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Jeudi
20 septembre 2018

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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 20 September 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 20 septembre 2018

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STANDING ORDERS

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 19, 2018, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion regarding amendments to the standing orders.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I recognize the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. We certainly need more voices and more democracy at Queen's Park. That is exactly what the people of Guelph voted for and I think that's what all voters voted for, and so I was so happy to hear members opposite yesterday talk about the importance of working co-operatively across the aisle to put the people of Ontario first. I think that's exactly what the first amendment to this motion does: creating a select committee of all four parties working together to revise the standing orders in a way that reflects the unique character of the 42nd Parliament.

I also appreciate the passionate arguments of the members opposite that independent MPPs should participate more in the debates and proceedings of the House. I certainly agree, and that is exactly what the amendment to the amendment from the MPP from Ottawa-Vanier accomplishes: providing independent members with more time to participate in the debates and the proceedings of the House.

This amendment accomplishes that based on past precedent in 2003 when the NDP did not achieve official party status and, through unanimous consent, 16 days into the sitting of the 38th Parliament, the standing orders were changed to allow those independent members more opportunity to participate in the debates and the proceedings of the House.

We are now 27 days into the sitting of the 42nd Parliament, and I think the same privileges should be granted to the independent members of the Liberal and Green parties in proportion to the votes that we received. For this reason, I am quite confident that all members in the House will support these amendments. The eight independent members currently sitting in the House represent 25% of the votes that were cast on June 7. Although the composition of the House doesn't necessarily reflect the democratic will of the people, due to the distortions of our first-past-the-post electoral system, I

certainly believe that it's in the best interests of this House that the debates and the proceedings reflect in a proportional way the composition of the House. That is exactly what this amendment achieves.

The government received 40% of the vote and a majority. They certainly have the power to proceed with their agenda. But the voters of Ontario deserve all voices to be heard in proportion to the votes received, so I'm confident that all members will support this amendment.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I got into politics—actually, I'm relatively new to it. I have to say that it was actually the Liberal Party of Ontario that inspired me to get into politics. We couldn't continue operating the way that we were operating. It was just ridiculous, the entitlement that they seemed to believe was theirs when they were here in government.

It inspired me to enter politics, because we needed to make a change, and the people of Ontario agreed that we needed to make a change. They agreed to the point that 76 Progressive Conservatives were elected to this House. How many Liberals were elected? Not enough to form an actual official party. So it's really rich when I'm looking at the amendments that the Liberal independent put forward. It seems like they just haven't learned that they are not entitled to this. They're not.

Let's take a look at one in particular. They look at this and they say that independent members should have 20% of the available time. But they make up less than 10% of this House. "Give us twice as much as we should have, because we're Liberals. We deserve it. We're entitled to it. Because we're Liberals, we should have that extra." It's unbelievable, the arrogance that we're seeing from them even after they have been wiped out as a party in this province. It's completely irresponsible of them to come forward this way. Suddenly, after they are wiped out and they have nothing, they are here and they care about independent members, when the reality is they gave them no rights when they were in power.

Let's talk about the opposition party. Back in 2003, when they sat here with seven members as well, they were trying to get their jobs done, and they were out there working hard. I'm going to give them some praise for that, because they were. They were working hard. And what did the Liberals do? Absolutely nothing. "No, we're not going to give them party status." Now the Liberals are in that same position, sitting here with seven members. What they're saying is, "We have to have all of these things. Give us everything that we want, because we're Liberals and we're entitled to it. We are entitled."

We saw 15 years of their entitlement here in Ontario, and the voters in Ontario said, “Enough is enough. We’re not going to stand for this anymore. We’re tired of that.” They sent a clear message to the Liberal Party of Ontario that, no, they are not going to have that.

How do you go from being the governing party to non-party status? You go there by being arrogant. You go there by being entitled. You go there by believing that everything should be handed to you. Luckily, the voters in Ontario said, “Enough is enough. No more Liberal entitlement.”

Let’s take a look at some of the things that the Liberals did during the 41st Parliament. They put forward an astounding 40 time allocation motions during the 41st Parliament. Madam Speaker, it’s interesting to see that, because that’s eight times as many OPP investigations as they had. They had five OPP investigations. Why did they have five OPP investigations? Because they believed that they were entitled. They believed that things really didn’t apply to them. They could do whatever they wanted, and to heck with what the province actually wants.

0910

They had almost six times as many time allocation motions as their current group of independent members: seven—seven independent members. The reason they have seven is that the province was tired of them. They believed they had this innate right to rule in Ontario, that no one cared whether they did something right or wrong. They were just always in the right, so they could stand up and do whatever they wanted.

The seven Liberal independent members in this House represent a total of 121,000 votes. My riding has almost 154,000 people, so they’re representing less people than I actually have in my riding. So it’s really rich that they would come forward with this type of stuff.

Let’s take a look at the change that they want to have for 24(b). I’ll paraphrase a couple of things here and come down to the last quote. Basically, the standing order is that the government will do its thing, will have 60 minutes, and then a Liberal independent member could speak for up to 60 minutes. “But we’ll only give the Green member five, because we really care about independents.”

They don’t care about independents. They care about themselves. That’s evident perfectly in this. They believe they’re entitled to far more than they should have, simply because they’re Liberals. Thirty minutes—

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: A point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I recognize the member for Ottawa–Vanier on a point of order.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Yes, attributing motive.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I’m just going to remind the member to stick to the amendment on the amendment, and be very careful with your language. Make sure you’re not imputing motive. Thank you.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Speaker.

Instead of showing remorse, then, for the way that they acted in government, we see a number of things coming forward this way. What they’re asking for us to do is, they’re asking for us to make exceptions. They’re asking

for us to give them more than what they are actually entitled to. They make up less than 10% of this House—less than 10%—but they’d like to have 20% of the available time. We have 76 members here in this House. We make up about 74%, but we’re not asking for 74% of the time. It is completely inappropriate.

Now, there was some conversation, there were some points made by the Green member, that we have to look at proportional representation when we’re in here. Okay, let’s talk about that: 121,000 votes is what the seven Liberals represent—121,000. Well, we have 76 members, and we represent far more than that.

When we talk about what happens in the election, it is first past the post. What we’re trying to do in Ontario is, we’re trying to have representation based on the ridings themselves.

When we come into the House and we’re actually speaking in here, when we’re debating something, we’re debating based on our ridings. It is that type of representation. We have 124 ridings in Ontario. Each of us should have a very similar amount of time to speak, and yet, what the Liberals are asking for is 20% of the time. They are looking for their seven ridings to be more important than all of the other ridings in Ontario.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: That’s not correct.

Mr. Dave Smith: It is absolutely correct. When you want 20% of the available time for seven, that leaves 80% of the available time for 117. The math just doesn’t work out. We can’t have Liberal independents believing that they have more rights than everyone else. That just cannot happen.

So when we look at the rotation, when we look at how we allocate the time in here, we have to allocate the time in an appropriate manner. Giving one group significantly more than any other group is not effective representation in this House. Ontario elected 76 Progressive Conservatives. They even elected 40 NDP members—far more than the independent Liberals. But the independent Liberals want to be treated as a party. They want to be treated as if they were just as powerful as 76, or just as powerful as the 116 that are made up by the other two official parties—because there are only two official parties.

The voters in Ontario made a very, very clear statement—to quote my friend the Minister of Transportation, a “crystal clear” statement in Ontario. They rejected the Liberals. They rejected the Liberal Party. They told the Liberal Party that Ontario was finished with their entitlement, that Ontario wanted nothing more to do with how they governed this province, and they sent them packing, to the point of only having seven members.

The former Liberal Party is entitled to nothing. That’s what the voters of Ontario have said. The former Liberal Party is entitled to nothing, and yet they come forward with these changes and they’re making amendments to a motion to try and give themselves far more power, to prop them up and to put them in a position that far exceeds everyone else here. That simply is not fair and reasonable. We cannot allow this to happen. We’re here to represent all of our ridings; we’re not here to put extra representation

on seven members. I can't say that enough—seven members. That's all Ontario wanted in here from the Liberal Party. Seven. Seven. You can't say it enough. They were absolutely devastated in the election because Ontario was tired of the way they had run things.

Giving them the extras that they're asking for does not do Ontario a service. In fact, it does a disservice to all of Ontario. I keep coming back to it because we can't emphasize it enough. They're looking for another day, they're looking for 20% of the available speaking time. They're looking to change a lot of the language. They're looking to say, "The official parties—and the Liberals." They want our language changed so that we treat them as if they were an official party. But the voters of Ontario said that they are not an official party—

Mr. John Fraser: Are you talking about 1.4 million voters?

Mr. Dave Smith: They are not an official party—I'm talking about the 121,000 voters who said, "Let's put a Liberal here." That's all they represent: 121,000 people. As I said earlier, in my riding there are about 154,000, give or take a couple.

It would be irresponsible of us to allow them to have these amendments that they have put forward. It doesn't represent good governance.

We decided to make some changes to it because we want to get back to work. Ontario has put us in this position where we have a very strong mandate. The reason that we have a very strong mandate is that the people of Ontario know that the Progressive Conservative Party wants to do the job. We're looking to extend the hours of debate. We're going to put 40 more hours of debate time in here. We want—we welcome—all of that discussion, and we should have all that discussion. It should be equal amongst all of us.

We all have the opportunity to stand up and represent our ridings, but if we go ahead with the amendments that the Liberals are suggesting, there are 117 ridings that are not represented quite the same way as the Liberals would be. The Liberals are asking for more time, they're asking for more privileges and they're asking for things they shouldn't have. They still believe that they're entitled. They're entitled to their entitlements.

0920

It's a terrible thing that we're seeing today. This is something that—myself, in good conscience, if I were one of the independent Liberals, I couldn't look myself in the mirror after putting this forward. I looked at this and I thought: All they're saying is, let's ignore what the province of Ontario said to them back on June 7. Let's ignore all 117 other ridings. Let's ignore the fact that they went from the governing party to non-party status.

That can't be emphasized enough: They went from the top party to nothing. The reason they went to nothing is that Ontario was sick and tired of their inaction, and where they did have action, it was action that caused damage to this province. Giving them what they're asking for here simply perpetuates that. It gives them the ability, then, to cause more damage to this province. It's going to take us

years to fix the mistakes that they made. They should remain as independents in perpetuity. There's no way that anyone in Ontario would accept this, other than other Liberals. It's completely wrong.

They talk about being fair to the independents. Let's look at what's fair to the independents: Let's give 30 minutes to the independent Liberals; five minutes to the other independent—five. If they wanted to truly be fair and reasonable, then they would have looked at this and said, "We are independent, period, and all independents should be treated the same way. All independents should be able to speak at the same proportional rate as everyone else in this House." But that's not what they're asking for. What they're asking for is, "Treat us as special. We deserve more because we're Liberal." And that's just wrong. It's just wrong.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member from Ottawa–Vanier on a point of order.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: It's imputing motiving again.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I would just caution the member to be careful with the words that he chooses.

Back to the member for Peterborough.

Mr. Dave Smith: A hundred and twenty-four members, 60 minutes' worth of debate, and they want to have 30 minutes for seven. If that sounds like motive to you, I'm sorry. Seven members should not get an additional period of time. Seven members should not have more time than everyone else in this House.

Mr. John Fraser: What did Mike Harris do in 1999? Oops, actually, he changed the standing orders.

Mr. Dave Smith: And we're looking to change the standing orders. We're trying to get it so that we're back to work, so that we're doing more for this province.

Yes, it's legitimate to change the standing orders once in a while. Sometimes you do need to make adjustments to it, but you need to make adjustments to it that serve the people of Ontario. The changes that we're proposing serve the people of Ontario. We're asking for 40 more hours of debate. We're going to give the Liberals more time, because we're asking for 40 more hours of debate. That's something that they haven't asked for. They've just said, "Give us more time," not "Give everyone more time." We're looking at changing the standing orders so that on Thursdays, where we had that 31-minute period that is dead time that we're not sitting here—we're in Toronto; we're here at Queen's Park. Let's get to work. Let's get in here and do more.

We're offering it to everyone because it's fair and it's reasonable. What's being offered back, or what's being proposed by the Liberals, is not fair and reasonable. It's about self-serving. Asking for more time than everyone else gets is not serving the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario made a very, very clear message that they did not want what the Liberals were offering. The Liberals would be wise to listen to the people of Ontario, something that they did not do the last session of this government.

They did not sit through it. They did not listen to the people of Ontario, and that's why they're sitting with seven members—not even an official party—because they didn't listen to the people of Ontario. They're great at talking. They're great at saying what they think. But they're not very good at listening to what the people of Ontario are asking for. They're not very good at interpreting the will of the people of Ontario, and this is evident in what they have proposed here. Seven members—I can't say it enough—and they want more than everyone else is getting. It's ridiculous that they're even contemplating this. The people of Ontario were very, very clear. They don't want the Liberal Party. They only brought seven of them back—not enough for an official party—for a reason.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to be able to weigh in on this discussion. We are discussing a substantive motion that the government put forward to make changes to the standing orders, which is essentially our playbook here in the Legislature, and a few amendments that have been put forward—one by the independent Liberals, and one very thoughtful amendment put forward by the NDP caucus.

I've got about 20 minutes to break it down for the folks at home. This might be a bit of an interesting one because—well, it's always an interesting one here in this Legislature. When we're talking about the standing orders, it can seem a bit cumbersome, even for me. I'm not quite a rookie anymore, but I still consider myself a fairly new member, having only served for four years. There are a lot of things about this Legislature and about the standing orders that I am still learning, as I'm sure we all are, so any chance we have to talk about the rules and the specifics and the details is a chance for all of us to learn.

When the government put forward this substantive motion to make significant changes to the standing orders, that is the government putting forward ideas about how the game should be played here in the Legislature. There have been changes made through the years, as we've heard from government members who remember—from our own House leader, who so eloquently took us back in time through the years. It was sort of storytime in the Legislature the other day as he was reminding us about different changes to different standing orders through time, which I find fascinating because I only know the rules of the game since I arrived four years ago, and now I'm going to know even fewer of those rules—well, not fewer; we're going to have some changes.

We have had the opportunity in this House to debate a number of significant issues, from climate change to charter rights and a few things in between, and I have been getting a lot of letters and a lot of input from folks in my riding, as I know we all have. It was interesting when folks in the riding said, "Jen, you guys need to filibuster." I said, "Well, that's not a thing that we can do anymore. We are not allowed to filibuster." You'll have to forgive me my lack of dates and historical knowledge—I don't remember when that was changed, exactly. But folks remember, with

the amalgamation of Toronto, the conversations and the filibustering and the approach the opposition took at that time. They were digging in their heels and doing their darnedest, with the standing orders, to give that conversation a whole whack of time—including to filibuster. Then, probably on the heels of that, the change came to limit all members with the clock. There was no more opportunity to give a long, movie-style filibuster speech anymore. We now have an hour for the lead speech on any new bill introduction for each party, and then after that it's 20 minutes, and then it gets dropped down to 10 minutes, and then, generally speaking, the government of the day, as I have seen, brings in a motion that says, "We've talked enough. Let's go." They don't let debate just collapse on its own anymore. They end it with a time allocation motion.

0930

So that is life under the clock here in the Legislature. But that's a change. It used to be that you could speak, really, ad nauseam, but that the debate could continue until it ran its course. Regardless of which party we're talking about, it gave the members in opposition a particular tool, that they could stretch it out so that the folks at home had time to not just clue in to what was going on but to follow along and to organize, to get involved and maybe be able to work with this House, whether it was at committee or protests or rallies or to call their MPP. But there is a reason to not always be in such a darned hurry.

I'll get into the bits and pieces of this specifically, but I'm going to also take us back into a little more recent memory, since I've been here. It has been my esteemed privilege to sit in this House on behalf of the fine people of Oshawa, but it has now twice been sitting across from—and now across from and beside—majority governments.

I'm going to skip to the end. I'm going to ruin—spoiler alert, Speaker: Their bills are going to pass. They have a majority, as the Liberals did before them. When the government brings forward a bill, they get to decide what happens with the bill. It's going to pass. They can say, "Now, if this bill passes," because that's how we should speak about it. We should assume that there is process and involvement with the broader community that might make them change course, but I've never seen it. It's kind of like a unicorn. Maybe that's a thing.

The bills get to go through. They have a majority government. We can vote against it, we can bang our desks, we can do all sorts of things. Well, we used to be able to, up until this. But we could do all sorts of things to try to make the government maybe reverse course as needed, to take information in, maybe make some changes, to slow it down, to do some consulting.

As I said, I was going to take us back to when the Liberal government was sitting across from us. The Conservative members and the NDP would stand in our places and we would give them heck about not consulting enough, that the people of Ontario were not invited to participate in fulsome committee hearings, that with the time allocation motion that would lay out just how quickly that darn bill was going to fly through this establishment—

we, as, I would say, at those times, a unified opposition, would rail against the government, to say, "Let them speak. Let them be involved in the process. Let the outside in." It was so frustrating.

I've stood in this House and I've said this before: Committee, and committee process, in my mind, should be one of the best things we do here, because that is where the government has put forward legislation, we've debated it—hopefully, it's thoughtful legislation—and then it's supposed to go to committee, where we hear from sometimes the community, experts, people who are mad about something in the bill, people who support it. What is supposed to happen in committee is that those experts or individuals sit before all of the committee and say, "Hold on. Give this some thought. Hey, just a second—we caught a mistake. Hey, by the way, don't do this, because here's an unforeseen consequence." Or they'll say, "You are spot-on with this. May I make a suggestion?"

It's supposed to be input for sober second thought, to flesh out a bill so that then they don't have to make changes after it's already been made law, so that it doesn't have negative ramifications in our broader community. That's what committee, in my mind, was supposed to be for. I never saw that happen, because of course, when you have a majority on committee, you can't hash it out. The opposition could weigh in and debate some of the amendments, but we didn't see that the majority ever—or often—listened. That was something that was frustrating.

The other thing that we would give them heck about—we being the opposition benches, whether they were Conservative members or New Democrat members—we would give the last government a hard time about the fact that all of the committee hearings, save maybe when travelling the budget, were hosted here in Toronto. Well, that was not fair, as we heard over and over, for folks across the province who have challenges travelling all the way to Toronto. We have a lot of members in this House that know how challenging it is to travel from the north to anywhere, let alone to Toronto for these tiny little windows for a committee hearing.

Why am I bringing this up, Madam Speaker? I am bringing this up because, as opposition members, the Conservatives were very vocal—as they needed to be; as we needed to be—about having an open Legislature and an open process for feedback on the committee process. Fun fact: We have had a few bills go through since those Conservatives have now gone from opposition to forming the government. We've had bills go through, and do you know we haven't had committee yet? We used to give the Liberals a hard time about not travelling committee and not going to the people, and here we have a government where I have not yet seen any committee. We have not had any committee hearings for any of the bills thus far. So I can't tell you whether this government is going to travel any bills. I can't tell you if they're going to invite or allow public participation, because they don't actually have to. I'm sure in the standing orders there should be something about—well, there's lots about committee, but if there's a "have to," I haven't seen it. But what I'm seeing here with debating this substantive motion is that the government

has figured out that there are a few things in those standing orders that aren't working for them, that aren't working for their agenda or their goals, their plan—things that get in the way. So I'm going to do my best to put this into people-speak. That's not to condescend. That is so I understand it, because the standing orders can be, well—

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Legal.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes. They're very technical.

One of the changes that the government has put forward—I'm going to read it as it stands and then I'll explain it: "That standing order 6(b) be amended by deleting the word 'eight' and replacing it with the word 'twelve.'" Well, that doesn't tell me very much, Madam Speaker, does it? It basically says that they can have the ability to extend, instead of two weeks, to three weeks that the House can sit until midnight the last three weeks of a session. It's always been two weeks before the end of a session, before a winter break or before a summer break. If there's a whole bunch that we need to get through, it gives us as members more time to debate. So they've added a week for that. They've added more debate time. The government will celebrate debate time, but I'm going to come back to that.

Another change that they have made deals with opposition day motions. Madam Speaker, as I'm sure you know, an opposition day motion—I think we have five, is it, that we get in a session, that opposition gets where they put forward an initiative or a bill. The opposition puts forward a bill that reflects their priorities, that if the roles were reversed and they were in government, this is something that they believe in and that they feel is in the best interests of the province.

We still have those opportunities as oppositions to bring forward those bills, but the government has gotten tricky with the standing orders and now has said, "Well, okay, the day you're supposed to have it"—normally when we use one of our opposition days, we dominate the day. We opposition have that day to put forward our priorities, to debate it, to vote on it. I'm going to tell you that it probably won't pass; again, back to the majority—skipping ahead, sorry. But it's still opposition day.

The government has figured out a way to say, "No, no, no. Let it be opposition afternoon but still leave time at the end so that the government can bring in some stuff and we can address our priorities so they can't actually have the whole day." So who cares, right? Who cares if we get a day or we don't get a day? Well, it's a tool, Madam Speaker, as it turns out, not just to share the opposition vision with the province, but also to push their agenda back a day. Again, a little bit of breathing room for sober second thought never hurt anyone. But it sure ticks them off. They don't like it if there's anything that can slow them down.

We're not actually saying, "Hey, look, we've got a tripwire. Ha ha." We're saying, "We're going to take an afternoon from you." And they said, "No, no." Here it is with standing order 43(a)(v). "We've now found a way that we can get those few hours back and take away that day of delay." It is what it is. It's inside baseball. But it

just sort of speaks to that they're pushing their agenda through, and, "Ain't nobody going to get in the way," Madam Speaker.

