targets. I work in the conservation field and see first-hand the increasing effects of climate change here in Ontario. I am not talking about weather—I’m talking about the longer-term trends such as flooding and extreme heat that is very worrying. I have kids and the situation for them when they grow up will be much more dire. I am worried about their future and the future of all Ontarians (and indeed, people all over the world) when it comes to this issue. I would like to be proud of my province and the role we could play in addressing climate change issues head-on.”

Natasha from Brampton wrote: “I have a small child, a baby on the way and hopefully grandchildren in my future and I want them all to have fresh air, clean water, green space and a safe, healthy environment to thrive and flourish in. Unfortunately, with all of the green initiatives that have been targeted ... I fear something closer to a post-apocalyptic wasteland seen only in movies becoming a reality sooner rather than later. Right now I worry that this planet won’t survive my lifetime let alone my children or grandchildren. I’m saddened and disappointed by your actions, Mr. Ford, and ask that you put aside whatever anti-environment agenda you seem to have and try to think big picture long term.”

Finally, I just want to share what Margaret from Toronto had to say: “Premier Ford, I am 81 years old and what happens in the next few years won’t make much difference to me. But my children and my grandchildren will have to live with the consequences of shutting our eyes to what is happening. To avert the disaster barreling down on us all, we need to take action to cut down drastically on pollution, and we need to do it now! I just hope that it isn’t already too late.”

Mr. Speaker, once upon a time there was a Conservative Party that believed that markets could solve problems. They either don’t today, or they are playing politics with the biggest crisis we have ever faced. All that pollution pricing is, is a market mechanism to send the right signals to businesses and people to reduce pollution. That’s what Nobel Prize-winning economists tell us. But the Premier calls it a tax grab. How is it a tax grab if you return the money back to the people of Ontario through a carbon dividend? As a matter of fact, the best way to help hard-working, low-income and modest- and middle-income Ontarians is to put a price on pollution and return the money back to them as a carbon dividend. The FAO says this. Even conservative policy analysts like Mark Cameron say this. It shows how people can have more money in their pocket.

The Premier says pollution pricing kills jobs. Well, the provinces in Canada with the five best economies have a price on pollution. The 10 states in the US performing best economically have a price on pollution. The European countries performing well economically have a price on pollution. Why? It drives efficiency, innovation and job creation in the fast-growing clean economy. But this Premier wants to throw it away.

The Premier says pollution pricing won’t work. Well, British Columbia brought in a pollution price, dropped their emissions almost immediately by 16%, and they have one of the best-performing economies in Canada. The state of California has already met their emissions targets ahead of schedule and has one of the best-performing economies in the world right now.

Mr. Speaker, pollution pricing works. We know it’s only one tool. There are other tools. We’re going to have to electrify our transportation system. We’re going to have to build out public transit. We’re going to have to help people transition to electric vehicles. We know that we’re going to have to retrofit buildings to help people save money by saving energy.

Here’s the bottom line: Bill 4 sends the wrong signal. It tells the people of Ontario and it tells the world that Ontario is closed for business in the clean economy and that Ontario is not doing its fair share to solve the biggest crisis we face.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It’s a pleasure to have an opportunity to speak today.

Speaker, I’m going to start off by talking about the political context within which this bill is being debated and brought forward by this government.

The first part of this is to understand that right-wing populism is a fever dream. It’s not connected to reality in the way most ways of understanding the world are connected. We, in fact, have a government that can describe the problem that people are facing, that many people are facing in their lives. We’ve had increasing income inequality, more and more people finding that their incomes have stagnated or dropped in the last 30 years, people finding life harder on a daily basis—no doubt about that. That’s the reality. Thus, there is rising frustration. There is

rising anger. There is a demand on the part of people in Ontario for someone to actually deal with this fact that life is getting tougher.

What you get with right-wing populism is very much what you got with physicians from the 17th century: the application of leeches and, as they got further on, bleeding of patients as a way of curing disease. If you don't actually deal with the big issues like income inequality—and I'll put it into clearer language: the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer—if you're not dealing with that, then what you're doing is applying leeches to the body politic.

This is a government that's very happy to attack regulation. It thinks that regulation—regulation put in place, frankly, to make all of us safer, to make our lives better—is something to be avoided, to be shut down. They don't want to take collective action to deal with the problems that we face.

One of the biggest problems that we face—and speakers today have addressed that—is climate change. It will be a defining part of our lives. In fact, in the last year or so, there was a very interesting speech about climate change becoming the news issue in the decades to come, just as other, what can I say, earth-shaking events like the Second World War or the First World War defined all the other politics that were going on in this country and in countries around the world.

This is a government that looks for scapegoats, diverts people's attention, will not address this question of income inequality, won't address the question of climate change, this huge risk to our way of life. So that's the larger framework within which they act.

The second is that we have a Premier far more interested in running in the federal election than he is in running Ontario. We're about to blow 30 million bucks on a lawsuit that the government of Manitoba—I will note, a Conservative government—has already done a lot of research on and realized that the lawsuit would die. In fact, our Attorney General here in this province, at the media conference announcing that lawsuit, would not answer reporters' questions when they said, "Can this win?" She wouldn't even say, "Maybe." She stuck to her talking points. She was a drowning woman in the sea and she held on to that life jacket, because that talking point was keeping her afloat.

This government doesn't believe that that lawsuit can win, but they do believe that they can score big political points with it—\$30 million of our money being flushed away. This is a Premier spending all his time sparring with Justin Trudeau when in fact what we need is someone who is going to pay attention to what has to happen here in Ontario.

We have a style of government—third point, Speaker—that's very focused on the leadership looking after itself. I tried to look for a literary, what can I say, precedent. I turned to that great English-language writer who wrote the play *Richard III*; you may be familiar with it. Anyone who has read *Richard III* or gone to Stratford would instantly recognize the style of government being carried forward by this particular Premier. Having said that—actually, the

parts about the Tower of London don't feature here in Ontario, but all the rest, I'd say, in style, do.

This is the context we have: a government that's trying to divert attention from the real questions that we're facing in this province—income inequality, climate change, cut-backs to public services—don't want to go there, don't want to go there; a Premier looking to his next conquest, the federal government; and a Premier doing politics in an old-fashioned and yet strangely modern way.

And that brings us to this bill. This is a bill that shows complete abandonment of responsibility and in fact a recklessness, a complete recklessness.

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The Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks was interviewed in the last few weeks by Matt Galloway on *Metro Morning*. Matt tried to get a sense from the minister as to whether he thought there was a moral imperative to act, given the dire warnings from the global scientific community about the scale and the speed of the risk that is coming upon us. I thought it was a simple question: "Do you have a moral responsibility to act to deal with this risk, to protect the lives and livelihoods of everyone in this province, to protect their property?" I thought it was a softball question. I thought Galloway had been set up by the minister's staff to ask him something to which he'd just say, "Of course it's a moral question; we're acting morally." But, intriguing to me, the minister could not go there. He could not answer that question, and that was extraordinary to me because, in fact, it is a moral question. It's a practical question but a moral question: Do we, as government, look after the people in this province, do we look after the generations to come or do we abandon them? That is fundamentally a moral question unaddressed by this government—unaddressed.

Speaker, there's a ferry that goes from the Jack Layton terminal on the mainland out to the Toronto Islands, constantly going back and forth. Do you think that governments have a legal and a moral responsibility to ensure that there are life jackets for every passenger, to ensure that there are lifeboats, to ensure that if things go wrong, it is possible to save their lives? I believe you would say yes, Speaker. I believe you would say yes.

So, in an analogous situation, we are going forward into very rough water—very rough water—and we have a government that not only has not given any indication that we will have life jackets or lifeboats, but is jettisoning them, throwing them overboard, as quickly as it possibly can, to reflect the political priorities of the Premier. I've outlined that style, those priorities, that analysis.

There is no doubt that the existing climate plan was flawed. For those veterans who were here before the last election, you will have heard myself and many members of this caucus speaking about the flaws in that plan. They were substantial. But the reality is that to scrap it without having something to put in its place immediately is reckless, because things are changing very, very fast. It was very clear, from the most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, that we have a very short window to avoid the next round of catastrophic change.

In the early 1990s, we were debating this issue and we knew that at that time, for a relatively low price, we could change course on this issue and we wouldn't have to actually deal with any substantial climate change. The Kyoto protocol sort of wrapped all of that up together—again, a flawed agreement, but one that actually was heading in the right direction. It wasn't carried through, and we lost that opportunity. So we are now going to have to deal with a fair level of damage, no doubt about it. But we have the opportunity in the next few years to avoid the next level of damage. This government has refused to recognize that and refused to act on that reality.

I was listening, earlier in the debate on this bill, to the member for Cambridge, who said that the climate plan before us and the investments from cap-and-trade did nothing—did nothing. Speaker, I actually went to look at the public record on that, because I felt that the plan was inadequate, I felt that it was far too weak to actually do what had to be done, but I never said, and most people who actually looked at the facts would not have said, that it did nothing.

I can't be sure of the quality of all of the programs that were funded. In fact, I don't even know which programs the government is going to carry on—the \$3-billion increase in the deficit for programs that they are continuing to do, a small part of what needed to be done. They won't release that information. We don't know, actually, what they're doing with the remaining funds. But I will say, if they felt that the projects that were being carried on by the previous government were problematic, inadequate or wrong-headed, they could have cancelled those and continued on with those that actually were making a difference, that were helping us here in Ontario to deal with this problem.

I had an opportunity in the summer, when this bill first came forward, to talk about some of those things. One of the projects that was cut was \$100 million in funding to fix schools and make them more energy-efficient—\$100 million cut from schools.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Maybe not in your riding, Parliamentary Assistant. I'm sure in your riding you were looked after. But the rest of the kids in Ontario get beat up by your government.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Order, please. Order.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You cut \$100 million in funding to fix schools and make them more energy-efficient. It didn't need to be cut. You could have continued with that.

People are well aware of the conditions in the schools. The Liberals left a \$15-billion or \$16-billion deficit in capital repairs in schools—schools where the temperature reaches 25 degrees, 30 degrees, 33 degrees in May and in June. That is no environment for young people to learn in. It's no environment for anyone to learn in. You could have actually kept that money.

Just an example of some of the things that were invested in: \$358,000 was invested in Kensington

Community School for two energy-efficient hot water boilers. It doesn't sound slushy to me. It sounds like a necessary capital repair that would reduce emissions. My guess is that the old boilers were clapped out and had to be junked. That's the condition of a lot of our schools. That \$100 million could have helped to reduce the cost of operating those schools—cut by this government for no reason whatsoever.

They cut funding that was going to fix up social housing. In 2017, it was announced that \$200 million would go to retrofit social housing apartment buildings to reduce their energy costs and their emissions. It sounds like something that would really make a difference. It would cut the operating costs so that we'd be able to provide housing and make buildings more comfortable. Now we have a government that is very happy to cut funding to housing and happy to cut funding to schools just because the Liberals do something that they don't like. They aren't stuck with what the Liberals were doing. They could have moved the funds to other things, or they could have continued actually putting them into schools and housing.

There's another report. It's an interesting one; it came from the Ottawa Sun. As you're well aware, Speaker, the Ottawa Sun is not exactly, in fact, an NDP-aligned publication. Those from Ottawa can correct me, but my sense of it is that it tends to be on that side of the spectrum. But I can do further research.

Their headline on the cuts from this Conservative government was "Millions Gone: Scrapping of Cap-and-Trade Ends Program that Helped Hospitals Save on Electricity." It must have been real bad. The Ottawa Sun says it was bad, talking about their own friends. It must have been real bad.

They note: "A \$64-million program that was helping cash-strapped hospitals save millions on electricity bills is among the provincial programs that have been cut as a result of the scrapping of cap-and-trade in Ontario." Actually, Speaker, it was cut by a government that said the money wasn't being used for useful things when, in fact, helping hospitals reduce their operating costs and reduce their emissions is a useful thing.

The editorial said, "The Hospital Energy Efficiency Program paid out \$64 million to Ontario hospitals in 2017-18 for projects such as motion-activated light sensors," and other things that reduce energy costs.

My colleague, health critic France Gélinas, "says the program was a boon to smaller hospitals in particular"—smaller hospitals, most of which would be in rural and small-town Ontario, not big-city hospitals that may have a bit more money, but the smaller places with a tougher time—"many of which are facing deficits and couldn't afford to put money into work that would help reduce their rising energy bills." That's who the Conservatives targeted. That's who got pushed to the back of the line. That's who got forgotten about. In this rush to shut down climate action, they cut funding for hospitals, they cut funding for schools, they cut funding for social housing. I'll say this: They're comprehensive. They don't miss out

on any vulnerable target to beat up on. They go after them all.

1010

So, just a message to rural hospitals from the Conservative government: “Tough luck. We’re keeping the money. You’re not going to get it. Your bills are going up. We’re not going to help you.”

As my friend and colleague France Gélinas from Nickel Belt said, “The program was extremely popular. They got way more requests than they were able to fund.”

In recent years, she said, she has heard from as many as half of the province’s 152 hospitals with serious concerns about increasing electricity costs.

So what’s the government’s response? Cut the program that was going to cut those energy costs. That’s their response. Cut, cut, cut, and keep cutting until you’ve gone through the bone. That’s where they’re headed.

“Fourteen hospitals in eastern Ontario’s Champlain LHIN received a total of \$3.6 million through the program, says a spokesperson for the LHIN.”

Speaker, I’m sure there was some spending that I wouldn’t have approved of, but I think spending money on hospitals, particularly small, rural hospitals and small-town hospitals that are having a tough time of it with their energy bills, is entirely defensible. But it’s something this government decided to cut, with not a moment’s concern on their part, not an instant.

The Environmental Commissioner looked at a number of the other programs. One of the things she talked about in that Hospital Energy Efficiency Program—not just energy efficiency, but cutting greenhouse gas emissions—was hospital energy retrofits and waste anaesthetic gas collection and recycling. Anaesthetic gas is a very powerful greenhouse gas. It’s very useful, vital and critical for operations, but something that, when released into the atmosphere, heats things up. That program was going to launch in the summer of 2018—cut. That’s reality.

Speaker, funding was cut for university and college retrofits. Some \$214 million was scheduled for improving the energy efficiency of colleges and universities. A \$300-million loan fund was due to be launched in the summer of 2018. The program is now cancelled. We hear regularly about the expense of running post-secondary education, and yet a program that was going to cut costs and help fight climate change got the axe. How logical is that? Where is the sense? Where is the understanding? Where is the concern about climate change or post-secondary education? It’s gone, not there.

Speaker, one of the things that was cut was Green Ontario for industries—\$200 million in support for industrial greenhouse gas reduction products. All those projects have been cut. So when the government talks about helping industry and helping manufacturing—when a program is set up to actually help those businesses, to cut their costs and cut their greenhouse emissions, they get cut.

Here are some of the programs that were out there for funding but we don’t know whether they were cut or not,

again, because we can’t get information from the government on what’s standing and what’s not standing:

—using landfill gas from the Walker Environmental disposal facility in Niagara Falls to power a General Motors plant in St. Catharines, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 5,500 tonnes per year, a 77% reduction, and significantly cutting plant operating and energy costs. It sounds to me like a good plan, a good program. We should have more of that;

—the Stelco steel mill in Hamilton substituting recycled bio-carbon for coal in its coke oven, to reduce 64,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases, divert waste from landfill and improve competitiveness;

—Goldcorp, a mining company, developed Ontario’s first all-electric mine in Chapleau, avoiding more than 6,000 tonnes of GHG emissions annually from diesel, and improving air quality for miners, and helped develop new low-carbon power generation technologies.

Some of these projects may continue. Most are cut. But again, we can’t find out, Speaker, because this government is completely secretive when it comes to these costs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member may continue at another time when this bill is brought forward.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We are going to take a recess until question period at 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to invite everyone to Meet the Miners tonight. They’re going to be having an event. Also, I want to welcome Chris Hodgson, along with the 85 members who are going to be here, from the mining association. Welcome to Queen’s Park, gentlemen.

Hon. Todd Smith: I’d like to welcome a special guest who is in our east members’ gallery this morning. He’s had a distinguished 50-year career as a physician. His name is Dr. Conor Healy. He spent the last 30 years or so as the head of radiology at Trenton Memorial Hospital. We thank him for his service to Ontarians. Thank you.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I’d like to welcome a friend of mine. A city councillor from Windsor, Bill Marra, is here. Bill is also a vice-president at Hôtel-Dieu hospital in Windsor. Welcome, Bill.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ça me fait un grand plaisir d’accueillir à Queen’s Park Marie-Claude Martel, Valérie LeVasseur, Gilles LeVasseur, Jean-Guy Martel et Anne-Marie Martel, qui sont les parents et amis d’une de nos pages, Sophie LeVasseur. Gilles LeVasseur est un pilier de la francophonie à Ottawa. It’s a great pleasure to have them at Queen’s Park. Merci beaucoup. La page Sophie fait un travail extraordinaire.

Mr. Dave Smith: I have a number of people to introduce today: my constituent assistant, Julie Chatten; her

daughter, Madeline; a constituent of mine, Sally Carson; and her 12-year-old son, who is here for his birthday, C.J. Carson.

Mr. Jamie West: I'd just like to take a moment to introduce Peter Xavier from Glencore in Sudbury. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: It gives me great pleasure to introduce, over in the members' gallery, my mother, Ester Bethlenfalvy, and my beautiful sister Sylvia Bethlenfalvy.

I would also like to introduce someone else. It's with an abundance of hubris that I'm reluctant to introduce this next person. He's worked for the European Union, particularly in refugee areas—my friend and relative, Peter Bethlenfalvy.

Mr. Paul Miller: It's my pleasure to introduce my wife, Carole Paikin-Miller. We have a new politician in the family. Carole was just elected school board trustee, ward 5, in Hamilton.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Today, it's my pleasure to introduce my dear friend, who migrated with his family from Pakistan in 1996. After the death of his father from cancer, he started his business right in Ontario. I'm proud to announce today that my friend will be donating \$5 million in his father's memory to the cancer clinic at Markham Stouffville Hospital. Thank you and welcome to Queen's Park, Shakir.

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's my pleasure to introduce to the Legislature today a former neighbour and constituent, Craig Leroux, who is here representing Queen's University.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I would like to introduce my executive assistant, Kyle Jacobs, and his friend Alan Pisano from Oakville. He is studying finance at university.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to introduce the family of page captain Sophie LeVasseur, who is from my riding of Ottawa South. Her mom, Marie-Claude, is here; her dad, Gilles; sister Valérie; and her grandparents Anne-Marie Martel and Jean-Guy Martel. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I'd like to welcome the Ontario Mining Association members and staff who are joining us today for Meet the Miners Day, in particular my friends from Noront. It's good to see you here. I'm pleased that a number of their members are in the visitors' gallery and joining us for question period.

For 40 years, representatives from this special industry and government have been meeting at Queen's Park for Meet the Miners Day. Please join us for our reception this evening in rooms 228 and 230 at 5 o'clock.

Welcome, miners.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I want to introduce Sanjin Zeco, who I know is going through security and will be in the members' gallery. He's an advocate for people with disabilities. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Roman Baber: It's the fourth annual tech day at Queen's Park. We welcome North of 41, an organization dedicated to technology innovation and to training Canadian Armed Forces veterans for the IT jobs of today and

tomorrow. Joining us are Jeff Musson, Lois Shaw, Phil Landry and Joe Marra.

All members are invited to the 5:30 p.m. reception at the legislative dining room. North of 41: Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I would like to welcome Wally Boonstra, who is a small business man from my riding of Flamborough—Glanbrook. He is here with George Parry and David Weishuhn from the Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Along with the other miners from Ontario is a very good friend of mine from North Bay, the president of the Redpath Group, Mr. George Flumerfelt.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to welcome Mr. Blair Stransky and Jim Keohane from the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan; also, from my great riding, from a company called Zebra Technologies, Denis Wills; Mr. Kevin Richardson; and from Maple Leaf Strategies, Giancarlo Drennan.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'd like to welcome Victor Hyman, a constituent from my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence, here today at Queen's Park with the Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada.

As well, I would like to extend a welcome to the grade 10 students from Havergal College and the grade 5 students from West Preparatory Junior Public School who will be here later today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I also would like to welcome Meet the Miners, specifically Tyler Nicholls, from Technica Mining; Danica Pagnutti, from Vale; Shane McShane, from Covia Canada; James Higgins, from the Centre for Advancement of Water and Wastewater Technologies; and Ken Korman, from Story Environmental. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Amy Fee: I would like to welcome again my son Kenner and his service dog Rickman to the Legislature. Also, my rock, the one who has figured out how to balance having four kids at home without me and two jobs as well: My husband, Craig, is joining us.

M^{me} Marit Stiles: C'est un grand plaisir d'accueillir les étudiants et professeurs de l'École secondaire catholique Saint-Frère-André, une école dans ma circonscription. Bienvenue. Bienvenue aux étudiants.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to introduce my able constituency staff from Nepean. Brooke Timpson is here, as well as Caitlin Clark, who is also the daughter of our Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We welcome all of our guests. At some point, we have to cut this off. I've ignored the clock. We're going to have to move on now.

VETERANS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): As we approach the month of November and Remembrance Day, I want to take this opportunity to remind the House of a motion that was unanimously passed on October 30, 2014, to permit

MPPs to have Canadian Legion poppy donation boxes in their constituency offices, if you so wish.

1040

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my first question is to the Premier. Our health care system is stretched to the max, with patients being treated in hallways without the privacy and dignity that they deserve. David Jones is a person who knows this first-hand, and he'll be joining us later on today at Queen's Park.

On April 8, David's wife was taken by ambulance to St. Joseph's hospital in Hamilton due to complications from cancer she had been battling for several months. When the ambulance arrived, she was transferred to a bed in the hallway of the emergency room, waiting for a room to become available. Tragically, Donna passed away that day without ever being moved to a hospital room.

What does this Premier have to say to David, like so many others who have had to watch their loved ones be treated in hallways in hospitals all across our province?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: First, let me express my condolences to the family. This is something that is a tragic situation, but one that we know that we need to fix.

That was one of our major promises when we got elected—to end hallway health care. That is something that had been developing over 15 years under the previous government's rule. This isn't something that just happened overnight, but it's going to be our responsibility to fix it. It is a multi-faceted problem. It's not something that there's going to be one solution that's going to change everything overnight.

We are looking at enhancing our long-term-care facilities, making sure that those patients who are alternate-level-of-care, who are in hospitals but don't need to be, have a place to go, either home with home care supports or to a long-term-care home.

We know that there are many people who are waiting long periods of time to get out of the hospital to where they need to be to receive the best care. That is what we're working on. I'll have more to say in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: David found those caring for Donna during her illness "almost without exception professional and caring." But he goes on to say in a letter, "Having observed the health care system during the several months of Donna's illness, I am aware of the challenges, but I believe that, in this instance, Donna deserved better." I think we can all agree that Donna deserved better, Speaker.

Can the Premier explain specifically what investments he will make in the hospital system to eliminate the sort of hallway medicine that has become all too common in Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I would certainly agree that our health care professionals are doing a wonderful job in situations that are not ideal for the best provision of care—hallways, storage rooms, auditoriums and that sort of thing. We need to move away from that and get people into beds in proper hospital rooms, which is for their benefit but also for the benefit of the health care professionals who are doing their best to provide excellent-quality care to all patients.

We have already made some investments and we're continuing to make more. As I indicated before, it is a multi-faceted problem, but we have already announced the inception of 6,000 long-term-care beds, and have put \$90 million into hospital care to at least get us through the flu season while we are developing a long-term-capacity plan for our hospitals. We are working on that on a daily basis.

Interjections.

Hon. Christine Elliott: The other important point to note, if I could just complete that, is that we are also investing \$3.8 billion into a comprehensive—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It was disappointing for us on this side of the House that the government shorted the flu surge funding by about \$10 million compared to what the previous government invested last year, Speaker.

No one should have to watch a loved one pass away in a hospital hallway because they can't get a room, Speaker. We can address the challenges in our health care system and in our hospital system, but we won't get there with an agenda of cuts and so-called efficiencies.

Just this week, we've seen the future of a hospital in Grimsby put in doubt due to lack of funding. Will the Premier reject an agenda of cuts and privatization and commit to investments in a hospital system that desperately needs it?

Hon. Christine Elliott: It's hard to know where to start. There was a lot in that question, but I think the overall theme I completely disagree with.

What we are doing is increasing our services in mental health and addictions, in hospital care, in health care. We are increasing them across the board, because we know that people need these services.

With respect to the flu season, a significant amount has been put into that—\$54 million. There are no shortages of the flu vaccine this year. Anyone who wants to receive a flu shot will be able to do so, either at their family doctor's office, in public health units or in many pharmacies across this entire province. They are available—no shortage.

With respect to hospital funding, we are continuing to fund hospitals. We are continuing to make the investments in terms of renovations. Patient care and safety is an absolute priority, and we are investing in that. We are going to invest \$3.8 billion into mental health and addictions, all-inclusive—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Restart the clock. Next question.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. A worker in his forties was killed last Thursday when he was pinned between a tractor trailer and the loading dock at a Fiera Foods facility in North York. We don't know his identity yet, but he is the fourth person to be killed working at Fiera Foods, all of whom were temporary workers.

Four families have lost loved ones, and we all have a responsibility to make sure this doesn't keep happening. The Ministry of Labour is investigating now. Will the Premier wait for their findings before moving ahead with his changes to the Employment Standards Act?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I was saddened to hear the news. My condolences go out to the family. It's an absolute tragedy. Any time a worker loses their life, it's a tragedy. My thoughts, again, are with the family.

The Minister of Labour is currently investigating the situation. The official opposition is attempting—which I find disgusting—to politicize last week's tragedy, and I won't have anything to do with it. I'm very proud of the legislation we introduced last week, but again, I'm not going to politicize the death of a worker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, whether the Premier likes it or not, he is responsible now for preventable deaths that happen in our province, which may get worse with his legislative changes.

Amina Diaby was just 23 when she was killed while working at Fiera Foods. Aydin Kazimov was 69 when he was crushed by a transport truck on the job. Ivan Golyashov was just 16 years old when he died cleaning a Fiera Foods dough machine. All of them were temporary workers. Each and every one of them were temporary workers. None of them should have lost their lives as workers in the province of Ontario.

The government is proposing major changes to employment standards laws that protect temporary workers. Will the Premier, at a bare minimum, agree to wait for the results of the Ministry of Labour investigation before pushing through his changes to the Employment Standards Act?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Labour.
Disingenuous. Unbelievable.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I ask the Premier to withdraw his unparliamentary comment that I heard.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Labour?

Hon. Laurie Scott: We all feel horrible about the tragic incident that has happened in that company. Our thoughts are with the family and the workers.

Look, the Ministry of Labour is strongly committed to the health and safety of all Ontarians—and it's the Occupational Health and Safety Act the ministry is investigating through, not the Employment Standards Act.

I say to the member opposite, this is tragic. The Ministry of Labour is investigating. The processes are being

followed. I ask you please not to politicize such a tragic event that has happened in the province of Ontario.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I will stand in this House every day to try to protect workers from being killed on the job—every single day if I have to.

The friends and families of these workers are worried that basic protections on the job were not there for their loved ones, and they're—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I heard an unparliamentary remark. Would any member over there like to withdraw it? I'm not sure who—Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm sorry to interrupt. The Leader of the Opposition.

1050

Ms. Andrea Horwath: They're very worried about what they see from this government: cancelling investigations designed to protect temporary workers, and gutting legislation that ensured temporary workers would be properly paid and receive decent treatment on the job.

We have an obligation to these four people to learn what we can do to prevent tragic deaths like those from happening again and ensure that they don't ever happen again.

Why is this Premier so determined to move ahead with his plan to gut workplace rights and protections?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Again, I reiterate the fact that the ministry's key role is to investigate the fatalities and health and safety incidents at workplaces, and that is under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We're making sure that those things are followed and are enforced.

Again, it's an ongoing investigation. We are very concerned about what happened. The investigation is in process through the ministry, through the occupational health and safety. It has nothing to do with the Employment Standards Act.

Again, Mr. Speaker, through you to the Leader of the Opposition, please don't politicize such a tragic event. We are all here to make sure workers in the province are safe. Let the investigation follow.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier, but I think the government needs to know that treating temporary workers like lesser-than workers puts them in a precarious position in the workplace, Speaker. That is a reality.

Here's what one former temp worker said last night at a vigil for the deceased man: "It's so sad because this is what happens when we don't have rights and protections at work."

These are people who work incredibly hard to provide for their families. They don't have money to hire lobbyists, but they pay their bills, they raise their families and they deserve to be heard. Will the Premier listen?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Through you, Mr. Speaker: We want to protect all workers in the province of Ontario. That's why we do have the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We want workers to have good-paying jobs, and we want to create more better-paying jobs in the province of Ontario with better protections. We want more people in the province of Ontario to have better-paying jobs, better benefits, better ways of life. That's why we brought in Bill 47, so we can attract those types of businesses and provide jobs for people—not in a temporary situation.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Working people have some very serious concerns about the government's changes to the Employment Standards Act, whether it's losing a day's pay when you get sick or losing basic on-the-job protections for temporary workers. Before the government tears up legislation that protects people on the job, they should wait for the evidence that these changes won't do harm, especially from their own ministry investigating a death on the job.

Speaker, with yet another person dying at Fiera Foods, will the Premier do that? Will he at least wait until the ministry report is complete, to ensure that these changes are not going to make things worse?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Through you, Mr. Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition is stretching. There is no connection between the open for business act in Ontario—Bill 47—and the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Of course we're protecting workers. We want to protect workers. We are doing that.

Mr. Speaker, the best thing that we can do for workers in the province of Ontario is remove the worst burdens on Ontario businesses while preserving the real benefits for Ontario workers, so businesses have the confidence in reasonable and predictable regulations. Everyone who works should have the confidence of a good and safe workplace, and that is what we're doing on this side of this place. We are protecting workers and making Ontario open for business so there are better jobs out there for all the workers in the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. The member for Niagara Falls, come to order.

Mr. Paul Miller: Have you worked in any industry? I did.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Economic Development, come to order. Premier, come to order. The member for Waterloo, come to order. I'm learning your riding names.

Start the clock. Next question.

EDUCATION

Ms. Donna Skelly: My question is for the Minister of Education. Last week, Minister, we tabled the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act. This legislation is the first step in closing two gaps in Ontario's education system.

Student safety is always a top priority for this government, but for a while now we have known that sometimes students have been taught by individuals guilty of sexual abuse toward children. However, these individuals have escaped legal trials because of poorly worded laws. In some cases, it took months and years of complaints from students, parents and teachers before these individuals were removed. This is completely unacceptable.

Can the minister explain what our government is doing to make our schools and our early years and child care settings safer?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to thank the hard-working member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for that question because we need to talk about this.

Our PC government has zero tolerance when it comes to any form of proven sexual abuse within the school environment, be it a student or a teaching colleague. That's why we've proposed mandatory revocation of teacher and early childhood educator certificates of registration for all acts of proven sexual abuse. Today, a certificate will only be revoked if the specific form of sexual abuse is on the current defined list within the Ontario College of Teachers Act or the Early Childhood Educators Act. We believe very strongly on this side of the House that the previous government did not go far enough, and I know there are members of the NDP caucus who agree with that.

We're proposing in Bill 48 that if a member of the Ontario teachers' college or the College of Early Childhood Educators is found guilty by their respective disciplinary committee of committing any form of sexual abuse, their certificate will be revoked immediately.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Thank you for ensuring that student safety remains a top priority.

Ontario's parents also want their children to succeed. However, our students have been falling behind in math, with some students graduating at a disadvantage due to poor math development. The previous government just made things worse with an unproven and experimental curriculum called "discovery math." Now that we have discovered that it is a failure, can the minister tell me how the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act will address the level of math achievement in Ontario?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, thank you to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook. We know that for the past five years, there has been an overall decline in the education quality and accountability of math scores. As I've said before, and we all echo it, this is absolutely unacceptable.

We recognize that more needs to be done, and we will work with teachers to ensure they are prepared to teach the fundamentals of math in order to improve the success of

Ontario's students. The Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act would require any new teacher seeking to be registered with the Ontario College of Teachers to successfully complete a math knowledge test.

All of these changes will provide more confidence that our PC government is working to make sure that Ontario continues to have the best education system in the world.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE FUNDING

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Bramptonians have been patiently waiting for a university in our city, and now that dream has been shattered because this government has decided to cut the funding to our new university. The Brampton campus of Ryerson University, in partnership with Sheridan College, meant so much, like better access to education, job opportunities and a stronger economy for Ontario at large. But this cut signals that the Conservative government doesn't care about education or job creation, especially in the city of Brampton.

Speaker, why does this government keep giving Brampton the short end of the stick?

1100

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Our government has had to make tough decisions across Ontario regarding expensive projects.

However, I want to share a quote from a letter sent to me from the president of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, representing 150,000 students, Danny Chang. He says, "At OUSA, we believe in responsible investment that will effectively improve the lives of students and the future of our society. That is why our students wanted to communicate alignment with your decision on October 23. We believe that the Ontario university sector should ensure that any new or growing university institutions and campuses are financially sustainable."

Speaker, Ontario students know the importance of fiscal sustainability, and it is time for the NDP to recognize that as well.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: Time and time again, the Conservative government has demonstrated that it does not care for the people of Brampton. Now it is taking away a university in our city that would have created jobs and economic development, and provided a much-needed campus close to home for those living in our city.

Sadly, yesterday, not a single government member from the Brampton side stood up to be counted on yesterday's motion to preserve funding to our universities. Does this government not believe that Brampton is worth the investment?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member for the question. Our government has had to make tough decisions about projects across Ontario, I repeat.

I want to share the perspective of Leo Groarke, president and vice-chancellor of Trent University. He says, "In a situation in which the system is characterized by a lack of students, creating entirely new campuses takes students away from existing campuses at a time when they are scrambling to find students they need to fill the spaces they already have available."

He goes on to say that we cannot "expect a provincial government that is trying to wrestle with its deficit to pay for" new campuses "at a time when there is no pressing need to establish them...."

"The Ford government has made the right decision."

The people of Ontario expect us to make tough decisions and clean up the fiscal mess left behind by the Liberal government.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Parm Gill: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Yesterday, the minister had the opportunity to represent our government at the Empire Club to address important issues that we currently face. For the last 115 years, the Empire Club of Canada has hosted debates on some of the most important topics. Leaders have participated in forums discussing the issues of the day.

Today, our government is faced with 15 years of Liberal mismanagement that has left our province \$15 billion in deficit. Our government for the people has made it a clear priority to address the concerns we've heard during our campaign. Under the leadership of our Premier Ford, our government is focused and remains clear and consistent.

Can the minister tell the members of this Legislature what he was able to share at yesterday's event?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Milton: It was an honour to speak on behalf of the Premier and the government yesterday to the Empire Club. What I was able to tell them was that our government has wasted no time in terms of putting in place the actions that will make life more affordable for Ontario families.

Cancelling the cap-and-trade program, ending Drive Clean, scrapping the wasteful Green Energy Act, freezing driver licence fees and other fees—these are just the beginnings of trying to put more money into the pockets of the people.

We talked about the introduction of the Making Ontario Open for Business Act and how that's going to reduce red tape, unlock thousands of skilled trades jobs for Ontarians and repeal the worst parts of Bill 148, which has burdened Ontario with unnecessary regulation. We talked about the completion of a line-by-line audit, which is going to help put our finances back on an even track.

Mr. Speaker, this is just the beginning. Like the rest of the members of the government, I'm proud to be part of a government that's standing up for the people and working to make life more affordable for families.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to thank the minister for making it clear that this government is working hard to ensure that the voices of all Ontarians are heard and our commitments are kept.

Speaker, back to the minister: During election time, the people of Ontario were clear. They were tired of dealing with a Liberal government that acted in their own political self-interest. They were tired of taxes being imposed on them. Ontarians called for a government that would finally listen to the people.

One of the concerns facing this province is the threat of climate change. Mr. Speaker, we see more frequent storms, resulting in flooded basements, structural damage and costly cleanups. Can the minister tell us what he was able to emphasize at the Empire Club in terms of how our government will address concerns like we're facing in Ontario?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member for Milton: We talked about how the elimination of cap-and-trade is going to save Ontario families \$264. We talked about the threat of the imposition of a federal carbon tax that could add hundreds and hundreds—even \$850—to the price for our Ontario families.

We also, though, talked about Ontario's climate leadership. We talked about how Ontario is on track to meet its Paris 2020 targets. We talked about the plan that we'll bring forward next month, which will be a balanced plan that will balance the economy and the environment.

Mr. Speaker, we talked mostly about the importance of the leadership of our Premier, Premier Ford, and how he is going to be leading with other Premiers. He is meeting with other leaders across the country to make sure that the unconstitutional tax that Prime Minister Trudeau is bringing forward will not be brought forward and that Ontario families will not be punished. We'll meet our environmental objectives—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Next question.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Burch: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Yesterday in this House, I asked the minister about cancelled services at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, specifically obstetrics and surgical programs. Following my question, I heard from Frank Trivieri, a constituent from the riding who feels this action is a slippery slope to a hospital closure.

In January, he suffered a heart attack and received exceptional care at this hospital. Frank asked me what the minister meant when she stated that she would be maintaining services. I could not give him a clear answer because she wasn't clear on what services will continue and which will not.

Speaker, will this minister be honest with the people of Niagara West and explain what services will not continue and why there was no consultation with the hospital or the people of Niagara?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We did have a discussion about the West Lincoln hospital here yesterday, and I indicated to the member that I recognize that this is a matter of concern to all the residents in Grimsby and surrounding area. I can tell you again that the member from Niagara West has done an excellent job in bringing the community's concerns to me—an absolutely outstanding job in reiterating those concerns and bringing forward considerations that have been brought to him by members of the community.

I'll say again today what I said yesterday: Hospital services will continue to be provided at West Lincoln hospital. The Ministry of Health is in active discussions right now with the LHIN, with Hamilton Health Sciences and with the West Lincoln hospital to determine the best way to provide care to patients who need services and where that care will be provided in the short term. In the long term, I can tell you that there will be a hospital in West Lincoln.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Again this minister is playing word games with the people of Niagara when it comes to their health care. The chief of staff of the hospital resigned because of this government's failure to consult. The community is frustrated, and a petition is being circulated by the member from West Lincoln—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Niagara West, come to order. Member for Niagara West, come to order.

Mr. Jeff Burch: —against his own government. Will the minister confirm today whether the obstetrics and surgery programs will continue at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Niagara West is warned.

I think the question was put. Response.

1110

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, I think that there's a short answer to this. I have been very clear with my communications throughout, as has the member from Niagara West, as has the Premier, who visited the West Lincoln hospital last Friday. We are all working on a solution that is going to benefit the people of Grimsby and surrounding area.

Patient safety is of utmost concern. We're all looking at that, but we are also very concerned that the hospital remain open to provide services to the people who need them. A solution is being formulated now that is going to take into consideration all of those factors, but the hospital in West Lincoln is going to remain open.

PARTY STATUS

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier. It's great to see you.

Premier, there are so many things that we haven't had a chance to talk about, like how proactive inspections have

been stopped by your government, making workplaces and workers' rights more at risk; or how your finance minister has been unable to get the signature of the controllers on this year's public accounts; or how the costs from all the programs you've cut aren't reflected in the public accounts; or where the proceeds from cap-and-trade are going; and, most importantly, how workers' rights and wages are being stripped in Bill 47 and, at the same time, the Premier can hire his ex-party president and campaign adviser to \$350,000-a-year jobs here in Ontario.

My question to the Premier is this: Does the Premier think that six friendly questions a day is a good thing?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not too sure where the member for Ottawa South is going.

But I find it pretty rich that this member was part of the \$15-billion deficit that has been put on the backs of businesses, put on the backs of the people here in Ontario. The member from Ottawa South was personally responsible for destroying the financial books of this province. He destroyed 300,000 families who lost their jobs under the Liberal government. We had the highest hydro rates in North America under his government. He wants the highest carbon tax anywhere in the entire world. We are facing \$338 billion, the largest subnational debt in the world because of this government—

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

Interjections.

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

Government side, come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Mr. John Fraser: I think I put six questions in there, and I didn't hear an answer to one of them.

One question a day, 22 minutes of debate on a substantive bill like Bill 47, and no participation in the financial oversight committees to this Legislature just doesn't cut it for the 1.1 million people who voted Ontario Liberal—or, actually, the 1.4 million, if you include the member from the Green Party.

This Legislature has recognized the importance of the popular vote in the business of this Legislature, most recently in 2003. In 2003, a motion was passed in this Legislature that supported the seven members of the NDP and the 600,000 people who voted for them. Two weeks ago, we put forward an amendment that mirrored that motion. You voted it down, supported by the NDP.

Will the Premier commit to passing a motion that will ensure the voices of more than one million people in this province are fully supported in this Legislature and can participate in a fulsome way in the business of this Legislature?

Premier, will you commit to that?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I recognize the Premier to respond, I would remind all members to please make your comments through the Chair.

Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, again to the member from Ottawa South: I just find it so rich and so ironic. He's talking about oversight. There was no oversight for 15 years for the taxpayers. We have an inquiry

going on. We have a select committee going on to find out who got rich off this government, the Liberal government.

I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, we've never seen more backroom deals, more scams, more people getting their pockets lined, than under this government—

Interjections.

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

I'm going to caution the Premier on that sort of language.

New question.

GUIDE AND SERVICE ANIMALS

Mrs. Amy Fee: My question is for the Minister of Education. World-class education means accommodating all students, including those with unique learning needs. Research shows that service and therapy animals provide a wide range of emotional and physical support for students.

Parents across the province have expressed the need for service animal supports in school boards. Today, though, only approximately half of Ontario's 72 school boards have a policy or guideline in place to address the needs of students with service animals. That means that half of school boards' families are being left behind to try to navigate the system.

Minister, what will this government do to provide consistency across the province when it comes to student access to service animals?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: First of all, I would like to thank the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler for the question. She is an amazing MPP, an amazing advocate for support dogs and, most importantly, an amazing mom to Kenner and his siblings.

I would like to share with the House that after 15 long years of inaction, I am pleased to say that it's the PC government that is taking this issue of support dogs very seriously, and we have taken the first step to get it right. It has only been 120 days, and our government is proposing a legislative amendment to the Education Act that would require every single school board in this province to put in place a policy to address this important and unique need.

Mr. Speaker, I stress the fact that currently there is not one consistent policy in the province, and we owe it to our students to get it right. If the proposed amendment is passed—and I hope we have support from all of the members in the House—school boards will be directed to have a publicly available, clear and fair policy regarding support animals.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amy Fee: Back to the minister: First off, thank you for those kind words. I'm very glad to hear that this government for the people is taking action to put our students first.

My constituents have been participating in consultations via fortheparents.ca. The people of Ontario are pleased that they have a say in what student education will look like. I'm sure they will also have a lot to say around student access to service animals in our schools.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Can you confirm that my constituents and all Ontarians will have the ability to submit opinions on what these policies and guidelines will look like?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to rise in the House and say to the constituents of Kitchener South–Hespeler and all across Ontario: Thank you for exercising your voice. We want to hear from you. If you haven't already participated in fortheparents.ca, we are listening.

With regard to support animals and to service animals in particular, all members of the public will have an opportunity to provide input on the policy directive that would be issued to the boards. That includes families, education partners, advocacy groups and community agencies. It will help us to develop the best form of guidelines for school boards and develop policies that will work for students with special needs.

Parents deserve a clear and transparent process for requesting service animals no matter where they live. I'm proud that our PC government is listening and striving to ensure that every student and family will be accommodated in our education system.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. The Premier claims to believe deeply in respect for taxpayers and transparency in government—

Interjections.

1120

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, I appreciate the enthusiasm—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Just a sec. We haven't started the clock yet. The government side will come to order.

Start the clock. Member for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I appreciate the enthusiasm from the members of the government. Maybe they might want to wait until I'm done the rest of the question to show their enthusiasm.

That's why it was really shocking to see the Premier refuse to tell reporters how much taxpayer money he'd be spending on his plan to roll out these new "Welcome to Ontario" billboard signs up at the border. Can he tell us now how much of the people's money he'll be spending on this project?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member of Essex: As a matter of fact, we're going to put a sign up right down the street from the member's home there, to make sure people know that Ontario is open for business. We're going to make sure the world knows, and the millions of people that cross every border across Ontario, that we now have a province that encourages

business to open up, because we're going to lower the hydro rates. We're going to create a business-friendly atmosphere to invest. We're going to make sure we don't lose the 300,000 jobs that the previous administration lost.

On 96% of the votes, they supported the Liberals. They were part of destroying this province.

We're going to make sure we have this province thriving. We're going to create tens of thousands of new jobs. We're going to attract new businesses. Again, Ontario is open for business.

Interjections.