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The other thing is that this government has made a bit of a change in response to something that happened a few weeks ago. I had the opportunity to be in the chair, and it was a Thursday afternoon. The wheels didn't quite come off, but it was quite a Thursday afternoon, Madam Speaker. Both sides were flexing their standing order muscles to do their best to delay different parts of the process. It was a very interesting day to be in the chair presiding over debate because I just knew that there were rules that were going to be followed—and we did, and the outcome was the outcome. But those rules that were followed on that day now are going to be a little bit different. So that's what we find frustrating: to have this motion that is going through the standing orders and being very clever—very, very clever. Good for the government for finding any little loophole that might slow them down and taking it away from the opposition, but I remind them that they were opposition—I know it well; I'm learning it well—and there may come a time when they are back in opposition. These tools, not just for sober second thought but to hold the government to account, are necessary. They are.

The folks across the province understand that opposition plays a vital role, and that is not just to slow down the government; it is to hold them to account, to ensure that what they're doing isn't going to have negative consequence. It is to ensure that we have a fulsome committee process, that we invite the folks from across the province to be involved in this House, because this House is the people's House—the government notwithstanding, ha ha. As we just recently had all the conversations about our rights, a lot of Canadians have been engaging. They've come to the House. We've seen that they haven't been able to get in, for various reasons that we can discuss. But this is, ultimately, the House that is to serve the broader public.

Our legislation needs to be the best version of itself that it can be. I believe that it's not just about more time on the clock for debate. This government loves to stand up and say, "Yes, but we're adding 40 hours of debate. Debate is good." Okay, except that you rush each debate for each bill. So that additional debate time isn't going to be 40 thoughtful hours that we add to debate to really flesh out an issue and make sure that we're doing the best we can in terms of legislation. No, it's that they're going to ram through that many more bills that, I would argue, will be that much more damaging because they are so rushed.

Like I said, I challenge this government to prove me wrong. Prove that we will indeed involve the community and the public in our process. Have committee once—twice—for every bill. That would be great.

I have a couple of minutes left. I said at the beginning that we're debating their motion—yes, but we there are also some amendments. The Conservative member who spoke before me spoke at length about the independent

Liberal amendments, so I won't go there. I will focus on what the NDP had put forward.

We put forward that the motion be amended by adding this section:

"a Select Committee on Modernizing the Standing Orders be appointed to consider and report to the House its observations and recommendations with respect to proposed changes to the standing orders that would better serve the democratic interests of the people of Ontario;"

We also said, "That ... the committee shall focus on the following:

"—measures that reflect the government's right to carry out its agenda and opposition parties' responsibility to hold the government to account.

"That the committee shall have the authority to call for persons, papers and things, and generally shall have such duties and powers as are required to carry out its mandate;"

We're not saying that the government can't be the government or shouldn't be the government. We want them to be a thoughtful government, and we want this legislation—any legislation—to serve people in the best way it can. We're not going to agree, perhaps, on many of the priorities, but the way that legislation comes forward—there shouldn't be mistakes in it that could have been caught during a committee process.

This committee on modernizing the standing orders: We've laid out very thoughtfully what the makeup of that should be so that it's balanced for members of this House, because the standing orders shouldn't be partisan. The standing orders are meant to reflect the non-partisan, public nature of this House. They are the rules of this House by which we all conduct ourselves.

Each time—and I took us back in history a little bit—that a new government comes in, they make changes to the rules that sort of fit their purposes and their plans. But you're going to have to live with them one day when you're not sitting in that seat. We all need to be thoughtful about that.

This amendment is entirely that—it is thoughtful—and it says, if we're going to make changes to the standing orders, let's put together a select committee that does the math on that, that makes changes.

You know, there are changes. We only have two parties now recognized in the House. There is a weird gap of empty airtime that the government is seeking to change. Well, that was an unanticipated problem before the last election. That's how they've chosen to address it. That select committee would be non-partisan and would address anything else coming forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: We're speaking today not just about changing the standing orders. Also, the NDP has put forward an amendment to the changes we want to make to the standing orders. For everybody who is perhaps watching at home while they're having breakfast—I just ran over here from a meeting and did not have the time for breakfast today, so I'll get to that, hopefully, at some point—we're talking about the NDP's suggestion, through

an amendment, to create a Select Committee on Modernizing the Standing Orders. Basically, what they want to do is be involved in the discussion—that's what I'm hearing—on how we change the standing orders. I think we always welcome input. I don't know that this is a feasible thing to do. It sort of smells a little bit like the usual delay tactics—we normally call them “reasoned amendments”—to a piece of legislation.

We just heard from the member for Oshawa, a member of the NDP. She spoke about the obligation of opposition “to hold the government to account.” Certainly, as somebody who was in opposition for four and a half years, I totally understand that, I get that, and I think that's why we have debates in the Legislature. We don't just go ahead and propose bills and then vote on them. We have debates and second reading, then we go to committee, often, and then we come, hopefully, for third reading, if it makes it through committee. We all know the process, and we all know that sometimes it doesn't go to committee and sometimes it doesn't come for third reading. That's why we hear so many private members' bills, especially, coming back time and again and again.

She also mentioned recognizing the “non-partisan ... nature of this House.” Ideally, I guess, once we're in the Legislature, we're all a team. Certainly, I see it on committee. When I'm in committee, I feel that we do work as a team, and it's a little bit less partisan. Question period, obviously, is very partisan sometimes. But during the debates, I think that it is thoughtful. I think people are representing their own opinions and their party's consensus of opinion, as well as the ridings that they represent. It's tricky to balance all of that. It's easy to criticize. But I think we all recognize that we're here to do a job.

I think that on the changes to the standing orders that were put forward by our House leader last week—we heard debate from the NDP House leader, the member from Timmins. There was a lot of thoughtful comment about why we're trying to make the changes, and I know that the NDP agreed with some of the changes.

First off, I'm going to mention that on Thursdays, we—*Interjection.*

Mrs. Gila Martow: Sorry. It was a Liberal amendment? There's a Liberal amendment—I'm getting a note—to the NDP amendment that I wasn't aware of.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It's an amendment on the amendment.

Mrs. Gila Martow: It's an amendment on the amendment. Oh, my goodness.

Actually, I'm just going to talk about that. The first time I heard the term “reasoned amendment”—now, I don't come from a law background, so some of the terminology in here was a little overwhelming, the first week or two I was here. I was in optometry, and I can tell you all the different parts of the eyes and all the diagnoses and tests on eyes. But some of the legal terms—and it's not just terms; it's a way of speaking. It's almost like a different language, sometimes.

So “standing orders,” of course, for people who are watching, refers to the rules and regulations of how the

Legislature operates. We cannot just get up and speak whenever we want, although we might like to. We cannot just debate. It's not even up to the government. We can't just say, “You know what? We're cancelling question period and we're debating.” It's all very strictly regulated. We have Clerks here, we have staff here and they all ensure, through the Speaker, that we are following all the rules. The rules are called, basically, the standing orders. What we're trying to do is make a few changes to the standing orders.

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One of them is pretty obvious, and I believe the independents and the NDP agree with it. We're down to only two official parties. The way the standing orders were set up for private members' business on Thursday afternoons is that we have a rotation system that goes through three parties, and each party gets their allotted amount of time. Because we're down to two parties, that extra time doesn't go to those two parties, and we're sometimes left with a situation where we have 31 minutes of downtime on a Thursday afternoon.

I want everybody to understand that a lot of our members live far away, and many have to fly home. Friday is a constituency day, so we end here officially at 6 o'clock, usually, unless there is some kind of end-of-session late-night sitting. Usually we're out of here by 6 o'clock on a Thursday. To have a half-hour break, as it were, at around 4 o'clock in the afternoon, or 3:30, is a little disheartening for a lot of the members who are anxious to get home, and even the ones who live in the GTA, who wouldn't mind getting home that half an hour earlier. To have that half-hour break—obviously we spend the time wisely, but it's difficult to know that we have a half-hour break instead of just maybe using the time wisely to debate, or perhaps finishing half an hour earlier.

One of the amendments that we've put forward to the standing orders is to use that half-hour as debate time if necessary. I think that's pretty obvious. If anybody in the opposition or the independents wants to argue that, I would say that that's obstruction instead of opposition. Obviously, we know that it's the opposition's job to raise issues, as I said, of importance to themselves, to their party, to their constituents, but when it comes to having 30 minutes of downtime on a Thursday afternoon, if they're going to be somehow speaking against changing that, I would call that obstruction.

We want to have flexibility. I think that's the key word here. We want to have some flexibility as the government, and we want to be able to use our time wisely in the House.

What hasn't been really brought up so far is that we have a schedule here when the House is in session. We all have offices in our constituencies, and I know that sometimes people are walking into my constituency office and saying, “Why isn't she here?” or “Where is she?” or “Why can't I have a meeting on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday this week?” It's basically two jobs. I have my job in Thornhill, which I represent, and then I feel that I have a job here, and then I have, I guess, a bit of a part-time job as the parliamentary assistant to the

Minister of Labour, which is the office further down the road. I just came, a little breathless, from a meeting, representing the Minister of Labour.

So we have a lot of different parts to our job, and I think people don't always appreciate that it's after all those jobs that we then go to your events. We're happy to go to your events, but you have to be a little understanding of what else we have on our plate. We might be speaking the next day, and we need to go home and write some notes. If you tell us the speeches are at 7, and we tell you we'll be there at 7, you can't really tell us, "No, we've changed the speeches to 8:30." That doesn't really jibe very well with our scheduling.

We want to also, in terms of flexibility, expand the opportunity—it doesn't mean we'll necessarily do it, because I know that we kept being warned of late-night sittings until midnight for the last four and a half years. It doesn't happen very often. The idea is to have the flexibility for each session. Each session, obviously, is a group of months that the Legislature sits fairly regularly, in consecutive order, and then there's a winter break and a summer break.

Obviously, if there is a break of a couple of months where we're focusing more on constituency work, the idea is to wrap up what we've been working on. I think the people at home and the people who are interested in whatever bill we're working on are very anxious to see it wrapped up. They understand that sometimes there are delays, whether it's intentional, by opposition members—or it could even be snowstorms. We know that the climate here can get difficult sometimes. We had a day where we were shut down most of the day because there was a gun scene at U of T on the campus near here. There are times when we're losing time in debate and we're looking for ways that we could have the flexibility to make it up and to be more efficient.

It's pretty difficult, I know, even when you're gone for a week from this place, to come back and pick up on the debate that you were working on. Sometimes it's months until a bill makes it to committee, and it's always like you have to go back and read your notes. Even if you spoke on that bill, sometimes you have to go back and read your notes and remind yourself, "Oh yeah, we're going to put forward an amendment on this," or which party put forward that amendment. You have to wrap your head around it.

Obviously, the House has to have the ability to do its work. We want to be able to do our work. I know that not just the people who vote us here, but all the business leaders from inside the country and outside the country who want to invest in Ontario want to see an efficient, flexible government in Ontario before they invest their profits, their investors' money, and create good jobs in Ontario. Everything is connected to everything else.

We also want to look at the fact that on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the House, according to the standing orders, does not resume sitting until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Again, a lot of times there isn't—sometimes there are caucus meetings for different members. Obviously, people have meetings and things like that. But in the afternoon

sessions, it's not usually obvious that all of us are in the building because we usually have duty days and we don't have to be here in the afternoon or early morning, all of us, all the time. So people can, on their non-duty days, have meetings with stakeholders and things like that. The fact is, oftentimes on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 1 o'clock until 3 o'clock, people are sitting and twiddling their thumbs, as it were, and saying, "Gee, I wish I could do my time in debate now instead of on Thursday afternoon at 5 o'clock. That would be much more efficient for me, personally," and the government is thinking, "Let's get this show on the road and let's get to work while we're all here and we're all in the building, because who knows? There could be a snowstorm next week and we won't be able to be here. Let's get to work; let's get our jobs done."

We recognize that the opposition members want to sometimes have their delay tactics, and they need time to do that. So maybe we need that extra time just so that we can allow for some of the delay tactics that we've seen in the House.

Again, to have the flexibility doesn't mean that the House is going to be changing the standing orders to be at 1 o'clock on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. It's going to stay at 3 o'clock, but to have the flexibility to move it to 1 o'clock should the need be there.

In terms of delay tactics, we mentioned before reasoned amendments. It's "reasoned" with an O-N. The first time I heard it, I heard "recent" amendments. I said, "Recent amendments? What were the old amendments if we're having recent amendments?"

That's sort of what I'm talking about, the legalese, as it were, that certain terms—we're all sometimes pulling out our phones and trying to catch a word that somebody uses here that isn't in our normal, day-to-day language. We hear politicians often say that things are egregious. I don't think I've ever heard anybody, in a regular conversation—maybe my friends are peculiar or something, but they've never used the word "egregious" with me. It's one of those words that you read in newspaper columns all the time. It's an emotional word; I think it is an emotional—

Interjection.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm hearing from the NDP. It's an emotionally charged word here sometimes when people feel very strongly about something.

It is important for us to recognize that there are parliamentary protocols, there's parliamentary language. I know that sometimes people have a way to wiggle around it, saying things like "horse feathers" and things like that in the House until it gets obvious that they're using it in an unparliamentary way. Recently we had to add some new words or terms to our list of unparliamentary language because the debate was so heated in the House. People are looking for colourful terms, colourful words. I think sometimes people are looking for a way to grab everybody else's attention, to stand out in the crowd, as it were. It's not easy when you're my height to stand out in the crowd, but I do try, Madam Speaker, to be noticed sometimes and to be recognized.

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Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You're larger than life.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I was just told I'm larger than life, so I really appreciate that.

We've heard a lot about time allocation as well in terms of discussing the standing orders. Time allocation—again, the first time I heard about it, the first week or two I was here, I had to think about what it meant, and it became obvious to me that basically the time allotted to speak on a bill is set up. We have first reading, which is that we table a bill and we don't actually debate it. A lot of times, people are very excited in my constituency when they hear that it passed first reading, and I say, "Basically, everybody passes first reading because we're not voting on it and we're not debating it," but they're quite excited. I'm happy they're excited, but really it's not as exciting as it might sound to pass first reading. The fact is, second reading is when we debate a bill. First reading is when we table a bill, which means we bring it to the table where the Clerks are. Oftentimes if the government is anxious and there are reasons why we don't want a delay, it's not just because we want to move on to something else; a lot of times there's something hinging on what we're working on.

I think a perfect example is the York University strike. The students were locked out for almost five months and the school year was about to begin. I think that certainly the people I heard from in Thornhill and in the GTA, where I consulted with so many people since I'm with the Ministry of Labour—people felt very strongly that enough is enough and that the students had to be able to go back to class. The only way to be able to do that efficiently and quickly, unfortunately, because nobody likes to have to legislate back to work—it's not something I look forward to doing, but I recognize that sometimes it's necessary. It was necessary, I believe. The striking teaching assistants and library researchers, I believe, were legislated back to work. The professors actually were part of that initial one of the three striking units—there were three different striking units of CUPE. The professors, the initial one, settled rather quickly, so it was the other two that were still not at the bargaining table, and they were legislated back to work.

In order to legislate them back to work, we have to table the bill at first reading, second reading debate, possibly go to committee, and possibly come back for third reading. So the idea of time allocation is to negate the necessity of having committee and having third reading—my understanding again, because I'm still learning every day in this place. If I'm getting anything wrong ever, I would appreciate the more experienced members—I appreciate even—the Clerks are very supportive. The fact is that sometimes you use time allocation to move things along quicker, but we also recognize that time allocation itself is something that we're debating on. Certainly it's almost like third reading. In my opinion, when we have time allocation, really all we're skipping over often is committee.

It's tricky. I think it's hard for people sometimes to wrap their heads around. I know that when I speak to my constituents who are lawyers, they have a much better grasp of what we're doing here. I appreciate the time that

I'm spending here, and I wish I would have been more involved. I think that's something you really hear from people who start to work in politics or volunteer in politics or manage to get themselves elected. Some of the few privileged people in our province who do that—they never say, "Oh, I'm sorry for whatever I learned about how the Legislature works." The answer is always, "Gee, I wish I would have learned more. I wish I would have come to the galleries and watched or watched on TV." To tell you the truth, until just before I was elected, I didn't know it was televised. I had no idea at all that this was televised. Maybe it's something that we have to do more public service announcements on and let people know what station in their area it's on because I'm letting people know now who actually watch.

Certainly when we were here over the night this past early Monday morning, starting at a minute after midnight, I was getting messages on my phone, on my mobile. We're allowed to have our mobiles in here. The galleries are not, of course, but I was getting messages from people watching at home at 4 o'clock in the morning. At 4 o'clock in the morning, I got a message from Carrie Liddy, who's running for local council in Vaughan. She messaged me and said, "I can't sleep. This is too interesting. Let Premier Ford know that I support him 100%."

So quite a few people were watching through the night. I believe the Star said that it was one of their most-read articles. That's how you get people engaged. If one positive thing came out of that early-morning all-night sitting—because the purpose of it obviously was negated yesterday with the stay, the judicial judgment that stayed the previous judge's ruling. But if one thing came out of that all-night sitting, I would say it's that people got engaged in the last couple of weeks.

Boy, oh boy, if Premier Ford is doing one thing right with this team, it's that we're getting the province of Ontario engaged. Through the leadership race, through this past election cycle, through our proposed changes, our quick changes, our fulfilling of our campaign promises so quickly and, I think, so efficiently, and not without a lot of media attention and sometimes controversy—but then again, controversy helps people get engaged, so maybe that's a good thing sometimes.

I really appreciate the opportunity to speak, Madam Speaker, and maybe I'm going to go have a coffee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Good morning to everyone in the Legislature. It's always a pleasure to stand and debate all items that come forward, be it legislation or standing orders or motions. It's very important.

One of the things that the standing orders guide us on is that they guide us as to the rules of this Legislature. The book that we have—everyone has one in their desk. It also has the Legislative Assembly Act in here as well. It's very interesting, if you actually take the time to read it. I, myself, do pick it up in the evening and I read a couple of pages, and then I'll have to go back and read it again, because there is a lot of "clause (a), subject to clause (b)"

and “subsection this.” It’s like a path, right? You have to follow that path. It’s a bit of a patchwork and a puzzle, and you link those things together, and then it makes up the rules that really govern us here in the Legislature.

They are subject to change obviously, but I think the approach that this government has taken to change the standing orders is really wrong-headed. We need to have discussions about what rules, guidelines, expectations and boundaries we work under and how they fit into what we do. The government has a role in this Legislature, and we understand that. They want to pass legislation. We have a role—we’re the official opposition—but they’re not understanding that very well. They’re not paying attention to how to develop a working relationship with people in this House. They really just want to push their dominance, I’m going to say, on the official opposition by way of the standing orders.

It’s very clear, when you look at what they proposed, how they want to exert their power and dominance over the official opposition, to kind of limit what we can do so that we can exercise some discretion around their legislation. That’s the thing: We’re not going to stop every piece of legislation by way of ringing bells or asking for further debate on things. There are times we’re actually going to agree with the government that things should be time-allocated because it’s a really good bill—

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Maybe not time-allocated.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Well, yes, that’s true. We’re not going to necessarily—

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Stop debate.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: You’re right. We’re not going to stop debate but we can agree that we can move forward on bills when they are good legislation and allow each member to have an opportunity to talk.

I’ve said this before: This government likes to use a sledgehammer. What’s wrong with having a conversation with your colleagues? What’s wrong with that? Because what happens is that when you come to the table and you actually get to know someone, you understand them better, and all the thoughts and presumptions you made about what they’re trying to do or what we’re trying to do or what the independents are trying to do—they actually come down to reality and you realize that you have common ground. If we can find that common ground, we can create standing orders that work for everyone.

I have to tell you that when we go to the House leaders meetings—and this is another piece of the way this government is conducting themselves, like a domineering effect—they don’t even let us know ahead of time what’s coming up, which is, again, very wrong in a working relationship.

1010

Today, we have a House sheet, but we have yet to confirm—and I haven’t checked my BlackBerry, but as of about 9:30, the government has yet to confirm what business they’ll be bringing forward after private members’ bills. In one of their standing orders, they’re talking about how Thursdays need to be productive, because the independents don’t have the time and, therefore, there’s a

gap between the voting period and when we bring business forward. Yet they haven’t told us what that business is.

They profess to say, “We need to work here, and nobody else has a work ethic like we do.” I call that horse feathers, as the member mentioned earlier. I call that horse feathers, Speaker, because I think we all have the work ethic that we bring to this House to do the best by the people we represent. If that means working later, I think all of us here want to do that.

The common goal that we bring to this Legislature is to make a change for the better, to make a difference to people’s lives. Yes, this government thinks it’s making a difference to people’s lives when they’ve passed the most recent bills that they had, their agenda. But remember, you’re also being challenged in court on each one of those bills.

The other piece—you have to reflect. You say, “We don’t believe in the cap-and-trade.” They call it a carbon tax, the federal government’s carbon tax, and they’re taking them to court. Yet they don’t see that reflection back in Bill 31 and understand that what they’re doing—that people don’t agree with it and they’re taking them to the court. They actually act like they’re offended or hurt that someone would challenge their authority in legislation—

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It’s egregious.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Exactly. So I smile when the member from Caledon—is that still your—

Interjection: Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: —Dufferin–Caledon does a little heckling, or another member does a little heckling on this side of House. Sometimes, it’s the interaction of the job. Now, when you get way offside and way off-colour, that’s rude, and you do have to stand up and withdraw. Absolutely, Speaker.

I remember when the Conservatives were the official opposition, and one member in particular from Ottawa, who is now the community and social services minister, would always say things that she would have to withdraw. I bet you that she’s having withdrawals from withdrawing, because she was always asked to withdraw—always.

We’re running out of time, unfortunately. I wanted to put that introduction first of how I wanted to talk about the bill, and how what the standing orders allow us to do is actually form a working relationship with the government. It’s a tool that we have. The book is a tool that we use to build those relationships with each other in this Legislature. Unfortunately, we’re hacking away at them. When I get back to debating, in the next 13 minutes of my speech, on another day, I’ll be able to address that.