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

Hon. John Yakabuski: Taras, you should get your picture taken by one of those new signs.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: We don't care whether it's billboards or bumper stickers from Deco Labels; we just want to know how much it's going to cost the people of the province. Be upfront with us. Come on. Tell us how much it's going to cost.

The Premier also committed to some additional taxpayer spending this week. He committed to bilateral trade talks with the province of Saskatchewan, a province that we do about 5% of interprovincial trade with, which is especially interesting considering Ontario and Saskatchewan were the only two provinces to skip a meeting on interprovincial trade this past week. That's where the other 95% of interprovincial trade is actually being discussed.

Can the Premier tell us how much of the people's money he will be spending on trade talks with his friends in Saskatchewan?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take your seats.

I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I was proud to host Premier Scott Moe. He's like-minded. In total, we do \$11 billion of trade. But BMO came out with a study. It's costing us \$50 billion a year as a country that we don't even have proper interprovincial trade. We have regulations over regulations.

But guess what? We're going to blaze a new trail, because BMO also said it's costing Ontario \$15 billion to \$20 billion to the economy. But I can make sure that we're going to have a deal with Saskatchewan, and then you're going to see all the other provinces hop on board. We talk about the USMCA deal, and we can't even get trade down within our own country. But under our leadership, we'll make sure that happens. We'll make sure we create jobs—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Both sides of the House, come to order. Member for Essex, come to order. Premier, come to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Mr. Mike Harris: This government has committed to being responsive to the needs of Ontarians and, most importantly, we are listening. While the Liberals ignored the business community and ignored the people, this government is working day and night to get Ontario's finances back on track, something my constituents are very happy to hear.

That's why the President of the Treasury Board has been conducting round tables and stakeholder meetings with organizations across the province. In fact, a few weeks ago, I welcomed him to Waterloo region, where we met with job creators and constituents to discuss the state of Ontario's economy and finances.

Can the President of the Treasury Board please inform this House who he has consulted with over the past few weeks?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for that excellent question.

Our goal is to transform government to one that is both efficient and responsive to the needs of the people. This is the only way that we can repair the damage to both the public finances and the public trust caused by Liberal mismanagement.

That's why the Planning for Prosperity consultations have evolved from—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You're in government now. The bad people can't hurt you anymore. It's okay.

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: —a consultation for the people to a conversation with the people—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Seriously, it's okay.

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: —as opposed to the barking from the other side.

Over the past two weeks, I have visited four chambers of commerce, two colleges and universities, two innovation hubs, a dairy farm, a greenhouse farm and many more. I've heard from hundreds of Ontarians who know that help is on the way and that Ontario is now open for business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you to the President of the Treasury Board for his answer.

Mr. Speaker, businesses across Ontario are being suffocated by red tape. My constituents are also concerned about how the legacy of poor financial management left behind by the Liberals will impact them and their families. In fact, this sentiment is the same toward the federal Liberals. A recent survey shows the majority of Ontarians surveyed preferred balancing the budget compared to running a deficit.

Despite the opposition's insistence that we are nothing more than a party of cuts, it is this Premier and government that are actually listening to the people and building up Ontario.

Can the President of the Treasury Board inform this House as to what he has heard during his consultations with Ontarians?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member for that question.

I can say that our government for the people is taking the necessary steps to finally get this province back on track. We will be cutting red tape, we will be cutting inefficiencies, and we will be cutting the deficit.

Everywhere I've gone, I've been hearing a common theme. I hear that red tape is haunting businesses, that we need to improve and modernize this province's services, and that the needs of business owners are finally being addressed.

Ontarians want change. They want a government that is efficient, effective and receptive.

To those who have participated in our consultations, I say, we hear you. We are working non-stop to get this province back on track.

I say again, Ontario is open for business.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The Conservative government has announced that they will be releasing the results of their 100-day review of Ontario's social assistance system on November 8. However, they have been surprisingly tight-lipped about how exactly they are conducting this review and who has been involved in its development.

Can the minister tell us exactly who she has consulted during this process? And can she explain the steps her ministry has taken to make sure that the public has been engaged, particularly those who have lived experience with the Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much for the question.

It's really great that the NDP is finally starting to talk about this important issue, which should be in their wheelhouse—but they're really neglectful in that they really haven't engaged very much in the Legislature.

We were very clear when we assumed office that we were going to hit the pause button on the previous Liberal administration's patchwork, disjointed system when we repatriated the five ministries that I'm now responsible for. When we did that, we said we would bring in a 1.5% increase in ODSP and Ontario Works right across the board, and that has happened.

We've started to engage stakeholders, and we'll be ready in a couple of weeks to outline the positive changes that we'll be making as a government to lift more people out of poverty and back on track where they're able—and where they're not, we're going to be able to provide additional supports. But I can assure the member opposite that we have been engaging with stakeholders, and we have been engaging with previous research from the previous Liberal administration, and we're going to continue to make those supports.

1130

I can assure you: One in seven people living in poverty in the province of Ontario is—

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

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Back to the minister: Minister, you might remember the Mike Harris government, which actually cut social assistance rates by nearly 22%, and your government, which has also cut social assistance rates and cut off the basic income.

Over the past month, I've spoken to members of my community, social policy experts and leading advocacy organizations, and I have yet to find anyone who was invited to take part in the minister's review. It's shocking to hear that this Conservative government is not including in the process the very people who will be impacted by their decisions.

Does the minister think that it's smart policy-making to make unilateral decisions without consulting the people whose lives she is directly impacting? Does she simply think that she knows best and understands social assistance better than anyone who is currently receiving it?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Look, the member opposite is misleading the House by suggesting that there has been a cut, because—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member knows the rules. She'll withdraw.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

The member opposite knows that we raised rates by 1.5% across the board for people on ODSP and Ontario Works. We have a \$10-billion program in social assistance that one million people in Ontario are on, and one in seven people in this province are living in poverty. What we were doing in the past was not working, and that's why I will stand here to make sure that the best social safety net in this province is a compassionate society. The best social circumstances are when those people who can work are in the labour force. And I will remind the member opposite: The best social program in the province of Ontario is a job.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Late-show it, Lisa.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs, come to order. Member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order. Member for Ottawa South, come to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Stephen Crawford: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. While the federal Liberal government is dreaming up new

ways to tax the people of Ontario, our government for the people is working hard to create jobs and bring new investment to our province. Last week we introduced the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, for which we received an outpouring of support from people across this province. Our government continues to stand up for workers and job creators, and I'm happy to see our government working with other governments who have the same goals in mind.

Just yesterday, the minister and Premier Ford met with the Premier of Saskatchewan. Unlike our opposition members over here, we recognize the importance of Saskatchewan as part of Canada to the agricultural community and to stand up to the federal government, which I'd like to see this party do more. Could the minister please inform the House of what our government is doing to strengthen the economy?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to my honourable colleague for the question. Yesterday the Premier and I did welcome Premier Scott Moe to our province to discuss how our governments can best serve our people and fight the federal government's carbon tax. The Premiers went so far, and I agree, as to call this new federal tax a scam. Canadians agree that it's a scam. The federal government is trying to bribe Canadians with their own money, but the people aren't falling for it.

Under the federal Liberals' carbon tax, we would all be paying higher gas prices and higher home heating costs, and thousands of people would lose their jobs. The good news is that Canadians from coast to coast to coast are fighting back, and that fight started under the leadership of Premier Scott Moe and former Premier Brad Wall. Killing the federal carbon tax is the right thing to do for families, for workers, for businesses, for jobs. I'm glad to have sat in on that meeting and watched this wonderful Premier fight for the workers and families of Ontario along with Premier Scott Moe.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the minister for your response. I'm glad to hear that our government is joined by others in our fight against the federal Liberal government's carbon tax. I'm also glad to hear that interprovincial trade was discussed. Reducing interprovincial trade barriers will provide real benefits to the people of Ontario.

While the federal government is creating new tax grabs, our government is taking action to put more money in the pockets of the hard-working people of Ontario.

Through you, Speaker: Could the minister please outline how the memorandum of understanding will create opportunities for Ontario families in our province?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to the honourable member, again, for the question. Yesterday, Premier Ford, on behalf of the government of Ontario, was pleased to sign a memorandum of understanding with Scott Moe, the Premier of Saskatchewan. The MOU is a sign of our shared commitment to reducing interprovincial trade barriers which continue to impede job-creation investment

throughout Canada. We've heard from Ontario's job creators that this is one of the primary obstacles to attracting new investment in jobs to Canada. It's very important that we act now.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to sit in on that meeting. I've been around here for 28 years, and I can't name you five interprovincial trade barriers we've ever brought down in that time. We've built up more and more and more, and it's a shame that the NDP don't respect the \$11 billion to \$13 billion worth of two-way trade we do with Saskatchewan. If we bring down trade barriers with Saskatchewan, we'll do more trade and we'll do more exports outside of Canada, and the rest of the provinces will follow. Finally, we have a couple of Premiers, Premier Ford and Premier Moe, who want to get the ball rolling—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. I just wish to inform the House that once the ovation started, I couldn't hear the minister who had the floor, and I had to stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Start the clock. Next question.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier. We all know that there is huge potential in this province for mining, which will benefit Ontario's and Canada's economy. However, nothing can be done unless the groundwork is laid and done and if we establish good relationships with our First Nations in Ontario. Industry players—mining companies—are at the table. First Nations—Indigenous communities—are at the table. Municipalities are at the table.

Can the Premier explain to us why his government, just like the Liberal government before him, is not ready to come to the table or prepared to roll up their sleeves and get to work?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Just taking that drive with the Premier in and out of beautiful Algoma country, I think it was abundantly clear that this government is at the table, creating extraordinary opportunities for Indigenous communities in northern Ontario and municipalities to mutually benefit from the resources that we develop and the resources that we share with this country and contribute to our economy and to the global economy.

There's no question that this is a great opportunity, Mr. Speaker. There are more Indigenous people employed in mining than in any other sector in this country, and although we'd love to see these numbers improve across sectors, we're very proud of the traditions in northern Ontario that we have. We're committed to developing more mines, unlike the NDP—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Timmins, come to order.

Hon. Greg Rickford: —who bought into, 97% of the time, the more than 380,000 regulations that shut mining down, that shut forestry down and that shut northern Ontario out of its rightful place to contribute to the economy of this great province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Start the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Premier: He, along with the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, and Indigenous Affairs, and I were up at White River to open up the Harte Gold Sugar Zone mine. But let's be clear: The only thing this government did was cut a ribbon there.

That was a prime opportunity for this government to acknowledge the lands of the traditional territory of the Pic Mobert First Nation people. However, neither the Premier nor the minister took that opportunity or offered that respect.

1140

It's hard to think that this government will come to the table fully prepared when they're not willing, or even interested in building a trusting relationship with Indigenous people. When the Premier makes statements—and I'll quote: "If I have to hop on that bulldozer myself with Vic on the other one, we're going to start building the roads to get to the mining"—does the Premier really believe that making statements of this kind and jumping on a bulldozer will advance any development in the Ring of Fire with the Indigenous communities that are there, or the mining companies?

Hon. Greg Rickford: It's a bit of a take on words, Mr. Speaker. But it's true that we were up there to cut the ribbon and to cut tape as recently as a couple of weeks ago, when my office had to break through to make sure that Harte Gold could actually open up the project. Isn't that right—through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Thank goodness that they have a government, as the CEO said, that is open for business and committed to mining in northern Ontario.

As for the Ring of Fire, this is a tragedy of epic proportions. For seven years, it has been bogged down in the kind of bureaucracy that, in my meeting with leaders in the propinquity of the Ring of Fire, they said we need to break through.

We're engaged with those communities. We're meeting with those communities. Municipalities and Indigenous communities in that area can look forward to a renewed relationship that delivers results and builds a corridor to prosperity. Unlike the no-digging party, we're going to get our shovels out and our bulldozers—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Next question.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. I was very pleased to hear

that the minister and our Premier devoted time in their busy schedules last week to visit our northern ridings and spread the great news that Ontario is finally open for business. I'm happy to hear that our government will be working with our northern partners to help rebuild a robust economy.

I was also pleased to hear of an announcement regarding the wolf transfer to our friends in Michigan. There are many questions about whether this transfer will be done in a safe and humane way, and if the wolves will be able to adapt to their new homes south of the border.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister please tell the House how the transfer will take place and how this will benefit both Ontario and Michigan moving forward?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to thank the member from Brantford–Brant for that question. This partnership will see wolves moved from Ontario to Michigan's Isle Royale National Park. It's part of a mutual commitment for conservation between their state and our province.

Wolves play a critical role in managing moose populations, preventing over-grazing of vegetation and sustaining the ecosystem dynamics. With very few wolves remaining at Michigan's Isle Royale National Park and natural population recovery unlikely, Ontario has agreed to move several Ontario wolves during the winter months.

Mr. Speaker, the wolves will be transported in the safest possible way. It's expected to take no more than two hours to transport the wolves via helicopter from their current home to their new home in Michigan. Collars will be placed on each of the wolves in order to track them in the wild by radio and satellite. In doing so, we'll be able to learn just how they're adapting to their new environment.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Will Bouma: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for his response. It is promising to hear that partnerships such as this one are creating opportunity on both sides of the border. I am relieved to hear that this process of transferring the wolves can be done in a safe and humane way.

I know that last year alone, two-way trade between Ontario and Michigan totalled \$84 billion. This is a significant number and suggests that we must continue to strengthen this relationship. Relationships must remain strong between Ontario and our neighbours to the south, and the partnership demonstrated by this wolf transfer suggests positive news moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, back to the minister: Can he please tell us how leaders in Michigan are responding to the news of Ontario being open for business?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I thank the member for his question. My team at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is very pleased to participate in this collaborative initiative with Michigan and the United States National Park Service.

There are many great things being said by our counterparts in Michigan. Governor Rick Snyder said, "Michigan is proud to be part of this international effort to return a viable wolf population to Isle Royale, and we appreciate the partnership provided by Premier Ford in the effort."

If that's not enough, Mr. Speaker, Isle Royale superintendent Phyllis Green stated, "The National Park Service

appreciates the support of Premier Ford and Governor Snyder in helping restore predator-prey dynamics" in the Isle Royale National Park.

Despite the howling coming from the other side of the House, northern Ontario is open for business.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: If that's the best economic policy you've got for us up north—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have another question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Order. Start the clock. Next question.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Many of my constituents in Hamilton Mountain, as well as others across the province, have entered into agreements with the Green Ontario Fund for rebates on work being done to improve energy efficiency in their homes. In July, the government cancelled the program, saying that it would not honour any agreements if the work was not completed by tomorrow, October 31.

Contractors have been working hard to meet that deadline, but they're finding it impossible. Bob Elliott is the owner of Ken Mason Insulation in Hamilton. As a contractor, he is finding it impossible to complete orders by the deadline set for the Green Ontario Fund. Manufacturing, delivery and installation of windows and doors takes time; that time runs out tomorrow.

Delays happen. VentraLux Window and Door Systems have pointed out the impact of rain days and manufacturing defects. These realities of the industry appear to be lost on this government.

Will the minister extend the unrealistic deadline so that contracts entered into in good faith will be honoured?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member for her question. The government has been very clear with the people of Ontario. We were elected on a mandate to end the cap-and-trade program and to end the programs that it was subsidizing. The program of which the member speaks was an example of an out-of-control subsidy program. It would literally have cost the people of Ontario hundreds of millions of dollars.

We did make it clear; in fact, in June we made it clear that this program would be winding down. Originally, we talked about the work being completed by August 31. We extended that deadline in good faith to support the kinds of people that the member is speaking to, and that deadline is now October 31.

The only responsible thing to do when winding down a program, when stopping money flowing into the government coffers, is to end the program and end the cost to taxpayers.

We will not be extending the deadline. We have extended it on one occasion, and we want to be clear that when we said we were going to cancel the program—

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

and her husband, Tim Strand, are here. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(c), the member for Windsor West has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services concerning the 100-day review of social assistance. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader has a point of order.

Hon. Todd Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding extending the meeting of the general government committee on Wednesday, October 31.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding a committee. Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated October 25, the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet until 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 31 for public hearings on Bill 32.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, is moving that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated October 25, the Standing—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no deferred votes, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1150 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jamie West: It's my honour to introduce my mother-in-law and father-in-law, Philip Menard and Suzanne Menard, and my wife's aunt and uncle, Rick and Jackie Guindon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would like to introduce two men named Jones who are not related. In fact, I'd like to introduce Mr. David Jones, who is a resident in my riding of Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, and also Will Jones, who is my new constituency assistant. Welcome, gentlemen, to the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I wish to introduce guests of mine who are here in the Speaker's Gallery. My sister, Debbie Jackson; and another sister, Donna Strand,

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I received a compelling email from a resident outlining his experience with our health care system as he attended the needs of his wife, Donna, who sadly passed away this year from cancer. I would like to acknowledge again Mr. David Jones, who is here today in the gallery. Mr. Jones has kindly given permission for me to read directly from his email. Mr. Jones writes:

"I am writing about the treatment Donna received on the last days of her life. On April 8, her breathing had reached a critical stage, and in the presence of a nurse, and because there was no alternative, I called an ambulance.

"When the ambulance arrived at emergency at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, Donna was transferred to a bed, but was left in a hallway and had to wait for an emergency room space to open. When a space became available, I was told that she would be transferred to a hospital room, but no room was available, and my wife died in the emergency room space.

"Having observed the health care system during the several months of Donna's illness, I am aware of the challenges but I believe that in this instance, Donna deserved better."

Mr. Speaker, our health care system is in crisis. I thank Mr. Jones for allowing us to share his experience and for it to be told. It can't be easy. Mr. Jones, I commend your courage.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I rise today in recognition of International Religious Freedom Day. Our province has one of the most multi-diverse and multi-ethnic residents. In Ontario, freedom of religion is a given, so sometimes we tend to take it for granted.

As a Coptic who was born and raised in my home country as a minority, I lived the challenges that any minority faces every day for their religion, their careers and their day-to-day lives. I understand the importance of freedom of religion and supporting minorities.

I have been working with different communities for the past 15 years: Coptic; Jewish; Iraqis—Syriac, Assyrian, Chaldean; Lebanese Maronites, Antiochians and Melchites; Syrian Catholics and Orthodox Christians; Ahmadiyya and Ismailis; and Goan, Indonesian, South Asian and Chinese Christians.

I consider freedom of religion the cornerstone, the baseline to build a homogeneous society. I strongly condemn any and all acts of discrimination or violence against anyone based on their religion.

We live in an Ontario that welcomes all people. It is an honour to be the voice of these communities and all of the citizens who have placed their trust in me and allowed me to be here addressing this to the House today.

INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Last week, I was honoured to be welcomed by Donna Dubie and Rebecca Sargent from the Healing of the Seven Generations in my riding of Kitchener Centre. After our meeting, they shared a powerful document with me entitled *Visions of Reconciliation*, Region of Waterloo. Thank you so much for this.

At a time of reconciliation, our government is simply not doing enough to right the historical wrongs done to First Peoples in Kitchener Centre and beyond, and I'm committed to rebuilding this trust between us. In the region of Waterloo, despite 20,000 to 40,000 residents being First Peoples, we are lagging severely behind other regions in the province that ensure access to culturally responsive services. As your MPP, it is my duty to find ways to help us address the devastating impact of inter-generational trauma, whether from legalization of residential schools or the fact that First Peoples are still over-represented in our child services or criminal justice system.

Please accept my gratitude for the provision of court support, advocacy and mediation services; for your community luncheons and food supports for those facing food insecurity; for your community closet program, Christmas gift program, birthday hamper and backpack program; for your senior social groups and assistive support; and for your cultural programs and counselling services, healing circles, and the multitude of other programs that you have had to provide because your government partners have not stepped up to make sure that reconciliation is more than a symbolic word, but instead effective action.

COLOURS OF LOVE INTERNATIONAL CONCERT

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: It was my great pleasure this weekend to both attend and perform in the third annual Colours of Love concert at the Living Arts Centre in my home riding of Mississauga Centre. Under the direction and execution of my good friend and incredible photographer Maggie Habieda, the night was one to remember, full of music and dance by popular and professional artists from around the globe.

I was thrilled to get the opportunity to dust off my dance shoes and perform a bachata duet with my dance partner, Peter. The concert was a multicultural and multi-community expression of love and appreciation of music and performing arts, bringing together people and organizations. Funds raised by the Colours of Love concert will go to Hats On For Awareness, a local charity that works to further the reach of mental health programs which enhance the lives of those living with and affected by mental illness and addictions.

Throughout high school and university, ballroom dancing was my form of self-care, and I find it very fitting to be able to support the cause of mental health awareness through dance. To my colleagues in this House, I would like to remind you that even with our busy work schedules,

it is okay to take some time to care for oneself, and it is also okay to have some fun while doing it.

Thank you once again to Maggie Habieda and all of the sponsors, as well as my fellow performers and patrons for coming out and making the Colours of Love concert a truly magical night in celebration of what unites us all, which is love.

TASTE OF BRAMPTON

Ms. Sara Singh: It's an honour to rise here today in the House. I know that over the past couple of weeks, there has been a lot of focus on quite a few different issues coming out of the city of Brampton, such as our municipal election, the cancellation of our university, or the wait times at our hospital. But I wanted to take a moment today to tell everyone about an exciting initiative, Taste of Brampton, that will be wrapping up today in Brampton.

Taste of Brampton is an annual food festival hosted by the downtown BIA and some local businesses to showcase the exciting culinary world in Brampton. This year, we had some old favourites in the community participating—like one of my personal favourites, Carve on Lot 5; their mushroom penne is by far the best—as well as some new businesses reaching out and getting to know our local community. Brampton is a rapidly growing and thriving city, and with that growth we have seen some very exciting new restaurants and menus popping up all over town.

We all know that nothing brings people together like a full plate of food and great company, so I want to invite all members to take some time to explore Brampton's thriving food culture the next time they visit the city. I'd like to extend my sincerest appreciation and congratulations to all of the organisers and participants in this year's fantastic Taste of Brampton festival.

1510

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Mike Harris: Remembrance Day is a time for sincere reflection on the immense sacrifices made by Canada's finest, across generations, in the name of our freedom and security. It's with honour that I stand here today to speak about the significance that Remembrance Day holds in my riding and across the province.

On a personal level, I will be remembering the sacrifices of those within my own family who served in the Second World War. My great-uncles Art Sheridan, Doug Sheridan and Bill Harrison all served overseas during World War II. Additionally, my grandfather Deane Harris served with the merchant marines, whose operations were crucial to sustaining the war effort.