I listened also to the member from Thornhill, as well as the member for Peterborough–Kawartha earlier—and how passionate he was and how vocal and strong he was in his opinion about the independents.

You know, Speaker, when you have—how many seats?

Interjection: A bajillion.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Too many.

Mr. Dave Smith: Seventy-six.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: That’s a majority, right? It’s a majority. When you have that majority, you don’t

need to—you can be humble. You can be humble when you're winning, right? You can be humble.

I can tell you that I did not agree with many of the things that the Liberals presented in this Legislature. As a government, they were completely entitled; I agree with that. But this is a new makeup in this Legislature.

I'm going to leave it at that right now, because I know you're probably going to call the House to adjourn for question period. Thank you, Speaker.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ross Romano: I wanted to welcome a number of my staff from my constituency office here to Queen's Park today. They're all here for training this morning: Colleen Bishop, Jason Naccarato, Christina Speers and Natasha Zore. One of my newly hired people in my office here is my legislative assistant, Anisha Vohora. Welcome.

Mr. Doug Downey: I have two guests that I would like to introduce. First is my chief of staff for the constituency, Kathryn Abel, who's in the members' gallery. The other is Melissa Varsava, who is the chief of staff for my colleague Andrea Khanjin in her constituency.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce three members of my constituency staff who are here today for training. They all live and work in Carleton. I have Barbara Shantz, who is my executive assistant; Hina Patel, my constituency administrator; and John Buchan, who is my clerk/typist. I just wanted to welcome them to Toronto and to Queen's Park.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Could I have the House's attention? I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), the member for Ottawa-Vanier has notified the Clerk of her intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 32, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998.

The order for second reading of Bill 32 may therefore not be called today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is to the Premier. A few short weeks ago, the Premier decided that the top priority of his new government was not hospital wait times, the state of our schools or the 80,000 jobs that were lost in the province last month. His top priority was throwing a municipal election into chaos, an issue that he

didn't mention even once during the election campaign. Now, Toronto has been forced into an election that many doubt can be conducted freely or fairly and may yet to be found to violate the charter.

Can the Premier tell us what the plan is if the original ruling around Bill 5 is upheld on appeal?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: We had a great day yesterday on all fronts. We had a great day with Bill 5. We had a great day down in Washington with Minister Wilson, making sure that we're protecting jobs in Ontario, we're protecting the steel and aluminium sector, we're protecting the agriculture sector and we're protecting the automotive sector.

My friends, we're there to put money back into the taxpayer's pocket, not back into the government's pocket. I can read off some of our accomplishments over just a short period of time of a few months: We announced the end of cap-and-trade; we saved 7,500 jobs in Pickering that would have been shut down by the Leader of the Opposition; we committed to building a memorial for the most important people around, our veterans of the Afghanistan war—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Looks like most of the money is going into lawyers' pockets here in Ontario, Speaker.

The fact is that all of the Premier's actions, from his late-night lockdown of the chamber to his plan to trample charter rights, were done to achieve one thing and one thing only: forcing a single municipality to have elections that many doubt will be free or fair, and may still be proven to violate the Charter of Rights.

Does the Premier really consider that a success?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: We can see that the Leader of the Opposition is still trying to protect her downtown NDP friends, but we're focused on important things that matter to everyone in Ontario.

We ended up reforming OHIP to support the people in greatest need.

We ended up, as we promised, getting rid of the CEO of Hydro One and the board of directors, to lower hydro rates by 12%—again, putting money back into people's pockets.

We:

—cancelled wasteful, wasteful energy contracts that were implemented by the Liberal government;

—launched an Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry—and you will hear from the finance minister how the Liberals destroyed this province financially;

—launched a line-item-by-line-item audit of government spending. I can't wait until you hear the line-item-by-line-item audit, to see who's been wasting the taxpayers' money;

—attended the Council of the Federation meeting in New Brunswick—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. On Monday of this week, I reminded the House that we were

going to be cracking down on the imputing of motive. I'm going to ask the Premier to withdraw.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This Premier never campaigned on doing this. From what we can see, he didn't even tell his Minister of Municipal Affairs about his plan before the drafted bill was dropped on his desk. This Premier loves to get his way, but he's not very good at proving that he deserves it.

From Ottawa to Niagara, municipalities across Ontario are looking on and wondering whether they're going to get the short end of the stick the next time the Premier wakes up on the wrong side of the bed.

What protection can the Premier offer to those municipalities?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker—

Interjection: He doesn't sleep.

Hon. Doug Ford: You're right: I don't sleep, because I'm up protecting the taxpayers all day and all night.

Our PC team has accomplished more for this province than any government in recent memory.

When the students up at York were struggling, we ended the York University strike.

We announced the Better Local Government Act to make things run more efficiently; committed to fixing social assistance by increasing rates by 1.5%; and launched a constitutional challenge against the federal carbon tax, the single worst tax there is. We returned buck-a-beer to the people of Ontario.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier.

The Premier stated he "won't be shy" about overriding the charter in the future, so can the Premier tell us which charter rights he plans to override next?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: We have such a long list of accomplishments, it's just amazing.

When people in the north were struggling with the fires, we made sure we committed an additional \$100 million to fight forest fires across this province.

1040

We invested \$25 million to combat gangs and guns, which is a serious problem in some large cities.

We announced the cannabis retail model.

We announced the Hydro One board of directors, proclaimed the Hydro One Accountability Act, reduced natural gas prices by up to \$80 per year per family, expanding natural gas—that was a great, great announcement the other day at the plowing match, when we went up there for the farmers, that we're actually putting money back into the farmers' pockets—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We recall that the Premier attacked the judge who ruled against him, but the fact is that judges uphold the law of the land. That includes the Charter of Rights and the Human Rights Code. Sadly, the Premier made it clear that he thinks that the law of the land shouldn't apply to him when he wants to get his way. That leaves Ontario and Ontarians wondering what's next.

Can the Premier tell us whether he's ready to use the "notwithstanding" clause to override, for example, collective bargaining rights or to keep updated sex health education out of our schools, or is there a line that this Premier won't cross?

Interjection: Tell us more.

Hon. Doug Ford: I'll tell you more.

We brought accountability to Toronto's city council, as well as a number of two-tier municipalities.

We reduced the costs associated with licence renewals. As the Liberals want to continue jacking it up, we froze it.

Interjection: Bringing relief for families.

Hon. Doug Ford: We're giving relief to families. We're giving relief to businesses by lowering taxes. We're giving relief to families earning up to \$80,000, reducing their taxes by 20%.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: This is about respecting the taxpayers. It's about putting money back into their pocket. It's making sure that we have an accountable, transparent government that we haven't seen down here in 15 years. We will bring integrity back to the taxpayers of this great province. We will be the engine of Canada once again.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This is the government of backroom deals. We haven't had a single committee meeting happen in this chamber since this government got elected.

Here's what Ontarians see: In the few months that he's been on the job, the Premier has managed to find himself in court almost on a weekly basis. People are taking this government on because they worry that the Premier just does not respect their rights. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms was created to provide basic legal protection to all Canadians from arrogant governments that think a majority government gives them licence to do whatever they want.

The Premier said he "won't be shy" about trampling those rights over and over again, so my simple question is: What rights will the Premier override next?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I find it pretty rich that the Leader of the Opposition is talking backroom deals when the NDP propped up the Liberal government 97% of the time. I'd like to know how many backroom deals they had with the Liberal government to destroy this province, to make us the most indebted region anywhere in the world, the largest subnational debt in the world.

Well, I can tell the people of Ontario that we're going to turn that around. We're going to start reducing the debt, putting money back in their pockets. We're going to create

jobs. If it was up to the Leader of the Opposition, there would be 7,500 people unemployed right now in Pickering, with no solution.

Again, we are going to lower the hydro rates, lower taxes, stimulate the economy like this province has never seen before, because we're going to create an environment to create good-paying jobs.

COURT RULING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Attorney General, but I have to say that 80,000 job losses is not a stimulated economy for our province, Speaker.

In their ruling on Bill 5, the appellate court felt compelled to note that their decision was not informed by the government lawyer's arguments that Bill 31 and the charter override would not proceed if they granted a stay.

The Attorney General will know that attempts to politically persuade the courts are exactly the sort of thing that our province's top lawyer is supposed to guard against. So can the Attorney General confirm that this direction did not come from her or senior officials in her office?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, through you to the Leader of the Opposition: We provided that evidence in response to the city clerk's evidence regarding uncertainty about the upcoming election on October 22, because, as we've been saying all along, we want to provide certainty to the voters of Toronto regarding their election process. We provided that information in direct response to her concerns about uncertainty. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, because I'm sure she read the decision, the court said that it had no bearing on their decision.

I can say that now the voters in Toronto have the certainty that they've needed regarding their election, and we are hopeful we'll be able to proceed on October—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: One media report suggested that the political direction to government lawyers came directly from the Premier's office, which looks like a transparent attempt to politically manipulate the courts and the office of the Attorney General. It's one thing to disrespect the Minister of Municipal Affairs and usurp his role, but the Attorney General has a legal responsibility.

Can the Attorney General promise that political interference with crown lawyers arguing on behalf of Ontario will not happen again?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I would direct the Leader of the Opposition to the decision that the Ontario Court of Appeal issued yesterday for the answer to her question, and let you know that we are able, finally, to provide certainty. We campaigned on a promise of smaller, more efficient government, and that's what we have delivered. So I direct her to the decision for further questions, not to media reports.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

The United States is Ontario's number one trading partner. Some 920,000 Ontario jobs depend on free and fair trade between our two economies. Jobs in my own constituency and across this great province depend on getting NAFTA right and making our industry more competitive.

Automobiles are a great and important example of how connected our economies really are. The parts on an average car cross the Canada, US and Mexico borders seven times before being installed on the production line.

Can the minister please inform the Legislature about what our government is doing to stand up for Ontario workers?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to my honourable colleague from Brampton South, who is joining all PC caucus members in standing up for Ontario workers and making sure that Ontario is open for business.

In July, Mr. Speaker, the House will know that I first travelled to Washington to testify at the US Department of Commerce's public hearing on section 232, which was a US threat to put tariffs on autos and auto parts. We successfully, to date, argued that. I stressed the importance of the Ontario-US trade relationship. This marked the first time in history that a subnational government was invited to give testimony.

The Premier has been burning up the phone lines speaking to numerous US governors, legislators and stakeholders, and what we're hearing is that a NAFTA deal must get done.

Yesterday, Premier Ford and I travelled to Washington to meet face to face with members of the Canadian negotiating team, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian and American ambassadors. We were formally briefed on the latest developments—

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

Supplementary.

1050

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to the Premier and minister for working to keep markets open for Ontario workers and businesses.

The US and Ontario really do share a unique economic relationship grounded in free and fair trade, integrated supply chains and complementary markets. Everyone we speak to emphasizes how important it is that we reach a deal and end this ongoing uncertainty. NAFTA has served all three parties well for 24 years. But people expect and deserve a government that will stand up for their economic interests and the prosperity of our province.

Can the minister please inform the Legislature what message he delivered to our federal counterparts in Washington?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to the honourable member. Our government knows that, in order to create and protect jobs in Ontario, Ontario must be open for business.

This is dependent upon a fair and open trade agreement with our largest partner, the United States.

The message yesterday to the federal government and our negotiators was that the Premier and this government stand shoulder to shoulder with the federal government. It's "team Canada" when it comes to NAFTA. We stressed the importance of the agricultural sector in Ontario, of our automotive sector, and steel and aluminum. Every province has sectors they want to stand up for. Those are the sectors that we emphasized, that affect just about every job in the province of Ontario.

The Premier did an excellent job—I was so proud of him—in talking to the negotiators directly. This is a man and this is a Premier that really, really cares about your job, about putting food on the table for families, and he showed that in the US. I think they were extremely impressed and the message got through.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is for the Minister of Education. Today and tomorrow, students across our province are staging walkouts to protest the chaos brought on by this government's rollback of sex education and the cancellation of the Indigenous curriculum writing sessions. While students are forced to fight for a curriculum that prepares them for today's world, their parents and educators are left in the dark about the promised consultations.

Will the Minister of Education tell the House how long Ontario's youth will be forced to learn from a 20-year-old health curriculum while the government delays its work on the curriculum consultations?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I am very much looking forward to the rolling out of this consultation across the province. It's going to be comprehensive. It's something that parents have never seen before, because, first and foremost, we as a government are standing up for parents and respecting their right to exercise their voice. I'm very much looking forward to hearing from students and every person who wants to exercise their voice in sharing how we should be shaping our curriculum going forward.

The fact of the matter is, it's the PC government of Ontario that actually is going to get it right. We care about the path of success our students are walking on. We look forward to the information and the consultation responses that we are going to foster. We are going to be embarking on a unique situation whereby we will be utilizing telephone town halls and online responses, in terms of a survey that will be released at the end of this month, and we will be entertaining written submissions as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnett): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Mr. Speaker, while this government has dragged their heels on this so-called consultation for months—months—students in 2018 will be learning from a health curriculum written in 1998—

Interjections.

Ms. Marit Stiles: They know it's true.

When will the minister turn off the time machine and ensure Ontario's students have the information they need to feel safe, empowered and ready for the challenges of today? Students are telling you today and tomorrow that they've had enough. They want answers. They want to see what this consultation involves, and they want you to roll back this decision and move Ontario forward in the sex ed curriculum, not backward.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: We are moving Ontario forward because we're actually listening to parents, students and communities throughout this province once and for all. That's what I call forward-moving.

You know what? I absolutely respect anyone who wants to stand up. Students, if you want to have your voice heard, I say sincerely to them, Speaker: Please contribute; participate in our consultation. It's going to be very unique because we're going to be focusing on improving their math scores, we're going to be focusing on mental health supports and we're going to be focusing on how we can best prepare our students for the realities of today. Most importantly, Speaker, we're standing up with our administrators and encouraging students to respect the code of conduct, which I hope the member opposite is encouraging students to do as well.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. The minister and Premier Ford have said that our government for the people will be known as the government that brought transit to Ontario.

During the election, I heard at every door, "We need more transit." Constituents in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore commute to and from work every day using the GO train, so I was pleased to join the minister this morning, along with my colleague from Durham, at an announcement to increase service along both lines of Lakeshore East and Lakeshore West. An increase in service will give my constituents a more convenient commute, allowing them the opportunity to spend more time with their number one priority, their families.

Would the minister please inform the House on how today's announcement will increase the service and benefit commuters?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore and also the member from Durham for joining us this morning.

Yes, that was an exciting announcement. It builds upon the commitment that Premier Ford made in the campaign and we have lived up to. We are going to increase transit opportunities and ridership in this province and expand the GO network and expand transit throughout the GTHA.

Today, we announced that, effective September 24—next Monday—an additional 220 trains per week will service the GO Lakeshore line. That is going to be such a benefit to the people who ride transit in this province and in the GTHA. It's hard not to get excited about it, and I'm sure the people on the other side are as excited as I am about this.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. That's the minute.

Hon. John Yakabuski: I'll do more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Yes, I know. Supplementary?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you, Minister, for that exciting answer. I know the people of Etobicoke–Lakeshore will be extremely thrilled to hear this news. It's something we campaigned on, it's something that we promised, and it's something that we're delivering on.

This is an exciting time for all transit users in Ontario. I know that this is just a start, and I'm certainly looking for future announcements that this government will have that will take place in the near future. The people of Ontario finally have a government that listens, and I applaud the continued efforts of Premier Ford and our Minister of Transportation to bring efficient transit to the people of Ontario.

Can the minister also speak to how this service increase fits with the rest of our plan that the government has for the people of Ontario?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank the member again for her question—and I'm watching the clock.

Two hundred and twenty trains per week, 27 trains per day on the Lakeshore East GO line, 17 trains per day on the Lakeshore West line—that's 408,000 additional seats per week available on the GO Lakeshore corridor. The change that this makes to people's lives—everyone can understand that. People want to be able to move more efficiently and effectively through the GTA.

Time and time again, the Premier has said that better transit is an absolutely vital economic development tool, and we're going to use it to make Ontario better. We are committed to building transit, and this is just the first step.

1100

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Hallway medicine at Thunder Bay regional hospital has reached a crisis. Recently, I brought a friend to the emergency room and saw overwhelmed hospital staff doing their best, with stretchers lined up the halls.

One of the reasons for overcrowding at the hospital is the lack of a regional mental health crisis centre. Over 6,300 people visited the emergency room in 2017 with mental health and substance abuse issues. When will these much-needed mental health services be funded?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question. There are two issues here that we are immediately addressing and that we spoke about during the election campaign. One is to end hallway medicine. We are working on that with the creation of more long-term-care beds to end the number of alternate-level-of-care people who end up staying in the hospital because there's nowhere else for them to go. We're working on that

directly right now; we are creating 15,000 spaces within five years.

The other issue is to deal with mental health and addictions issues, which are also using hospital resources in the emergency department. We need to end that. There are some short-term solutions that we are going to be putting forward for this year that deal with some of the more urgent issues.

We are looking at the overall picture. We know that we don't have a comprehensive system right now, but we have committed a large amount of money, as you know—\$3.8 billion over 10 years—in order to be able to deal with that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: The government can help hallway medicine by making important investments in emergency and mental health treatment. We need this at Thunder Bay regional hospital and in our community, desperately. But so far, this government seems more interested in making cuts than making investments. The government has put all new investments on hold and under review.

We can't wait any longer. We need mental health crisis services in Thunder Bay and for Thunder Bay regional hospital. When will the minister provide the necessary funding and get this opened?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We are doing a line-by-line review of all programs and services in Ontario because we know that after 15 years of Liberal government, spending is out of control. So we need to make sure that whatever investments we do make are going to be of benefit to the people of Ontario.

We do know that one of the biggest areas for that is with mental health and addictions. We know that, despite some efforts that have been made, it has been more of a scattered approach. What we need is a comprehensive, holistic view of what people need. That covers things like mental health and addictions treatment and also housing, employment, social and recreational opportunities—the list goes on and on.

We have about 12 ministries on this side of the House that are working on that, because it's not just one simple solution; it's going to require the work of everyone to put that system together. We have a lot of money we're going to put into that; \$3.8 billion is a lot of money. We're going to make—

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

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Premier. The Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario reports that the province's credit rating remain strong, but warns that your government's planned actions could damage Ontario's financial standing.

The FAO further states that under the previous Liberal governments—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The member for Scarborough–Guildwood has the right to ask a question. She’s a long way from the chair. I have to be able to hear her. I would ask the government benches to come to order and let her put her question.

Start the clock. I’ll give the member more time.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: The FAO further states that under the previous Liberal governments, there has been constrained spending on programs for the last number of years.

Through you, Speaker: Premier, you’ve promised things to Ontarians. How can you pay for those without cuts? You promised to build more subways in Scarborough, while at the same time you’re going to reduce revenues. During the campaign, you said that no one will be laid off. Premier, will you come clean and tell the people of Ontario what programs you plan to cut?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, that’s so shameful I’ve got to give it to the finance minister.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You can refer a question, but we don’t need to hear a political statement during the referral.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Premier.

We’re going to have to tell the lob question that was coming to me on this later to move on to something else because you’ve already done it for us. What the FAO actually noted was the history of waste, mismanagement and scandals from the previous government.

Interjections.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, the waste, mismanagement and scandal of the previous government that was propped up by the NDP was the actual cause of the significant deterioration in Ontario’s credit rating since—

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Actually, page 4 of the FAO report states that there has been “restrained growth in program spending over the last number of years.” It’s right there.

So my question, again, to the Premier: Our Liberal record has propelled Ontario, having the lowest unemployment rate in 20 years, the highest foreign direct investment record over the last five years in North America, leading the growth amongst the G7—

Interjection.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Will the Premier listen to the FAO report and continue the Liberal record of balanced investments and investing in critical programs—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: —like education, health care and infrastructure that has led Ontario to have a driving economy? Will the Premier continue this balance of investment and growth to sustain Ontario’s economy?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, quite frankly, I’m still shocked at the question. We’ve been clear from the start that only this government is committed to enhancing financial accountability and transparency. The FAO’s report was a scathing indictment on the past Liberal government—again, propped up by the NDP, who supported them on 97% of their votes. It was a smouldering indictment of your activities, your scandals, your abuse—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Victor Fedeli: —your mismanagement of the budget. Speaker, to my finance critic: I have been a finance critic for five years. I’ve written five books on the Liberal government misuse. I will ask a page to take Focus on Finance 5 over to the finance critic, and she can see the scandals in her own government.

SNOWMOBILING

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: As an outdoor enthusiast, I was pleased to read of the recent announcement by the Minister of Transportation. So my question is to the Minister of Transportation on his recent announcement to increase the access to safety training and licensing for snowmobilers. This was a direct response to long-standing requests from the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs and from many Ontarians.

Our government is committed to making life easier for the people of Ontario, and I thank the minister for highlighting the fact that online learning will allow for better access to safety training for those who live in rural and remote communities. With more trails and more riders, we must continue to make sure that our riders are safe and up to date on the latest safety measures.

1110

Could the minister please inform the House as to how these changes will make it easier for Ontarians to safely enjoy our great outdoors during the winter months?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I’d like to thank the member for Barrie–Innisfil for her question, and her advocacy as well.

We all want people to get out and enjoy the great outdoors in Ontario, and snowmobiling is one of those great sports. We have been pleased to partner with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs in bringing forth an online safety training course for people to have more access to safety training and get out on to those trails and enjoy them.

This is something that the OFSC has been asking for for some time, and the previous Liberal government seemed to refuse to want to co-operate with them. The OFSC is a great organization across this province, and we were more than happy to join with them in bringing forth these kinds of changes.