My family's story is no exception. According to Veterans Affairs Canada, 650,000 Canadians served in the First World War, and of those in uniform, 68,000 paid the ultimate sacrifice. In the Second World War, more than one million Canadians served and over 47,000 of those lost their lives.

Thousands of residents from Waterloo region served in both world wars. I would like to take a moment to recognize those from my region who gave their lives for the war effort. For the First World War, this number totalled around 469. For the Second World War, it was about 427.

Lest we forget, Mr. Speaker.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: Today I had planned to speak in response to the minister's statement on Autism Awareness Month. Unfortunately, the ministerial statement was cancelled at the last minute, at the very end of Autism Awareness Month. For me and for families across Ontario, this cancellation is concerning. It fuels a feeling of uncertainty that people with autism and their families already live with every day.

There are an estimated 20,000 people on wait-lists for treatment. I hear stories of families who are already receiving services, but money that had already been approved is inexplicably held up. As a result, families are threatened by service providers that their child will be kicked off the program if their bills are not paid.

Our schools are ill-equipped to provide the support that students with autism need and deserve. Educational assistants do the best job that they can, but there are not nearly enough of them. If they want extra training to deal with the complexities of an autistic student, they need to pay for it themselves. The solution in far too many cases is to exclude the student from the school, sometimes for months on end.

In adulthood it doesn't get any better. Aging parents caring for an adult with autism can't get the respite services they so desperately need.

None of this is good enough, Speaker. We need better from the Ford government.

EVENTS IN SRI LANKA

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: As a representative of Scarborough–Rouge Park, home to the largest Tamil community in Ontario, the recent appointment of Mahinda Rajapaksa as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, without any justice for crimes against humanity and Tamil genocide, is extremely alarming for the protection of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Mahinda Rajapaksa and his government were responsible for a campaign of horrendous crimes at the peak of the Tamil genocide in 2009, including massacres, rapes, torture and abductions which left tens of thousands of innocent Tamil civilians killed or with permanent physical disabilities and mental trauma. It once again demonstrates that justice and peace for Tamils seem to be forever delayed.

The international community must not let this go. I urge our federal government to take practical and meaningful steps to ensure that an independent, international mechanism is established to investigate accusations of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. I also urge the federal government to take concrete steps to work

with the broader international community to bring forth a political solution that addresses the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people.

MADDIE SMITH

Ms. Jane McKenna: This morning when I was driving in to work, I was so touched by this story. Maddie Smith is a brave little Burlington girl, born with cystic fibrosis and diagnosed last year with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. She is undergoing treatment and is very much looking forward to the time when it's completed in June 2019. Then she can use her Children's Wish Foundation wish and take her family to Disney World.

Her mom, Keri-Lyn Smith, explained that Maddie, who was now in grade 1, has a very meaningful "extra-curricular" project she is working on and she hopes to complete it by her sixth birthday. Instead of birthday presents, Maddie is hoping to raise \$20,000 to give another child a wish. "I want another kid to be happy and wishes help make kids happy," is exactly what Maddie said. She is only asking for \$6 donations, to match her age on her birthday, or anything with the number six in it: \$36, \$60 or even \$600. This morning, she was more than halfway to her \$20,000, at \$11,000.

I think we can all understand how important it is for sick children and their families to have some really special time to look forward to. As Keri-Lyn said, the wish and the vacation will be for the whole family, and it is the whole family that struggles with the impact of a sibling with cancer. Maddie has a big sister, Alexis, who is nine, and a baby brother, Clark, who is four. She sees the trip to Disney World as a time for them to celebrate together as a family and make new memories, a chance for the kids to feel carefree and just be kids, Speaker; to put all the difficult times behind them.

I'll quote Keri-Lyn: "Maddie is always thinking of others and looking for ways to do small acts of kindness. To her, if we raise \$100 or \$10,000, she doesn't understand the difference. As a family, we want to be able to return the generosity that has been shown to us."

We're all touched by Maddie, and I hope everybody does donate.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CUTTING RED TAPE FOR MOTOR VEHICLE DEALERS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 ALLÉGEANT LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES POUR LES COMMERÇANTS DE VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES

Mr. Harris moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act /
Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

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): Would the member for Kitchener–Conestoga care to explain this bill?

Mr. Mike Harris: The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to enable certain motor vehicle dealers to apply for permits, number plates and other things by electronic means or in an electronic format.

LONG-TERM CARE HOMES
AMENDMENT ACT
(PREFERENCE FOR VETERANS), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS
DE LONGUE DURÉE
(PRÉFÉRENCE ACCORDÉE
AUX ANCIENS COMBATTANTS)

Mrs. Stevens moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, to give preference to veterans for access to beds / *Projet de loi 51, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les foyers de soins de longue durée pour accorder la préférence aux anciens combattants qui veulent avoir accès à des lits.*

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 would ask the member for St. Catharines if she would like to explain her bill.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: The bill amends the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, by enacting a definition of “veteran” that includes former officers and former non-commissioned members of the Canadian Forces. The bill amends the act to require the minister to assure that preference in admission to long-term-care homes is given to veterans.

1520

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is 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;

“Protect workers’ employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

“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 fully support this petition and will be affixing my signature to it, as well.

PUBLIC SAFETY

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

“Whereas the Justin Trudeau government is not doing enough to protect the people of Ontario from convicted terrorists; and

“Whereas safety, security and peace of mind is of the utmost importance to the Ford government; and

“Whereas Ontario residents who have not been convicted of criminal acts could find themselves unable to gain access to various privileges they enjoy; and

“Whereas there are no provisions to prevent convicted terrorists from accessing privileges in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 46 and disallow anyone convicted of a crime under section 83 of the Criminal Code of Canada and any international treaties that may apply from receiving:

“(1) a licence under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997;

“(2) health insurance benefits under the Health Insurance Act;

“(3) a driver’s licence under the Highway Traffic Act;

“(4) rent-geared-to-income assistance or special needs housing under the Housing Services Act, 2011;

“(5) grants, awards or loans under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act;

“(6) income support or employment supports under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;

“(7) assistance under the Ontario Works Act, 1997;

“(8) coverage under the insurance plan under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.”

Of course, I affix my signature and give it to page Amani.

INJURED WORKERS

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: “Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

“Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition and will be affixing my name to it.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jamie West: I have a petition titled “Save the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.” It was given to me by Cecil Richardson from the riding of Sudbury.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Premier Doug Ford promised that there would not be cuts to nurses’ positions; and

“Whereas in Sudbury we have already lost 70 nurses, and Health Sciences North is closing part of the Breast Screening and Assessment Service; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will result in longer wait times, which is very stressful for women diagnosed with breast cancer; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will only take us backwards;

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

“Provide adequate funding to Health Sciences North to ensure northerners have equitable access to life-saving programs such as the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.”

I support this and will sign my signature and will give it to page Sophie.

TRAFFIC CONTROL

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Cindy Sarazin from Wahnapiatae in my riding for collecting this petition. Here it goes:

“Whereas residents of Wahnapiatae are concerned about the safety of the intersection of Highway 17 and Highway 537 and would like greater traffic control measures in place to prevent further accidents and fatalities; and

“Whereas an accident that occurred on October 1, 2017, resulted in loss of life; and

“Whereas two different accidents occurred on October 13, 2017, that involved multiple vehicles and closed Highway 17 for seven hours, delaying traffic; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has jurisdiction over highways and is responsible for traffic safety in Ontario;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That the Ministry of Transportation install traffic control measures such as a flashing light at the intersection of Highway 17 and Highway 537 to enhance traffic safety.”

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

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My petition is entitled “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;

“Raises 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;

“Protect workers’ employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

“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...;

“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 support this and will affix my name to it and give it to page Sophie.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the province of Ontario requires a minimum but no maximum temperature in long-term-care homes;

“Whereas temperatures that are too hot can cause emotional and physical distress that may contribute to a decline in frail seniors’ health;

“Whereas front-line staff in long-term-care homes also suffer when trying to provide care under these conditions with headaches, tiredness, signs of hyperthermia, which directly impacts resident/patient care;

“Whereas Ontario’s bill of rights for residents of Ontario nursing homes states ‘every resident has the right to be properly sheltered ... in a manner consistent with his or her needs’;

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

“Direct the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations amending O. Reg. 79/10 of the Long-Term Care Homes Act to establish a maximum temperature in long-term-care homes.”

I fully support this petition, sign it and give it to page Honora to deliver to the table.

1530

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Laura Lee Rintala from Lively in my riding for collecting this petition. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

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

PHARMACARE

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This petition is entitled “Universal Pharmacare for All Ontarians.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care, and people shouldn’t have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need; and

“Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don’t have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don’t take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost;

“Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and

“Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition, will be affixing my signature to it and will be giving it to page Sophie.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Jamie West: The petition is entitled “Time to Care.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes to keep pace with residents’ increasing acuity and the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

“Whereas several Ontario coroner’s inquests into LTC homes deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and staffing levels and the most reputable studies on this topic recommends 4.1 hours of direct care per day;

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

“Amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

I support this petition and will affix my signature and give it to page Taya.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Nancy Hammell from my riding for sending this petition. It reads as follows:

“Save the” breast screening clinic.

“Whereas Premier Doug Ford promised that there would not be cuts to nurses’ positions; and

“Whereas in Sudbury we have already lost 70 nurses, and Health Sciences North is closing part of” its breast screening program; and

“Whereas cuts to the” breast screening clinic “will result in longer wait times, which is very stressful for women diagnosed with breast cancer; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will only take us backwards;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Provide adequate funding to Health Sciences North to ensure northerners have equitable access to life-saving programs such as the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.”

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

CELIAC DISEASE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the IgA TTG blood screening is the internationally recognized standard as the first step in diagnosing a person with celiac disease;

“Whereas celiac disease is an autoimmune disease that can strike people with a genetic predisposition at any time of life and presents with a large variety of non-specific signs and symptoms;

“Whereas many individuals, such as family members of diagnosed celiacs, are at higher risk and pre-symptomatic screening is advised;

“Whereas covering the cost of the simple test would dramatically reduce wait times to diagnosis, save millions to the health care system due to misdiagnoses, unnecessary testing and serious complications from untreated celiac disease and reduce the painful suffering and health decline of thousands of individuals;

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not to cover this blood test;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario government to cover the cost of the diagnostic blood test (IgA TTG) for celiac disease for those who show symptoms, are a first-degree relative or have an associated condition.”

I fully support this petition and give it to page Maya to deliver to the table.

SCHOOL BOARDS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from Manitoulin Island.

“Whereas the Ministry of Education oversees all school boards in the province of Ontario and as such there is an immediate need for a ministerial investigation and oversight of the Rainbow District School Board for serious contraventions contrary to the Ontario Education Act, Ontario Clean Water Act, 2006, municipal freedom of

information and rights to privacy act, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code; and

“Whereas the Rainbow District School Board, by failing to adhere to the Ontario Clean Water Act and by failing to permanently remedy the unsafe levels of lead contamination in school drinking water (33 schools), are placing our students and educators at serious risk of lead poisoning; and

“Whereas the malfeasance, systemic discrimination, abuse of power, abuse of process, excessive pay increases, incurring large legal fees to defend their malfeasance, as well as unauthorized redundant spending by the Rainbow District School Board and school administration have taken money” away from the classrooms;

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

“To commence an immediate detailed ministerial investigation and oversight of the Rainbow District School Board, as well as a complete financial audit of school board spending since 2010, including ... pay increases to be conducted by the office of the provincial auditor, and detailed reports of findings to be submitted to the Ontario Legislature.”

Thank you, Speaker. I ask my good page Armita to bring it to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The time for petitions has concluded.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MAKING ONTARIO OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 POUR UN ONTARIO OUVERT AUX AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 29, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 and make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 47, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d’emploi, la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail et la Loi de 2009 sur l’Ordre des métiers de l’Ontario et l’apprentissage et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d’autres lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Laurie Scott: It truly is an honour to rise in the House today and address the PC government’s Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act.

First of all, I want to say how proud I am to be part of a government that has already accomplished so much in four months. Mr. Speaker, our government has put more money into Ontarians’ pockets by freezing drivers’ fees, scrapping the Drive Clean program, by cancelling and

winding down wasteful green energy projects. Ontario's carbon tax is gone, saving families an average of \$260 a year. We've already begun work to lower gas prices by 10 cents a litre.

Our PC government began to clean up the Liberals' hydro mess by overseeing the renewal of Hydro One. The previous CEO and board of directors are gone, and we installed a new board backed up by real accountability and transparency measures. We've been working to repeal the Green Energy Act to stop approvals for wasteful energy projects that would add unnecessary costs to electricity bills, and we're well on our way to fulfilling our commitment to lower hydro bills by 12%.

We're creating and protecting jobs by expanding access to natural gas; reducing WSIB premium rates for employers; taking responsibility for subways; increasing GO train service in the GTHA; beginning work on the promise to build better regional transit across Ontario; creating a provincial forestry strategy; working to reduce barriers to interprovincial trade; travelling to Washington, DC, to protect Ontario jobs during NAFTA renegotiations; calling for the federal government to support farm families and steel and automotive workers; and bringing slots back at racetracks.

We're sending the message to the world that Ontario is open for business through bringing quality jobs back to Ontario, and that's by lowering taxes, reducing hydro bills and cutting job-killing red tape. We're restoring accountability and trust in Ontario's public finances. The commission of inquiry has exposed the previous government's real deficit of \$15 billion.

1540

Mr. Lorne Coe: Shameful.

Hon. Laurie Scott: It is shameful, Mr. Speaker.

We've released a line-by-line review of government spending by EY Canada as a first step to shedding light on past public spending. We're ending the culture of waste and mismanagement in government. And we've earned a clean audit on the province's books for the first time in three years from Ontario's Auditor General.

A select committee has been struck to investigate past financial practices.

We've improved the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal governments by reducing the size of Toronto city council and removing an unnecessary layer of elected regional politicians in York, Peel, Niagara and Muskoka regions.

We're giving parents a voice on public education through an unprecedented parental consultation on the future of Ontario's education curriculum, something the previous government refused to do.

We're working on cutting hospital wait times and ending hallway health care.

We're expanding hospice and palliative care in communities like North Bay to provide quality end-of-life care to patients.

We're making OHIP+ more efficient and cost-effective, by focusing benefits on children and youth who do not have existing prescription drug insurance plans, and

announcing the creation of 6,000 new long-term-care beds and over 1,100 hospital spaces in advance of the upcoming flu season.

Ontario's government for the people is also keeping Ontarians safe and protecting communities.

Our cannabis retail model will protect children and youth, ensure road safety and fight the illegal market.

We're fighting guns and gangs through a \$25-million investment, giving Ontario's men and women in uniform the tools and resources they need to protect families from the menace of guns-and-gang-related violence.

We've announced nine new OPP detachments.

We're responding to the forest fire crisis through an additional \$100 million to fund fire response efforts, and providing tornado recovery assistance funding in Ottawa.

The PC government also created a pan-Canadian consensus on the issue of costs—

Mr. Jamie West: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I recognize the member from Sudbury on a point of order.

Mr. Jamie West: Just for clarity: Are we debating Bill 47?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We are debating the bill. I believe the minister is doing a preamble to get to the point. I would encourage the minister to get to the point.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We also—sorry that I was interrupted, but I'll carry on—the Canadian consensus on the issue of costs associated with illegal border crossings; worked to uphold free speech on publicly funded university and college campuses; got York University students—

Mr. Paul Miller: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I'm sorry, Minister. I'm going to recognize the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek on a point of order.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, just to follow up on the member from Sudbury's comment: I think we're getting a whole story about how wonderful things are. I would like to get to the bill that we're discussing. I think you've been more than lenient. I think it's time to get on the with the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I agree. I have been lenient. I was hoping the minister would get to the point. I will ask her to get to the point quickly, please.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have such a great team that has sprung into action so quickly over here in the PC government. And I'm proud to be part of that government that introduced Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act.

Applause.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Patience. Patience.

We're going to turn this province around after many, many years of neglect by the previous Liberal government—over 15 years. We're a government that understands small business and working people. They told us a lot before the campaign, during the campaign and since the campaign. Bill 47 is a product of what we heard out there: how we can have the confidence of a good job in a safe

workplace in Ontario, and to give businesses the needed stability of reasonable and predictable regulations. Those two ideas are certainly the root of why the PC government's approach to the province's labour market is what it is in Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act.

I'm going to get that right down, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the opposition and the Liberals have fundamentally different ideas. Certainly, government intrusion into the lives of workers and entrepreneurs was their only economic instinct. Higher taxes, onerous regulation, and suspicion of business seemed to be the guiding principles of everything they did.

Applause.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Absolutely.

They presided over the collapse of manufacturing in Ontario, and they had no interest in remaining competitive with our neighbours to the south.

The clearest example of these principles came in the dying days of the last Liberal government, when they passed Bill 148—and yes, Mr. Speaker, Bill 148 is tied to Bill 47. With Bill 148, we saw the sudden 21% rise in the minimum wage overnight. Businesses across Ontario struggled to adjust to such a large increase. We heard time and time again that it was too much, too soon. The previous administration's ideological approach to minimum wage placed a massive new burden on small businesses, particularly in the service industry and in small-town and rural Ontario. The results were very severe. To understand why, we have to look at the facts.

According to a recent study by the Fraser Institute, 60% of all minimum wage earners are young people below the age of 25, and 87% of them live with a parent or another relative. Only 2% of minimum wage earners are single parents with young children.

In January, right after the minimum wage went up by 21%, Statistics Canada recorded 59,300 fewer part-time jobs in Ontario. Employers kept their wage bill constant by cutting workers, and they cut part-time workers first.

Worse news came from the August employment data. Ontario lost more than 80,000 jobs that month, the largest job loss in a decade. Every single one of those jobs was part-time.

More recent jobs data from September is just as bad. Although employment in Ontario increased slightly, the gains were mostly in the public sector. Jobs in manufacturing, food service and recreation all declined. In other words, employment took another hit in the sectors where businesses were adjusting to the massive minimum wage increase.

The evidence is in: Employers are finding it hard to cope with a 21% rise in the minimum wage. Businesses are cancelling the career-starting jobs that pay minimum wage now but lead to more opportunities later.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business called Bill 148 “punitive” and said it was implemented without any economic analysis or understanding of the potential negative impacts. The CFIB's vice-president said, “Bill 148 has been grinding job creation and competitiveness in the small business sector to a halt, forcing

many business owners to make tough decisions due to higher labour costs and a tsunami of red tape.”

This concern was echoed by many, many other stakeholders across Ontario. This is why the Ontario government for the people will be keeping our promise to hold the hourly minimum wage at \$14 an hour, in order to allow businesses time to adjust before letting the minimum wage rise with inflation beginning in 2020.

For the past four months, my colleagues and I have been meeting with businesses, workers and public sector employers to review Bill 148. As Minister of Labour, I reviewed each section of the bill and asked three critical questions: What was the impact on Ontario's economy? Does this provide a real benefit for the people? How do we ensure Ontario is open for business?

The result of this review was the legislation that was tabled last week. It's called the Making Ontario Open for Business Act. It's a great act.

Let me tell you a little bit about the Making Ontario Open for Business Act. The purpose of the bill is to reduce burdens on our job creators, while preserving real benefits for Ontario workers. Our legislation, if passed, will fulfill our commitment to keeping Ontario's hourly minimum wage at \$14. While some people have called for us to roll back the 21% minimum wage hike, we recognize that would be immensely unfair to Ontario workers. As Minister of Labour, I understand there is a need for the minimum wage to increase as the cost of living goes up, so as of October 2020, annual increases to minimum wage will be based on an economically sound metric: inflation. Ontario's workers and businesses deserve a minimum wage determined by economics, not by politics.

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Let me tell you about the Retail Council of Canada. They applauded this promise, saying, “Tying future minimum wage increases to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) provides employers with the predictability they require and ensures employees' wages keep up with price increases. These proposed labour law changes will ensure Ontario's retail industry remains vibrant, and protects employment in our sector.” Mr. Speaker, we are grateful for such support.

The minimum wage hike wasn't the only burdensome part of Bill 148. For months, MPPs' offices have been inundated with complaints about the bill and its negative effects on businesses and workers. I used the same deliberate approach to assess each section of Bill 148.

Our reforms will correct the Liberals' disastrous personal emergency leave program, a piece of red tape so burdensome it actually rewards employers for not hiring new workers or creating new jobs. Instead, we will introduce a consistent, simple system where every Ontario worker will now have a straightforward package of annual leave days: three sick days, three family responsibility days and two bereavement days for each worker every year.

We know that time spent with family is important. Our government will protect three weeks of paid vacation after five years for every Ontario worker. We'll continue to

support domestic or sexual violence leave. I understand the importance of these provisions. Our government is committed to job-protected domestic or sexual violence leave for all Ontario workers.

We'll reverse the needless scheduling restrictions and give employers back the flexibility to have the right staff at the right time. The Ontario Hospital Association applauded our proposed reform for scheduling. President and CEO Anthony Dale said that Bill 47 "signals an understanding from government of the enormous pressures facing hospitals and will help ensure that hospital resources are directed to front-line patient care."

Similar words came from the Association of Municipalities. AMO president Jamie McGarvey said that Bill 148's "scheduling and on-call rules are just two of many that create new costs and inefficiencies in our delivery of services." AMO was pleased to know that their concerns were heard.

Other words of support came from the Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association's president and CEO, Tony Elenis: "We are very supportive that the Ford administration is listening to Ontario's hospitality industry as we were considered among all other sectors in a one-size-fits-all approach to labour reforms by the previous government."

Jocelyn Bamford from the Coalition of Concerned Manufacturers and Businesses Canada said, "This legislation will go a long way in maintaining the viability of small and medium businesses in this province and will help save our jobs."

As a former nurse, I understand collective bargaining and I respect that process, but certain provisions in Bill 148 made it nearly impossible to create new and better jobs for Ontario. If only 20% of a workforce expressed interest in joining a union, their employer would be required to hand over to the union the employees' personal information. Similarly, card-based certification, which is common in the building trades, was extended to home care, building services and temporary help agencies.

Neither of those changes were justified. Our reform will respect Ontarians' personal information and we are repealing the rules that forced card-based certification on new sectors. Our reform gives back to those workers their right to a democratic, secret ballot.

Overall, our reforms will simplify, harmonize and reduce the regulatory burden for anyone willing to create jobs in Ontario. The reforms we are introducing are deliberate and thoughtful, unlike the last-minute changes imposed on Ontarians through Bill 148.

The Making Ontario Open for Business Act is only the beginning. Our government for the people recognizes that lower-income workers and their families do deserve a break, which is why we are committed to ensure minimum wage earners pay no provincial income tax. I know my colleague Minister Fedeli, the Minister of Finance, is working on that right now. If you want minimum wage workers to have more money in their pockets, the answer is simple: Stop taxing them.

We believe Ontario's entrepreneurs and small business owners understand that cutting red tape and leaving your money in people's pockets is the way to get Ontario growing again. Workers across all trades and professions treat their hard-earned money with respect and they want their government to do the same. This package of reforms will help unlock the job-creating potential in Ontario's economy. Our government wants to be the engine of job creation in Canada.

By replacing ideology with economic sense, we are helping ensure that more people—and, in particular, young people—can enter the workforce and start their careers. Businesses should have the confidence in reasonable and predictable regulations, and everyone who works should have the confidence of a good job and a safe workplace. This is what Bill 47 is meant to achieve and this is why I urge every member of this House to vote for it.

I'm sure we're going to have some healthy discussion, Mr. Speaker, and I do appreciate your patience. I'm very proud of the piece of legislation that was brought forward last week. I look forward to the debate, and I look forward to the passing of Bill 47 for all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you, Speaker. Through you: There's an awful lot of inaccurate information coming from the minister. This bill is an attack on workers—it's as simple as that—especially female workers and those struggling most to make ends meet. Today, all workers have two paid sick days; Doug Ford is taking them away. That means the mom who has to rush her little one to the doctor will lose a—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): If you're making reference to a member, you will use the title or the riding as opposed to the person's name.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Understood, Speaker.

That means people will have to choose between going to work with a nasty flu or giving up part of the paycheque. Doug Ford—I'm sorry, the Premier—is forcing you to get a doctor's note to prove you're sick and a death certificate to prove you need to attend a funeral. When you have the flu, you should stay home, not clog up a doctor's waiting room or leave the house to spread your germs. Doug Ford is, again, allowing a—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. Take your seat, please.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): That's three times. I'm sorry. You're done. That's three times you've been called to order on using the Premier's name as opposed to "the Premier" or his riding. You're not showing deference to the Chair when it's brought to your attention.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you, Speaker. It's great to see you in the chair again this afternoon.

I have to say, in my comments, that it is always a pleasure to hear the Minister of Labour and her contributions. I

had the opportunity to sit with her also in the opposition benches, and then, as well, her speeches were always thoughtful, intelligent and forward-looking, as this piece of legislation indeed is for the province of Ontario. I'm very proud of the minister for her contributions.

Not a lot of people know this, but I actually grew up working in the trades. I was a framer; I did landscaping, demolition and excavating. A lot of my friends, most of the friends that I hang out with, are involved in the trades, whether it's in electrical or plumbing; I have some friends who are mechanics as well as involved in a wide variety of the trades. One of the things that they always brought to me—including those friends who, after university, found it very difficult to find work in their fields, who went back and started looking at the trades—was the ratios. This was something that came up time and time again: the ratio of journeyman to apprentice. Those who were looking for apprenticeships said, "I don't get it. On the one hand, we have this huge shortage that we're talking about, the skills gap. On the other hand, I can't get an apprenticeship. What's going on?"

These are the sorts of conversations that would cross not just my desk but, really, around a campfire when we would go camping, whatever it was—having these discussions with my friends, most of whom work in the trades.

These were conversations that came up. When I told them that what we were doing today with Bill 47 was finally addressing that flaw and making sure that we could provide good, stable, well-paying jobs for my peers and for hundreds of thousands of students and young people across this province, they were overjoyed.

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This weekend, I had that opportunity to chat with some of them about it. They were very, very excited, and it's because of the legislation that the minister is bringing forward today as well.

So, I want to thank the minister for her contributions to this debate. I look forward to hearing about it. This is a good-news story. It's good for Ontario; it's good for Ontario workers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: Bill 47 and the other additions that the government has made—I can tell you, I have three certified trades. I worked in heavy industry for over 30 years. I've seen people killed on the job. I've seen accidents galore. And why were a lot of those prevented? As we brought a safety and health program into that steel plant, fewer people were killed, because we had regular inspections. We had people coming into that plant who knew what they were doing, tradespeople who could look for the accidents and the things that cause accidents. In 1975, we used to average four fatalities a year in the plant that I was in alone—four fatalities a year. After we brought in a health and safety system and we brought in regular inspections, that went down to almost nil.

What I'm saying to you is, if you reduce the number of inspectors—which was supposed to be doubled by the last

government, which they didn't do. You need more inspectors.

Also, I'm very concerned about lowering the penalties, lowering the fines. That's just encouraging people not to take the guidance to put in safety precautions, to put in new equipment that's going to protect people.

I've seen people dragged into lines. I've seen people decapitated. I've seen people fall into vats of hot steel.

What I'm saying is, if you reduce the number of inspectors and you don't get regular inspections in these plants—you want to create a good Ontario? You want to create jobs? Well, you should create safe jobs and a safe work environment, and you're not doing that. With all due respect, Minister, your government is setting us back 25 years in health and safety. We fought tooth and nail, through our unions, to protect the people. We want to go home to our families too.

You can talk about money; you can talk about opening Ontario and all these great things. But if you don't protect the people and they don't go home to their families, you've failed this province. I'll tell you that right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I wanted to thank the minister for her very insightful debate and comments. I also wanted to thank the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for his very thoughtful and insightful comments, which I look forward to reviewing in Hansard.

When my dad heard about this bill, the first thing he did is, he called me and he said, "Goldie, I'm giving you a thumbs-up through the phone."

Everyone here talks about how they were in the industry or they know someone who was in the industry. Well, my father is still in the industry, and he's been in the industry for 33 years, from the first day that we came here to Canada. He built his life, and he built everything that we have today through his hard work, working in factories, working in plants, being an electrician.

This bill is here for the people; it's for the workers. It's essentially here to make life easier and to promote the trades. No one is talking about the positives of this bill. Why are we only being called out on something that may or may not be the case? The other party seems to just be naysaying and making this into a political agenda.

What we're doing is, we're reducing regulations. We have over 380,000 regulations that we are looking at reducing.

Many companies have had enough of the high cost of doing business here in Ontario. We need to stop the mass exodus of business, and we need to encourage businesses to come back. That's why this bill is going to make sure we're open for business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): That's the end of questions and comments. We return to the minister for her two-minute wrap-up.

Hon. Laurie Scott: I want to thank the members from Niagara Centre, Niagara West, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and Carleton for their comments. There's so much positive news in this bill, as the member from Carleton

said. Look, I want to thank my colleagues the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities also, for combining a three-minister bill bringing forward—changing ratios. For 15 years, we have fought to change the ratios so we can get more people to go into skilled trades, make it more streamlined, make it easier for our young people to get into skilled trades to fill the job vacancies that exist. So I was more than happy to see that as part of the bill.

Since this bill has been introduced, I have gotten so many positive stories of businesses that are going to hire more people. Yesterday alone, when I was out, I had a person who owns a restaurant; they're going to add another kitchen on. They didn't do that when Bill 148 came in, Mr. Speaker. Now they feel they can. They have the confidence in the economy in the province of Ontario, and they're going to add more jobs and add that kitchen.

I have a forest products industry in my riding. Just because of the WSIB premium decreases, they're going to hire two more people because that's more money they have to reinvest in their businesses.

Mr. Speaker, when I hear from businesses that they felt the previous Liberal government, and Bill 148 especially, was an attack on them—they felt their province was attacking businesses; our job creators, our mom-and-pop shops, our manufacturers. When you have people telling you stories day after day, something was wrong with that bill. Bill 47—Ontario is open for business—is what we're going to do. It's not just a slogan.

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

Mr. Jamie West: It's my honour to give my inaugural speech today, so I'd like to begin with: Bonjour. Aanii. Hello. It seems fitting that I had the opportunity to smudge this afternoon at our caucus meeting, because I'd like to begin with a land acknowledgement. Last year, I had the opportunity to spend nine days travelling across Nunavut as part of the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference. When I returned, I realized I knew more about Indigenous people who lived thousands of miles from me than I did about the Indigenous people in the riding of Sudbury.

I learned that I had to be more than an ally; I had to be an activist. One way I can do this is to recognize the importance of acknowledging our treaty territories.

In Toronto, the territory is covered by the Upper Canada treaties: the ancestral traditional territories of the Ojibway, the Anishnabe and the Mississaugas of the New Credit.

In Sudbury, the territories are in the Robinson-Huron Treaty, and the ancestral traditional territory of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek.

As a step towards reconciliation, it's important to recognize that these treaties belong to all of us.

Speaker, I'd like to thank the previous MPP for his service to the riding. All of us in this room know what it means to put our names—and the names of our families—forward for public service. My colleague and I differed on

our opinions on how to move the province forward, but we agreed on the philosophy of “soft on people, hard on policy.” During the campaign, our discussions and our debates, be they public or private, were always professional.

I'd also like to thank the many people that helped me in my election. I want to thank my volunteers. I know better than to try to name all of them, and honestly, there isn't enough time during a 20-minute speech. And it wouldn't be fair to try and narrow down the list for a speech like this because I wouldn't know where to start and I wouldn't be able to stop, so from the bottom of my heart, thank you for helping me get elected.

I especially want to thank you for having so much fun with me along the way. We were a serious and hard-working team, Speaker, but like the riding I represent, we believed in a “work hard, play hard” philosophy, and our campaign office was often filled with laughter. I'll always be thankful that our work was fun, that it was hopeful and that it was positive.

It's important to thank the voters that trusted me with their vote. They need to know that their votes are valuable and that I'll do everything to ensure that their trust in selecting me on the ballot will be earned.

Speaker, I'm not just the MPP from the riding of Sudbury; I'm a Sudburian, born and raised, and I'm proud to say that over the past 46 years I have lived in all areas of my riding, including the town of Copper Cliff, where I was employed for the last 16 years.

Sudbury is a fantastic city. It is a vibrant, diverse city that serves people from across the region. As I often describe it, Sudbury is small enough to have that friendly, small-town feel, where strangers will stop to talk to you and to help you, but not so small that everyone knows what you had for breakfast that morning.

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To give you a scope of the size of the riding of Sudbury, you can walk from one end of the riding of Sudbury to the other—and I have. This summer, at the tail end of the summer, I took the Rainbow Routes Camino challenge: I walked a 28-kilometre network of trails that Rainbow Routes has helped maintain and organize throughout our city.

To be clear, the Camino challenge doesn't include all of the trails in my riding. It's just the ones that would bring you from one corner of the riding, at Fielding Park, to the opposite corner, at Moonlight Beach.

In fact, one of the many gems in Sudbury is our easy access to nature. Imagine having well-groomed nature trails within five minutes of your busiest streets. That's what we enjoy in the riding of Sudbury.

But it wasn't always this way. Many people who haven't seen the city in decades might remember Sudbury as the place where NASA once prepared to visit the moon. It was black rock and decimated.

However, Sudbury has spent the past 40 years not only re-greening our city, but also continually reducing and capturing SO₂ pollution before it's released. As a touchstone, there is now serious talk about the removal of the

Superstack, a landmark in Sudbury that was once the world's largest smokestack. That stack was commissioned the year I was born. It's hard to believe that, as a city, we've come so far in such a short time. As a result, Sudbury is absolutely beautiful, especially considering that the city of Greater Sudbury, which I share with the member for Nickel Belt, has over 300 lakes.

The most popular lake in my riding is probably Ramsey. It's one of several beautiful lakes that are in the middle of our city. A large portion of the shoreline of Ramsey Lake is connected by four beaches known as Bell Park, which is named for the Bell family, that willed the land to our city when they passed away. Bell Park is home to many of our arts festivals, including the Northern Lights Festival Boréal, which is as old as I am, and the Sudbury jazz festival, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this summer.

Bell Park ends at a boardwalk that connects walkers to Science North, our northern science centre, and Health Sciences North, the north's largest and most important hospital.

Nearby is James Jerome field, which includes a first-class field for the Sudbury Gladiators, our city's football team. Sudbury is also home to the Sudbury Wolves, our OHL team, and probably the only OHL team to have blood as part of their logo. This winter will be our first season with the Sudbury Five, the first Canadian professional basketball team based in Sudbury.

If you were to take a boat across Ramsey Lake from Bell Park, you'd arrive at Laurentian University. It's a bilingual university which shares space with Huntington University, with Thorneloe University and with Université de Sudbury. Laurentian is also home to CROSH, the Centre for Research in Occupational Safety and Health. This is a world-class facility that uses a field-to-lab-to-field approach to making workplaces safer.

It's also home to NOSM, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, which allows northern medical students the opportunity to train, to work and, most importantly, to stay in the north.

As well, Sudbury is also home to two colleges: Cambrian College and Collège Boréal.

I'm proud to say, Speaker, I'm a graduate of both Laurentian University and Cambrian College. My oldest son, Sam, recently graduated from Collège Boréal, our French-language college. And, similar to their slogan, son choix c'est Boréal.

The riding of Sudbury is the gateway to the north. Northern Ontario is where we measure distance by hours. It's where we buy Halloween costumes that will fit over top of our snowsuits. It's where we fought to have our hospitals and our cancer treatment centres in the north.

Despite what the Premier said on the campaign trail, Sudbury doesn't want to travel to Toronto for the best care in the world. We expect the best care in the world to be in the north, because that's where we live and that's where our friends and our families live.

Sudburians deserve solutions that work for them. For example, as the gateway to the north, Sudbury deserves to

have the four-laning of the final 68 kilometres of Highway 69 finally completed after years and years of delay, so that we can reduce the number of fatalities on that highway and so that our northern businesses can become more successful.

Obviously, this summer, the summer of 2018, was an important date for all of us in this House. I want to congratulate my colleagues on their success in the election.

However, I want to talk briefly about the summer of 2017. Speaker, 2017 was significant in my family because it was the year that my wife, Pam, and I celebrated our 20th anniversary; her parents, Philip and Suzanne, who are in the gallery today, celebrated their 50th; and her grandparents Rolly and Coloumbe celebrated their 75th anniversary.

My parents, Bev and Bill, celebrated their first wedding anniversary two years ago. You see, my mom and my stepfather eloped two years ago. When I asked my mom why they eloped, she said, "Jamie, I'm 70 years old. How many romantic things do you think I get to do?" She's right. The world needs more romance. We need to lead with our hearts.

I'm going to tell you my love story. My wife and I met in high school. We weren't dating back then; we were just friends going to see a movie together. It was March break. Everyone else we knew was out of town. It was cold. Sudbury is a city located in the middle of a meteorite crater. You can't really see more than 200 metres in any direction because of all the hills. But *Dances with Wolves* was filmed in Big Sky Country; you can see for miles. So I was swivelling my head back and forth and back and forth in the movie, when all of a sudden, like I'm struck by Cupid's arrow, I couldn't stop staring at my wife. I couldn't look away no matter what—until she caught me. Pam looked at me, and I snapped my head back as quick as I could. With knots in my stomach, I prayed for a chunk of the ceiling to fall down and kill me, but it didn't.

More than 25 years later, I'm proud to say that I've been in love with my wife for more than half of my life. If you see me smiling, I'm probably thinking about Pam. She is one of the smartest, most loving people I've ever met. None of the achievements I've ever had in my life would be possible without Pam. As I often say, this world needs more Pams.

Our proudest achievements are our children, Sam, Thomas and Ella, who continue to inspire me.

Sam just turned 22 yesterday. At six-foot-four and over 280 pounds, he was a quarterback's nightmare when he played for the Sudbury Gladiators. Now he works in instrumentation, programming tiny machinery. My son Sam is the definition of strength and gentleness.

Thomas is 17. I've always described Thomas as thoughtful, not just because he cares about people, but because he's always thinking about things, researching new information and looking for different points of view.

Ella, my daughter, is my youngest, at 13. She's both competitive and caring. She's a competitive dancer at Dance Evolution in Sudbury. But she always compares her performance against how well she could have done and

never against how anyone else does. That's probably why she has such a strong network of friends.

I'm proud to say that my children are bilingual and that my wife and her family are French. Et moi? Je suis anglais, mais le français est dans mon cœur. I'm proud to say that I've set a personal goal to improve my French during my time here at Queen's Park, which has been on my bucket list for years.

To understand how I got here, Speaker, it's important for me to tell you a little bit about myself.

I grew up in poverty. My sister and I were raised by a single mom who worked as a secretary. We lived in geared-to-income housing. I need to repeat that: My mom worked full-time and we couldn't afford to pay rent, so we lived in poverty, just like thousands of Ontarians do today and might do after Bill 47 is passed.

My mom was a role model to me. She insisted that I go to post-secondary school because that was the key to a better life.

So when I graduated from high school, we took out student loans and I worked two part-time jobs. I was the first in my family to graduate from college, but there were no jobs, let alone careers—just short-term contracts with minimum wage. I thought I had it wrong, so I went to university. I was the first in my family to graduate from university—but still, no jobs, just short-term contracts with minimum wage, sometimes 20 cents more. But those aren't careers. In fact, I spent the first decade of my adult life working short-term contracts and precarious jobs while trying to whittle away a mountain of student loans—a decade.

I did everything right. I followed all the rules. I had a diploma. I had a degree. I was married. We were trying to raise my son Sam. My wife and I, because of this, had to wait four years to have Thomas. My wife and I were waiting for our precarious jobs to become careers. We were waiting for a light at the end of the tunnel that was never coming—until I got a job at a unionized workplace, until I became a steelworker.

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In 2002, I was hired as a steelworker at the Copper Cliff smelter. I was 30 years old, and for the first time in my life I had a career—not a job where you couldn't plan for the future, but a real career where you could raise a family, the career I had when my wife and I bought a house and when we had my daughter, Ella. I was a furnace operator, and I belonged to a union that fought for workplace dignity, a union that fought for fairness and a union that fought for safety.

This world is thirsty for leadership, and my union gave me the training and opportunities to become a leader. They celebrated with me when I was successful and they supported me when I was struggling. I would not be here today if it weren't for the steelworkers. I wouldn't be in this House, in this chair or in the position I have with my family. So on behalf of all the steelworkers who have believed in me, who have helped me, who have trained me and encouraged me, I would like to thank the international president, Leo Gerard. From one Sudburian to another,

from one steelworker and Local 6500 to another, thank you, brother. I look forward to your retirement.

There was a time when I honestly didn't think the government cared about people like me: working class, poor. I didn't think they hated me; I just thought they were focused on their wealthy and well-connected friends, and if they hurt me or helped me, it was incidental to their real plans. I mean, I literally was five years old living in poverty when the government promised they would end child poverty. More than 40 years later: still waiting.

Just look at this government and their most recent attacks on the working class and the poor. In their first three months, they've already cancelled the Basic Income Pilot project. They cut the promised increase to OW and ODSP in half. They cancelled the hiring plan that would double the number of Ministry of Labour inspectors. They sent a memo to the current inspectors ordering them to stop proactive workplace inspections. And their new plan? Weaker labour laws, taking away paid sick days, clogging up our health care system with wasteful sick-day notes and freezing the minimum wage for another four years. They're freezing it again, the same way the Conservative government froze minimum wage for eight years the last time they were in power, which is why we're in this mess in the first place. It's shameful.

You can understand, Speaker, why I didn't think government cared about people like me. But in 2009, we went on strike for a year, and the NDP was the only party to show up. Think about that. We had 10 picket lines scattered across the city of greater Sudbury—10 of them, active 24 hours a day, seven days a week for an entire year, and the NDP was the only party to show up, and not just show up but actively support us on the picket lines. They spoke at our rallies. They marched in the streets. They spoke at Queen's Park. They spoke in the House of Commons. The other parties didn't even stop to have a conversation with us. It seems like government consultation with workers was about as effective then as it is today.

Meanwhile, I met my party leader on a picket line. It was in the middle of the night at the Garson mine. This wasn't a photo op, because people don't go to a sand pit for a photo op. There was no press there. Andrea was standing beside a fire barrel, trying to keep warm while speaking to striking steelworkers in the middle of a Sudbury winter. Speaker, it doesn't matter if you're the leader of the NDP or you're the neighbour down the street; you walk a picket line with me and I'm going to stand by you forever.

I'm thrilled to have been named the labour critic for my party, because I'm working class and I'm proud of it. I spent nearly two decades of my life representing workers. I've been involved with my labour council for nearly a decade and I was their president for the past five years. As a steelworker, I've had the opportunity to represent workers on three continents. In my own workplace, I've dealt with everything from firings to fatalities.

Before this election, I was literally blue collar. Last year, that changed to orange because mining requires high-vis work clothes, but it works for my party. You get the

picture. I have a favourite work boot. I have a favourite type of glove. I showered and changed in the dry at work. And for what it's worth, I prefer coveralls to the two-piece shirt and pants.

To me, labour is more than a job title. It includes the things that mean the most to me. It includes dignity, it includes fairness and it includes safety for workers. Organized labour is the thing that saved my family and myself from poverty and precarious work. It is literally the reason that I'm here today, and that's why I'm so proud to be the labour critic.

Most importantly, Speaker, being a member of provincial Parliament is an opportunity for all of us to make life better: To make it better for every senior who can't afford to retire, for every student who has graduated to a life of precarious work and that mountain of debt, for every parent who struggles without so their children can be successful and, most importantly, for every five-year-old whose mom is working full-time and still can't make ends meet.

Thank you, Speaker. Merci beaucoup. Chi meegwetch.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: It's a privilege to rise here. As the member from Sudbury talked about being an MPP in this Legislature, it was interesting to hear his life and times in Sudbury.

Just after graduating from university, I spent some time—three years—in Sudbury. I had a number of friends I went to school with and who were classmates: Steve Grinious, Tim Merla, and Dave Tailor. Sudbury was a place where anybody who was from there went back, because it was a great place with lots of—if you love fishing and hunting, and they all did. I had some interesting times. I spent three years there—lots of fun. Of course, everybody up there worked in the mines, basically. I worked for Bell, but I was the outsider. All my friends worked at Inco. It was interesting to hear the issues they had.

I have to say that there were lots of jobs at that time. Of course, after 60 years of PC government, the economy was booming and life in Sudbury was good. We spent time at the Sudbury arena and played a lot of hockey there at the time. Of course, hockey was big in Sudbury. When I left, they had the curling—the Canadian bonspiel. It brought everybody together, and it was quite a party up there. It was my only time attending the bonspiel. Most of the people in the house were volunteering at it. It was interesting, because after you got by the sixth end or something, everybody went to the garden patch and nobody went back to watch the end of the game. So it was a fun time.