Let me point out, Speaker, that any time we make regulatory changes in the Ministry of Transportation,

safety is always top of mind, and it is no different in this case.

We have listened to the people. There will be more access to training, particularly for those who drive a long distance—

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Thank you to the Minister of Transportation for his practical approach to improving access to safety training and for listening to Ontarians.

Snowmobiling is a popular winter pastime for many of my constituents and people all around Ontario. Ensuring that our young riders, who are the future of snowmobiling in Ontario, have access to online safety training will be to their benefit and to all trail users'. I believe all members of this House believe it is very important to have up-to-date training and safety for our young generation so more Ontarians can get outside and we can attract more tourism in our province. This is a very positive development.

Can the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport update the House on how our government for the people is working with our partners to promote tourism and advance the priorities of snowmobilers in Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplemental question went to the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. John Yakabuski: To the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thanks for sharing. Thank you to my colleague from Barrie–Innisfil. Not only is snowmobiling a fun and great recreation; it's also an enormous economic benefit to our communities. Each winter, an estimated 200,000 snowmobilers hit the trails and inject \$1.7 billion into Ontario's economy.

Our government for the people is proud to partner with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs. Dozens of clubs and over 7,000 volunteers maintain 32,000 kilometres of snowmobile trails connecting communities throughout Ontario. These trails are not only used by Ontarians but are a very popular destination for our out-of-province visitors.

I'm happy to share a quote from the executive director of the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs on the government of Ontario's recent announcement: "On behalf of snowmobilers across the province of Ontario, the OFSC welcomes this announcement and applauds ... the government of Ontario for their support of our sector."

ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Ontario is facing an unprecedented public health crisis. Between January and March of this year, opioids have claimed over 1,000 Canadian lives, but the minister has refused to declare the opioid crisis a public health emergency, which would quickly send resources and funding to where they are desperately needed, and has called into question the future of Ontario's overdose prevention sites. More and more

lives are in jeopardy with every minute the minister delays action.

Will the minister finally take action and declare the opioid crisis a public health emergency?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question. It is an issue that we take very seriously. We are losing far too many people to opioid use and misuse because it's often being mixed with other things like fentanyl; people aren't consuming what they think they're consuming.

We are taking it seriously. The Premier is taking it seriously. That's why he asked me to conduct an evidence-based review to determine whether we should continue with supervised consumption sites and overdose prevention sites.

I have taken that seriously. I've met with four tables of people, including people who are in favour of it, people who have some concerns about it, law enforcement officers, community representatives and people with lived experience. I've visited several supervised consumption sites myself. I've gone on a walkabout with the Toronto business improvement area. I have taken it seriously, and I am preparing a report for the Premier because, as you know, September 30 is the deadline when the federal exemption expires.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Back to the minister: As part of budget 2018, the federal government has allocated \$150 million in emergency funding for provinces and territories to combat the opioid crisis that is devastating families across the country. It was recently confirmed that British Columbia will receive \$70 million to fight the opioid crisis and save lives. New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec have all taken the federal government up on their funding offer.

Minister, why is Ontario leaving money on the table when so many Ontarians' lives are at stake?

Hon. Christine Elliott: In fact, we are taking the federal government up on the money that is available. It was because of the election being at the time that it was that several other provinces have moved ahead of us, but we are working on finalizing that agreement so that we can have access to those monies. That is important, but of course, our own monies are going to be put into this system as well in various ways.

We are looking at a comprehensive, complete mental health and addictions system. The issue with respect to opioids is one aspect of it, but any solution that is arrived at, we're going to have to figure out how that is going to slot into the overall picture. So we need to take both short-term action, as well as longer-term action. We are working directly on that right now. It is a priority for my ministry, and I am preparing to make recommendations to the Premier for his decision about whether to continue or not before September 30. This is time-limited. It is something that we are dealing with straightaway and we will be making recommendations—

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

Next question?

TAXATION

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday, the Minister of the Environment revealed to this Legislature that refineries had reduced their prices on gas by 4.6 cents a litre. This was in response to the government's cancellation of the expensive and ineffective cap-and-trade program of the previous Liberal government.

This reduction has resulted in direct savings on the cost of fuel, providing some much-needed relief for the people of Ontario, relief which our government promised we would deliver. The people of Ontario can't afford a carbon tax. Times are tight, and the Premier promised that relief is on the way.

Will the Minister of the Environment explain to this House how our changes are reducing the cost of fuel and making life more affordable for families in Ontario?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member from Perth–Wellington for his question and for his advocacy for his constituents.

It is great to see gas prices starting to come down. It is great to see relief for families. There is a straight line between this and the mandate on which we were elected to fight carbon taxes at the provincial and at the federal level.

This started with the introduction of Bill 4, which is currently before the Legislature, and that is part of our commitment, which will reduce gasoline prices by 10 cents a litre when the entire commitment is fulfilled, both Bill 4 and the following commitments.

Mr. Speaker, we've also announced our next steps in terms of challenging the federal government with their regressive, job-killing carbon tax—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I want to thank the minister for standing up for the people of this province.

Again to the Minister of the Environment: I can't express how important this commitment was to me and to my constituents. When I knocked on doors in my riding of Perth–Wellington, the issue of affordability was number one. Parents would tell me how they struggled to fill their tanks up in order to bring their kids to hockey and how they would fill up for \$5 at a time, hoping for prices to come down just a little bit. That's because every little bit helps, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, I received messages of support expressing their thanks not only for the savings, but more than that. It was from people who said they continue to be impressed by a government that delivers on what they promised. How refreshing after 15 years of broken promises.

1120

Will the Minister of the Environment tell this House how he plans to continue to deliver on these commitments?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, the member is so right: This is about families. Every bit helps. The NDP scoff at something like \$260 a family per year. That's real

money, and that's money that the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act will help deliver to families that need that support.

This isn't about not being focused on the environment. We will have an approach to the environment that respects our need to reduce greenhouse gases, but will respect the taxpayers and, as the member referenced, respect the needs of families for those dollars in their pockets.

INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: *Remarks in Oji-Cree.*

Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Karlena Kamenawatamin was a 13-year-old girl from Bearskin Lake, a remote fly-in community in my riding. Karlena took her own life early yesterday morning. Now the chief and the community are concerned that there will be more tragedies like Karlena's. This concern is well founded. In 2015, a 10-year-old girl took her life. This was also in Bearskin Lake.

What is the Premier prepared to do to ensure that these pandemics of our young Indigenous people killing themselves stop once and for all?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The question is to the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much for the question. It is something that we take very seriously on this side of the House, as well. I know that in many Indigenous communities there are no adequate supports for young people for physical or mental health, and mental health is health. That is something that we are going to seriously address as we are filing and completing our system on mental health and addictions.

We know that there are far too many young people who are committing suicide who should have a chance at life. They need a lot of supports. It's not just health counselling; it's so much more than that. It's education; it's housing; it's communications with others. There's lots of work that we need to do.

But I look forward to working with you, to visiting your communities and to understanding from people directly what supports they need. Then we will do our best to make sure that we can provide those supports.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Back to the Premier: Two years ago, the suicide rate for children under the age of 15 in First Nations I represent was 50 times higher than the national average. But what has changed since these children took their own lives? This is a health crisis. This is a mental health crisis. This is an intergenerational trauma crisis. This is a housing crisis.

Karlena, the girl who took her own life yesterday morning, lived in a rundown home, a house without electricity. What is the Premier prepared to do today, long-term, to ensure that the community of Bearskin Lake and

other remote communities in Ontario have the resources they need to prevent more deaths of our young people?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much for your emotional question. I remember sitting in opposition myself, asking questions about suicide prevention.

Yesterday I met with the independent child advocate regarding this specific issue, and last week with the coroner regarding this same issue. This government is committed to working with you and our First Nations in order to put the proper supports in place so that these tragedies don't continue.

I know when someone loses their life by suicide, when they make that decision, it rocks an entire community. I can understand, just standing here with you, how emotional this is. I'd like to speak with you after question period so that we can make sure that we have a plan in place that fully supports you and helps your community get through this.

TAXATION

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the Minister of Transportation for the great news today on the GO train line. As a commuter, that's fantastic news for commuters all across the GTA.

My question is to the Minister of the Environment.

Ontario recognizes the importance of a clean environment and preserving that for generations to come, and we recognize the very real challenges that climate change presents to that. Ontario has done more than our part in Confederation to make significant progress toward reducing emissions.

These results have also come at a great cost to the people of Ontario. We have some of the highest energy bills in North America, and these costs have left people fuming at the pumps when they can't afford to fill their tanks. I have heard from constituents who say that they want to do their part but they simply can't afford to pay anymore.

Can the Minister of the Environment advise this Legislature on how we plan to balance affordability with long-term progress?

Hon. Rod Phillips: The member is right: This is about balance. He's also right that Ontario has made significant progress and is a leader in Confederation. While Canada's emissions declined by just 1.5% since 2000, Ontario's emissions dropped by more than 20%, and compared with an average decrease of 4.7% across the OECD. On a per capita basis, as I mentioned to the Legislature yesterday, Ontario has reduced its carbon footprint by 34% since 1990.

So yes, Ontario will do more, but the people of Ontario have paid a great deal for the contributions that they've made. That's one of the reasons we eliminated the previous government's cap-and-trade carbon tax. That's one of the reasons we're seeing the 4.6-cent reduction that

refiners have now made. And that is why that gas price reduction is now working its way through to families.

As the member rightly said, this is about balance. It is about balancing the needs of families with the legitimate and important priorities we have around the environment.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I'd like to thank the minister for his answer.

I'm glad to hear that the minister recognizes the importance of a balanced approach. For too long, the people of Ontario have been saddled with the cost of unfair and regressive carbon taxes. Our government made a promise to make life more affordable for Ontarians. Our government has a clear mandate to get rid of the cap-and-trade carbon tax. We promised that help was finally on the way. It is such a relief, after months of gas prices upwards of \$1.35 and \$1.40, to finally see them come down to more reasonable levels.

Speaker, my constituents think that they should keep more money in their pockets. Can the minister advise this House as to what he is doing to make life more affordable for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: Our work in terms of repealing cap-and-trade is part of our broader agenda, whether it's reducing hydro rates or the other initiatives that we're taking under the leadership of our Premier to make life more affordable for Ontario families. Every cent that was spent on cap-and-trade, an ineffective approach to reducing greenhouse gases, was money taken out of Ontarians' pockets. We'll be putting \$260 back in Ontarians' pockets. That's money for families; that's money not for luxuries, but for the basic necessities they need.

We will be coming forward with a made-in-Ontario approach that balances the needs of the economy, the important priorities of reducing greenhouse gas, cleaner air, cleaner water, but also the pocketbooks of Ontarians.

Our priority is a plan that works for Ontarians and that works for the environment at the same time.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: My question is for the Premier.

Yesterday, this government issued a memo indicating that there were some drastic changes to the ministerial priorities. Among the ministries and offices being scrapped by the Premier was the Anti-Racism Directorate. This was shocking, since the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, answering a previous question, said, "We will continue to work, as a ministry and through the directorate, to ensure that racism is not something that continues in the province...."

Can the Premier tell us how dismantling the Anti-Racism Directorate will allow it to continue its work of combatting systemic racism?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for that question.

As I've mentioned in the past, there is no place in Ontario for racism, and our province is an all-inclusive province. We will continue our work on a whole-of-government basis with respect to ensuring that there is no racism. We will continue our work.

1130

I'm not sure where that notice came from for you, but we will continue our work in that area.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I'm just a little bit concerned because oftentimes when I ask questions, it begins with a discussion about corrections, which is part of why this is an issue.

In addition to the Anti-Racism Directorate, we're now finding out that we're scrapping the Ministry of International Trade in the midst of a trade crisis. The Ministry of Research, Innovation and Science is being collapsed despite the future of our economy being founded on research, innovation and science. And the Poverty Reduction Strategy office is gone, at a time when the government cancelled the Basic Income Pilot project and cut planned social assistance increases.

Premier, why are ensuring a good trading environment, building up our economy, ending racism and reducing poverty not a priority for this government?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'll speak to this. As far as this government is concerned, we are committed to ensuring that we look after the needs of the people in the province.

The Anti-Racism Directorate continues under the mandate of this ministry, and the work that I do particularly in this ministry deals with policing, enforcement, corrections and we're looking, together with the other ministries, at an integrated approach to dealing with a lot of the issues that have been plaguing this province for at least 15 years without any kind of solution.

We are going to work together between the different ministries and ensure that we look after the issues that are being discussed: education, youth, community, suicide, Indigenous people. We are working on an integrated basis between the different ministries to provide the service—

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Nina Tangri: My question is for the Minister of Finance. One of the core commitments of our government is to create and protect good jobs here in Ontario. However, the previous Liberal government pursued policies that made life harder and less affordable for Ontario families and businesses. Our government is committed to sending a message to the world that Ontario is open for business.

Could the minister please inform the House of his recent efforts to strengthen competitiveness and protect jobs for businesses and workers in Ontario and Canada?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for the question. Last week, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and, yes, Trade and I wrote to the

federal government. We asked them to take bold action in their fall economic statement to support businesses in Ontario and across Canada.

We would like to explore discussions with the federal government on several initiatives, including 100% in-year accelerated capital cost depreciation. We look forward to working with the federal government alongside our provincial and territorial partners to strengthen Ontario's competitiveness in the global economy. Our government is committed to ensuring that Ontario reclaims its place as the economic engine of Canada.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the minister for standing up for our jobs and our future prosperity. It is reassuring to hear that our government stands firm on our commitment to lowering tax to support employers so that they can invest, grow and create jobs in Ontario. The time for bold action is now.

Recent US tax reform and policy decisions provide the US with a competitive advantage over Ontario and Canada. Additionally, uncertainty around trade issues continues to pose a challenge. Last week, the CEO of CIBC said that it is vital for us to create a better environment for businesses and growth.

Could the minister further explain the importance of strengthening Ontario's competitiveness and ensuring the world knows that Ontario is open for business?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to the member. The member is absolutely correct that the time for bold action is now. The risks of inaction are simply too great to stand by idly; we hear it all the time.

My parliamentary assistant Mr. Parsa is holding red tape round tables. Another parliamentary assistant, Ms. Skelly, is holding round tables on NAFTA—because we are the trade ministry, as you might want to know over there—and the differential between tax rates in the United States on a number of fronts where President Trump has dramatically lowered and unlevelled the playing field.

I know that our fantastic Minister of Finance is perfectly aware of that and he's working really hard to live up to the Premier's commitment to lower taxes for middle-class families, to lower taxes for corporations and to create good jobs in the province of Ontario, because Ontario is open for business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have available for question period.

KARLENA KAMENAWATAMIN

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Two members have informed me that they would like to do a point of order. I'll first recognize the member for Kiiwetinoong.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I seek unanimous consent for a moment of silence to honour the life of Karlena Kamenawatamin, the young girl from Bearskin Lake who tragically died by suicide yesterday morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

The House observed a moment's silence.

PETER ADAMS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Peterborough–Kawartha on a point of order.

Mr. Dave Smith: I've been informed this morning that former member Peter Adams, who served in the 34th Legislature, has entered the final stages of palliative care. I would request that all members offer their support and prayers for the Adams family.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no deferred votes, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have two friends who are guests this afternoon here in the west gallery: Shafiq Beig, as you know, is the tailor for the presiding officers, but he's also a poet, and he's here to support my private member's bill this afternoon; and my new legislative assistant, Mike Gibbons, is here as well. Welcome both to Queen's Park.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'd like to welcome a friend and volunteer, Caroline Law, who is in the members' gallery with us today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to recognize and welcome to the members' gallery here today Steve Dyer of the 1st Canadian Army Veteran Motorcycle Unit OPS, and Boris Rosolak, St. Lawrence Unit, 1st Canadian Army Veterans. Thank you and welcome.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I have the pleasure and privilege today of welcoming a very, very special person, of course, for many, many years, a person who has kept me relatively on the straight and narrow despite many, many challenges that we all face in life—and I'm truly blessed: my wife of 48 years, Carol Ann.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Singh (Brampton East) assumes ballot item number 28 and Mr. Natyshak assumes ballot item number 69.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: In Windsor, one in four children live below the poverty line. Our Downtown Mission now serves an average of 726 hot meals per day, and 1,100

working poor people are forced to use their food bank every month. I know that Windsor is not the only municipality in Ontario that is struggling with these issues. And yet, just three months into their mandate, Premier Ford and his Conservative government have consistently attacked those most in need.

One of their first moves was to slash social assistance rate increases by 50%. They're going to eliminate the minimum wage increase. And they cancelled the Basic Income Pilot without a shred of evidence to support this decision. In fact, the evidence we do have shows that these programs are crucial to lifting people out of poverty.

In a letter to Minister MacLeod regarding the pilot project, the Windsor-Essex county board of health stated, "We strongly urge your government to reconsider this decision. Our position is based on extensive evidence that income instability reduces opportunities for health, social, and economic prosperity."

This Conservative government's priorities are completely backward. Even Ron Dunn, executive director of the Downtown Mission, said to me, "Our Premier should be embarrassed that buck-a-beer was a priority while our most vulnerable citizens are not cared for."

I agree with Ron, Speaker, and I will do everything in my power to ensure that this government is continually reminded that they have an obligation to actually help every person in this province, especially those living in poverty.

JOE DRUMM

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to rise today to pay tribute to my friend and former colleague on Durham regional council, Joe Drumm. Joe is retiring from public service after 41 distinguished years serving his constituents. It has been a truly amazing career, and it's difficult to imagine Whitby without his leadership on so many local issues. In total, Joe has been elected 14 times, worked under six different mayors and sat on countless committees at both the town and regional levels.

Speaker, Joe has been a dedicated representative, winning over residents with his unique ability to balance a hard-nosed approach with a lighthearted Irish charm.

Whitby mayor Don Mitchell, in reflecting on Joe's career, said, "He has earned the full trust and affection of our residents, staff and council colleagues through his integrity, work ethic and humour."

So, Speaker, to Joe Drumm, I say thank you. Thank you, Joe, for your dedication and hard work, my friend. You are and remain an inspiration to so many in the town of Whitby.

God bless Joe Drumm.

CURRICULUM

Mr. Joel Harden: Tomorrow, high school students are organizing a coordinated provincial walkout to protest this government's decision to roll back modern sexual health education.

They also oppose this government's decision to stop the TRC curriculum writing sessions for public, elementary and secondary schools.

As the MPP for Ottawa Centre, I have two messages for these students. First, thank you for supporting acceptance and inclusion in our schools.

Second, if you require a supporting letter for your absence from class, please contact our constituency office, and we will note your walkout participation as an act of fulfilling volunteer hours with your MPP.

We'd love you to continue volunteering with us. We think democracy isn't something that happens once every four years. Democracy is about ensuring public officials are held to account all the time, and ensuring that people in my profession make the right choices.

My friends in government may claim your walkout is unruly and contemptuous of parents. As a parent of two young children myself, I disagree. What's contemptuous is denying our kids an education that's queer- and trans-affirming. What's contemptuous is failing to honour our treaty obligations with Indigenous peoples. What's contemptuous is not teaching young men, at a young age, the value of consent culture, and about healthy relationships.

The students walking out tomorrow are teaching us a lesson. From the bottom of my heart, I thank them for their leadership.

EVENTS IN RICHMOND HILL

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I agree with the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services that there is no place for racism in our great province. We need to take this a step further. We also do a lot of things to support this.

We are doing this to respect each other's cultures. We see that when we participate in different events in our communities, and also host different events among different cultural groups, we are really supporting this, especially in the riding of Richmond Hill, where 57.4% are immigrants.

My riding also covers a part of Markham, which is Canada's most diverse community, where more than 72.3% are visible minorities.

I would like to do a lot of things to support this and make this a strong community. We see that when we respect each other's cultures and attend each other's events. We have just recently celebrated Rosh Hashanah, and attended fun fairs hosted by the Muslim community. Last week, I attended a barbecue at the Islamic community centre, having a fun time with them while answering their questions on Queen's Park.

Actually—

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

JASWANT SINGH KHALRA

Mr. Gurratan Singh: There is a fable that when the sun was setting for the first time, light was decreasing and

the signs of darkness were appearing. Darkness set its foot on the earth. But it is said that far away, in some hut, one little lamp lifted its head. It proclaimed, "I challenge the darkness. If nothing else, then at least around myself, I will not let it settle. Around myself, I will establish light."

Watching that one lamp, in other huts, other lamps arose. And the world was amazed that these lamps stopped darkness from expanding, so that people could see.

Mr. Speaker, these are the words of the late activist Jaswant Singh Khalra. He challenged the darkness by uncovering the murders and disappearances of approximately 20,000 Sikhs throughout Punjab by the Indian state. He came to Canada to bring light to this injustice. On September 6, 1995, upon his return to India, he himself was picked up, disappeared and murdered by members of the state.

1310

His legacy lives on. In the spirit of Jaswant Singh Khalra, Ensaaf, a human rights organization, has released their database which documents the systemic, widespread and targeted killing of thousands of Sikhs conducted by the Indian state.

In the month of September, Mr. Speaker, let us not only remember this great soul, but also let us commit to being that lamp that fearlessly challenges darkness and injustice in all of its forms.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to make a member's statement.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough—Guildwood is seeking unanimous consent of the House to make a member's statement at this time. Agreed? I heard some noes.

Members' statements?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: A point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): A point of order: the member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I think what the member was trying to say was to switch her private member's statement in the place of Mr. Gravelle's; that is what she was trying to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You can ask again.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent to switch places with my colleague Michael Gravelle to make a member's statement.

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

SISTEMA TORONTO

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of my constituents.

On September 10, at the very start of the school year, I visited an amazing program in my riding, Sistema Toronto, to meet with students and to find out how they are doing in this program. MP John McKay also joined this visit.