Sudbury had a lot to offer and was different at that time. It was just starting to turn green. I think it had a reputation for being part of the moon. But it was a great place, with lots going on—a little cold in the wintertime, I have to admit, but other than that, I can appreciate the member's love for the city.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to commend the member from Sudbury. Jamie and I have walked in the same shoes. I spent almost 34 years in a steel plant—heavy industry in Hamilton. When I started in 1975 there, just in that plant alone, it was five miles wide and three miles deep. We had 18,000 employees. Today there is less than 1,000. That tells you how industry has been affected in this province.

In reference to Jamie's comments about safety and health, I can remember when they started the WHMIS program. We were one of the originals on that. I worked on that WHMIS program. I was a level 2 safety and health rep. I was an assistant chief steward, mechanical.

I think a prerequisite to anyone who serves in this House should be that they spend six months in those types of environments to get a real appreciation of what Ontarians do, what the base population does. I think to come into this House with no labour background, no—how would I put it?—feeling or compassion for the people who work in these environments—a lot of them die from diseases related to the work environment. A lot of them die from that. A lot of people don't realize that their life expectancy has probably dropped 15 or 20 years just by working in those environments.

It's very important, safety and health. When I see bills like this, that are setting safety and health back 25 years in reference to inspections and the types of situations that happen in those places, those mines and those plants, it's a pretty scary situation. I would suggest to this House that they take this bill back and re-examine the inspector part of it and also re-examine the fines, because there are companies up there who were actually giving away boats and cars if you didn't report your accident—absolutely terrible, disgusting. I'll tell you, they haven't even looked at half of it. They haven't got an idea what's going on out there.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I'd like to congratulate the member from Sudbury on his inaugural speech, for highlighting some of the key areas in his riding, and for sharing his political journey with us. As a new member myself, I certainly appreciate the emotions and the self-reflection that go into one's maiden speech. I think he did a great job today. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to his love story. Pam, if you are listening, your man is a keeper.

Today, I had some remarks prepared to speak in support of Bill 47, Making Ontario Open for Business Act. But in listening to our Minister of Labour, who is an inspiration to me and many young women in politics, I was reminded of my own humble beginnings in Canada, and I would like to offer some thoughts on that.

At the age of 12, as a brand new immigrant, I delivered newspapers, making pennies for each newspaper delivered. At age 14, I worked as a dietary aide in a retirement home, and I was making \$5 an hour at that time. In high school, I had two jobs: one in retail and one as a secretary, making about \$7 an hour. As humble as those earnings were, I was so grateful to be able to make them, to offset

some of the financial burdens of my struggling single mom.

We heard today that almost 60,000 part-time jobs, largely held by students, were lost as a direct result of the reckless Bill 148. I can't help but wonder how many young Natalias lost their sole source of income, their opportunity to be financially responsible and self-reliant. This is only one of the reasons why today I am proud to support Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act—to bring good jobs back to Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to congratulate the member from Sudbury on a very passionate and educational experience that he gave us here today—talking about what it's like to struggle from a very young age. Everyone has a story about how they got where they are, but some of them are harder; some of them don't have to be so tough, especially for struggling people who are trying to do their best.

When he talked about his single mother in geared-to-income housing and how difficult that was, and that he did all the right things—he went to post-secondary education and tried to find a permanent job with good pay and some benefits, but he couldn't do that because there was precarious work everywhere. What kind of message does that send to people, that you have gone to school, you've put in your time, your parents lived in poverty—just like the member talked across the way—and yet you're not able to find decent work that will give you sick days, that will give you benefits for your teeth, for your prescriptions, retirement?

Luckily, the member from Sudbury was one of the ones who did find decent work, and he attributes that to a great work environment in the steel industry, which has unionized. He talked about the benefits of a good workplace. A workplace can be beneficial if we start doing things to help people who are working in the workforce.

Bill 47, this—what is it called? Open for Business?

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's the bumper sticker bill.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, it's the bumper sticker of all bills.

You are not creating a good work environment when you are taking things away from people who are struggling to make ends meet and stay afloat in our society. Give them some help and make sure we strengthen our workplace environment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I'm channelling Stompin' Tom and returning to the member from Sudbury Saturday Night.

Mr. Jamie West: I want to begin by—well, thanking everybody. But I want to begin by thanking my in-laws, who came today. They took a real chance on me. I look good now as an MPP, but they knew me in the old days when there wasn't as bright of a future.

The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry: The stories of hockey, of Bell take me back. I was actually a line tech, as one of my first precarious jobs, at Bell. Talking about when the land wasn't green—the only thing

I really miss now that we have all these trees is that when you go sliding with your kids, you can't just point in any direction that you want.

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, my brother from USW 1005, talked about safety. Steelworkers are fundamental. It's our history in safety. If it weren't for Steelworkers, Ontario wouldn't have the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We wouldn't have the right to refuse unsafe work. We wouldn't have the Westray bill. We wouldn't have regulation 854. We demanded that; we forced it to happen—the mining and mining plants review.

The member from Mississauga Centre: I appreciate the comments as a new member and the history as a new immigrant, her work history and talking about being raised by a single mom. That's a unique experience that few of us can relate to. I agree 100% with her comments and everybody else's. I don't think Bill 148 went far enough, either.

The member from London–Fanshawe: I think the point she had, that everyone has a story and that some are harder, resonates with me as we talk about this bill and these changes we're making and the importance of listening to other people's stories. I went past a store yesterday where they were selling shoes for a thousand dollars a pair. I didn't even know they made shoes for a thousand dollars a pair—and I found out those were on sale.

When I hear the government talk about consulting with business and people with deep pockets, you might want to talk to people who can't afford those shoes and don't have as much money.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: I am pleased to rise today as one of the parliamentary assistants to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, as well as the representative of the hard-working people of Flamborough–Glanbrook, to speak in favour of Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of this bill because it is a pro-jobs bill. When I grew up in Capreol in northern Ontario, everyone saw Ontario as the land of opportunity. There was no question that Ontario led the country in economic prosperity. There was hope in a better tomorrow, hope that each generation would be more prosperous than that of their parents. Ontario was blessed then, as it is now, with smart people, an abundance of natural resources and an ideal location situated next to the largest consumer market in the world.

In short, Ontario was open for business. And that prosperity built our health care system, our education system and more. But overregulation, high hydro costs and endless red tape have choked Ontario's competitive advantage. This has been the legacy of the last 15 years.

Yesterday in this House, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade articulated just how far we have fallen behind the jurisdictions we compete against, the jurisdictions that are taking our businesses and our jobs away. As the minister explained, this bill can help achieve an Ontario where businesses are able to invest and grow without being weighed down by heavy regulations.

I would like to thank the House for the opportunity, over the course of the next few minutes, to share three things about Bill 47:

- (1) fairness for employees and employers;
- (2) how changes to Ontario's apprenticeship system contained in this bill will help with the skilled jobs gap we're experiencing and fuel growth in these critical areas of our economy; and
- (3) feedback that I have received from small business owners in my constituency of Flamborough–Glanbrook, across the Hamilton area and across Ontario which I believe underscores exactly why we need to make these changes.

From day one, our government has been working hard to deliver results for Ontario employers and employees. Over the last couple of months, I've travelled the province, hosting round tables with businesses affected by the trade uncertainty with the ups and downs of trade negotiations. However, inevitably the discussion would always turn to what the government of Ontario can do so that job creators stay in Ontario and, better yet, invest more in Ontario, creating more jobs.

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Over and over again, I heard the stories of red tape and burdensome regulation. Mr. Speaker, don't get me wrong: There is an important place for regulations that can effectively protect health, safety and other important priorities. Unfortunately, far too many of Ontario's 380,000 regulatory requirements are inefficient, inflexible, out of date or duplicate federal or municipal regulations.

Bill 47 is a step forward towards building prosperity, putting Ontario back on track as a growth leader in North America and restoring our province to its rightful place as the economic engine of Canada. We heard over and over again how the Liberals' job-killing Bill 148 chased jobs and investment out of Ontario. Unlike the Liberals, we understand and believe that the private sector has a role to play in getting Ontario back on track.

We ran on a commitment to cut red tape and make Ontario open for business. There is no worse example of job-killing red tape and regulation than Bill 148, which actually punishes job creators and employers who try to hire. One factor was the sudden 21% increase in the minimum wage that was brought into effect this year. We agree that employees deserve to earn a decent living, but we all have to understand that businesses need to be given time to adjust to such large changes.

An unfortunate consequence of the previous government's labour reforms was that 52,000 Ontarians lost their jobs in the first month that Bill 148 was enforced. Most of them were part-time jobs, the kind of jobs the opposition believes they are protecting the most by supporting Bill 148.

We have seen the effects across our communities. Our local supermarkets are cutting down on cashier hours. Fast-food restaurants are turning to automation. The purpose of holding the line on minimum wage until October 2020 is so that small businesses—the job creators in our economy—can have an opportunity to catch up on

the large overnight increase. After October 2020, the minimum wage in this province will be increased based on the rate of inflation, bringing Ontario in line with most other provinces. This will still ensure Ontario has one of the highest minimum wages in the country.

Our government is also committed to ensuring that minimum wage earners do not have to pay provincial income tax, with the tax credits announced yesterday. This means that minimum wage earners can keep more money in their pockets.

The opposition likes to perpetuate a narrative that we in this government are being ruthless and are simply repealing Bill 148 because we don't like it. Mr. Speaker, this is simply inaccurate. When reviewing each section of Bill 148, the Minister of Labour, as she has just articulated, took three questions into consideration:

- (1) What was the impact on Ontario's economy?
- (2) Does this provide a real benefit for the people?
- (3) How do we ensure Ontario is open for job creators?

It's important to note that we are keeping some provisions from Bill 148. For example, we are continuing our support for domestic and sexual violence leave, and we will be protecting the three weeks of paid vacation after five years for every Ontario worker. In addition, we are introducing a simple and consistent system where each and every worker in Ontario will be entitled to three sick days, three family responsibility days and two bereavement days every single year. This will bring Ontario in line with our counterparts in Alberta and British Columbia.

Bill 47 also reverses employer scheduling restrictions so that they have the flexibility to ensure they have the right staff on schedule at the right time. The current provisions in Bill 148 have caused significant uncertainty for the employer community and have had unintended consequences. We have been told that Bill 148 is a major disincentive to hiring part-time employees and summer students. Employers have had difficulty interpreting and implementing these provisions. It was never made clear how these provisions would actually help employees.

As I said at the outset, Mr. Speaker, with Bill 47, our government intends on being fair to both employees and employers. That is one of the main reasons why pay discrimination on the basis of gender remains against the law, and this will be maintained.

My second point is about improvements in this bill to apprenticeships so that we can make greater progress in filling the skills gap in the job market. We are making sweeping changes to improve the system in regard to skilled trades and apprenticeships. We have a serious problem in our province where skilled trade apprentices cannot find jobs and employers are having a hard time finding apprentices. One of the hurdles was the impractical 4-to-1 ratio of journeymen to apprentices. Bill 47 reduces that ratio to 1-to-1 so that skilled trade apprentices can get the vital hands-on experience that is required for them to succeed.

One of my constituents, Wally Boonstra, who owns a heating and air conditioning business, told me that the 4-to-1 ratio was not feasible because he did not always have

enough workers to cover the ratio, which meant that he had to hire the apprentices as labourers first so that they could get the experience they needed. This is a clear indication that the current apprenticeship system in Ontario is broken.

Ontario currently has some of the most restrictive ratios in Canada. The ministry has heard clearly from employers that reducing ratios would allow them to hire more apprentices and meet anticipated future needs for skilled tradespeople. In addition, a single consistent ratio requirement would reduce the regulatory burden on employers, modernizing and making the system easier to access and navigate for employers and workers. With the new 1-to-1 ratio, this Flamborough business owner and job creator has said that he will be taking on four more apprentices because there was a shortage of workers in his industry.

There is no evidence that the journeyman-to-apprentice ratio supports safety in the workplace. The health and safety of Ontario workers is of utmost concern. Other protections are in place, most notably the Occupational Health and Safety Act, to support workers' safety on the job. There is also no substantive evidence that Ontario's current complex and restrictive ratio regime promotes a higher standard of training for apprentices. By setting a lower ratio, apprentices would be able to learn from a journeyman without artificially restricting access to the trades.

We are also eliminating the Ontario College of Trades to remove any hurdles that deter young Ontarians from entering into the skilled trades and obtaining stable, well-paying jobs. The College of Trades is a complicated, unnecessary bureaucracy whose sole purpose has been to restrict the ability of people to pursue careers in regulated trades. No other province uses such a system, which serves to cripple the ability of employers to find skilled workers and for young people to build their careers in Ontario.

Our government is passing on the message that if you are prepared to do the work, you deserve a shot at the job, and that begins with getting the proper training. That's why the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has indicated that as part of the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, the 24 trades that the Ontario College of Trades recommended be de-prescribed will indeed be de-prescribed. This will help ensure funding for more in-demand trades.

It is absolutely mind-boggling that over the past 15 years of Liberal government, we have seen the total number of regulatory requirements grow to over 380,000. Far too many of those regulations that are imposed on Ontario businesses contain heavy-handed requirements and plenty of extra paperwork that don't necessarily provide greater protection for people. Ontario's problem is that the previous Liberal government didn't understand or care about private sector jobs and instead imposed countless layers of oppressive regulations in order to satisfy their political agenda.

Another example from my discussions with businesses in the Hamilton area was a company that had to pay nearly \$100,000 more in fees on a recent construction project

because of excessive regulation. The small business owner ended up paying even more due to loopholes for surcharges and had to pass the cost on to his customers to make up for that extra expense.

Red tape like this is inefficient and outdated, especially when federal or municipal regulations are duplicated. On top of this, existing regulations became costlier to comply with. With the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, our government intends to put an end to burdening job creators and forcing them to move south in order to compete in the global workplace. We cannot stand by as our businesses close up shop because it is simply too expensive to do business at home here in Ontario. Our government has committed to reviewing Ontario's stock of regulations and to figure out if certain regulations need to be eliminated or modernized.

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The owner of Beverly Greenhouses in my riding made a plea to me during a small-business round table that we held in Hamilton. The owner said that the government really needs to think about smart regulation, not more regulation. This multi-generation family business employs about 60 people. He strenuously pointed to many of the stipulations in Bill 148 as an impediment to creating more jobs and being more successful.

Some people have asked us about cost: What would our proposed changes cost the economy? By having a minimum wage that will grow with the rate of inflation, we are ensuring that out-of-control costs do not drive jobs out of Ontario, thereby helping businesses actually invest in more local jobs. By making Ontario open for business, we will unlock new jobs and new growth. We will get Ontario growing again, which will, in turn, help us invest in health, invest in education and invest in other priorities.

The Liberals' ideological approach to minimum wage placed a massive new burden on small businesses, particularly in the service industry and in small towns and rural Ontario. By replacing ideology with economic sense, we are helping ensure that more people—and in particular, young people—can enter the workforce and start their careers.

Our government is proud to announce that Ontario is once again open for business. We're very serious about cutting red tape. We're very serious about creating the right conditions for businesses to grow and to thrive. If there is one word that captures what I keep hearing as I've travelled throughout Ontario talking to businesses large and small, it's "hope." "Hope" is the word I keep hearing, and that rings true. There is hope in Ontario once again.

This government wants to get results for Ontarians now—not in a few years or just before the next election, but now. We are working hard to take action and get results to make sure that Ontario is open for business in a global economy. Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, is the first of many steps to put this province back on the right track.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Flamborough–Glanbrook.

Hearing the many speakers today, a lot of things came to mind for me. It brings up the precarious work that myself and many people in this House have had throughout their university years, throughout high school, and going into my twenties and thirties.

It also reminds me of people like Suhail. He lives in Toronto. He went to the University of Toronto for many years, has a PhD in electrical engineering and now works contract to contract at one of the largest banks in Canada. The bank has no real reason to move him from being a contract employee to being a full-time, permanent employee because there's no legislation requiring them to do so. It makes it difficult for people like Suhail, and people who are working minimum wage or precarious jobs, to build a life, to raise the money they need for a down payment, to pay for the rent, to build a family and to pay for child care when they have precarious work.

What concerns me so much about this bill is the decision not to increase the minimum wage, because it will mean that minimum wage workers will have \$2,000 a year taken away from them so that some of our biggest companies in Ontario and in Canada can profit more. It also means that there will be a rise in precarious work, because if employers can choose between paying someone part-time or precariously for less than they would a full-time worker, which is what is in this bill, then they're always going to choose the precarious option. That means that there will be more precarious workers in this economy. That is not a good thing, and it's why I do not support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I'm very pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 47. Mr. Speaker, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act is our government's signal to the province, the country and the world that Ontario is open for business. In the months and years to come, our government plans to introduce a series of changes to improve Ontario's business environment and competitiveness. We are going to reduce the cost to Ontario businesses of complying with regulations while maintaining rules that keep Ontarians safe and healthy, and we are also going to make it easier and faster for companies to do business with the government.

Mr. Speaker, our government is going to streamline and modernize, and in some cases eliminate, unnecessary, complicated and outdated regulations. Ontario imposes thousands of rules that businesses are telling us do not make sense, and we are listening. We are reviewing these rules. Businesses should have confidence in reasonable and predictable regulations, and everyone who works should have the confidence of a good job and a safe workplace. We are solving key business concerns while continuing to protect employees and support constructive labour relations.

Ontario lost 320,000 manufacturing jobs from 2003 to 2009. That's about 30% of total manufacturing employment. Since the depths of the recession in 2009, Ontario has seen no net growth in manufacturing jobs. Open for

business means open for everyone, including all workers—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to compliment the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for her input. I remember the days when we were standing in front of CHCH sticking up for her union and sticking up for her jobs when that nasty company ended a lot of those long-term jobs for that company. We were there, good union people standing with good union people.

Anyway, now I hear from this government, "We're open for business." Great. "We're going to create more jobs." Great. "We're going to end red tape." Great. But where do they fall off the wagon? Safety and health. You're going to set us back 25 years, cutting the number of inspectors, cutting the number of visits to the plant to realize what unsafe conditions exist in that plant. I have seen fatalities through my entire career.

And now they've decided that not only are we not going to visit them anymore, not only are we not going to inspect the job sites for safety, but we're not going to fine them as much. We're going to take away the fines and lower the fines for these things. Absolutely wrong, in the wrong direction. You want to make Ontario a great place to work? Well, you also want to make it a great place for safety and you want all those workers to go home to their families at night feeling that they have completed their job and they can go back and be with their families, not on a stretcher headed for the hospital, or worse.

I think that some of the things in this bill are going to set us back 20 years, of all the gains that labour has had in this province, because of their lack of insight and lack of on-the-job experience. You can make laws in this House, but if you haven't experienced these work environments, you don't know what goes on in these work environments, Speaker. You don't know what you're up against. It's easy to say, "Oh, that's a good bill. I support the minister." How can you say that when you have no experience, you've never been in these situations, but you're making decisions for people whose whole life depends on your decision, where it's their safety and health and going back to their families? I think there needs to be a real wake-up call in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Harris: I wanted to thank the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for her comments. There's one thing that I really took to heart from what she spoke about, and that's the apprenticeship ratio. I'm going to use an example. It's my friend Andrew. He's from small-town northern Ontario, Espanola. I'm not sure that we have any northern members in here at the moment, but Espanola is a small town of roughly, I think, 5,000 to 6,000 people just west of Sudbury. He is an HVAC apprentice. He unfortunately couldn't stay up north because—we know how hard it is up there. I'm from North Bay originally. I've been down south seven years now. But I know how hard it is to find a good job in northern Ontario. He tried to stay up

north, but there were not apprenticeships available to him up there, so he made his way to Parry Sound and now subsequently lives in Stratford.

1700

Part of the reason why he had to move, and part of the reason why these apprenticeships weren't available, is because the ratios were so out of whack that it made it impossible for business in the north and around the rest of the province to be able to bring on more apprentices.

When we're talking about ratios of 4 to 1—four journeypeople to one apprentice—it just doesn't make sense. Move this to a 1-to-1 ratio and then be able to have businesses thusly petition the ministry, or apply to the ministry, to have that ratio increased, not on the side of journeyperson to apprentice, but on the side of having more apprentices per journeyperson.

I know from first-hand experience, speaking with Andrew, that this is something that he supports, as an apprentice, as a worker and as a union member.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that Bill 47 and the repeal of Bill 148 is something that is going to be great for this province. I'm happy to be supporting it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you very much. I'm sorry—the member for London North Centre.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I was right the first time. You lost your turn when the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek stood up.

We're now returning to the member from Flam-
borough–Glanbrook for her two-minute response.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I would just like to say it's a pleasure to be able to speak to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek other than with a microphone and a camera between us.

I do want to address one of the big issues that my colleague just raised, and that is the ratio. One of the important issues that has been presented and will be addressed in Bill 47 is this unfair ratio of journeyman to apprentices, a ratio that has really stifled job creation for most young people in this province of Ontario.

As I mentioned in my speech, I've had an opportunity to travel right across Ontario. I was in the Soo a couple of weeks ago. We've been to Chatham, to all around the GTA, and in my area, in Niagara and Hamilton, speaking to businesses and speaking to workers. One of their biggest concerns, when it comes to growing their business and growing the number of jobs, is this difficult ratio of 4 to 1. That is why we are so proud, and I am so proud, to say that we are changing it and we are going to bring in a 1-to-1 ratio.

I can tell you, standing here as a mother of two men who are in their early twenties, that both are in the trades and both, and their friends, will actually benefit from this change. My son is studying hairdressing, and one of the big issues is having to go through the College of Trades. As a person who is an apprentice, he has to pay an outrageous fee just to be a member of the college, and that is even before he gets his licence to cut hair.

I think all of the things that we are presenting in Bill 47 are going to help young people in Ontario. I am proud as a member of this party, and proud as a mother, to say that what we're putting forward is going to see job creation. It's going to see jobs created in northern Ontario, in southern Ontario, in small-town Ontario and even in Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, where I am from as well.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: In order to start off my comments, I wanted to address some of the things that we're hearing out of this government. Here on the NDP side, we are very firmly in support of small business and of business. We hear a lot of this false rhetoric, with them saying that we have a certain position. Quite frankly, it's inexcusable.

Businesses create jobs. However, it's important that we draw a distinction here. When we hear the government talking about this bill, they keep talking about bosses—bosses and bosses, again and again and again—but we don't hear them talking about workers.

I'm so glad that I can rise today to debate this Bill 47, or the making Ontario open for bad bosses act. This bill proposes some rather large changes to legislation that was already flawed, but quite frankly, it's taking that legislation from bad to worse.