We had a chance to talk with all the students and to find out how they are doing and how this program was

benefiting them. One student said that it was helping her to focus more and to have discipline. All of the students are actually doing better in school as a result of this program.

But, Speaker, I am concerned that the current government has actually pulled planned funding for Sistema Toronto so that this program will not benefit more students in need. Sistema currently serves 250 students and their families in neighbourhoods with some of Toronto's highest child poverty rates—Parkdale, Jane and Finch, and East Scarborough in my community.

Sistema students develop crucial social skills like empathy, problem solving and communications while they are learning music together. Mr. Speaker, a mother said about her daughter who has been in the program for two years that formerly she was shy, and really, with this program, "It's like a cocoon becoming a butterfly." She said that instead of kids just staying at home watching TV, they are improving themselves through this program.

I believe that it should be supported by this government.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): A point of order.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I'd like to introduce my staff who have just come for training. I don't want them to miss any part of the training; I just want to quickly introduce them. I've got Lily Ngan, I've got Alessandra Scarpitti, I've got Tarun Saroya, and I've got Maxine, as well as Braydon, joining us today.

MARC DIAB

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Today I would like to talk about a young man, Trooper Marc Diab, who chose to serve our great country in the Canadian Armed Forces. Mark always made it a point of coming back to Mississauga during his leave to take part in youth camps, becoming a role model and a mentor.

Sadly, Trooper Marc Diab died on March 8, 2009, after his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device in the Kandahar province of Afghanistan. Mr. Speaker, he was only 22 years old and about to come home.

In his honour, this past Saturday I attended the Streetsville Overseas Legion for breakfast to join the Canadian Army Veteran Motorcycle Unit, who came from across the province to kick off their annual Trooper Marc Diab memorial ride. During my conversations with Trooper Marc Diab's family and fellow vets, I advised them of the all-party unanimous passing of private member's bill ballot item number 12 to erect a monument on the grounds of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in honour of the brave men and women who fought during the war in Afghanistan. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, the announcement was very well received by our vets, who felt they were being recognized for the sacrifices made.

Welcome to our gallery, and also to Marc's cousin, Ghassan Khraish.

Unable to join us today but watching live on TV are Marc's parents, Hani and Jihan, and their entire family.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Legislature for the passing of this bill to stand as a testament of sacrifices made by our troops. Lest we forget.

INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: To pick up the conversation from this morning, the one I talked about regarding the Bearskin Lake youth suicide, I think it's very important for all the MPPs to know that this issue is a marker of a bigger issue and that it relates to inter-generational trauma. Intergenerational trauma has been passed from generation to generation of our people because of the things that happened in residential schools.

One of the things for me is the cancelling of the Indigenous curriculum program. This government had decided not to teach young students about residential schools and not even to have a conversation about what reconciliation is as an issue.

Resolving the problem of First Nation youth suicide and Indigenous youth suicide will require all Ontarians to know and understand the root cause of the problem issue of suicide. Without this next generation of children learning about the history of First Nations people and Indigenous peoples in this great province of Ontario, how can the people of my riding expect people to care? And without the caring, how can we ever expect that things will change?

DON VALLEY NORTH COMMUNITY BARBEQUE

Mr. Vincent Ke: On Saturday, September 8, on a sunny and cool afternoon, I hosted our first annual community barbeque in my riding of Don Valley North at Cummer Park.

Over 2,000 residents joined us for free food and drink and enjoyed various multicultural performances. In addition to my constituents, friends and volunteers, my fellow members from Markham–Unionville, Scarborough–Agincourt and Scarborough–Rouge Park joined us as well. Also, Markham–Unionville MP Bob Saroya, Markham regional councillor Joe Li and Richmond Hill city councillor Godwin Chan attended. All three levels of government were represented.

We had local Armenian, Chinese and Korean community groups entertain the audience with amazing cultural and musical acts. It was a great success.

I look forward to hosting our second community barbeque next year.

MARKHAM FAIR

Mr. Paul Calandra: It's a pleasure to rise and give a member's statement today. I want to just take a brief moment to talk about the Markham Fair, if I can. As you

may or may not know, Mr. Speaker, back in 1844 the Markham and East York Agricultural Society got together to start a local fair, and the Markham Fair has continued since that time. Over 700 volunteers take part annually in making sure that we have a great four-day fair.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you would probably appreciate, and all members of the House would probably appreciate, the many different contests that they have. Of course, they judge the best heifer and the best bull, there are a lot of pie-eating contests—all the things that you would find at a fair across Ontario.

But it's more special for our community, given the fact that our farming community, the agricultural community, was under such pressure for so many years. In particular, its greatest threat came with the last Liberal government, when the creation of the Rouge Park was under way. The previous Liberal government, of course, had wiped out farms in my riding and planted trees across those farms. While nobody can suggest that tree planting isn't important for our community, farming is also important to our community.

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I'm very proud that this tradition is continuing and that this government and the federal government that I was a member of before stood up for farmers and continue to stand up for farmers and that the great farming tradition and the important business that is agriculture in my community will continue for a long time, despite the threats that it had from previous governments in this place.

I encourage all members to get out, come to the Markham Fair—after you've had a chance to visit Ford Fest, get out and visit the Markham Fair, because you'll have a great time.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I wish to correct the record for my colleague from Kitchener Centre. This morning, she said the "Ministry of Economic Development." She meant to say "a committee of the Ministry of Economic Development."

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I think that standing order allows a member to correct their own record. But we appreciate the information nonetheless.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GREEN ENERGY REPEAL ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 ABROGEANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉNERGIE VERTE

Mr. Rickford moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to amend the Electricity Act, 1998, the Environmental Protection Act, the Planning Act and various other statutes / Projet de loi 34, Loi abrogeant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité,

la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement, la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire et diverses autres lois.

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 minister care to give a brief explanation of this bill?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Emphasis on "brief," Mr. Speaker: I rise today to submit new legislation for the consideration of this Legislature, the proposed Green Energy Repeal Act. The bill proposes to repeal the Green Energy Act. It further proposes to reintroduce select energy efficiency and conservation provisions in other existing legislation. Finally, it proposes to amend both the Planning Act and the Environmental Protection Act to restore municipal planning authority related to the siting of renewable energy and to enhance the government's authority to make regulations to prohibit the issuance of renewable energy approvals.

MOTIONS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Todd Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding travel to the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees Conference.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice regarding travel to the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees Conference. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I jumped ahead of myself. There is consent to allow the government House leader, the member for Bay of Quinte, to move a motion. I apologize.

Hon. Todd Smith: And I have that right here, Speaker. I move that the Chair and the Clerk of the public accounts committee and one member of each of the recognized parties be authorized to adjourn to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, to attend the annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees in September 2018.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, the government House leader has moved that the Chair and the Clerk of the public accounts committee and one member of each of the recognized parties be authorized to adjourn to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, to attend the annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees in September 2018. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I think I heard a no.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

CURRICULUM

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: In support of the students who are organizing the walkout tomorrow, I'd like to table a petition on the sex ed curriculum. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the health and physical education curriculum empowers young people to make informed decisions about relationships and their bodies;

"Whereas gender-based violence, gender inequality, unintended pregnancies, 'sexting,' and HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) pose serious risks to the safety and well-being of young people;

"Whereas one in three women and one in six men experience sexual violence in Canada, and a lack of age-appropriate education about sexual health and healthy relationships leaves children and youth vulnerable to exploitation;

"Whereas one in five parents reported their own child being a victim of cyberbullying; and

"Whereas Doug Ford and the Conservative government is dragging Ontario backward, requiring students to learn an outdated sex ed curriculum that excludes information about consent, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexting, cyberbullying and safe and healthy relationships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Education to continue the use of the 2015 health and physical education curriculum in schools and move Ontario forward, not backward."

I fully support it and will be signing the petition as well.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

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

"Whereas students living in York region attending York University's Keele campus will be affected by the two-fared system from York Region Transit (YRT) and the TTC; and

"Whereas students will pay \$3.75 with a Presto card or \$4 cash for a ride on the YRT and have to transfer to the subway contracted under the TTC at Pioneer Village station and pay an additional \$3 with a Presto card or \$3.25 cash fare; and

"Whereas many students would have to walk more than 20 minutes to get to some of their classes to avoid paying additional fares;

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

"To remove the two-fared system and allow students who ride the YRT to transfer to the TTC without paying an additional fare, regardless of if or whether or not they use a Presto card."

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

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Lidia Romero from Garson in my riding for this petition, which 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 Alisha to bring it to the Clerk.

CURRICULUM

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I have a petition from my constituents to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas young children and adolescents across Ontario are being lured into the sex trade and being sexually exploited every day;

"Whereas many youth have no idea what exploitation entails or that they may fall victim to it;

"Whereas prevention is the best strategy in eradicating human trafficking, education and awareness is key to prevention;

"Whereas incorporating mandatory human trafficking education will ensure our province is doing everything legally possible to protect our precious youth;

"Whereas our younger generations must be properly informed about true consent, the reality of sexual exploitation and the dangers of online predators...;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to include informed consent, sexual exploitation, the warning signs of human trafficking and the dangers of online predators into the Ontario sexual education curriculum."

I support this petition, will sign it and ask page Alexander to take it to the Clerks' table.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: This is a petition from my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas certain commercial operations known as 'puppy/kitten mills' have been reported to keep animals in precarious conditions in breach of provincial animal welfare laws; and

“Whereas dog/cat breeding in accordance with the law is a legitimate economic activity; and

“Whereas it is the duty of any government to ensure that the laws of Canada and Ontario are respected and that the health and well-being of innocent animals are protected;

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

“That the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services work proactively with all amateur and professional dog/cat breeders, as well as consumers, with the intent to tackle confirmed animal cruelty cases in puppy/kitten mills and to educate all stakeholders about animal welfare standards.”

I’m happy to affix my signature to this.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario is situated on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, many of whom have been on this land since time immemorial;

“Whereas in 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report: ‘Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future’ which made 94 recommendations or ‘Calls to Action’ for the government of Canada;

“Whereas reconciliation must be at the centre of all government decision-making;

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

“—continue reconciliation work in Ontario by implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;

“—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

“—work with First Nations leaders to sign cooperative, government-to-government accords;

“—support TRC education and community development (e.g. TRC summer writing sessions);

“—support Indigenous communities across the province (e.g. cleaning up Grassy Narrows).”

I fully support it. I will sign it and pass it along to Simon to bring up to the table.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Ms. Catherine Fife: “Action needed for Alzheimer’s patients and their families.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease is a degenerative brain disease that causes thinking and memory impairment. Alzheimer’s disease is progressive, worsens over time and will eventually lead to death;

“Whereas there are an estimated 208,000 Ontarians diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and related dementia today, and that number is set to increase by 40% in the next 10 years;

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease creates emotional, social and economic burdens on the family and supports of those suffering with the disease—over 25% of those providing personal supports to survivors of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia are seniors;

“Whereas the total economic burden of dementia in Ontario is expected to increase by more than \$770 million per year through to 2020; and

“Whereas Ontario’s strategy for Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia has not been revised since the implementation of a five-year strategy in 1999;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately review, revise and implement an updated, research-informed, comprehensive strategy to respond to and prepare for the rapidly growing needs of those living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia.”

It’s my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Victoria.

PHARMACARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition entitled “Universal Pharmacare is for All Ontarians” that is signed by many residents of London West. It reads:

“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, express our support for a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians.”

I am proud to affix my signature and will give it to page Alisha to take to the table.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I have a petition entitled “Stop Doug Ford from Interfering in Municipal Elections.” It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Doug Ford’s decision to reduce Toronto’s wards from 47 to 25 was made without any public consultation;

“Whereas Doug Ford’s meddling in municipal elections is an abuse of power;

“Whereas Doug Ford is cancelling democratic elections of some regional chairs;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse Doug Ford’s unilateral decision to dismantle Toronto city hall and cancel regional chair elections; to maintain the

existing Toronto municipal boundaries; and ensure that the provincial government does not interfere with the upcoming Toronto municipal election for Ford's political gain."

I support this petition. I'll be affixing my name to it, and I will be giving it to page Katie.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Joel Harden: I have a petition on affordable housing.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas for families throughout much of Ontario, owning a home they can afford remains a dream, while renting is painfully expensive;

"Whereas consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have sat idle, while housing costs spiralled out of control, speculators made fortunes, and too many families had to put their hopes on hold;

"Whereas every Ontarian should have access to safe, affordable housing. Whether a family wants to rent or own, live in a house, an apartment, a condominium or a co-op, they should have affordable options;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately prioritize the repair of Ontario's social housing stock, commit to building new affordable homes, crack down on housing speculators, and make rentals more affordable through rent controls and updated legislation."

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I'll be signing it and giving it to page Simon for the Clerks.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is tabled in honour of the young person who died by suicide in Bearskin Lake yesterday.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario is situated on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, many of whom have been on this land for at least 12,000 years;

"Whereas in 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report: 'Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future' which made 94 recommendations or 'Calls to Action' for the government of Canada;

"Whereas reconciliation must be at the centre of all government decision-making;

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

"—continue reconciliation work in Ontario by implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;

"—reinstate the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation;

"—work with First Nations leaders to sign co-operative government-to-government accords;

"—support TRC education and community development (e.g. TRC summer writing sessions);

"—support Indigenous communities across the province (e.g. cleaning up Grassy Narrows)."

I fully support this petition and will be signing it as well.

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;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition for a \$15 minimum wage and fairer labour laws and will be affixing my signature to it.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition that reads:

"Stop Doug Ford from Cutting Mental Health Care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Doug Ford has announced a \$335-million per year funding cut to mental health care and services;

“Whereas an estimated 12,000 children are waiting up to 18 months for mental health care, and there are 63% more children in the ER for mental health issues than there were in 2006;

“Whereas a cut to already threadbare mental health funding will mean longer waits for care and fewer services—which can result in mental health conditions being exacerbated, and more people living with mental illness spiralling into crisis;

“Whereas front-line care workers and first responders are doing the best they can, but coping with a shortage of resources;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse Doug Ford’s \$330-million per year funding cut to Ontario’s mental health services.”

I couldn’t agree with this more, Madam Speaker. I’m going to affix my name to it and give it to page Katie to bring to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. The time for petitions is over.

I just want to remind everybody in the House—we have brought this up before—that when you are doing petitions, even if it is not you who drafted the petition, you have to adapt it as you are saying it, to ensure that you are referring to someone by their title or their riding, please.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

POET LAUREATE OF ONTARIO ACT (IN MEMORY OF GORD DOWNIE), 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE POÈTE OFFICIEL DE L’ONTARIO (À LA MÉMOIRE DE GORD DOWNIE)

Mr. Hatfield moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario in memory of Gord Downie / Projet de loi 6, Loi visant à créer la charge de poète officiel de l’Ontario à la mémoire de Gord Downie.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I accept that poetry isn’t everyone’s cup of tea. Yet we remember some of the poems we learned in school.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row....

That poem was written more than a hundred years ago.

There has been a poet laureate in Great Britain since 1668.

Even if you don’t celebrate Christmas, you’ve heard the poem about the night before, “when all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.”

Speaker, poetry uses imagery that paints colourful pictures, stirs the imagination and stimulates the senses.

Here in Canada, our Parliament created the position in 2001 to encourage and promote the importance of literature, culture and language in Canadian society. The parliamentary poet laureate writes poetry, sponsors workshops and gives advice to the parliamentary library on collections and acquisitions to enrich its cultural materials.

My friend George Elliott Clarke was going to be here today, but he came down with a summer cold. He was Canada’s poet laureate in 2016 and 2017. Before that, he was Toronto’s poet laureate from 2012 to 2015. He’s also a previous winner of the Governor General’s award for poetry for his Execution Poems. Speaker, in that book he writes:

The blow that slew Silver came from two centuries back.

It took that much time and agony

To turn a white man’s whip into a black man’s hammer.

My community of Windsor has a poet laureate, as do many other communities in Ontario: Mississauga, Toronto, London, Sudbury, Cobalt, Cobourg, Kingston, Brantford—the list goes on and on. Other provinces have a poet laureate: Saskatchewan since 2000 and Prince Edward Island since 2002. It’s time for Ontario to send out a literary message: “We can and will do more to support the arts in this province.”

Speaker, as you know, Windsor has a long history with whisky, and sometimes we have magnificent sunsets because of the air pollution over Michigan. Here’s the final line from Anne Baldo’s poem Finally Sweet: “Windsor is the city of roses under a whiskey sour sky.” Wow.

One more quote from a Windsor poet, Salvatore Ala, from Straight Razor and Other Poems:

So sensitive was the poet,

He was like a drop of rain

In which a city is reflected.

Speaker, allow me to turn now to Gord Downie and the Tragically Hip. This bill will be known as the Gord Downie bill. The purpose is to create the position of poet laureate in Ontario in his name as a means of honouring his memory. He was the lead writer and singer with the Tragically Hip, a Kingston-based band that had played together since 1984. The Hip criss-crossed Canada dozens of times, were nominated for 45 Juno Awards and won 16 of them. Playing in small towns, big cities, dingy bars and huge arenas, they created summer soundtracks for their millions of fans.

In May 2016, the Hip announced that Gord Downie had inoperable brain cancer. In July, they started out on a 15-

city tour to promote Man Machine Poem, the Hip's 13th full-length studio album. It led to a summer of national bonding. It was almost as if we were invited in advance to Gord Downie's wake.

Canadians celebrated with Gord and his band of brothers, Rob Baker, Paul Langlois, Gord Sinclair and Johnny Fay. Part of the proceeds from the Hip's tour was dedicated to the Sunnybrook Foundation, and more than \$1 million was raised for cancer research.

The final concert in Kingston was aired by the CBC and seen by more than 12 million people. I watched it at 35,000 feet, flying from Toronto to Calgary on my way to a conference in Yellowknife. The Globe and Mail said the concert "galvanized a nation."

Gord Downie viewed Canada through a distinctive poetic lens. Many of his poems evolved in his songs, Tragically Hip songs known by heart by Canadians from coast to coast to coast:

I left your house this morning
 'Bout a quarter after nine
 Coulda been the Willie Nelson
 Coulda been the wine

When I left your house this morning
 It was a little after nine
 It was in Bobcaygeon, I saw the constellations
 Reveal themselves, one star at time.

Speaker, Gord Downie passed away nearly a year ago, on October 17. "Stolen from us at the age of 53," wrote Vinay Menon in the Toronto Star, "Downie is leaving when we need him most. Who will write the songs that cross generations and slice across geography? Who will be our poet laureate and history professor, our spirited raconteur and unflinching critic, our tour guide to the past and cultural voyager of the future?"

In the Globe and Mail, Josh O'Kane wrote, "Through songs such as Fifty Mission Cap and Ahead by a Century, Mr. Downie sung his poetry with both coos and howls, helping the band become kings of CanCon." Yes, Speaker, there was a ton of Canadian content and imagery in Gord Downie's poetry and recorded songs.

In Maclean's magazine, Michael Barclay wrote, "Downie is considered by a lay audience as one of Canada's greatest poets—even if he only ever published one book of poetry ... and his work is communicated primarily through a rock band."

To drive that point home, Barclay writes in a commemorative issue of Maclean's devoted entirely to the Tragically Hip's Gord Downie, his life and legacy, "Poetry and pop music are not strangers, of course: just ask the committee who granted Bob Dylan the 2016 Nobel Prize for Literature."

When asked once about his book of poetry, Gord Downie said, "I think it would be cool if Coke Machine Glow means more people will go into the poetry section of the bookstore ... I just want people to buy more poetry. Poetry characterizes a nation...."

Speaker, I accept that perhaps a few of the more traditional poets may not be as glowing about the accolades accorded to the poetry of Gord Downie, but I haven't heard from any of them—not one—questioning the concept of creating the position of poet laureate for the province of Ontario.

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In his book *The Never-Ending Present: The Story of Gord Downie and the Tragically Hip*, Michael Barclay writes, "It is Downie's words that truly set the Tragically Hip apart from every other band. His lyrics are tapestries of imagery, allusions and narratives that blur the personal, the historical and the fantastical."

The writer and poetry editor Damian Rogers says, "The greatest compliment you can give a poet is to say she's a rock star. The greatest compliment that you can give a musician is to say he's a poet. Gord Downie is both."

From an editorial in the New York Times: "The place of honor that Mr. Downie occupies in Canada's national imagination has no parallel in the United States. Imagine Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan and Michael Stipe combined into one sensitive, oblique poet ... and you're getting close."

When Mr. Downie passed, we in this House held a moment of silence in his honour. This bill is intended to keep alive the memory of Gord Downie. It's intended to recognize his contribution to Canadian literature. It's offered in a non-partisan fashion, in a symbolic way of paying tribute to Gord Downie.

Laurie Brown, a host on CBC Newsworld's program *On the Arts*, once wrote, "Gord doesn't consider himself one of the great poets of the nation ... but he is!"

Gord Downie was always writing. He referred to it as "lifting the 400-pound feather" every day. The role of our poet laureate would include writing poetry, of course, but he or she would also be expected to travel the province, visit schools, colleges and universities, and host poetry readings and writing workshops. Younger generations would learn to appreciate language and the creative ways that words can stimulate our imagination.

There are thousands of photographs of Gord Downie. In many of them, he's wearing a blue jean jacket with a yellow button on his right chest. On that yellow button, in black letters, are the words "Open Books, Open Minds, Open Hearts." And that pretty well says it all. An Ontario Poet Laureate would encourage people to open their minds to poetry, to read poetry, to write, and to grow a true appreciation for the written word.

In his final months, Gord Downie became an advocate for Indigenous issues. Perry Bellegarde is the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations. He writes, "As a man of words, Gord's lyrics and his poetry held up a mirror to Canada." The Assembly of First Nations gave Gord Downie a star blanket, an eagle feather and a Lakota name, Wicapi Omani, "The Man Who Walks Among the Stars."

After the final tour and before he died, Gord Downie put out a solo album titled *Secret Path*. It was dedicated to the memory of Chanie Wenjack, a 12-year-old First

Nations boy who died from exposure while running away from a residential school in Kenora, 400 miles from his home. With his brother Mike, Gord Downie turned Secret Path into an animated video which has won wide acclaim. In his letter to his fans, Gord Downie wrote, "I never knew Chanie, the child his teachers misnamed Charlie, but I will always love him."

"Chanie haunts me. His story is Canada's story. This is about Canada. We are not the country we thought we were."

Recently, a Toronto poet, who has joined us today, Shafiq Beig, sent me his poem Eternity Bound. I've edited it down to this:

A scream on our voice track
 One night he tried to feel the pain of native victims
 Asking many questions of our justice system
 And creating the story of Charlie on animation
 His heart was grieved and longing for reconciliation
 Gord Downie is eternity bound.

Mike Mackey in Pembroke heard about the Gord Downie bill and wrote me a letter. He says, "This bill simply makes sense from all perspectives. Promotion of literacy, prose and creativity can only strengthen our Ontario society."

We spend a lot of time in this Legislature arguing over policy and process. Why not, for just one day, put down the swords, pick up the pens and craft a non-partisan bill to honour a talented Canadian from Ontario and create, in his name, the position of poet laureate for generations to come?

I offer this bill—it's not the first time it has been before the House. It almost passed the last time—it came this close—but during the March break, the Premier at the time prorogued the House. As you know, when the House is prorogued, all private members' bills that are on the docket are squashed. "Quashed" would be another word, I guess. Speaker, it's offered, as I said, in a non-partisan fashion. I hope this government will see the benefit and will actually, after the passing, if it passes today, send it to a committee and have a hearing and introduce to Ontario the position of poet laureate in Gord Downie's name.

We won't be the first province. We're not breaking new ground here. Saskatchewan has one, PEI and, I think, Yukon. Canada has one, and it's time for Ontario to stand up and pay tribute as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It's a pleasure to rise and speak on behalf of my friend and colleague across the way from Windsor–Tecumseh on his private member's bill.

Bill 6, the Poet Laureate of Ontario Act (In Memory of Gord Downie), would create a new post that would designate a poet laureate for the province of Ontario, while at the same time honouring one of Ontario's native sons, Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip.

I know establishing Ontario's poet laureate is something this member has been very passionate about

throughout the years and I admire his hard work and dedication.

In my own riding of Dufferin–Caledon, we have a thriving arts community. I would like to take this opportunity to first invite everyone to the Headwaters Arts festival, which actually begins tonight and runs until October 8. Spend some time in the Headwaters region, discovering theatre performances, book readings, workshops and demos, open studios, studio tours and other arts events at multiple venues.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize two poets from Dufferin–Caledon who would be very supportive of this private member's bill: the first, Max Layton, and the second, Harry Posner.

Max Layton lives in Caledon and is a singer-songwriter who has published a number of volumes of poetry. Max has actively worked to install a poet laureate for Dufferin–Caledon. In fact, while he didn't get Dufferin–Caledon, we did get a poet laureate for Dufferin county. I was happy to support Max in that endeavour.

Harry Posner is Dufferin county's first poet laureate. He's written film scripts, songs, books and poetry. In 2015, he was awarded for best adult poetry. Harry is actively promoting poetry and other artistic forms as Dufferin county's cultural ambassador.

The imagery of the many songs of Gord Downie and the Tragically Hip involve everyday themes that exemplify what Ontario is all about. I'm happy to add my support for this private member's bill and the creation of the poet laureate of Ontario. An Ontario Poet Laureate position would help promote arts and literacy in the province of Ontario and be an appropriate commemoration of Mr. Downie.

The establishment of the position of a poet laureate for Ontario would support our cultural sector. Our government understands how important the cultural sector is. In fact, it contributes over \$25 billion to Ontario's economy each and every year. In addition, Stats Canada figures indicate that Ontario's cultural sector supports almost 270,000 jobs.

Thank you to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for advocating establishing Ontario's poet laureate. I'm happy to support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Ian Arthur: I want to begin by thanking the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for bringing this bill forward. I am proud to stand here as a representative of Kingston and the Islands in support of an act to create a poet laureate for Ontario, and one that honours one of Kingston's favourite sons, Gord Downie. Wheat Kings remains one of my most favourite songs.

Gord Downie and the Tragically Hip hold a special place in the hearts of many Canadians, but specifically Kingstonians. This was evident in their last show in Kingston, when people gathered from miles around to watch and take part in the collective experience of both sadness and joy.

We have a street called Tragically Hip Way. Many of my friends have had the luxury of recording their own music at the Tragically Hip's recording studio in Bath, Ontario. On our beautiful waterfront there is a lovely newly renovated beach that we have named the Gord Downie Pier, where Kingstonians have enjoyed swimming and playing all summer long.

Paul and Joanne and Rob and Leslie were very frequent customers at the restaurant that I cooked at for so many years.

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The Hip began as a group playing gigs at Clark Hall and other student bars on campus at Queen's University, and 44 singles, 33 years, 13 studio albums and 16 Juno Awards later, the group is beloved around the country and is a touchstone for Canadian music.

If you ask anyone from Kingston who was able to see them in those early days, their shows have become the things of legend. Sometimes those shows would be just Gord, and they would take place on a porch in the neighbourhood that I now call home. I've heard similar stories from those who lived in Toronto when they used to play shows at the Horseshoe Tavern, with its checkerboard floors."

Much of what made the Hip special are the lyrics that Gord Downie brought to their songs. As much as he was a musician, he brought the sensibility of a poet to his work. His lyrics have been described as touching upon specifically Canadian topics, but I feel that they are more universal than simply Canadian. Listening to a "voice cross a frozen lake," seeing "the constellations reveal themselves one star at a time" or to be in a park on "one fine summer evening" when "the sun teased the dark" are things that we have all felt and loved. Lines of wisdom, such as "No dress rehearsal, this is our life" and to deal "with the consequences under pressure," are delivered in a way that take old lessons and experiences and make them new.

We should also recognize the advocacy work Gord did throughout his life. I admire his commitment to environmental causes, such as his activism regarding water rights in Lake Ontario. His work as an advocate for reconciliation through the establishment of the Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund in 2016 touched Canadians across the land. His project about Chanie called Secret Path is very important and is a special act that ought to be recognized and acknowledged by all Canadians.

I also want to speak to the importance of poetry and the spoken word for Ontario. The vast reaches of land that is Ontario stretch from the Canadian Shield to "where the Great Plains begin."

We must remember that the arts are an important way for us to share in the multitude of experiences from peoples of every facet of life. It is strange to say, but the arts are simultaneously a celebration of what makes us different but also what makes us the same. It is the use of words and sounds to bring us into the perspective of another, to feel that while we are not the speaker, we are closer to an understanding with them and our empathy has

grown. As Scottish poet Dame Carol Ann Duffy wrote, "Poets sing our human music for us."

The poetic history of Ontario is rich and diverse. I would not be a good representative without mentioning poets and spoken word artists who have either lived in or were born in Kingston, such as Winona Linn, Eric Folsom and Steve Heighton. You know you're from a small town when you're looking up poets and you play hockey with one of them. There are many, many more throughout the province, and they all make our lives richer: Al Purdy, Don McKay, Margaret Atwood, Gwendolyn MacEwan, Lillian Allen and John McCrae, whose poem In Flanders Fields we recite each Remembrance Day. Of course, this is to name but a few.

The position of poet laureate is one that carries with it great prestige. I should also mention that the position exists at a federal level and at a provincial level, as has already been said, in Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and the Yukon, as well as in my own community of Kingston. It is one that honours both the work of all poetry and spoken word in Ontario and one that honours a single person. I believe it is one that the province should provide and that the province should honour with the name of Gord Downie.

In this time of great change, the arts should neither be ignored nor forgotten, because the arts, in the end, will not forget us.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Speaker, I'm pleased to stand today to speak in support of Bill 6, Poet Laureate of Ontario Act (In Memory of Gord Downie). Mr. Downie's songwriting and poetry provide much of the inspiration for its creation. His lyrics spoke to an entire generation of Canadians. In fact, his words crossed many generations.

Although everyone anticipated the end of his journey, his loss at 53 years of age caused an emotional groundswell across the nation, especially in Ontario, his home province.

It is therefore appropriate that his name be included in the legislation, a fitting testament to his abilities as a poet and to his commitment to helping communities in Ontario and across Canada.

In our daily work at Queen's Park, we deal with many diverse, important issues on behalf of Ontarians. A poet laureate will help to provide a new perspective for us here. It's sometimes too easy for elected officials and staff to be so immersed in the practical issues of the moment that we forget many of the things that make this province such a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. A poet laureate will add to the cultural fabric of Ontario and, in my view, make it an even better place. All of us should embrace the idea that art and literacy will be promoted by the person appointed to the position.

Speaker, although many of my colleagues here are loquacious, including myself from time to time, it will be a unique and welcome experience to have periodic poetry readings created by our own poet laureate for use in the Legislature.

This legislation, if passed, will add a new and valuable cultural component to our lives here and for all the people of Ontario. The appointment of a poet laureate and anticipated outreach to schools, workshops and other activities will send a message to all Ontarians that we care about culture and the promotion of creative writing in our great province.

Gord Downie's writing was often cryptic—yes, sometimes humorous—but always poetic. He reminded us that this is no dress rehearsal; it is our life. I am pleased to voice my support for Bill 6, and I look forward to celebrating the appointment of our own poet laureate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate? The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the time to speak about this in the House.

Much has been said, but we do look to our poets and artists to challenge us, to keep us honest and to lift us up. As politicians, it is our responsibility to honour the artists who hold us to higher account.

An Ontario Poet Laureate would engage and encourage people to connect to the poetry of our incredible province. As the member from Windsor–Tecumseh has said, poetry may not be everybody's cup of tea, but perhaps that's because we need to recognize poetry in its many forms. I think of the poetry of Canadian Dennis Lee. This is poetry that taught my children and, I guess, now my grandchildren, lessons about our history. This is their particular favourite:

William Lyon Mackenzie King
Sat in the middle and played with string
And he loved his mother like anything
William Lyon Mackenzie King.

It's that humorous poem that allowed both my children and now my grandchildren to be interested in the history of our country.

Just as Bob Dylan was recently awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, Gord Downie is our poet laureate. To name the poet laureate recognition in his honour, in honour of our dear Gord, is exactly the message that this House should look to convey.

As an artist, Gord was like no other. He held the attention of our nation, and he used his peculiar pulpit to make us a better nation. He delivered messages from the past, messages of good, of injustice and of sorrow, and we listened. We listened to his poetry about Hugh MacLennan, Tom Thomson, his young nephew Charlie, and Chanie Wenjack.

Gord Downie was exactly what this country needed. He wrapped our identity and our stories up into a bow and he handed it right back to us. He handed it back to us.

I knew Gord. I met him in university, and we spent a lot of time at Chez Piggy and some of the bars that were mentioned here. He was always a genuine soul. He was a true artist. He was compelling and he was honest. But let's never forget that he was a true rocker. He burned down the house. But he also burned a hole into our imaginations

and into our hearts. Gord's voice was the voice that became the soundtrack to generations of Canadians.

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My personal favourite Gord Downie moment happened about 25 years ago in Kingston, Ontario. My daughter was about eight years old. We were leaving Chez Piggy and I was giving Gord a ride home. Just as he reached for the handle of the car to get in the front seat, my daughter called out, "Shotgun!" Gord and I looked at each other—and this was sort of at the height of his fame—and he said with a chuckle, "Shotgun rules." He was a really good sport as he rode in the back seat of the car all the way home.

I share this story because, for me, this was the Gord that I knew. That's how I knew him then and this is exactly the same Gord that we saw up until October 17, 2017.

People ask if Canada is truly a country. What do Canadians believe in, other than hockey? What do Canadians agree on? Well, I can tell you: On the night of the Tragically Hip's farewell show, diehard fans marched arm in arm, denim on denim in our Canadian tuxedos, into a stadium that was transformed for one night into a place of worship. We all knew the words to those hymns, and if anyone ever prayed for a miracle, they did it that night. Parents and children and friends who had known each other since high school stood there, singing in one voice, crying for a man whom they had never met but knew as well as they knew anyone.

All across our country, people watched on TV or their phones, listened on radios at the cottage, and we all sang in one voice. We all gathered with a single purpose. If you were looking in on that scene from outside, you'd think, "Now there's a country. Those people are on the same page. They know who they are. They are Canadian."

What did the poet Gord do with his power? Did he try and sell his newest album or point out the merch table where his T-shirts were available? Not at all. He held our Prime Minister to account. He held him accountable in front of all of us, and with gentle hands he passed a torch to light the way for true and meaningful reconciliation. Has any poet affected us more than Gord did at that very moment?

Gord spent his life honouring us through his music, his poetry, so I can't think of a more fitting way to honour Gord in return than by naming a poet laureate in his honour.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Dave Smith: If you can indulge me for a moment, Madam Speaker, I'm going to take a little bit of poetic licence.

October 17
For a country I know it's Gordie's day
For he has gone alee
And that's where he will stay
Wind on a weather vane
Tearing blue eyes sailor-mean
As Falstaff sings a sorrowful refrain
For a boy in Fiddler's Green

I had the pleasure of going to 22 Tragically Hip concerts in my life, from Ottawa to Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, Buffalo and my own Peterborough. I also had the great fortune of experiencing one of their concerts with my son in my nemesis city of Oshawa. My son wasn't 38 years old and unfortunately neither was I when that happened.

The music of the Tragically Hip represents a generation of Canadians, the generation of Canadians that I grew up with. But really, the lyrics from Gord Downie, the lyrics that he created, are trans-generational. My kids are 20, 21 and 22, and they know all of the lyrics of the Tragically Hip.

The depth of his lyrics in every song is something that far too often we don't see today in music, not just in new music but in music that was produced by others prior to that.

He told stories—he was the Canadian storyteller—that resonated in his songs in a way that people who aren't well read may not have had any idea that he was referencing literary classics, but they took the time afterwards to find out. In one of his interviews, he was asked about the song Cordelia: What was the inspiration behind it? Gord's answer: "I don't know. You'll have to read King Lear." When my son saw that, he read King Lear. So Gord introduced him to Shakespeare at an earlier age than he would otherwise.

Gord had that rare ability to take Canadian icons and not only interweave them into a song, but if you watched the band through a bunch of dancers you could see that he had the courage to give a simple explanation for anything important that any of us do. He recognized that the human tragedy consisted of the necessity of living with the consequences.

Whether he was talking about Gus, the polar bear from Central Park; Bill Barilko; Chanie Wenjack; or just the Lonely End of the Rink, he spoke about Canada. He wasn't afraid to write about Canadian stories, even when those stories were about some of our most difficult times or difficult things. He truly was ahead by a century. Social injustices were something that Gord freely sang about, and yet he did it in such a respectful way that most people didn't realize what he was actually talking about.

Sundown in the Paris of the prairies
Wheat kings have all their treasures buried
And all you hear are the rusty breezes....

There's a dream he dreams where the high school's
dead and stark
It's a museum and we're all locked up in it after dark....

I had the good fortune of being able to attend the Hip's farewell tour. It wasn't in Bobcaygeon, nor were there checkerboard floors. I got to see them at the ACC with the rest of my family. My entire family came. We tried very hard to get tickets to the Kingston show. In fact, I had an opportunity to get them and I was willing to pay the \$1,500 per seat for the four of us to go, but my wife had other

plans that day, and I think my son will never forgive her for that. We had to attend my wife's cousin's wedding—a cousin we had never met. I offered to rent a husband and son for her because we found we could do that, but unfortunately she didn't think that that was appropriate for us. I thought it was fabulous because they'd never met me; they would never know it wasn't me. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us, but my wife decided that that was probably not the thing for us to do.

It wasn't just Canadians, though, who recognized Gord on that night. Eddie Vedder was having a concert, and he acknowledged Gord as well.

For the member from Windsor–Tecumseh: I know you brought this forward in the last session and I know that you did a lot of work on it. It has been a long time coming, but it's well worth the wait.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I just want to add that I've seen the Tragically Hip several times across the province. The best two concerts ever were in Windsor. I'm a little biased, I know.

Back to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh for his two-minute reply.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to all who spoke so passionately in favour of the poet laureate bill today. And thank you to Shafiq and the other poets who came for moral support, and of course the Ontario Arts Council, who will be selecting the first poet laureate if this bill passes.

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Like you, Speaker, I'm from Windsor. Yes, it's a blue-collar town, but we are or have been home to literary giants: Alistair MacLeod, Joyce Carol Oates and W.O. Mitchell. Nino Ricci is from just down the road, in Leamington. Margaret Atwood spends her summers on Pelee Island.

We're home to hundreds of great poets and authors: Marty Gervais, Mary Ann Mulhern, Peter Hrastovec, Vanessa Shields, Paul Vasey, Dorothy Mahoney, Daniel Lockhart, Carlinda D'Alimonte, Chris Edwards, Elaine Weeks, Matt Bhanks, Kate Hargreaves, Alexander MacLeod, Eugene McNamara, Lenore Langs, David Wagner, Laurie Smith, Arnie McCallum, Spike Bell, Patrick Brode, Christopher Paul Curtis, Herb Colling, Mick Ridgewell and so many, many more.

We have great publishing houses in Biblioasis and Black Moss Press. We respect the arts. We believe Ontario would benefit from having a poet laureate. My region is just a small example.

Minister, I know you've been waiting for a little bit of poetry, if I can call it that:

It is my supposition
That it's difficult for a member of the opposition
To get the government to consent
To a bill they themselves didn't present
Sometimes though we pass bills enthusiastically
Other times—perhaps—more autocratically
But today in democratic fellowship
Let's demonstrate non-partisan leadership

Honour the Tragically Hip
 With true statesmanship
 Show the proletariat
 In Gord Downie's name
 We'll have a poet laureate.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. David Piccini: I move that, in the opinion of the House, the government of Ontario should promote organ donation and should make the completion of the renewal or issuance of a health card or driver's licence conditional on a declaration that forms part of the card or licence renewal process; and that specifies whether or not the person consents to having their organs or tissue used for transplant purposes after the person's death; and that in the event more than one such valid consent is made, the most recent declaration prevails over all previous ones.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Piccini has moved private member's notice of motion number 14. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. David Piccini: According to Health Canada, 4,500 people are waiting for organ transplants today across our great country, 1,500 of whom are right here in Ontario. Many more are waiting for life-enhancing tissue transplants.

Canada has one of the most disorganized and fragmented donor systems amongst industrialized countries. An important statistic to support that and to note: There are only 18 donors per million people in Canada. That's lower than the United States and many other industrialized countries.

According to a recent Ipsos study, a majority of Canadians support organ donation; yet only 27% of those are actually registered for organ donation. Why is this so important? Because we know that with one's gift of life, one person can save up to eight lives, and up to 75 more with the gift of tissue. One has the ability to positively and fundamentally alter and impact the lives of others with the gift of an organ.

The origins of this motion stem from important conversations I've had with my constituents. I'd like to take a moment to recognize a few of them whom I've discussed organ donation with: Rob Milligan, former MPP of this place, from my riding. His story is a sombre one. Rob tragically lost his 19-year-old niece Cassidey just two days shy of her 20th birthday. This motion seeks to build on Rob's PMB that died with the dissolution of the Legislature a number of years back and, hopefully, set the stage for much-needed legislative reform in this area.

I'd also like to acknowledge Chuck Sammut, a resident of Cobourg, who tragically lost his daughter-in-law who was awaiting an organ donation. She left behind a young child. This is so symbolic of so many tragic stories of people who have passed away while waiting for organ donations—lives that have been needlessly lost in this respect.

Many members of this House, I would venture to say, have similar stories. Everyone would be able to draw on stories from constituents, stories of loved ones, of people they've met over the course of their door knocking and over the course of their constituency meetings. What makes this so difficult is that with the gift of life through an organ donation, so many of these stories are so preventable. I've heard far too many who express challenges, anxiety and frustration with a system that simply is not working.

I'd like to touch on one I read about just the other day, the Lamoureux family, who took their story to Facebook. They had a two-year-old boy, Taylum, who spent the first six months of his life in hospital due to polycystic kidney disease; it cost him both of his kidneys. Think of that at just a very young age. He visited SickKids every day for dialysis to keep him alive. He needed a transplant to save his life. When a possible donor fell through, the parents went to Facebook, and that is far too often the case we're seeing in this country. Enter Michelle MacKinnon, a mother whose son David tragically died the very day his mother, Michelle, was supposed to donate her kidney. The mothers met after uniting on Facebook and, ultimately, Michelle did donate her kidney to save Taylum's life.

I think this is symbolic of a broader problem. Simply put, of course, there are not enough kidneys in our donation system for everyone who needs one; but, more broadly speaking, a problem that so often goes to social media, to Instagram, to Facebook—desperate parents and pleas to save the lives of loved ones.

I think this speaks to a systemic problem we have. We boast of one of the best health care systems in the world; yet, with all our wealth, our strong public health care system, it's unconscionable that in today's day and age, in Canada today with our current system, one person dies every 30 hours while waiting for a transplant. In this province, Madam Speaker, it's approximately one person every three days, and that's one person too many. Think of those families; think of how many people are impacted by these tragic and senseless losses.

In fact, polls show support for organ donation across Canada, as I mentioned, yet so few are actually registered to donate. I would ask members of this Legislature why we are falling so far behind in Ontario; why so many in our province die in hospitals awaiting organ transplants.