I also want to use this time to combat a misconception that many people on the government side believe, or at least pretend to. They frequently parrot talking points from CEOs and their elite insider friends that the current legislation is bad for business and bad for attracting new investments. Quite frankly, the evidence does not bear that out. Not only is an increased minimum wage good for workers, it's also good for businesses. Ontario can be open for business while also keeping a higher minimum wage and sections of the Labour Relations Act. It will build families, communities and prosperity all across the province.

The title of this bill would be more appropriate if it were called Closing Ontario for Workers. That's exactly what this bill does. Instead of addressing the rise of precarious work, stagnant wages and underemployment, it takes the money out of the pockets of workers and puts it right into the already-stuffed pockets of CEOs. It does nothing to help marginalized workers and those who are stuck working multiple minimum wage jobs.

Much of the discussion thus far has centred around the interests of business versus the interests of workers. But workers are more nuanced and complicated than their labour itself.

It's more important to mention that the majority of minimum wage workers are women. Cancelling the minimum wage increase doesn't just hurt workers but specifically hurts working women, who are statistically more likely to be underemployed and working in the service industry. This government, with its already poor track record on women's issues, needs to understand that their actions today are contributing to growing economic inequality between men and women.

When we look at this legislation and we hear the rhetoric from this government, we hear all of the mentions of businesses and not as many mentions of workers. Quite frankly, this is really the start of this government and their gravy train, from the Ontario government to CEOs and rich insiders. They talk about standing shoulder to shoulder with people, but in this case, they're standing with their feet on the backs of Ontario's workers. If they wanted to fix the situation that currently affects Ontario, we could take a look at the WSIB. But instead of fixing that problematic system, a dysfunctional system that doesn't provide support to workers, they are lowering the premiums. Again, the gravy train for CEOs and rich insider friends is leaving the station.

There is no need for Bill 47 to eliminate the increase to the minimum wage. It does not deter businesses from investing in Ontario. David Olive, the business columnist for the Toronto Star, writes that the benefits of raising the minimum wage are tangible: "higher household incomes; increased consumer spending; lower workplace turnover and absenteeism."

Businesses want workers who have the disposable income to invest in their communities and build the Ontario that we all want. A couple of examples include Recipe Unlimited Corp., which owns Swiss Chalet, Harvey's, the Keg, among others. They reported stronger sales in Ontario after the increase to \$14 an hour. This increase gave working families that little bit of extra spending money. It could address food insecurity, the lack of fresh produce in some families, thus really impacting Ontario's health system.

Businesses also want to be able to hang on to their employees, and the minimum wage increase allows that as well. Workers don't have to always keep their eyes open, looking for the next job, looking for a better deal. It allows them to be comfortable. It allows them to be safe and enjoy their job.

This government has also talked about this one-time tax benefit, as if this is some sort of glowing recommendation. But in fact, they're costing working families \$2,000 less a year. That's going to affect 1.6 million Ontarians. They say they're going to give them a tax benefit. When is that tax benefit going to be realized? Once a year. So this government is telling me that they're going to give this pittance of money one time a year and that's suddenly going to address inequality—across the year? It doesn't make sense to me. Does it make sense to you, Mr. Speaker? I don't think so.

If we take a look at the actual numbers and we don't fall prey to this government's alarmist and dangerously false talking points that the minimum wage increase will damage our economy, we will learn that Ontario's year-over-year job growth matches the national average, at about 1.2%. Unemployment in Ontario is also around the national average, at 5.9%.

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Many industries, because of this increase, actually showed growth. The service sector grew in this province by 1.3%; nationally it was under that, at 1.2%. And let's

face it, businesses and large corporations knew that the increase was coming, so they were able to prepare for it, like Walmart.

But what I love is that others in this province, good businesses and good bosses that have a conscience, understand the need to pay people what's known as a living wage. Repeat that to yourselves, government: living wage—through you, Mr. Speaker. Other companies have increased their minimum wage, including Simons, a clothing store, and JJ Bean roasters. They understand the need for people to enjoy their lives and be able to pay their bills without constantly thinking that without one paycheque, they could be homeless.

Another misconception we need to address is that Bill 47—it's not going to lead to more jobs. It's going to lead to jobs being broken apart—piecemeal, patchwork—where people don't actually enjoy their lives because they're going to have to get two and three and sometimes even four jobs. It's going to gut already flawed legislation and replace it with something that is far worse.

Under this bill, temporary and part-time workers won't be entitled to the same wages, even though they're working the same jobs as permanent employees. Is that going to be an incentive for employers to hire more full-time positions? Absolutely not. They will have a benefit by hiring more piecemeal workers. And this dangerously false rhetoric that the best way to address poverty is to go get a job—this is taking us down the road of more precarious employment.

Precarious employment is a problem in my riding of London North Centre. The London Poverty Research Centre already found that half of Londoners are stuck in non-standard or unstable jobs. Many instructors at our university, Western, and Fanshawe College have taught for many years, but they make less money because they simply work on yearly or semester-based contracts. These are professionals. These are people with higher degrees. These are people who want to make Ontario better.

I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, I have to laugh when we hear that this government is going to create good jobs with benefits. To that, I say hallelujah, he must have read our platform. He must have read about universal pharmacare. He must have read about universal dental care. These are things that people need. These are investments, targeted investments, which this government doesn't seem to understand would increase the overall health of people in Ontario, thus alleviating some of the burdens on our health system.

It's important that we also point out that this province is a dangerous place for many temporary and contract workers. We learned recently about another Fiera Foods worker. He was in his 40s, and he was killed on the job. But he was not the only one, Speaker. His death was preceded by the death of Amina Diaby just one year earlier. Diaby was 23 years old. She was taking that job to save money for nursing school. Her head scarf was caught in a machine and she was strangled. Her co-worker, who had to sit and watch this, could not help. You see, they were temporary workers, and Fiera Foods was under no

obligation to provide them with the same health and safety training that would have allowed those individuals to press the emergency stop button and potentially save her life.

Furthermore, this government, with this bill, is going to cut the number of inspectors who are going to do proactive inspections on places like Fiera Foods—inspectors who might have found that there wasn't guarding on this machine as well. So let's look at this: She was not trained. There were not proper guards on the machine. Now the government seems to be rewarding this company by stopping workplace inspections; it can continue in the same manner.

The same company, 2011, Aydin Kazimov: He was 69 years old. He was crushed by a transport truck at Marmora Freezing Corp. This leads us to ask some very serious questions that inspectors would also ask: Why was he in an area with transport trucks? If there had been a health and safety audit or a proactive inspection, they would have discovered, did the plant have wall-mounted lights to let the drivers know when it was safe to back up to the loading dock? Or perhaps a health and safety auditor would have seen people out at the loading dock and said, "You do not belong here. That is not safe." Instead, he was crushed to death.

We also had an investigative piece recently, and it was found that Fiera Foods didn't equip their security guards with reflective gear, even though those guards had asked for this. There is a company that is clearly doing the wrong thing.

In 1999, Ivan Golyashov died on the job. He was just 17 years of age. Just like Diaby, who passed away years later, he died because he was trapped in a machine. His co-workers didn't receive any safety training. Speaker, he was in a food-mixing machine, cleaning it out. Standard protocol would indicate that if health and safety measures were in place, the breaker would be shut off and there would be no power going to that unit. Furthermore, had there been a health and safety audit, they would also have had a locking device to go onto that breaker so that nobody walking by would accidentally turn it on, so that man would not have had to die in a horrible, horrible way.

When we think about these things, when we think about these lives, these are people whose families will never be the same again. Four people have died, and this is directly related to what this government is proposing. Cracking the door wide open for temporary contract workers, removing health and safety inspections—this is something that is actually unconscionable and something that we cannot accept. They were absolutely preventable.

This also speaks to a certain attitude in our society, that temporary contract workers are worth less than their permanent counterparts, even though they do the exact same work. The Toronto Star investigated Fiera Foods and found that only five minutes of health and safety training was given to their temporary workers before putting them on the job. "Time to go. Get out there. We won't show you where the emergency stop buttons are, but it's time to work." One of the workers there said, "Supervisors shout at us to wake up. They shout at us to move faster, pinch

nicer, work harder. No one talks through the noise and exhaustion....

"Across the province, more and more people are relying on temp agencies to find work. When they do, statistics show they are more likely to get hurt on the job."

But it doesn't end there. Did you happen to know that Fiera Foods received \$4.7 million in federal and provincial government loans and grants to expand capacity and create good jobs? Did those four people have good jobs? I don't think so. None of that money, clearly, went to health and safety training.

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We also need to remember, as I begin to close, Mr. Speaker, that this bill will hurt Ontario's working women the most.

We look at what's going to be lost in this legislation, this bad legislation which is going to far worse. We know that two paid sick days are going to be lost. I've had people who have excellent jobs and have their own benefits through work, people who have worked in the same job for many years, and they cannot believe—because they say, "I couldn't imagine what I would be like in my job if someone took away my sick days." What this legislation is saying is that if you get sick, it's your fault. If you get sick, you'd better either get yourself to work or you need to get yourself to a doctor's office to get a note, to further hinder our already troubled health system; and not only that—as if that weren't enough—you're going to get more people sick, there again causing problems.

This bill is completely disrespectful to working families in Ontario, completely disrespectful to people who are trying to make ends meet. This is yet another example of this government's gravy train to their rich, insider, CEO friends and elites, people that they want to reward. They have their foot on the backs of Ontario's workers, and they need to take them off.

I would love to see this government actually use the words "living wage" as opposed to "minimum wage," but that would presuppose that they would understand what that concept meant. They would have to investigate what the actual cost of living is, and understand that this is simply not enough.

When we take a look at this, people in Ontario, and in my riding, are outraged. People understand the need for the minimum wage to be brought up. Quite frankly, people who don't earn minimum wage also say, "Yes, it would be incredibly difficult to live on that pittance of money." This government blames the previous Liberal government and says, "Oh, they didn't do the right thing" etc. It's always playing that blame game, shuffling it back. But they also do need to remember, way back when, when they froze the minimum wage for how many years?

While I, on this side, do agree that the Liberals did not fix the problem, what this government is threatening to do is absolutely unconscionable. We need to make sure that health and safety measures are in place. We need to make sure that peoples' lives are protected. We need to make sure that people can actually enjoy their lives, that people won't suffer from food insecurity, and that people will be

able to go home and see their loved ones and actually enjoy some time without having to spend time working in three or four precarious employment positions.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Family time.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I know. Family time? What a concept.

Mr. Speaker, before I finish, if this government is as pro-business as it would like to claim, buy back Hydro, get rates under control, and make Ontario the economic engine that it once was—such that it was studied by Harvard Business School—with public ownership of our treasured assets.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: We just heard a lot of very, I guess, “passionate talk” is the term I would use from the member for London North Centre. He feels he’s advocating, and I’m sure he believes that he’s advocating, on behalf of workers.

But we know, when we talk to people, that they’re worried. They’re working at multiple jobs because there isn’t one full-time, good job for them. They’re not choosing to work at what he calls precarious employment. We absolutely agree with him: People need good jobs, and you don’t create good jobs and investment in the province of Ontario by treating business poorly, making it absolutely impossible for them to invest, let alone even want to invest.

You know what? The NDP, Mr. Speaker, are being quite irresponsible. We’re seeing in the last few days that they’re employing real fearmongering tactics by attempting to tie employment standards inspections and health and safety inspections, and these, we know, are two vastly different things. One is governed by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the other is governed by the Employment Standards Act. So it’s completely different things. He’s comparing apples to oranges, and it’s very unfortunate.

Last Friday I had the honour to speak at the League of Champions. People who have been here before, who aren’t newly elected, remember that they come with their hockey jerseys and they get everybody to sign them. It’s an initiative started by Rob Ellis to create safe workplaces and to create a culture of safe workplaces.

We know that regulations can only do so much. We need to have that atmosphere and that culture of work where people follow the regulations, where they watch out for each other, where they warn each other, where they let the next shift know that there is something going on that maybe could be a danger to the next shift.

I look forward to hearing more debate on this topic. I thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments? The member from Sudbury.

Mr. Jamie West: I’d like to thank my colleague for his comments, and also the member from Perth–Wellington for hers.

We hear this back-and-forth about ESA inspectors versus labour inspectors for health and safety. I think

what’s missing in that conversation is this: What we’re saying is that, yes, yes, it’s the employment standards inspectors who are being reduced. They were supposed to be doubled, and you decided to shelve that, so there’s not going to be enough as it is, and they’re not going to be doing inspections.

What we’re talking about is, the heart of this bill, Bill 47, is that it’s stopping inspections, proactive inspections. It’s halting the hiring. So the recommendation of doubling the number—the fact is, we know that we typically don’t inspect proactively. They don’t collect fines when they are there. People wait until they’re fired or until they quit, because they’re so afraid to bring anything forward.

The government—I’m not talking about a nanny state; I’m talking about a government that needs to be more active and protect business—good business—and that needs to protect workers. There is not a balance of freedom there. You are in a position of not having power, as a worker.

When you look at the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the cornerstone of the act is the IRS system—the Ham commission. What this counts on is that workers will have a voice and bring voices forward, so they will talk about safety concerns. But if you have a government propping up temp agencies, where people have precarious employment and they’re afraid that they won’t be able to afford food or rent or they will lose their job—because that’s what happens when you’re temporary; you’re gone like that—that takes away the leg of the IRS system that has the workers and management working together. You don’t need to work with workers, because they’re replaceable. They’re not indispensable. You just get another one, get another one. And even now, after four deaths, they’re going to get another one like that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I’ve only got a limited time, but I do have some knowledge and experience from my riding of Sarnia–Lambton. We’re very well represented by the trades in Sarnia–Lambton, both non-union and union.

I want to specifically talk about the College of Trades, because of difficulty that it was causing—and I’m glad to see it go. I heard from all kinds of men and women who had to pay that fee every year. It was causing a real problem in my riding. They were coming in to construction jobs—turnarounds, shutdowns. We called them the haircut police, I remember, when we were in opposition, when we were first fighting them. They’d come in and they’d ask to see your certificate. If you didn’t have your College of Trades certificate, they would shut the job down, that particular job, and make you go home. Because lots of guys didn’t carry them with them in their lunch bucket—you don’t have a locker or anything when you’re on construction—they would make them go home and get that before the job could start up again.

So, I know that industry and the actual workers on the job are glad to see the end of the College of Trades.

I’m listening to the rest of the debate. It’s very interesting.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further comments?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Through you, Mr. Speaker, thank you to the member from London North Centre. I just want to pick up on one thing that he talked about, which is a living wage—not just minimum wage, but a living wage.

Just to provide some context, there are two basic issues that are facing not only us here in Ontario but around the world: climate change and income inequality. Most people recognize those are the two basic issues that we all face all around the world. This government, in its first few months, has managed to make both things worse. Climate change: They've cancelled cap-and-trade and green energy programs, with no environmental plan to replace them. On the second issue of income inequality, we have another huge failure by this government: a bill that will actually make income inequality worse. It's an attack on workers, especially women and those in most need of relief.

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Let me tell you what I believe about workers—any worker in any economy anywhere in the world. I share this belief with people all over the world of all political stripes. I believe that if a person wants to work and they go to work and they do their job, they should make enough to live on. It's not just New Democrats who believe that. There are Conservatives, there are people of all political stripes, who believe that if someone goes to work, they should make enough to live on. They should be able to put a roof over their head, food in their belly and clothes on their back, and take care of their children—a living wage. This government has no concept of fairness with relation either to a living wage or to making workplaces fair. They've taken away leave days from people who need them, especially women who may go through abuse at home. They've taken those days away. And they are endangering underpaid workers by taking away, as my friend from Hamilton said earlier, inspectors and regulations. They're endangering underpaid workers. This has to stop, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from London North Centre has two minutes.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the members from Perth–Wellington, Sudbury, Sarnia–Lambton and Niagara Centre for their comments.

We realize that this legislation is opening the door for a rise in precarious jobs. Not only that, but this government is taking legislation which admittedly is not perfect—it is taking it from bad to worse. When we take a look at it, removing two paid sick days is asking individuals to decide what is more important to them. But then this government has the—pardon me, Speaker—audacity to go and claim, “Well, those two sick days are still there. However, they simply won't be paid.” That's not enough for working families. That is not okay. Also, with family leave, they say they will be protected, so the person won't get fired, but they certainly won't get paid. Well, that's so good, that this government has its feet firmly planted on the backs of Ontario's workers.

I'd like to thank the member from Sudbury, who mentions the halting of the hiring of inspectors. That is

something that is key, that memo that came to light. That is key to this legislation. We need more health and safety. We need to make sure people's lives are being protected.

The member from Perth–Wellington talks about removing regulations. Well, this government will crow all it likes about cutting red tape, but, quite frankly, what's going to be left in its place is police caution tape when people's lives are being lost. She would like to also separate the Employment Standards Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Quite frankly, those two things are so inextricably linked, they could not possibly be separated from one another.

The member from Sarnia–Lambton talked about the ratio of apprentices to journeymen. Well, quite frankly, this legislation will really undermine journeymen and will allow businesses to hire more apprentices for lower wages.

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

Mr. Parm Gill: I'm pleased to rise today and am proud to speak about why I support the Making Ontario Open for Business Act. I wanted to thank the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade for bringing this great piece of legislation forward. I think Ontario really needs it. I also want to thank the parliamentary assistants and all of my colleagues who have conducted many round-table discussions around the province in order to listen to businesses and remove red tape for businesses.

Our government, from day one, has been focused on creating jobs across the province and making Ontario open for business. This bill is the first step of many that our government for the people will take in order to create jobs across our great province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my constituents from the great riding of Milton for, of course, sending me to Queen's Park to speak on their behalf, and especially the many small business owners I have been speaking to during the campaign and since getting elected. They have expressed to me the many burdensome regulations they have been putting up with for the last 15 years under the previous Liberal government. I'm pleased to share some of those stories in a bit.

Through the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, we're keeping a campaign promise to the people of Ontario. Businesses are fed up with the red tape and regulations that the previous Liberal government put in place to make it harder for employers to grow and hire more employees. I've heard time and time again from employers in my riding that they had to lay off staff and drastically cut back hours to avoid having to close their doors. It is unacceptable for a government to burden businesses just so they can play self-interest politics. That is why the previous Liberal government did this, but we're here to fix it. This bill is a step forward in fixing this issue.

I also want to thank the Minister of Labour and her staff, who got right to work, after getting elected in the June 7 election, reviewing Bill 148, and who have since worked with the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade to put this well-thought-out bill together. Last week, our government made a commitment to

remove burdens on our job creators while preserving real benefits for Ontario workers.

Mr. Speaker, during the campaign, we promised Ontarians that we would keep the minimum wage at \$14, and we're keeping that promise. During the campaign, we promised Ontarians that we would cut red tape and regulations, and we're keeping that promise. During the campaign, we also promised Ontarians that we would make Ontario open for business, and I'm proud to stand here today to say that we're keeping that promise as well. I'm proud to be part of a government that listens to small businesses.

Let me tell you a story about a charitable organization in my riding of Milton that was negatively impacted by the previous government's Bill 148. As one of my volunteers and I were knocking on doors during the campaign, we came across a young mother who answered the door. Her initial reaction was that she was not interested in whatever we had, as many of us in this House, I'm sure, experienced during the campaign. After a quick explanation as to why we were there, that there was a provincial election coming up, this young mother asked if we were from the Liberals. We obviously answered "No," with a smile, and the conversation changed a bit at that point in time. The issue she wanted to speak to us about was regarding the recent changes to the minimum wage brought in by the Liberals. After explaining why our party thought Bill 148 was too much, too fast, she stopped us again, saying, "I work for minimum wage and my hours were cut in half." She continued to tell us that she worked for a charitable organization in town and that we would not normally have found her at her house during a weekday, but she was there partially because her hours were cut. This young mother spent a few minutes telling us why her hours were cut under the Liberals' Bill 148, since the minimum wage increase came into effect. She told me that although she was not normally a voter and didn't normally follow politics, she was going to vote in the next election because our party's position made sense.

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Mr. Speaker, this bill, and the impact that the previous Liberal government Bill 148 has on workers in Ontario—our government for the people recognizes that lower-income earners and their families deserve a break. That is why we're committed to ensuring minimum wage earners pay no provincial income tax.

I know the Minister of Finance is actively working on that as well. The previous Liberal government put the burden on businesses by increasing labour costs by over 20% overnight. Our government is committed to removing the tax for low-income earners, and that is only fair.

The Making Ontario Open for Business Act, if passed, will also introduce a consistent, simple system where every Ontario worker will now have a straightforward package of annual leave days: three sick days, three family responsibility days and two bereavement days, every year, for every worker.

Right after the election, I sat down with one of the business owners in my riding for an informal chat. The

business owner had previously supported the Liberals, especially the candidate in the former riding of Halton. However, before the campaign began, he reached out to me to discuss our party's plan for small businesses.

This business employs around 200 people in Milton and has been there for decades. He brought a graph to show me the absentee rate amongst his employees year over year. The graph showed the unexplained paid sick days had almost doubled each month since Bill 148 came into effect. This business runs a production line. In a facility like this, having trained employees at their stations is imperative to run the production line operation successfully. With one or more employees missing unexpectedly, the production line cannot run.

This business owner laid out for me that the minimum wage increase did not impact them, and they already pay their employees well above \$14 an hour. But because each employee was now entitled to paid sick days without an explanation, they were falling behind in production. When an employee is unexpectedly absent from a production facility, it not only impacts their bottom line, but they are not always able to bring in temporary employees to fill it. This impacts their production line and ultimately disrupts business. This is another example of how the previous Liberal government's Bill 148 did not think through all of the consequences.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that this bill will provide sensible changes that will help businesses like this in my riding of Milton. Furthermore, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act will continue to protect and preserve important provisions for current workers, including domestic or sexual violence leave, a minimum of three weeks' vacation after five years of service and one of the highest minimum wages in Canada while committing to ongoing increases tied to inflation.

There are over 380,000 regulatory requirements for businesses in Ontario. That's 380,000, Mr. Speaker. Most of these regulatory requirements are inefficient, inflexible, out of date and duplicate federal or municipal regulations.

A good example of unnecessary red tape was shared with me this past weekend as I was with our Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The minister and I were attending the Halton Region Federation of Agriculture's AGM. In between the meal and the apple crumble, the minister shared with me that in order for a farmer to retire, they have to fill out a government form to apply to retire. Imagine that: Just as you thought the government was off your back, there was one last thing you had to do, and that's to apply to retire.