I think this motion sends an important signal that this Legislature, that this session, that this sitting is committed to promoting organ donation, and hopefully that will sow the seeds for important legislation to actually do something about it to tackle these troubling statistics that I've alluded to.

I'd like to highlight a few important stigmas to note. Often over the course of my consultations in my community, the number of stories I've heard, even conversations I've had with our caucus here—I think a few things are important to note.

Age alone doesn't disqualify someone; in fact, there are many cases of people in their nineties donating.

One's current or past medical history doesn't limit one from donating.

Most major religions support organ donation, or at least respect one's individual choice.

As well, organ and tissue donation does not impact funeral plans.

I'd also like to look back at the history when we were researching this motion and acknowledge that this issue has been discussed many a time before in this place thanks to a similar motion put forward by NDP member Peter Kormos; this was a number of years ago, in 2006. This was later discussed by the honourable Frank Klees who said something very poignant that I'd like to highlight today. Frank said that by bringing this forward—and I think in this motion you see that it's conditional on the renewal of a driver's licence or a health card for one to face this pivotal decision. He said that it forces people to confront this pivotal issue periodically in the course of their life, to give important consideration to this life-giving issue. I think those words echo true today and very much form the basis for what I'm looking to accomplish today.

1430

I think if we looked at breaking this down, making an important piece of this—basing this on the completion of the renewal or issuance of a health card or driver's licence—conditional on a declaration that forms part of the card or licence renewal process, and that specifies whether or not the person consents to having their organs or tissues used for transplant purposes after a person's death: That differs from the one introduced in 2006.

I brought some forms with me today just as some examples of a number of the forms people can complete to renew or request a health card or driver's licence. On only one, on your health card form, does it actually ask that, and it's right down here, Madam Speaker, in a tiny, tiny font. It doesn't actually ask you if you consent and what you consent to giving; it just asks you if you're an organ donor. You look elsewhere to then do that process.

The Trillium Gift of Life—I visited their website and would like to acknowledge the incredible work that they do—but this is symbolic of so much of what we've discussed in this place: red tape, legislation, regulatory burdens that we've discussed ad nauseam here. But this is the process. It took us days to get all these forms and to comb through all of them. It's just a very complicated process. The essence of this motion looks at addressing that.

The final point—“that in the event more than one such valid consent is made, the most recent declaration prevails over all previous ones”—because of course we know, Madam Speaker, that too often we see one's will overturned by family, whether intentionally or unintentionally. So I hope that through this motion we as a Legislature will look at ways to both promote and increase the number of donors in this province.

Madam Speaker, this motion sends an important signal and an important message to Ontarians. I think we all agree, through the gift of a number of the important interventions made over the last number of minutes here,

on the poet laureate. I think this motion, as well, would send an important message that we can find common ground on such a critical and important element within our health care system, and that is organ donation, and that is that we're sending a message to Ontarians that we as a Legislature want to address this issue, that we want to promote this issue, and that hopefully, again, as I said, that sows the seeds for important legislation that would be introduced at a later date.

As we look forward, there's so much more we can do—from an educational perspective, from an outreach perspective, to various communities within Ontario—but I'll draw it back to an important message that this Legislature can send by unanimously supporting this motion here in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you to the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South for bringing forward this motion and for prompting another important conversation on organ donation in this Legislature. He's not wrong when he references a fairly extensive history of individual MPPs bringing forward motions and private members' bills on modernizing the organ donation process. I think that as he references citizens from his riding—my first interaction with the Trillium Gift of Life and with the importance of organ donation came through a young boy in my riding, Jakob Beacock, who unfortunately was struck down by an appendicitis-related illness. He was 13 years old. During his illness and later when he was on life support, the community rallied around him. Jakob's grandmother was quoted at the time as saying, “I can't believe all the support. It does our hearts good, all this positive love.”

When his family lost Jakob, his parents, Pam and Dan, with the support of Trillium Gift of Life, made the courageous decision to donate some of Jakob's organs. All of that positive love that his family and friends shared with him over the course of his young life lived on through organ donation. His lungs and eyes were donated, his heart went to a little boy, and we know of four people now who have hope in their lives. That really is the power of organ donation.

I can tell you, just as every member in this House will know, that when that happens in your community, it is an opportunity to raise awareness and to educate about the importance of organ donation and sometimes to have some of those difficult conversations around the tension that some folks have around organ donation. You can honour a life by making this decision.

The process is not as clear as it could be. I have a 17-year-old daughter; she went to go get her G1, her licence, and looking at those forms was fairly overwhelming. In fact, it became very clear to me, because she got to that part on the bottom of the form where it said, “Will you be donating your organs?”, and this conversation had not happened through the education system. Had I not been there with her to say, “Honey, you can't take them with you”—this is the important part about organ donation, that

it is a gift, but the onus right now is to actually make that decision to sign that form for either a health card or a driver's licence.

The member from Northumberland–Peterborough South mentioned Peter Kormos. Peter Kormos served this House for 30 years. He was the member from Welland. His bill that he brought forward was back from 2006, so this has been ongoing. The member from Nickel Belt, just this past March, introduced the Peter Kormos Memorial Act, which was an amendment to the Trillium Gift of Life Network Act and also amended the Labour Relations Act, as well. Their direction was a little bit different than the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South in that it had an opt-out of organ donation rather than an opt-in—no, I'm sorry, it had an opt-in. The way that it works right now is that you actually have to say you want to opt in, but what we sort of feel might be a more effective process is if you opted out. This is arguably one of the more effective ways to actually deal with organ donation. It assumes that everyone is a donor until they say otherwise.

While the motion that's before us makes a clear direction around stating your intention as a potential donor, I think that over the next four years, potentially, this is something that we could work on with the PC caucus and the member opposite, to actually pass legislation and not to have another member in four years say, "This has already been debated over three or four other terms."

The opt-in system is essentially what we have now. The motion is seeking to enhance it by requiring a response from each person who carries a driver's licence or a health card and is seeking renewal. We think that this is a good starting point in these four years. We are going to be supporting the motion going forward. We are going to highlight just a couple of concerns that we have.

But I think it's important for the member to know that this is a long road. When I've met with Trillium Gift of Life—the receptions start next week here, and they will come and they will lobby all of us. The numbers that the member referenced are real, and they are real people. That is what Trillium Gift of Life actually tries to emphasize to all members—that those 33% of Ontarians who are registered donors are only 4.1 million out of an eligible 12.3 million. We can do better, we need to do better and the mechanism to draw in potential donors has to be strengthened.

But there also has to be an educational component to that, as well. The fact that there are 1,578 Ontarians, right now, currently waiting for an organ transplant is astounding to us. This is 2018. I have a friend who is currently waiting for a lung transplant, and I can tell you that his quality of life right now is highly compromised. I think, and I think everybody in this House knows, that there can be a more streamlined and open and positive experience around organ donation.

1440

I just want to mention what Peter Kormos had to say, because he was a staunch advocate for modernizing organ donation. He had so many quotes and, really, would bring

up organ donation almost at every opportunity that he had an opportunity to do so.

He said, and this is quote from Hansard, "When I die, there's going to be a '94 Chev pickup down there on Bald Street, and the organs. Anybody who needs the pickup, come and get it. It has probably been better maintained than my organs. But if you want my organs, get them too. I'm going to the tattoo parlour and getting a dotted line on my belly that says, 'Upon death, open here.'"

He said, "It's time for us to change dramatically the attitude towards organ donation. Simply calling upon people to sign an organ donor card, even the very agreeable proposal of mandatory election, is not going to change the culture, is not going to change the value system."

I think that's fundamental. Why a motion like this is so important is that it prompts all of us to challenge ourselves on how we feel about organ donation. Then, because we are legislators and we have the privilege of being in this place, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to take action.

It is quite incredible that in 2018, as the capacity to transplant organs becomes increased by virtue of new technology and medical science, the need for organs grows higher and higher and higher.

I think that, as Peter Kormos mentioned, there is this greater responsibility, almost a civic responsibility. That's why I referenced my daughter and the education system. There really needs to be a strong education component to addressing the fact that we have people whose lives could be dramatically improved by a streamlined process, by an educational component, by us as legislators finding common ground on an issue like organ donation.

I think that all of us have had some experience, and those experiences—I referenced Jakob Beacock—change your perspective on life. It changes the perspective on the quality of your life and how, through death, there can actually be a very positive grieving process.

I remember Jakob's dad, at the memorial service, saying that he knew that "Jakob would have wanted us to donate his organs," so he was really honouring Jakob's life by donating organs.

Where I think we do need to go, though, with organ donation, as we move forward, is that opting out of organ donation, rather than opting in, is a place that we have to get to. I want to acknowledge that it's not an easy path. There are people who don't feel as strongly as we do—or as I do; I'll speak for myself—or, certainly, as the New Democrats do.

Saving lives is the possibility, through a progressive organ donation system. Peter Kormos famously stated, "To date, it was considered an exceptional act to donate an organ. I put to you that it's time in Ontario for it to be considered an exceptional act to deny an organ where it could save a life or extend a life." So, fundamentally, what we are talking about is changing and shifting the culture around organ donation.

There is just one concern that we have, as the motion is currently crafted. Motions are certainly very powerful

calls to action in this place. The one component, though, is making the issuance of a health card conditional on the declaration that forms part of the card or licence renewal process. Essentially, the implication here is that if someone did not participate in the declaration, for whatever reason—and there may be reasons—they wouldn't be issued an OHIP card, which is a right of any Canadian citizen who is a resident of Ontario. As well, OHIP is also available to landed immigrants and temporary foreign workers—for instance, the seasonal agricultural workers who work seasonally in our fields in the province of Ontario. We probably wouldn't be able to be such a prosperous agricultural centre if these workers were not part of the equation. They potentially could also be denied their OHIP card.

As with any motion or any PMB, there are intricacies that need to be worked through. But I can tell the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South that the New Democrat caucus is committed to moving this agenda forward. If you're looking for a partner to address the modernization of organ donation, you have found one in this party. We can get this done. You have our support, and I think that it's an admirable direction to take the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Deepak Anand: I will be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa West–Nepean and the member from Perth–Wellington.

Speaker, in Ontario there are approximately 4,500 people waiting for an organ transplant, and every three days someone dies because they were unable to receive that transplant in time.

As said by my fellow members, at this time only 33% of Ontarians are registered donors, which is approximately 4.1 million out of 12.3 million.

A single donor can save eight lives through their organ donation and 74 more lives through tissue donation.

If you look at the data, since 2003, 17,000 Ontarians have received a life-saving organ transplant.

I'd also like to echo that in Canada's most populous province, there's no reason that Ontarians should be dying while they wait for an organ.

In bringing up this conversation, I'd like to highlight the amazing benefits of organ transplants. We can:

- end cornea blindness;
- help burn victims recover;
- remove the need for long-time dialysis;
- cure diabetes;
- prevent amputations;
- repair childhood heart problems;
- assist in heart bypass surgery; and
- correct birth defects.

Through this motion, we're not trying to find cures; the cures are already there. This motion will help bring proven cures to people who desperately need them.

Look at the data. Spain has the highest organ donation rate, at 36 donors per million. Canada's rate is merely half that—18 donors per million—and in the lower third of

developed countries. Even our neighbour, the United States, is doing better than us, at 26 donors per million.

In the past 10 years, the number of deceased organ donors has gone up by 42%, which is great. However, the number of people needing a transplant has gone up by more than that.

While most Canadians consent to donate after death, it is also possible to donate organs while you're still alive. Living donors who are the age of majority and in good health can donate a kidney, part of the liver, a lobe of the lung.

By increasing the number of registrants, we can not only save lives, but we will increase the quality of life of people waiting for these organs. Patients receiving organs earlier will have a better recovery, and it will relieve some of the burden on our health system as well.

Speaker, 44% of Ontarians volunteer their time and 83% of Ontarians volunteer their money to charitable and not-for-profit organizations. As Canadians, we have a good heart; we are hard-working, family-loving people. But we all get distracted by life, and when busy, we avoid decisions that are not crucial at that very moment. Signing an organ donation card is a prime example of something that we avoid doing, not because it isn't the right thing but because we get distracted.

I firmly believe that the province should encourage residents to think through organ donation and encourage a “yes” or “no” answer. We should encourage a decision so that no one needlessly dies waiting for an organ. It will improve the health of Ontarians. Once implemented, we can achieve better health, lower pain and higher productivity, and this will be all achieved without any cost.

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With this, I'd like to applaud the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South for introducing this promotion of organ donation and I'm looking forward for everyone to help.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm pleased to rise to speak to the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South's motion. We have heard all kinds of statistics about the numbers of people who don't sign their cards and could be involved in this type of thing.

I want to tell you a couple of stories here. I remember speaking to this when the former member from Northumberland–Quinte West at that time, Rob Milligan, first brought this forward when he was here. I spoke about my uncle who had received a heart. They figure that he lived probably another 10 years. He lived long enough to see his grandchildren born and his kids prosper. I full well know what a transplant can do to help a family along. It certainly helped the recipient of the donation.

But I want to speak about a very recent thing that has happened. I come from a little town called Monkton—not Moncton, New Brunswick; Monkton, Ontario. Most people have never heard of Monkton. It's about an hour and a half north of London. It's on Highway 23. If

everybody's home on a Saturday night, there might be 300 people in this little hamlet.

There are a couple of girls who live in that town who have suffered from cystic fibrosis all of their lives. One of them, Amanda, is currently in Toronto General right now because she received lungs last Thursday. She only had 25% of her capacity left in her lungs and she has been on oxygen for a number of years. She's only in her—I'm not going to say what her age is; I don't want to get this wrong. But she's a young woman. She's actually only been married for a few years to her husband, Phil.

For two years, she has been coming to Toronto every week to take therapy for her condition. It's put a real strain on the family certainly, but they are thankful for the technology and the doctors and physicians at Toronto General who have helped her along and kept her going for as long as she has. But she came down here nine times and had to be sent home, because the lungs didn't match her body.

Fortunately, last Thursday, she underwent about a seven-hour operation and received a set of lungs. The next morning, she was up. It's incredible how quickly they get patients up these days. She's breathing on her own and, apparently, the prognosis looks good.

But when things like this happen—and I spoke to a number of people. They had a benefit for her last winter that pretty near everybody in the area was at for them to help raise money, because it is expensive for the families. They have to pay for hotel bills. She will be here for about three months recovering. So they did a benefit for her, and it was packed; it was sold out. In fact, they couldn't get everybody in who wanted to go to the community centre.

But a lot of people who I spoke with at the benefit hadn't even thought about donating their organs until this happened. I hope that there's a bunch of them who have signed up to do it now and we can get on with this process, because the technology is there. We can do these things. Why not use it to the best of our ability that we can?

This motion is very personal to me because of what's happened in past years, but certainly with this young couple who are going through this right now. She's a very bright young lady. She is as full of life as she can be but she has been restricted for a number of years. Like I say, she and her sister both have cystic fibrosis, but she went downhill faster than her sister.

I would ask all members to support this motion. It's important, I think, that we get something done and get this at the forefront of people's minds, because it's easy to sign the card. I know it takes some thought on whether you want to do it.

I was at Rob Milligan's niece's funeral, where she had donated, I believe, eight organs to this, so her death, although tragic, has certainly helped a number of people get on with their lives.

I am pleased to support this motion. I thank you for bringing this forward again. I know it's important to Rob that this be done, and it's certainly important to a lot of people in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith): Further debate? I recognize the member from—Ottawa-Nepean, I believe?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Close: Ottawa West-Nepean. There we go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to rise today in support of my colleague and friend the member for Northumberland-Peterborough South's motion. The statistics on organ donations in Canada are staggering. Over 4,500 people across Canada are currently on wait-lists to receive organ donations. Some 250 patients die every week because they're on a wait-list and haven't received an organ donation. Let that number sink in: 250 lives that are lost that could have potentially been saved, this at a time when less than 25% of Ontarians have registered to be a donor. That's too small a number.

As I read this motion, I was brought back to a story that many of us will recall from last spring. Most of you will remember the tragic crash that took the lives of 16 young members of the Humboldt Broncos hockey team. One of those players who we lost, Logan Boulet, age 21, was registered as an organ donor. His tragic death had a silver lining, as his donation helped to save the lives of several other patients at that time. If a young man like Logan, with his whole life before him, can take the time to register, so can you and I.

Madam Speaker, I have a confession to make. I am ashamed to admit that I am not currently registered to be an organ donor. That is why today I am holding in my hand an organ donation registration form and I am proud to affix my signature to this and officially become a registered donor today. I have brought extra forms should any of my colleagues also like to do this.

Madam Speaker, this motion will give a gentle nudge to thousands of Ontarians to register.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I just want to remind members that you are not allowed to hold up things in the House. They're considered props, and that's not allowed. Thank you.

Back to the member for Northumberland-Peterborough South for his two-minute reply.

Mr. David Piccini: I just would like to thank the members from Waterloo, Mississauga-Malton, Ottawa West-Nepean, and Perth-Wellington for their interventions, and a special thank-you to my friend and colleague from Ottawa West-Nepean for being yet one more donor here in Ontario. That's great news.

I'd just like to address a few things mentioned by my colleague from Waterloo. I know opt-out/opt-in—certainly I acknowledge and will concede that there is more work to do; indeed I look forward to working together with you on this. Those very strong words that you said, “looking for a partner”—you have a partner in our caucus. I definitely noted those strong words and would respond equally as strongly in that you have a partner in myself and in members that have spoken today in our caucus. We do need to work together to address this systemic issue in Ontario and I look forward to working with you on this.

I know we heard earlier in a number of the stories the theme of hope here. If I could tie that into where I'd like to go with this, I very much view hope as a derivative of actions and one's will to effect desired change. That is the opportunity we have before us here in the Legislature, to work together to effect real and meaningful change that will tackle those troubling numbers that we heard. Such a will in this province—we're always looking to polls and things like that. We have a strong will in this province to address this issue. We have a mandate to do that and we have consensus here to tackle this issue, so I look forward to doing that—and, as the member states, important things from education to streamlining ways, as I said in my speech, to actually introducing legislation. I look forward to working with all of my colleagues to do that.

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SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Miss Monique Taylor: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should honour its commitments and work in the best interests of all Ontarians, regardless of ability, occupation, income or socio-economic status, by immediately reversing its callous decisions to (a) slash expected increases to social assistance rates in half, dragging Ontario backwards and pushing vulnerable Ontarians deeper into poverty, and (b) cancel the Basic Income Pilot Project in Hamilton, Brantford, Brant county, Lindsay and Thunder Bay, a project that has lifted thousands of Ontarians out of poverty and was in the process of collecting invaluable data about the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of such a program.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Miss Taylor has moved private member's notice of motion number 12. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to bring forward and speak to this motion and to highlight the impact of this callous decision that was made by the Premier that will put thousands upon thousands of vulnerable Ontarians at risk.

I tabled this motion because I felt that it was important that this devastating dictate deserved to be aired and debated in this chamber. This Premier and this government have shown time and time again in their first few short months that they have no intention of hearing from the people. They are shutting down debates; bills are not going to committee for public input; the new standard has become, "My way or the highway," even if that means suspending the Charter of Rights and Freedoms through the use of the "notwithstanding" clause.

Within a month of forming government, this Premier brought thousands of lives crashing down with the announcement that the Basic Income Pilot Program would be cancelled and the expected increase to social assistance payments would be cut in half—no consultation, no debate, no studying, no word of warning that he would renege on a campaign promise. In fact, the only way that

the people affected by this have found out any information on this change is through media reports.

The lack of official notification from the government is irresponsible in the extreme. It is disrespectful to those participants and the desperate situations that they face. So it is up to us as elected members to bring those voices here to Queen's Park to speak about what these decisions mean to the people whom they will directly affect and what it means to the future of our province. As it says in the motion, "To call on the government to reverse this decision."

There are two parts to this bill: the Basic Income Pilot and the social assistance rates. I first want to start with the Basic Income Pilot. It got off the ground in April 2017 but it wasn't fully enrolled until a full year later, in April of this year. It included 4,000 low-income people across the communities of Hamilton, Brantford, Brant county, Lindsay and Thunder Bay. These included people on social assistance as well as many people who were working but still met the low-income threshold for participation. This is important for the government members to understand because it underscores the reality of the changing nature of work. It reflects the ever-growing number of people whose work is extremely precarious, an issue that I and many other members have brought to the floor of this House in the past. It reflects those who can only find part-time, low-paid employment. With the growing trend of automated jobs, these problems will only get worse.

It was a pilot program, an experiment that was supposed to last three years, with experienced researchers studying the impact on the lives of those who took part. It was a program that the Conservatives said during the campaign that they would keep running for the full three years. Good; it made sense. This three-year pilot had only been fully up and running for a couple of months, and it made complete sense to continue it through so that the government could get the benefit of what had been invested in it, but within a couple of months that good sense, along with compassion, fairness and hope for thousands of people, was thrown out the window.

The design of the Basic Income Pilot went way beyond how much money people had in their pockets. Beyond meeting basic needs, researchers would measure and evaluate food security, stress and anxiety, mental health, health and health care usage, housing stability, education, training, employment and labour market participation. This information is crucial to understanding how best to transform our system.

In Ontario, it is unconscionable that so many people are living in poverty. Families who simply can't make ends meet have to make impossible decisions every single day. Do they pay the ever-increasing hydro bills? Do they pay the rent? Do they put food on the table? Thousands are homeless, and this includes people who are working but can't afford the ever-increasing cost of housing. The strains of these impossible decisions have a huge impact on all of those factors that were to be measured. As I said, it's unconscionable. All of those people pay dearly in many ways.

But poverty also costs us all. It increases our health care costs. It incurs increased costs related to our justice system. It reduces educational outcomes and future economic activity. All of this results in an estimated annual cost of poverty in Ontario of between \$32 billion to \$38 billion. I'm going to say that again: \$32 billion to \$38 billion is what poverty costs each and every single one of us here in Ontario.

This pilot program was going to be able to measure the outcomes of the overall quality of life for the individuals involved and the various services they use. It had attracted international attention. It was being watched worldwide and the communities that were involved had received delegations from the United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea and the United States, who were all interested in learning from this experience. Instead, that has all been thrown away.

I've heard the government and the minister particularly claim that this program wasn't working. How can she possibly say that? The only data that had been collected is the baseline survey against which the outcomes would be measured. So in the absence of hard data, what we do have are stories: stories from people who have been taking part; stories of hope; stories of success.

Jessie Golem is a freelance photographer. Before joining the basic income program, she was working four jobs—on the move, non-stop, day in and day out and still struggling to make a decent living. She came here to Queen's Park in early August to tell us what her experience was and how it had turned her life around using the basic income program to develop her freelance photography business.

While she was here, she also spoke on behalf of other participants who saw their dreams of decent housing, starting a business, going to school all torn from under them; people who had made plans for the next three years based on the promise of this program, only to have that promise broken. Since then, Jessie has put her photography skills to use by putting faces to those victims who have a story to tell, and I want to share just a few of them with you today.

"Basic income has helped me achieve my goal of graduating from college. It has helped by going through school with a lot less stress. I am achieving my goals for success. I am very thankful and grateful for the Basic Income Project. Meegwetch."

New quote: "Basic income has opened a door back into my life. After depression and a string of injuries knocked me out, the relief it brought allowed so many possibilities to rise up out of two years of darkness and anxiety."

New quote: "Basic income gave me the first opportunity in my 29 years of survival to be able to lift myself out of poverty. #promisemade, #promisebroken."

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Speaker, last weekend I had the pleasure of visiting Jessie and others at Supercrawl in Hamilton, where she had set up a wonderful display to show pictures and faces of people that had been collected through this basic income. It really is encouraging, and I please ask all

members of this House to visit her website, visit her Twitter, take a look at all of those faces and those stories, and see the real stories that are coming from this program.

More than 20 researchers from around the world, Speaker, have signed an open letter to this government to express their outrage about the program ending and the treatment of those who were recruited to take part in this program. Here's a part of what they had to say: "Not only is the cancellation inconsistent with international best practices, but it violates your own Canadian policy for the ethical conduct of experiments involving humans." To add insult to injury, the attitude from this government towards those people they are mistreating is absolutely reprehensible. That these participants have to learn of their fate through media stories rather than through official channels shows a remarkable level of disrespect that should shame you.

The government didn't stop with just cancelling the Basic Income Pilot—no. In a further attack on the poorest Ontarians, they also cut in half the increase to social assistance recipients that they were expecting. Already living below the poverty line, they had been promised an increase of 3%. That's still not enough of a raise to get them where they need to be, but the Premier couldn't even see his way to doing that. In one of his first acts as Premier, he slashed that increase by 50%. Under the last Conservative government, led by Mike Harris, social assistance rates were cut by 21% and never restored under the Liberal government.

Since the mid-1990s, social assistance rates have fallen more than in any other province, keeping OW and ODSP recipients in deep poverty. Now, right out of the starting block, we are seeing more of the same. Why it is so difficult for this government to understand, I will never understand. Income Security: A Roadmap for Change, written only last year, makes it very clear in its opening remarks:

"We have seen the human toll caused by inadequacies in the current system, including the deprivation, despair and lost opportunities for individuals and families living in poverty. Higher health care, social service and justice system costs and lower tax revenues follow as a reminder of the poor outcomes people are experiencing. The bottom line is that poverty is expensive and it costs us all."

Speaker, instead of dragging Ontario backwards, let's move Ontario forward. Over the course of the coming months and years, we should support the recommendations of A Roadmap for Change. We should get the ball rolling today by supporting this motion to reverse the decision to cut the increases in half and to stop the Basic Income Pilot.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am proud to rise today to support my colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain in this very important motion. I want to begin by quoting the minister responsible for the cancellation of the Basic Income Pilot, who explained the cancellation this way. She said, "A research project that helps less than 4,000

people is not the answer and provides no hope to the nearly two million Ontarians who are trapped in the cycle of poverty.”

Speaker, I'm not sure that this minister understands what a research project is. A research project is designed to compare results between a control group and an experimental group. In this case, the experimental group were receiving the basic income amount. The purpose of the research project was to address all kinds of questions that researchers across the world, in fact, are interested in finding out. Questions about: Would a basic income pilot lead to people working more or working less? What kind of work would people be doing when they were in receipt of a basic income amount? Their employment income: Would their income go up or would it go down? Would their productivity increase? Would there be an economic stimulus to the province? Would we have more people paying taxes? Would education rates increase? Would more people go back to school? Would crime rates decrease? Would mental health improve? Would intimate partner violence decrease?

These are all questions that we need to find the answers to, and this basic income pilot allowed us a mechanism to do that. But this minister said there were too many concerns. She said the program was failing. She didn't offer a shred of evidence to support that view. The purpose of a research project is that you start once the participants are enrolled, you begin administering the project, you wait until the project is concluded, then you analyze the results and then you make conclusions. You don't make conclusions at the very beginning of the project and then just decide arbitrarily to cancel it.

Speaker, we have huge concerns about this arbitrary cancellation, which was a promise broken. Let's face it, this government said not once but twice during the election campaign that they were committed to keeping the pilot in place and looking at the results once the pilot was complete, because that's what governments should be doing. Governments should be interested in using evidence to make policy that is going to improve people's lives. Clearly we have seen that this government really doesn't care about policy.

We know that now the Basic Income Pilot has been added to that growing list of lawsuits that this government is going to have to deal with. In August there was a lawsuit filed on behalf of some of the participants as a breach of contract law. We will be very interested in seeing the outcome of that lawsuit, because those research participants effectively signed a contract with this government. They handed over all of their personal information and they agreed to provide ongoing reports about their experience in the project. Now that contract that they had engaged in with this government has been violated.

But more troubling, I think, is the violation of research ethics that this government's arbitrary cancellation of the project represents. We saw just this week that international academics from across the globe have brought condemnation on Ontario. I have to hand it to this government: You're putting Ontario on the global map. People are

watching what is happening under your leadership in this province. International researchers and academics are regarding this government's arbitrary cancellation of the project as a serious breach of Canadian and international research ethics that harms Canada's reputation on the world stage and also has ripped the rug out from underneath the feet of these 4,000 participants who signed on to the project in very genuine expectation that the project would continue.

But, of course, this government didn't just stop there. They didn't just stop with cancelling the basic income pilot; they also cut in half the increase to social assistance rates that people in this province were looking forward to just to help not even lift them out of poverty, but just to help move them incrementally a little bit further so that they weren't as far under the poverty line, which is the reality for so many people in this province.

We know that people on social assistance have had to deal with the impact of an almost 22% cut to social assistance rates the last time we saw a Conservative government in this province, and it's certainly looking like that is what this government is planning to do this time around.

But, Speaker, in my community, in London, we have the highest monthly social assistance caseload of any other community. The shelter allowance on Ontario Works is \$384 when the average market rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$980. How—how—can people be expected to manage with that meagre—meagre—amount of support?

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So, Speaker, I fully support this motion and call on the government to reverse these draconian and mean-spirited changes that you have inflicted on the lowest-income people in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Joel Harden: It's an honour to rise to my friend's motion this afternoon. I have to admit: I'll begin speaking to my friend's excellent motion with a bit of disappointment. I would like to see some more members in this House talking about poverty and talking about the fact that we need to fight poverty. I'd like to see the Liberal Party even field an MPP to talk about poverty, because the fact of the matter is that poverty is expensive, as my friend said very well. Poverty is expensive.

Do you know what's funny? As my friend made the point and as my other friend just articulated, every time we've seen an effort in this country to seriously measure poverty, we've always found the research to be interrupted. Before this most recent pilot, the pilot in Dauphin, Manitoba, was also mysteriously interrupted midstream. But some intrepid researchers actually managed to gather the data, Speaker, to talk about what would actually happen if we made sure that people could meet their basic life necessities, and they found that people's opportunity into the labour market dramatically improved, their mental health improved, and the incidence of family discord or violence dramatically improved. So we know that when

research is allowed to be conducted, the evidence shows that people's lives are better.

I have two things to say. I'm going to try a little bit of truth-telling in three minutes and 27 seconds. There is something we inherited from Britain, and it's this notion that the poor are poor because they deserve it—the poor are poor because they deserve it—and if you're on Ontario Works or ODSP, which is incredible, to my mind, you're there because you deserve it, and you're not supposed to live well off the “taxpayer.” I just want to say in this place, as somebody who in my formative years was raised by a single mom on social assistance, that is the kind of elitist crap that keeps us from moving forward as a society, that keeps us from making sure every kid has an opportunity in this society.

And who does it serve? More truth-telling, with two minutes and 43 seconds left—who does it serve? Do you know what? There are ongoing research projects, non-sanctioned, happening in the province of Ontario and Canada right now, and do you know what they allow? Corporate welfare, Speaker; massive corporate welfare. We have such a hard time with the notion that somebody on ODSP or Ontario Works can make \$800 to \$1,000 or \$1,000 a year, to legislate them into poverty, but we allow people who collect stock options in the province of Ontario to deduct 50% of their income. We allow Mayo Schmidt, whom this government just fired, the 11-million-dollar man, to cash out his stock options with a 50% tax deduction.

Interjections.

Mr. Joel Harden: I know the truth hurts. I know it's hard for you to acknowledge that you're subsidizing corporate welfare, but that's what you're doing. You're not alone. The Liberals did it. Many other governments do it. You have no problem with the good people of Ontario and their tax dollars subsidizing yachts and Lamborghinis for Toronto's wealthy, but you do have a problem with poor people having a livable income. But here's the thing—

Mr. Stephen Lecce: How about a Tesla? Who wants to talk about—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Order. The member from King–Vaughan will come to order.

Mr. Joel Harden: It's okay, Speaker. I can shout over them. They don't want to hear the truth, but I'll keep talking. There are many more people—

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Unbelievable hypocrisy.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member from King–Vaughan will withdraw.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Withdraw, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Joel Harden: What I'd really like, Madam Speaker, is for this government to withdraw its foot from the necks of Ontario's poor. That's what I'd like—that's what I'd like—and what I'd like is for them to acknowledge for one minute that there is more fraud that goes on in a day at the Air Canada Centre with business executives deducting Raptors tickets and Maple Leafs tickets as business expenses than poor people trying to struggle for an income and a living in this country.

That could have been my life, Speaker, if my mom hadn't remarried, if the Harden family hadn't welcomed me and sent me to school. I could have been one of the people in one of the basic income pilots. I think the 4,000 people who remade their lives, bought new apartments and established small businesses, deserve respect, a tiny minutiae of the respect, I would hope, of what this government recognizes in corporate welfare for the elite.

The \$400-million lawsuit right now against Loblaw's from the Canada Revenue Agency; the Weston family, which I know patronizes many Conservative fundraisers and many Liberal fundraisers—never one of mine. Their ability to take tax money out of Ontario and park it in other no-tax jurisdictions should keep you up at night. It should keep you up at night. You should take that money and give people who are poor a chance at a decent life.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate? The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You look fantastic in the chair. Congratulations on your appointment.

I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to debate this motion and to discuss the new reforms that the new government is undertaking in order to lift Ontarians out of a cycle of poverty which has trapped far too many for far too long. My goal is to restore dignity and confidence in our social assistance programs and to get more people back into the workforce, where possible, and provide stronger supports when needed.

My responsibility to those who are less fortunate, across Ontario, is significant. My portfolio now combines the work of five ministers from the previous government. Ontario's most vulnerable are counting on me and the new government for the people, and I take that role very seriously.

On June 28, I was appointed to cabinet, and it was readily apparent that I had inherited a dysfunctional patchwork system that is more designed to keep people trapped in a cycle of poverty rather than to lift them up. That is why we had to push the pause button on the previous government's plan, which wasn't working. People today are turning to social assistance earlier and staying on it longer. That's not helping Ontarians; it's hurting them. Helping to make Ontario a better place, where the vulnerable can stabilize, get a hand up and realize a better life is what has gotten me up and moving every single day for the past three months.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services truly is the heart of the people's government. With so many programs and billions of dollars in spending, it can be easy to lose sight of the purpose of government. But caring cannot simply be measured by having a program or by the sheer number of dollars spent. We need to measure caring and the purpose in government in the motivation and objectives. The objectives need to be about measurable results. Our motivation is to have the best possible outcomes for those who need it. To do that, you need to have equal measures of head and heart. You can only do

this by sticking with programs that work and not with programs that aren't working or that aren't delivering the outcomes that society needs, particularly for our most vulnerable.

When we send our tax dollars to Queen's Park, we expect them to help the broader good, to have a safety net for those who can't help themselves or those who need a boost to get back on track. For too many years, Ontario has been heading in the wrong direction. That is not a political statement; that is a fact. Today, one in seven Ontarians live in poverty. Almost one million Ontarians are on some form of social assistance, and we spend nearly \$10 billion on supports that, right now, aren't lifting people up and aren't protecting those who need it most.

The programs we have in place are just that—they are siloed programs, each in place, for one problem or another. Rather than helping, this approach has been trapping our neighbours across Ontario into a cycle of poverty that is difficult to escape. Speaker, we can and we must do better. That's what I plan to do.

The system right now is failing those who need it most, and that's why I set an ambitious target of 100 days for my senior management team in social assistance to develop a plan to reform the system and to better help those who need our help the most. Make no mistake: We will unveil a system that coordinates the bottom rung of the ladder with every rung up to self-reliance. We will set objectives, and we will take a multi-ministry approach to the plan. That work has started, and I'm pleased that many of my colleagues in many different ministries are starting to work together.

1530

By the way, that is key, because for 15 years the previous Liberal administration, supported 97% of the time by the New Democrats, had a disjointed system that did not help other people. The social assistance people at Ontario Works were not talking to the social assistance people at Ontario disability supports, they weren't talking to basic income and they weren't talking to poverty reduction. Well, that ends today. This government, under the Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford, has made the decision that we will repatriate many of these programs. We will work together. We will talk within our ministries, and we will talk within our cabinet. I look forward to unveiling that soon, on November 8.

In the meantime: As we hit the pause button on the previous Liberal administration's plans, our government for the people raised social assistance rates by 1.5% across the board, on compassionate grounds, which is the average increase seen over the past decade. The members opposite won't want you to know that, Speaker. They want to pretend that we cut social assistance rates, but what we have done is increase them by 1.5% across the board, starting on September 1.

I'd like to make note of the member's motion for a moment, if I might, because I'm sure she feels that this is a noble motion. But it has an inherently flawed premise. I make note of the wording, where she says that basic income will lift thousands out of poverty. I'd like to

reinforce what I said earlier. One in seven Ontarians lives in poverty in this province, and only lifting 1,000 people out is not enough. That's why we need broader reform. That's why we need to support those who can't support themselves. Those who have the ability to go back to work and get themselves back on track—we need to provide them with supports.

I can't wait for us to unveil this plan on November 8. Our bureaucrats in my ministry are working so hard, with the political direction of my staff and my team, to ensure that we have a plan in place that is sustainable and gets more people working and looking after themselves. We're striving to build a system—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the minister.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod:—where everyone can access a social safety net when they need it most. That's not happening today. Ontarians should know that their government is working for the people to equip them with tools for success.

What I'm hearing from the other side, particularly as I speak, is that they want to keep people trapped in a cycle of poverty rather than lift them up and create an era of self-reliance within this province. That's what I'm hearing from them. They wouldn't want people to lift themselves up, because they want to trap them in the social system that we have right now that isn't working for them. It's failing us, and we need to change that.

If we want to lift them up, we have to take pride in their contributions to our communities across Ontario. Ontarians want to feel empowered to lead the lives they dream of, for themselves and their families. Not one person I have spoken to in my role as this minister has expressed a desire to live on social assistance. Perhaps they have met people who would like to live their whole lives on social assistance. I haven't met anybody. I've only met people who want to lift themselves up, create a great foundation for their family and be able to provide for one another. That's who I've met. Although it may be difficult for the members opposite to see that, our plan will benefit those who have failed under a fractured system that has hindered their pursuit for success. That's because the system that exists right now is siloed. That's part of what I'm doing now. In my new role, I get to connect various former ministries and programs that were operating lengths apart. They all should have been connected in the first place.

I'm going to conclude right now, Speaker.

I have some fundamental beliefs as somebody who travelled to this province with \$200 in my pocket, stayed on a friend's sofa for months on end, ate rice for weeks on end and had to use temporary employment and temporary work in order to pay the bills. My life started 20 years ago in this province, and it was not easy. But I had a desire every day to prove to my mum and dad back in Nova Scotia that I could make a living in Ontario and that I could be self-reliant. So I know a thing or two about what it's

like to have to struggle, to fight to survive and to make ends meet. That's why I think it's really important for us to actually lead with that motivation in trying to ensure that people are self-reliant where they can be and make sure that those people who are never going to be able to work because they have certain circumstances in their life—that we provide more supports for them.

Let me be perfectly clear: The best social safety net is a compassionate society. The best social circumstances are when those who can work, particularly women, are involved in our workforce and in our political discourse. And let me be very clear: The best social program in the province of Ontario is a job.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate? Last call for further debate. Back to the member for Hamilton Mountain for her two-minute response.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Speaker.

This has definitely been a lively debate, not one that I can say that I'm happy to be participating in. I think it's shameful that we are putting people in this position. People signed a contract for three years. What did that allow them to do? They signed leases. They started new possibilities of things that would never have been possible.

What is going to happen to those people now? Is she going to cover their rent for the next three months on the lease that they're going to contract? Does she care what's going to happen? She talks a lot about compassion. She talks a lot about what the world is going to look like under her new ministry. But I'll tell you, what it's looking like today for people is that they're eating in food banks. They're working four jobs and then travelling to the food bank on their way home.

Why is it that you completely disregard the fact that people have disabilities and cannot pull themselves up by their bootstraps and go to work? How is it that you can't acknowledge the fact that people are working four jobs? How is this possible that in 2018, under a Conservative government, we are going through what we went through under Harris? People are further behind today than they were under the previous Conservative government, and it doesn't look like things are getting any better.

I am ashamed to have to be standing here and trying to school people in this Legislature—people who are sent here to serve all people in this province, not just the elite, not just the corporations, not just the ones who can go to the grocery store and buy the extra, go to the Beer Store and buy a buck-a-beer. The people we're talking about here do not have that opportunity. If the minister thinks that people don't want to work, that they choose to be on social assistance—they're no different than the Liberal government that served them for the 15 years before—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. *Interjections.*

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Be seated, please.

Consideration of private members' public business has concluded before the expiry of the two and a half hours' time allotted. This House is therefore suspended until 4:13

p.m., at which time I will be putting the questions to the House.

The House suspended proceedings from 1538 to 1613.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Members, take your seats. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

POET LAUREATE OF ONTARIO ACT
(IN MEMORY OF GORD DOWNIE), 2018
LOI DE 2018 SUR LE POÈTE OFFICIEL
DE L'ONTARIO (À LA MÉMOIRE
DE GORD DOWNIE)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): We will deal first with ballot item number 13, standing in the name of Mr. Hatfield.

Mr. Hatfield has moved second reading of Bill 6, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario in memory of Gord Downie. Is it the pleasure of the House that the bill carry? Carried. I declare the bill carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Regulations and private bills.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The member has requested the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. Agreed? Agreed.

ORGAN DONATION

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Piccini has moved private member's notice of motion number 14. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It's carried.

Motion agreed to.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Miss Taylor has moved private member's notice of motion number 12. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1615 to 1620.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Miss Taylor has moved private member's notice of motion number 12.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Arthur, Ian	Harden, Joel	Shaw, Sandy
Begum, Doly	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Sara
Bell, Jessica	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Berns-McGown, Rima	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Bisson, Gilles	Mamakwa, Sol	Tabuns, Peter

Bourgoin, Guy
Fife, Catherine
French, Jennifer K.

Monteith-Farrell, Judith
Morrison, Suze
Rakocevic, Tom

Taylor, Monique
Yarde, Kevin

Hardeman, Ernie
Hogarth, Christine

Park, Lindsey
Pettapiece, Randy

Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak
Baber, Roman
Babikian, Aris
Bailey, Robert
Bethlenfalvy, Peter
Calandra, Paul
Cho, Stan
Coe, Lorne
Crawford, Stephen
Cuzzetto, Rudy
Downey, Doug
Dunlop, Jill
Elliott, Christine
Ghamari, Goldie
Gill, Parm

Jones, Sylvia
Kanapathi, Logan
Ke, Vincent
Khanjin, Andrea
Kramp, Daryl
Kusendova, Natalia
Lecce, Stephen
MacLeod, Lisa
Martin, Robin
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
McKenna, Jane
Miller, Norman
Mulroney, Caroline
Pang, Billy

Phillips, Rod
Piccini, David
Rasheed, Kaleed
Rickford, Greg
Roberts, Jeremy
Romano, Ross
Sabawy, Sheref
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Simard, Amanda
Skelly, Donna
Smith, Dave
Tangri, Nina
Thanigasalam, Vijay
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Wai, Daisy

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 29; the nays are 51.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Orders of the day.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The minister has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Interjection: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Carried on division.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, September 24 at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1624.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Downey, Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	
Dunlop, Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
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, Gurattan (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

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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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

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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 / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

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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

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Catherine Fife, Goldie Ghamari
Jim McDonell, Norman Miller
Suze Morrison, Michael Parsa
Peggy Sattler, Kinga Surma
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Randy Hillier
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kaleed Rasheed
Toby Barrett, Will Bouma
Mike Harris, Randy Hillier
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Présidente: Nina Tangri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Deepak Anand
Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
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