We all know how important the agriculture sector is to Ontario. Supporting our small business is something this government is committed to doing. Along with removing red tape and regulations, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act is making Ontario competitive again. Our government has consulted extensively with businesses, and they're telling us loud and clear that the regulatory burden is getting worse each and every year. At the same time, many of the US states are reducing the burden and enticing businesses away from Ontario.

My colleague from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill already outlined this yesterday, but I think it is important to emphasize: Last month, the C.D. Howe Institute forecasted that business investment in Ontario will average \$9,100 per worker in 2018. On the other hand, the United States forecasted that business investment per employee will be an average of \$23,200. We can't continue to drive companies away. Through this piece of legislation, we will get government out of the way of job creators, lower business costs and make Ontario more competitive again.

As the minister also outlined yesterday, Ontarians have always thought we measured up against most other places in North America. But the truth is, we've been slipping, and we've been slipping for the last 15 years under the previous Liberal government. The latest figures on GDP per capita from 2016 compared the 50 US states, the District of Columbia and the 13 Canadian provinces and territories. Out of these 64 jurisdictions, New York ranked third and California ranked ninth. Where would you think Ontario would rank, Mr. Speaker? We ranked 46th out of 64. We are nowhere near as rich as the previous Liberal government used to claim we are.

Mr. Speaker, I will share with you another story about a small business in my riding of Milton. This business is a small restaurant that has been around in Milton. After the campaign, I was able to take some of my volunteers, along with my wife, there for lunch. I have known the owner for a number of years and always get great service. During the course of our meal, the owner came over to check on our table to see if we needed anything else. We were, of course, well looked after by his staff. I asked him how the business was and wanted to know his plans, moving forward. He told me that they had just put in a new bar and did most of the work themselves to save money. He also said that they would like to expand to include a patio, but the cost and regulations were prohibiting him from doing so.

He proceeded to tell me that his employees were well looked after and his philosophy was that, if he looked after them, they would look after the customers and ultimately, of course, his business. He told me that he found out his chef was going through a hard time a few months ago. He told me that he and his wife discussed how they could help and decided to buy a small house for their chef to live in. This small business owner bought his employee a house because he wanted to look after his employee. He believed that if he looked after the employees, they would, of course, look after the business.

1750

The government needs to look after the rights of employees, and this bill does that. However, if you remove the burden and lower the costs for employers, they will look after their employees as well.

Mr. Speaker, this government for the people was elected to make Ontario open for business. Previous to my time as an elected member of Parliament and now an MPP, I was involved in a number of successful family businesses as well. My brother and I ran a business in the manufacturing industry. We used to manufacture furniture, most of

which was exported to the US. We were proud manufacturers right here in our great province of Ontario.

I've never lost that business owner's mindset and I pride myself in bringing that to the way I run my constituency office as well. I'd like to let this House and my colleagues know, Mr. Speaker, that when we took over the constituency office from a former member and we realized the amount of rent we were paying—and I wasn't happy with the location; it was hard for my constituents to find—we found another spot. Not only was it a better location, on Main Street, but also, at the same time, we were able to save taxpayers \$100,000 over the four years.

I can go on and on and share lots of stories with you, but, looking at the time, I'll cut it short and allow other members the opportunity to make comments and ask questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: I want to begin by correcting my record. Earlier, I had said “the member from Perth–Wellington,” and it was the member from Thornhill. I apologize for that.

Thank you to the member from Milton on the debate. Earlier in the debate, he talked about creating jobs and hiring more employees. I agree with that. I want to create jobs and I want to hire more employees, but I think that instead of jobs, we should really start talking about careers. It's important that we differentiate that.

I don't think Ontario really has a jobs problem. I don't think you can go very far before you meet somebody that has two or three jobs and is still struggling to make ends meet. What we need to focus on in this government—and I mean all of us in here—is creating careers. I think that's what you talk about when you say strengthening business, so we can build careers. The parts we push back the hardest on are the parts where it seems to prop up businesses that won't lead to careers, will leave people in minimum wage forever. Forever.

Now, often the government likes to talk about how the increase to the minimum wage was too fast, too soon, the rise to \$14. And I agree. It took 15 years to drag the Liberals, kicking and screaming, into making these changes. They made the changes, and it was quick. But the reason it was this giant leap was because the last time the Conservatives were in power, they froze minimum wage for eight years. They froze it. So you create this system where people don't have enough to make ends meet, because you froze minimum wage while the cost of living goes up, and then you complain years later that it's too big of a jump.

Again, it's déjà vu all over again. We're going to freeze it for another four years. It's not going to go to \$15 in four years. It's going to be tied to inflation in four years, like that's a gift to people: that four years from now, assuming the election is successful, they're going to be tied to \$14 an hour plus inflation. Realistically, to get to \$15 an hour, you're looking at probably four to six years after that. They're going to be below poverty levels for the next eight years. Congratulations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: It's a privilege to rise today to join this debate. In my time here, I've had the privilege of meeting with various companies that have come before us. Just about two years ago, we met with a manufacturer in the west end of Toronto. They had received a new contract from one of the Big Three automakers and they were trying to expand the plant in Mississauga—because they were from there; they were Canadian—but they couldn't get the job done because the regulations and all the red tape they had to go through wouldn't allow them to even start construction.

There was a point where they were going to lose the contract because they couldn't produce the product, so they moved it to Mexico. I think I've mentioned this before: The President of Mexico met them at the airport. Those 1,000 jobs were important to Mexico, but they were also important to Ontario. But we blew that case because of the regulations involved. So this was an expansion. The area was zoned properly. It was on a highway. We just can't afford to be losing these good jobs.

Ontario has become the capital of Canada as far as minimum wage jobs, and that's not what we want. People don't want minimum wage jobs—and that was before the minimum wage increase. When it was down around \$10-something or \$11-something, we had the highest per capita minimum wage jobs in this country.

I look for the people in my riding who don't have jobs—retired people. They can't get by anymore, because we've been driving the costs up. It's fine to say, "Well, we'll just raise the minimum wage," but that just ends up driving up the cost of living. It may seem like it's only 100 bucks or 200 bucks, but these people are having a hard time today, and they're getting a \$20 raise in the Canada Pension Plan. They can't afford this.

Our government is driving down the cost of living, benefiting everybody, and bringing back good-paying jobs. I think that's what we want.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Are you in your proper seat?

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I am in my proper seat. It says my name right here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Well, in that case, I'll recognize the member from Beaches–East York.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There's so much to say here. I think it's important to begin by debunking the myth that raising the minimum wage leads to joblessness. The Financial Accountability Office declared clearly in the spring that the minimum wage increase that had come into effect was actually leading the raise in nominal GDP, so it's good for the economy.

In July, Josh Nye, a senior economist with the Royal Bank of Canada, said, "It is tough to find a lot of evidence that employment has been negatively impacted."

So I think that we've really got to put that Hufflepuff to rest, and we have to understand that updated labour laws actually mean really important things to people.

The minister this morning was having trouble understanding the connection between the tragic deaths at Fiera Foods and this bill, so let me spell it out for her. When you incentivize companies not to hire trained people to do work, and you incentivize them—I hate that as a verb, but there you go—to hire temp workers because it's cheaper for them, they don't train them properly and people end up dying. It is not creating good jobs. These are actually terrible and dangerous jobs.

I think it's great that we all want to create good jobs in Ontario. This bill doesn't do that. This bill moves us backwards. It's bad for middle-class employees as well as lower-income and vulnerable people, whom it will drive further into poverty.

But middle-class folks also have to think about what happens when they give up a day's pay in order to stay home with their kids—not cool.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments?

Mr. Aris Babikian: Ontario is open for business. We will bring jobs and investment back to our province by lightening the burden on businesses and making sure that hard work is rewarded.

When Seattle officials voted to boost the city's minimum wage up to \$15 an hour, they hoped to improve the lives of low-income workers. Yet according to a major new study that could force economists to reassess past research on the issue, the hike has had the opposite effect. Some employers have not been able to afford the increased minimum wage. They cut their payroll, putting off new hiring, reducing hours or letting their workers go to find new jobs.

The costs to low-wage workers in Seattle outweighed the benefits by a ratio of 3 to 1, according to the study, conducted by a group of economists at the University of Washington who were commissioned by the city. On the whole, the study estimates, the average low-wage worker in the city lost \$125 a month because of the hike in the minimum wage.

David Autor, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, called the work "very credible" and "sufficiently compelling in its design and statistical power that it can change minds."

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Mr. Speaker, the new open for business act will change that fact, and we will bring more jobs to Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We now return to the member from Milton for his two-minute response.

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to thank my colleagues from both sides of the House for their comments and all of my other colleagues who have been participating in this debate here.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, in my closing comments, share a story from another small business owner, which is really an iconic landmark in Milton and has been around for

many, many years: Troy's Diner. Troy is somebody who is very involved in our community and really likes to help organizations, groups, stakeholders—anybody that reaches out to him for assistance in Milton. Troy is the kind of person who would never say no.

Just before the election, I had an opportunity and I met with Troy, and he was really disappointed when he shared a story with me. He said, "Parm, here's what I've done in the past," and it breaks my heart what this previous Liberal government's Bill 148, the changes brought forward—not only did he have to cut hours for his employees, but all of a sudden he had to turn organizations and groups away that he could no longer financially help and could not make a financial contribution to help them.

What he did, Mr. Speaker, was he drafted a letter just outlining all of the challenges he was facing now under Bill 148, the burden of regulations and red tape, and he said, "Literally anybody who comes to my restaurant now looking for help, I'm left with no choice but to give them this letter," which he encouraged them to take to the former Liberal MPP's office and go and ask questions in terms of why Troy was no longer able to support local groups and organizations. That's one of many examples, Mr. Speaker.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We have two late shows this evening. The member for Niagara Falls has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Labour. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or her parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

I turn to the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you for allowing me to rise and speak tonight. It's important that we're here, and I thank the members who join me here tonight. It's important because we're talking about people's lives and, more importantly, workers' lives.

Four people have now died at Fiera Foods, four human beings, ranging in age from 16 to 69, all of them temporary employees—temporary employees that this company doesn't provide proper safety training and protection for. And why did they hire them? Quite frankly, it's cheaper.

Can you imagine having a 16-year-old son or daughter who goes to work for the first time, is not provided with the proper training, and they get killed on the job? A 23-year-old woman was crushed to death, Mr. Speaker—little training. This is a company that got \$4.7 million of government funds.

It's hard to talk about this. Four people who had families: mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandparents. Four people who had dreams and desires, who had plans for their lives, and they're not here; they're not with us anymore. Why? Why do they lose the right to live their lives? Simply put, they lost their lives because they went to work.

Mr. Speaker, I've represented workers, women and men, my entire adult life. I've been in a plant when a worker lost his life—Joel Murray from Niagara-on-the-Lake. Mr. Speaker, every year, I go to the day of mourning. I remember walking Joel out of the plant on a gurney that day with EMS. I got the call at 6:30 in the morning that a member had been killed on the job. Joel never got to see his kids grow up. He never got to see his grandkids. He never had the opportunity—and neither did any of the other employees who were killed—to say goodbye or say "I love you" to his kids, to his wonderful wife. No family in the province of Ontario should ever have to go through that. Let me say that again: No person in our community should have to go to work and not know if they're coming home at night.

Yesterday, I rose in the House to express my shock that this government is scrapping workplace inspections—inspections that keep workers safe; inspections that save people's lives, period. Instead of answering that question, the minister dodged the question and tried to pretend that the lives of working people are somehow a political stunt.

Well, I'll say this to the minister: Go through my record. Go through what I've said for the past 40 years. I'll never shy away from defending workers' health and safety. I certainly will never shy away from holding those accountable who need to be held accountable.

Mr. Speaker, the leader of our party said this clearly today: When you gut safety standards and inspections in workplaces across the province, then you're responsible for what happens.

Don't try to hide behind sound bites. These are real people we're talking about.

I'm here tonight because we want a real answer. As this government moves to gut workplace safety standards across the province and trample on the livelihoods of some of the province's most precarious workers, I want them to stand up tonight and answer our questions.

Will they stop the passage of Bill 47 until the investigation of this worker who was killed last Thursday is complete? We owe that much to his family, to the community.

Will they reinstate the inspections they stopped doing in August? Why should they reinstate them? Because, quite frankly, those inspections save, what? You're right here, you're smart, you're MPPs—they save lives. They would have saved a 16-year-old, a 23-year-old woman. The 16-year-old, first time on the job, no training—that inspection might have saved their life. You've got an obligation now, as the government of this province, to not just worry about business; worry about workers and their families and community and their kids and their grandkids.

Most importantly, will they find a conscience and protect the people of this province who want nothing more

than a safe workplace, where they can work to provide for their family—and equally important, come home at night?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The minister's parliamentary assistant, the member from Thornhill, has five minutes to respond.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Yesterday, the member for Niagara Falls asked Minister Scott about a divulged memo relating to employment standards inspections conducted by the Ministry of Labour. He then asked a supplementary question about health and safety investigations conducted by the Ministry of Labour.

As the honourable member knows, employment standards inspections are unrelated to health and safety investigations. The Employment Standards Act sets out minimum standards for most employees in Ontario workplaces. The Occupational Health and Safety Act governs the protection of Ontarians while they work.

The official opposition is trying to confuse Ontarians by conflating a temporary shift in employment standards inspections with the ongoing work of health and safety inspections following workplace accidents. Employment standards inspections and health and safety investigations are conducted by different inspectors under different pieces of legislation.

Speaker, I know the members opposite understand the distinction between the employment standards inspections and health and safety investigations. It's obvious that the opposition is employing partisan tactics by attempting to conflate employment standards inspections and health and safety investigations.

Last week, the media reported on a divulged memo that suggested a backlog in employment standards inspections as of August 2018, shortly after our government took office.

1810

On Thursday, Minister Scott committed to this House to provide more information about this divulged memo. The minister and I have confirmed the veracity of the August 2018 memo, and I can now report on the following: The backlog referenced in the August 2018 memo was accurate. In August, the oldest backlog claims were then approaching a year.

After April 2018, the Ministry of Labour received a significant rise in claims related to the "equal pay for part-time work" provisions in Bill 148. Bill 47 will eliminate these provisions that were causing the backlog.

Given the sudden spike in claims earlier this year, the Ministry of Labour would not have been able to make headway on the claims backlog without shifting resources from proactive to responsive work. As a result of the shift of resources, Ministry of Labour staff have been able to close more claims per month than the ministry receives. Incoming claims have averaged approximately 1,500 per month, whereas claims closures in September were approximately 1,900, and October is projected to see 2,000.

Our government for the people takes the enforcement of employment standards very seriously. We understand that employees deserve to be paid for the work that they do. The opposition is routinely attempting to conflate

employment standards inspections and health and safety investigations. These are two completely different activities, carried out by two different sets of professionals at the Ministry of Labour, enforcing two different pieces of legislation. One is the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the other is the Employment Standards Act. A temporary shift in employment standards inspections does not affect health and safety investigations. Those investigations are continuing as before.

Our government for the people takes seriously both employment standards and workplace health and safety. Our recently proposed reforms to Bill 47 will continue to protect employee rights while removing unnecessary burdens on employers. The result will be more and better jobs and safe and productive workplaces.

Last Friday, Mr. Speaker—I managed to talk about it a little bit before when we were previously discussing Bill 47—I visited Rob Ellis, who was the host from the League of Champions. Some of the older—not older in age; some of the less rookie members of the Legislature will recall that there have been receptions here in the Legislature where they have their League of Champions hockey jerseys and they ask all the members to sign them. It is a volunteer initiative that Rob Ellis and some of his colleagues have put together. It was in response to an accident where Rob Ellis lost his son about 20 years ago at a workplace construction accident. What they're doing is promoting a culture of safe workplaces, because they know that, yes, government regulations are important, but they can only do so much. Regulations are there and inspections are there, but you need that culture of safety in the workplace, where everybody ensures that they are safe, that their co-workers are safe and that the next shift is going to be safe as well.

I was honoured to receive my League of Champions jersey, and I look forward to bringing it here so that everybody can sign it.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Windsor West has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The member will have five minutes, followed by the minister having five minutes.

I turn to the member from Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: We're here this evening because the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services issued me a challenge this morning after I asked her a question during question period. She challenged me to come here this evening for adjournment proceedings. Speaker, as you know me well, I love a challenge. I was happy to accept her request, and I hope that now we can move past the minister's talking points and grandstanding and get some real information about this 100-day review of Ontario's social assistance system.

To recap from this morning, I asked the minister to provide some information about how the review is being

conducted. Over the past few weeks, I have been contacted by people with lived experience as well as leading researchers and social policy groups, who have let me know that neither they nor anyone that they know has been contacted by the ministry to participate in the review.

It seems to me and to these people that I've talked to that if the government was trying to find a way to meaningfully improve the social assistance system—and believe me, Speaker, I know that there are serious improvements that need to be made—they would value the input of people who have spent their lives and careers interacting with the system.

Now, I know the minister is only a few months into this role, and she also is now overseeing a ministry that is made up of what used to be various separate ministries, and that is a lot to oversee, Speaker. So it's curious to me why the minister wouldn't prioritize getting her information straight from the source, why she wouldn't want to open up consultations to the people who know these issues better than anyone.

I also want to address something that the minister stated during her remarks which was entirely laughable, Speaker. She said that this is the first time the NDP has shown interest in this file, in poverty and in social services. I wonder if she genuinely believes that to be true, because if so, she surely hasn't been paying attention.

Just recently, I stood in this House to address the minister and even sent her a copy of the Income Security: A Roadmap for Change report for her to read as part of her review. It sounds like she still hasn't read it.

The allegation that the NDP has been sleeping on this file is ludicrous, Speaker. We were the only party in the recent election that fully committed to comprehensive and progressive changes to the income security system. We fully endorsed the income security roadmap report, which took over a year to develop and, yes, actually involved consultation with people with lived experience.

I've been the critic for community and social services for almost two years. I can't even count the number of times I've stood in this House in defence of those living in poverty because their disability payments are so low. Whenever I do, I always make sure to highlight the fact that where we are today is a direct result of the callousness of the Mike Harris Conservative government, the government that slashed income assistance by 21% and said poor people should eat baloney sandwiches and buy dented cans of tuna to save money. Ontario has never recovered from their heartlessness.

And now, Speaker, we have another PC government that has decided that rather than giving people on social assistance the measly 3% increase that they were promised, they're only going to give 1.5% and, to add insult to injury, has cancelled the Basic Income Pilot project that they campaigned on supporting. They promised that they would not cut the Basic Income Pilot.

Now, Speaker, before I finish, I would like to read a comment from someone who is actually living, or at least barely getting by, on social assistance, and I have something that I will be sharing with the minister. These

are letters from people across the province who are relying on this government to do the right thing.

This person wrote, "The Ford government is trying to take out the Liberals' debt and deficit on the poor, when we didn't create the problem." I think that sums it up nicely, Speaker. They are taking this out on the most vulnerable people of this province, and the minister has the nerve to stand up and say that the best social program is a job.

Applause.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: That's not something I'd be applauding, because people with disabilities can't work. When you're refusing to raise the minimum wage and give people a living wage, shame on you for saying the best social program is a job. It is insulting to the people who are living on ODSP and OW.

I hope the minister will choose her words more carefully next time, Speaker, and rather than sitting over there hollering and hooting—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you very much. We'll turn now to the minister. You have five minutes.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It's a real pleasure to be here this evening to talk about my ministry as well as the social assistance reforms we're going to bring in in order to lift more people up, get them back on track, get them job-ready where they're able and support them better when they can't be.

I asked for the challenge tonight because that member opposite, in the last four months since I have been appointed to cabinet, has only asked me two questions on social assistance. If she wants to grandstand, she can go ahead and do it. Me, I'm getting to work and I'm working very hard right now.

There are members of the Progressive Conservative caucus being briefed on some of the changes that I'm so excited to bring forward to this Legislature in order to make sure we get more people living a life outside of the poverty which they are currently trapped in, so I do appreciate the opportunity. Our goal is to restore dignity and confidence in our social assistance programs and to get more people back into the workforce when possible and provide stronger supports when needed. My responsibility—let me be perfectly clear—is to those who are less fortunate across Ontario, and that is significant. My portfolio now combines, as the member opposite said, five former ministries from the previous government. Ontario's most vulnerable people are counting on me to ensure we have a sustainable system well into the future.

On June 28, I was appointed to the cabinet, and it was readily apparent that I had inherited a disjointed, patchwork, siloed system of social assistance throughout the ministries. Therefore I had to act, and I had to act very quickly. People are turning to social assistance earlier and they're staying on it longer, trapped in a cycle that is not helping them get up. It's helping them stay back. That's wrong. When we send our tax dollars to Queen's Park, we expect to help the broader good, to have a safety net for

those who can't help themselves and a hand up for those who are ready and willing and able to get back into the workforce. We have almost one million people on social assistance in the province of Ontario, costing the taxpayer base \$10 billion, yet still one in seven people in this province are in poverty.

They're living in poverty because of 15 years of Liberal waste, mismanagement and scandal that was supported 97% of the time by that NDP party. They did that. They enabled a Liberal government that allowed people to live in a cycle of poverty. That is wrong and I won't stand for it. That's why we're making our changes, that's why we put a 100-day plan in place and that's why we've consulted right across this province with people with lived experience. We have consulted with people who are part of agencies, crown commissions. We have consulted with the private sector, the public sector, the philanthropic sector, the not-for-profit groups that are right across this province, and they are informing the work that we are doing. I think the members opposite will be pleasantly surprised when we unveil our plan in the next week and a half.

But I want to be crystal clear that my philosophy, from the day I arrived at Queen's Park, is the same philosophy I had when I left Nova Scotia with \$200 in my pocket, a student loan and a car loan, and slept on my friend's sofa for almost a year so I could get a job. Here I am, 20 years plus a day later, standing on the floor of this assembly as a minister of the crown. So let me be perfectly clear: Those are the possibilities that excite me. The best social safety net is a compassionate society, not bigger government. The best social circumstances are when people who are willing and able are employed in the workforce. We're creating more jobs with our Making Ontario Open for Business Act. I've got to be clear: The member opposite may not think a job is valuable, but this government is going to create more jobs. We are going to lift more people off the welfare rolls. And I've got to tell you that the best social safety net is a job.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): There being no further business 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 1823.

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
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
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
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	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Orléans	
Lecce, Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
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**

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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 McDonnell, 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
Mitzi Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
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**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
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Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
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Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
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**Select Committee on Financial Transparency / Comité spécial
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Roman Baber, Doug Downey
Catherine Fife, Robin Martin
Lindsey Park, Ross Romano
Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Sandy Shaw
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim