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(Hansard)**

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9 May 2019

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Jeudi
9 mai 2019

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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 9 May 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 9 mai 2019

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We're going to begin this morning with a moment for silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Let us pray.

Prières.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GETTING ONTARIO MOVING ACT
(TRANSPORTATION STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT), 2019

LOI DE 2019 POUR UN ONTARIO
EN MOUVEMENT (MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE TRANSPORT)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 8, 2019, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters / *Projet de loi 107, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et diverses autres lois à l'égard de questions relatives au transport.*

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today and add some of my thoughts on Bill 107. It's a government bill. We're calling it the Getting Ontario Moving Act.

I think we all recognize that in the province we have many challenges. There aren't a few challenges. It's not all about balancing budgets; it's about how to get the economy moving. That sounds very simple to say in a few words: Get the economy moving, get investments in Ontario, get great jobs that people feel are able to improve their quality of life and contribute to the province and educate their children, and do all the things that we know are important and could be done in Ontario. But there are a lot of challenges, and it's not just about getting companies to feel that this is a fiscally responsible government, that this is where they should be investing their money; they're looking at a lot of different aspects when they decide to invest in Ontario or expand in Ontario.

One of the things that I heard over and over again when I visited many of the companies in York region—one of them specifically told me that he had to double the number of trucks doing his deliveries. He has a fantastic—it's sort of like a huge vending machine in a factory to supply all those little things that you pick up on your way out of a pharmacy: the gum, the chocolates, and the little containers with Tylenol. It's a huge conveyer belt around

this enormous factory, and the stuff gets collected with the staff and all the high-tech machinery that's in there.

At the end of the day, he could have the orders coming in, he could prepare the orders in boxes. But those orders have to get, in a timely fashion, to all of the pharmacists and all of the pharmacies across Ontario, and probably maybe some of our neighbouring provinces even.

Just within 10 years, when I visited him a couple of years ago, he told me—one of the managers there—that they had to double the number of delivery vehicles. That's double the number of trucks on our roads and double the number of drivers who have to be paid to do the same number of deliveries. So that's without any growth; they needed double the drivers, and then, hopefully, they have growth as well and they need extra drivers and extra trucks for that.

Their challenge is that the traffic is getting exponentially worse each year. We all feel it, we all see it; we complain about it. We understand that for our constituents it really affects their quality of life. It cuts into the time they can spend working or with their families or even exercising. But we have to remind ourselves what it means to our businesses. For the deliveries to go out and for the supplies to come in, they need that transportation network; they need the trucks and the vehicles to get through. They also need their employees to be able to get to work and get home safely from work, and that's a real challenge for them.

The Getting Ontario Moving Act, if passed—the legislation will change, trying to make our roads safer. One of the things that I've highlighted is that any driving instructor who violates a zero blood alcohol or drug presence requirement—it will be a more serious offence than it is right now. As somebody who had four children who took driving lessons, I can't imagine a driving instructor violating any of the rules of the road, but certainly it makes sense they should have a zero blood alcohol level.

Improving traffic flow and enhancing road safety on our highways by introducing tougher penalties for driving slowly in the left-hand lane: We've all seen people who drive very slowly in the left-hand lane. There have even been protests on our roads, where people drove the speed limit in the left-hand lane and that caused huge delays and huge problems; which brings me to another point, which is, do we need to consult? One of the proposals is to consult. I'd invite people to contact their MPP's office by email, if possible, or letter or phone call, and let us know what you think about that. Should we be adjusting the speed limit to the actual flow of traffic, as opposed to the speed limit, which is right now posted on our 400-series highways?

We also want to put cameras on school buses, because too often the arm is out, the lights are flashing, the stop

sign is there by the school bus, but people still blow right by, and it doesn't register for them for whatever reason, or they do it intentionally, thinking it's worth the risk. We want to have those cameras on the arms to ensure safety for the students who are getting on and off the buses. After all, Madam Speaker—we've switched now from Mr. Speaker to Madam Speaker, just so that people at home are aware why I'm switching—it's paramount that our children can get on and off the buses safely. I know, as somebody who drove carpool for many years, it's hard enough with just five kids in a carpool to make sure they get out of your car with their lunch bag, with their hat, with all their school projects and papers. The school bus driver has enough of a responsibility without trying to get down licence plates of people who are driving by, which now I'm sure they try to do.

One of the other things that is being proposed is to allow motorcycles to have those high handlebars. It never really occurred to me that I don't see that in Ontario on our roads, and I do when I'm outside of the province. Perhaps in the United States, you see those motorcycle clubs and they're kind of leaning back. It reminds me of one of my first bicycles with the banana seat, and we used to call them the monkey bars. I guess it's a certain look, it's a certain style, it's a type of motorcycle club, and they want to have the option to have those types of handlebars.

I'd be interested in hearing from people any of their thoughts on any of these topics, but I do want to read a couple of quotes from the Ontario Confederation of Clubs, the OCC, the motorcycle clubs: "This regulation allows the bike owner to adjust the height of their handlebars to suit their individual rider position, which affects both riding comfort and safety. Without this change, motorcycles were the only vehicle in Ontario that the owner could not adjust for driver safety and fit."

Obviously, there is a different style of motorcycle for different types of riders and for how they feel safe or whether or not they have passengers or gear and just their comfort level. I think that there's a bit of a fashion style to it as well.

0910

The other quote from the Ontario Confederation of Clubs is, "Our research proves this access reduces pollution; addresses road congestion and greatly enhances rider safety." Well, this is actually talking about another aspect of motorcycles, which is to allow motorcycles to stay in the passing lane and not be stuck in the middle lane, which is very dangerous for a motorcycle. I think we can all appreciate that. I know I don't like to stay in the right-hand lane, personally. Cars are trying to get off and on, and I generally try to stay in the middle lane as much as possible. They're addressing that most motorcycle accidents on 400-series highways "result from drivers of larger vehicles failing to see a motorcycle; especially, when they change lanes and this access to HOV lanes greatly reduces that risk factor." So they want to allow motorcycles to use the HOV lanes even if it's just one rider. That makes sense from a safety perspective, but I think a lot of people are going to have a lot of comments about that because generally the HOV lane goes quite quickly, and I'm not so sure

that the motorcycles—some people might be worried whether or not they'll be able to keep up with the traffic. We all know you can't get in and out of those lanes so easily.

One of the other things is that they're looking at strengthening the laws to protect front-line roadside workers from careless drivers and using advanced technologies for commercial motor vehicles that lead to reduced fuel consumption, lower emissions and increased productivity within the trucking industry. Well, I think that technology is changing all the time. I would like us to look at regulations that can keep up with changing technology, not always being 10 years behind, which is how I feel Ontario has generally been. Maybe we have to build some flexibility into our regulations so that we can anticipate new technologies before they even come out and the adjustments can be made by the various ministries and the various industries so that we can use those new technologies. We see it happening now with all of the new technologies for cars, in terms of cameras, in terms of hands-free, in terms of built-in hands-free and Bluetooth and WiFi and things like that in cars.

I think it's a real challenge for all of us, when we're driving and stuck in traffic for so long, not to somehow try to use that time to our benefit to do some work and speak hands-free. There have been a lot of studies done. I know it's something that I talk a lot to. Specifically, my daughter has sent me information on studies that she says show that when you're talking on hands-free, on Bluetooth, it isn't actually much safer than holding a phone. It's a distraction. So we've had that discussion where I've said to her that if I'm talking hands-free, I try to keep it sort of a very light type of conversation, not serious where I have to really be thinking and somebody's asking you a serious question about something, because I'm aware that we're on the road, there are so many distractions, there are so many things happening, and it's really not the place we should be having to run our entire lives. With the fact that our traffic is so horrific in the greater Toronto area, I think it's just hard for people to manage. Their cars become almost a moving office. I used to joke when my kids were younger that they thought of my van as some kind of moving family room with an entertainment system and food, and they would be expecting things to be served to them. Maybe I was guilty of letting them have that expectation, Madam Speaker, but the fact is that it's very dangerous.

Just this morning I heard on the news that two women were injured, older women who were at a church event last night, and their car got stuck somehow on the curb. Both of them were trying to get out and deal with the car being stuck. One of them has passed away and the other one is injured and in hospital, I believe. These things happen very, very quickly, in the blink of an eye. Things can happen so quickly, and you're thinking, "Well, I was just trying to open the door to put in my credit card to pay for parking and have the gate go up," and then there's a pole there, and you didn't put the car properly in park and the car moved and trapped you. We all have to stop a little bit. They always say, "Stop, look and listen," to children, but we could all do that a little bit ourselves when we're

parking. Take a little extra time. You're making that left turn. You've missed your turn on the highway. I always remind my family members, if you're missing your exit on the highway and you're not in the exit lane, to just go to the next exit and turn around. You don't just—we've all had it happen to us: We've all seen the car come from that middle or left-turn lane and rush off to exit. It's one of those wow moments where you see your life flash before your eyes. Too often, accidents happen that we realize were preventable. I mean, they're called "accidents." Accidents are always going to happen. We cannot prevent every single accident. It's just the way of the world. Things happen. But we should do everything we can to minimize as much as possible.

We want to have some province-wide consultations: one to review speed limits and another to look at the rules of the road for bicycles, e-bikes and e-scooters. Certainly, with the bicycles, it's a big topic of conversation. Generally, when you're on a bicycle you see things from one perspective, and when you're in the car you see it from the other perspective—and the same thing for pedestrians, obviously. I think that it gets challenging when we have motorized bicycles. At what point do we decide a scooter is more of a bicycle or more of a motorcycle? It's a challenge, but I think that we need to hear from all aspects. I think that it's a good idea that we're doing consultations, because when we go door-knocking and we meet with constituents—just at the malls or the grocery stores or out walking our dogs—there are a lot of people out there who come from other countries and have seen things done better than what we're doing here, for one thing; and there are a lot of people who just generally have an interest and have good ideas. If we don't hear from people, we're not doing a service to the taxpayers of Ontario, if we're not getting all of those ideas that the public have and get them on the table. A lot of times people do have great ideas, but they don't realize the liability issue, or the complication, different weather conditions, and things like that. That's understandable. But the experts will go through all of those recommendations.

Again, I would invite people—certainly, I love it, specifically by email, because sometimes you have a few moments and you can go through those emails that we get from our constituents. I would advise people that it doesn't have to be in a letter. We don't need proper punctuation and grammar—just bullet-point form. Just say, "I'm sending you my concerns and suggestions. These are the concerns. These are the suggestions." A lot of times when we're here in the Legislature and we're speaking on behalf of a bill or giving statements or—whatever it is—we're giving questions and comments on somebody else's debate, we draw upon what people have told us and have shared with us and their stories.

We are obviously focusing on one of my favourite topics: subways. We're focusing on getting subways built in Ontario. I think that everybody agrees that we have been way too slow in terms of building subways. Other cities never stop tunnelling. They buy the tunnelling machines, they keep them going, and they just never stop. They know

in general which direction they want to go. Even though we call it the "rocket," it's not rocket science, where we want to expand those subways and in what direction. We've just got to keep tunnelling and keep building.

Other than the few subways that have opened up in the last couple of years, all of the subways prior to a couple of years ago were opened by Conservative governments here in Ontario. It's just such a shame, Madam Speaker, when we go to New York, and we go to other cities and we see the incredible network of subways. We were really the leader of subways not that long ago—a couple of decades ago—and we've really fallen far behind.

We need to look at the GTA as a big urban centre—one urban centre—and stop pitting different municipalities against each other. The province is really in a position to do that, to work with private interests, to work with different municipalities and to work with the experts and ensure that the subways are getting done in a timely fashion and on budget.

We want to expand light rail service. There are thoughts to that. There is new technology out there. We heard during the debate that there is now new narrower electrified trains so that the tunnels don't have to be as wide. That can facilitate an easier time tunnelling.

0920

One of my complaints, which, to be perfectly honest, Madam Speaker, not too many people agree with me on, has been that I feel that the subway stops are much too close to each other and that subways should reach a certain speed before they have to slow down for a stop. When you're expanding subways for miles and miles and miles, it gets kind of silly when it becomes what we call a milk run with trains. There's a reason why the train from Toronto to Montreal that people like to take is the one that goes straight through and doesn't stop along the way, or maybe it just stops in Kingston. The other ones, that stop at every little town—you don't get to Montreal very quickly from Toronto if it has to keep stopping.

Yes, I can see the point of view that you want to have the subway stops, so that more people can access it walking or biking, but on the other hand, we have to balance both parts of it. We heard the debate of new GO trains, in fact, and that it seems so obvious to open up more stations, but it actually lowers the ridership. People coming from further away, if it stops too many times, stop taking that train. So there are a lot of challenges that we have to consider.

We want to ensure that people feel that our roads are being made safer. One of the biggest debates, I think, that I've heard from people is about raising speeds on the highways. It's interesting that that is a real attention-grabber. Other jurisdictions have higher speeds. The speed was actually lowered because of the fuel embargo with OPEC back in the 1970s. We lowered it to conserve fuel consumption. But the reality is that that embargo has not lasted, and our cars are so much more fuel-efficient now that we want to get the traffic moving.

People have suggested to me that maybe different lanes have to have different speeds posted. It sounds kind of

complicated. People have said that in the States, they have a higher speed limit, especially in the southern United States. But it's a hard one; you do not go one mile above the posted speed limit or they're going to grab you. Instead, we have posted 100 kilometres an hour, and the average speed seems to be 115, or certainly 110.

So, it's a big discussion. I'm certainly interested in hearing from people. I believe that my colleagues here from all sides of the House are very interested in hearing from their constituents about all of these issues.

There are a lot of times—the summer months, beginning now, and spring—that we forget what it's like in the winter road conditions. But hopefully, we're going to always be thinking about that, and thinking about the types of surfaces, the friction, the fuel consumption, the noise—the concrete road surfaces make a lot more noise but last longer—and how we can use asphalt that doesn't have to be replaced so often.

These are all challenges that we're going to meet. I'm looking forward to hearing much more debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a pleasure to rise this morning. This is a time that we should be talking about getting Ontario moving. I think this is a great subject for debate. There are things in this bill that I could see the opposition coming around and supporting.

But, again, getting Ontario moving is a laudable objective, but doing it in a hurry concerns me. Everything this government has done since I started work here 11 months ago seems to be in a hurry.

My friend from Thornhill ended with talking about the speed limit issue. I just want to say, candidly, from an environmental perspective, people in Ottawa Centre have told me very clearly that the speed limit exists not only for a safety reason, but it exists for an environmental reason.

We are living in a context, in case my friends in government haven't noticed, of a climate emergency. Back home in Constance Bay, in Cumberland, in Britannia Beach, homes and properties are flooded. We've had forest fires up in northern Ontario. We've had flooding in northern Ontario. Our friends from Kashechewan were with us last week.

We either make policy decisions, as a government, that actually help us address that climate emergency, or we don't. What I fear is that in a lot of this bill are decisions that will allow us to fast-track already bad practices, and the speed limit issue is one.

I would also ask my friends in government—if they're listening to what I'm saying—when they approved the \$1.6-billion light rail project in Ottawa, which I think is needed, did they ask the city of Ottawa and the Rideau Transit Group questions so they had comfort that the project that was going to be built could actually be useful for Ottawa?

For example, my friend the councillor for Capital ward, Shawn Menard, has raised questions with the project's constructors, asking, "Are the trains suitable for the coldness?" And it's likely to be even colder; it's the nature of

Ottawa's winters. The answers we have been getting back are not satisfying. Our names, as a Legislature, are on that particular secretive group.

We need to make sure that when we get Ontario moving we're doing it—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Harris: It's a pleasure to take part in the debate today. I wanted to thank the member from Thornhill for some very poignant comments that she raised.

One thing that we don't talk about a lot outside of Toronto is subways. I had a really great chance to meet with the Minister of Transportation earlier this week and also a group from my area in Kitchener-Waterloo, in Waterloo region, called Connect the Corridor. They are very, very happy to see new subway lines being built in Toronto, because any time you can get Toronto moving faster, you get the rest of the province moving faster as well.

I think a lot of people focus on, "There's a lot of infrastructure being built out in Toronto. It seems like there's a lot of money being put into Toronto." But when you do factor it out and aggregate it—Toronto, of course, is our largest city. When you look at the overall GTA region, we're now the fourth-largest city in North America—Mexico City, New York City, Los Angeles and then Toronto. I think that says a lot for us as Canadians. It's great that we're able to celebrate that, but we do need to be able to get people moving.

When we can get congestion off of the 401—I think the vast majority of us here probably take the 401 on a pretty regular basis. It sometimes takes me almost three hours to get home, to go 116 kilometres door to door. It's pretty crazy, actually, when you think about it.

When you look at the investments we're making in transit infrastructure, especially pertaining to this bill, when it's talking about subways, when it's talking about getting people moving faster on our highways, they're all fantastic things. Of course, we don't want the rest of Ontario to be forgotten—and I certainly don't think we will. We've got a great group of ministers and, of course, our Premier. He's travelling around the province. He's meeting with everyday constituents, hearing their concerns. We're moving forward in a very positive, responsible manner.

I appreciate the time this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on this government's most recent bill, the Getting Ontario Moving Act.

I have to say, Speaker, that this government is once again tidying up the edges of already implemented acts in Ontario, selling the changes to the people as large, drastic policy changes and reaping the praise. For one, a lot of the amendments being made are simply to match already active legislation on the federal level, like the Criminal Code of Canada, which, of course, is something that needs to be done, but I don't think it warrants the hype that this government plays into.

One of my favourites was changing the motorcycle handle height restrictions to allow for high-style handlebars. My most favourite line was when the government said that doing so would provide consumers greater choice.

The government for the people clearly has their priorities straight. Between being able to drink at 9 a.m. and raising motorcycle handlebars, I almost cannot contain my excitement.

Going back to the important aspects of this bill, I can appreciate the desire to make our roads a lot safer for everyone in Ontario and help our businesses achieve their goals. But we need to think of the people rather than focus on reducing red tape for medium- to large-scale businesses or reducing the burden of inspections on specific vehicles. Regulations and red tape are there for a reason: to hold the people accountable, to ensure procedures are being followed through.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Parsa: First off, I would like to thank the member for Thornhill for raising some great points, and also some of my honourable colleagues across.

One of my colleagues across talked about getting things done and being in a hurry; we absolutely are. The last government kept coming to our towns and our regions, election after election, promising to build more transit for the people, for the businesses, and dropped the ball every single time. As soon as the election was over, all the promises disappeared. So absolutely, we're going to keep our promise. We said we were going to do things differently.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order. 0930

Mr. Michael Parsa: Of course we're very excited, Madam Speaker. The member across said there's no excitement. We're very, very excited, Madam Speaker.

In my region, I can tell you right now—the member across referenced some of the councillors. I can tell you, some of our councillors who have been vocal on this issue election after election have reached out to the provincial government to say that we need transit. The reason we need transit in York region, in my area, is that it's a very growing area. By 2041, our population is going to increase to 1.8 million people. We can't expect people to get around to work and school without better transit. Small businesses rely on better transit.

So, yes, we made a promise to them, and, yes, we're going to keep that promise. We're going to build subways. We're going to build transit all across Ontario. I'm very, very excited that transit is finally coming to Richmond Hill. I thank the minister and his hard-working parliamentary assistant for finally getting the work done on behalf of all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to thank all the members for their comments. I think that we all agree that we need to get transit moving. We need to get transit built and get people moving. We

probably need to get our roads fixed up, and some of our bridges. Infrastructure needs to be done in this province.

I want to point out that—the NDP mentioned priorities—a lot of times it's those small, little things that we do as a government that help somebody with a hobby, help somebody with their business. It might seem so trivial to us, but it might be very meaningful to them. I have a feeling that's the case with the custom-designed motorcycles, that it's something very, very meaningful to a lot of people. And I apologize; before, in my earlier remarks—I have seen the monkey bars, I call them, the high handlebars, in other jurisdictions on motorcycles. It never occurred to me that I never saw them here on our roads in Ontario because it's not something, maybe, that's important to me; I admit it. But if it's something important to our constituents, then I'm certainly willing to discuss it and hear the pros and cons. It sounds like it's a hobby type of thing, Madam Speaker.

In terms of fuel consumption, I think we all agree that we have some of the most fuel-efficient cars on the road here in the GTA, but the traffic has to get moving and we have to balance everything. I think that we recognize a lot of the cars now—I know certainly my car—say “eco.” I would just remind the member of that, that a lot of the cars now say “eco” when you're reaching the right speed to have the maximum fuel consumption for lower emissions. There's a lot of technology out there that we can be using to lower emissions, and I welcome the member to share some more comments on that with us at a later date.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm pleased today to join debate on Bill 107 on behalf of the good people of Davenport. Our community in the riding of Davenport depends on public transit every single day. We also depend on the effective functioning of the transit system in Toronto, and that functioning of the transit system is a top issue for my constituents.

It's ironic, because this morning I was almost late waiting for my bus, which is a pretty regular occurrence, so I try to use the tools available to me to make sure that I time my travel accordingly. But certainly, in my riding, as in many parts of the city of Toronto and elsewhere, we are used to a system that is overburdened, over-utilized and underfunded.

Davenport is home to the Dufferin bus, sometimes referred to lovingly as the “sufferin' Dufferin.” But, really, it is a vital transit line for so many people in the city. It is ranked as the fourth busiest route, with almost 40,000 riders a day. To put that in perspective, that's about a third of the population of Elgin–Middlesex–London, home of the Minister of Transportation himself.

Lansdowne, Dufferin and Ossington subway stations are jam-packed with riders at most times of the day, like the rest of Line 2. People tell me they go into work an hour early just to account for the crowding and the inevitable delays—as I just spoke of—on the subways during morning rush hour.

Fortunately, over the last little while, I don't take the subway to work as much. I tend to take a bus now to here.

But for many, many years, I took the Bloor line to work every day, entering at Dufferin station. And even then—and this is probably at least five years ago that I really stopped using it as regularly—I would give myself an extra 45 minutes during rush hour to account for the back-up that was really inevitable. If you talk to people who are using it regularly, like my daughter—my daughter takes the Dufferin—actually, she gets on at a different subway station now, but she takes the subway to her school across the city. Across the GTA, many, many students take the TTC. She leaves every day, giving herself plenty of time, but at her school they actually give a certain allowance because so many of the kids end up late because of the subway, and it's getting worse and worse every year. Even though the kids plan for it, the reality is that they do find themselves often arriving at school a little bit late. It takes a very long time. There are parts of this province where people have to take school buses for an hour and a half, so I'm not complaining, really, but the truth is, to stand on those crowded platforms—and I urge everyone here, if you haven't had that experience, to try to get onto a subway platform on the Bloor line, for example, during rush hour. I'm sure many folks here have, and I appreciate that. But try that a few times, because it's not a great way to start your day; I'm just going to say that.

Now I take the 94 Harbord bus, which takes me right to the back door of this wonderful building. It's less crowded, but as I said, sometimes it's also delayed. It really is, again, dependent on the time of day and the route that you take in this city. East-west routes along College and Dundas are just as crowded as the subway often is.

The Union Pearson Express and GO Transit lines also border my riding, and, in the northern section of the riding, there are also tracks. Indeed, I often describe Davenport as a riding that is defined by trains. It really is.

In my riding, people are still dealing right now very urgently with the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown. You'll recall that my riding was also very affected by the building along St. Clair a few years back. Many of the businesses did suffer quite a lot at the time. Things are coming back, and, in the end, it was a really important investment in transit in our city. It has been a great improvement, but we should not underestimate the impact that these projects have on local businesses.

I'm just going to mention that a couple of weeks ago I went to visit one of my constituents. Her name is Susan Bazarte. She has a wonderful Filipino cafe called Eglinton Fast Food, right at the corner of Dufferin and Eglinton. It has been literally hidden by barriers because Metrolinx is building right in front of her business. It has been, literally, completely hidden by these barriers for over a year. I'm sure she wouldn't mind me sharing this: She was compensated a tiny, little amount by Metrolinx, but the fact that you can't really even find her business at all and the fact that many of her regulars are seniors from a nearby seniors' home—it's very, very difficult for them to get there, and they've actually also lost a lot of that community that comes together in local places like that. I've been, on her behalf, trying to see if we can get any more support for her.

I understand that the barriers are coming down soon, or somewhat coming down. But I think we shouldn't underestimate, when things don't go smoothly, what that means to local communities that are directly affected. My riding is directly affected, in numerous ways, by many of the projects that Metrolinx has been involved in over the last number of years, as well as the TTC's.

0940

As many here may know, the Metrolinx extension of the Barrie GO line will see the construction of a massive new transit super-bridge that goes right through the heart of the riding of Davenport. We call it the "super-bridge"; it has some other less polite names as well.

It was announced quite a few years back, and I guess I wouldn't mind talking about it for a few minutes, because the people who I represent have a very good sense of what's working and what isn't when it comes to transit planning. I can tell you that they are tired of seeing vanity projects and electoral calculations take precedence over their needs as transit users and transit riders. They are tired of never being consulted and they are very disappointed in this legislation, because they have not been asked and they will be directly impacted in so many ways, like so many people in this city.

The government, I want to point out, had an opportunity to consult on this. In fact, they could have even talked about it, I don't know, in the election? That might have been interesting. I mean, I don't really consider that a comprehensive consultation, but you could have at least mentioned it—

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Put it out there.

Ms. Marit Stiles: —and put it out there. But, again, it was crickets.

In debating this bill, the first major piece of transit legislation by this government, I'm going to try to bring the experiences of the people in my community to the forefront. I'm going to talk about how successive provincial governments have failed the people of Toronto and have pushed our transit system to the breaking point, and I'm going to talk about how this bill, far from addressing those concerns, will actually make things worse—much worse—for transit riders in Toronto and for our economy as a whole.

Let's talk about what's in this bill. This bill amends the Metrolinx Act to allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to prescribe a new rapid transit project—in other words, a project for which for design, development or construction is yet to occur—as the sole responsibility of Metrolinx. Essentially, the government is seeking to break up the Toronto Transit Commission infrastructure, handing authority over its subway system to Metrolinx and opening the door, as such, to even more potential for political interference in transit planning; more privatization of public assets and higher fares for riders.

I also want to mention that there is no longer going to be a requirement for public consultation; I guess that's just a waste of money. Also, there is no longer going to be a requirement to consider—and this one I find really, really disturbing—the climate change impacts of transit planning. This is ironic, because one of the reasons we actually build and invest in transit is to build a sustainable province.

I'll tell you, in my community, when you have a line and this giant bridge that's now going to be taking hundreds of trains every day across their community right through their backyards—in Toronto and in that neighbourhood—this is the Junction Triangle neighbourhood—people live really close together, so there's not a big field between you and that line; it is right there. When you're increasing the number of trains by a substantial amount—which everybody kind of likes; we want to see more trains. But when you do that and they're not electric trains, that's a whole lot of problems for families in my community.

I'll tell you, I've had kids in the past when I was a school board trustee draw me pictures of what they were afraid of: the smoke, the billowing smoke, the air pollution as a result, the noise pollution. I'll get back to that in a little bit, but these are the kinds of things that directly impact communities that I really worry about, because of the action this government is now taking.

Why are the people of this city and others concerned? In my community and in neighbourhoods across the city, we have seen the impact of provincial governments meddling in long-term transit planning to suit their own purposes. It hasn't helped people get to work on time, but it has helped elect a few MPPs from time to time.

We have many, many reasons to be concerned, so let's talk about them again. Let's talk about the ripping up of Transit City. Let's talk about the Scarborough subway debacle. Let's talk about GO stations built in a Liberal minister's riding, overriding existing plans and evidence. I seem to recall that was Minister Steven Del Duca, who I understand has other plans, perhaps, in his future—the former transportation minister. We saw the reports that came out around that from Ontario's Auditor General, saying that the minister had clearly influenced Metrolinx to approve the proposed Kirby GO station in his Vaughan riding.

Just to be clear, Metrolinx initially did not recommend Kirby and a proposed Lawrence East GO station in Toronto to be built as part of the former Liberal government's expansion of the GO public transit system. And there were good reasons: They thought it would increase car traffic, it would reduce the number of people taking public transit and create more greenhouse gases. But Del Duca and the city of Toronto swayed Metrolinx to approve the stations in their communities. What they found was that the Minister of Transportation—and the city of Toronto as well, I will grant—influenced Metrolinx's decision-making process leading up to the selection of those two stations.

We've got to get the politics out of these decisions. This is not good government. We know that the previous government had a terrible record, but why repeat these mistakes?

The UP Express: Maybe some of the members in this room have actually taken this. It's the train that takes you back and forth to Union and Pearson, something that I have to say many of us thought—I thought, "Wow, great idea. Let's become a world-class city. Let's have a great train to the airport." The only thing that held me back from completely endorsing it was the fact that it was going to go right through the community again, and it was going to

increase a lot of the traffic, and that they weren't talking about electrification.

I want to talk about that. There was this promise of electrification. That was one of the reasons why the community eventually bought in or was willing to settle for it. There was a promise of electrification of that route. It has never come. In fact, what came instead was a boutique transit line built at a great cost at a time when people were desperate for relief on the main transit lines. It's also barely integrated into the rest of the transit system, and is heavily subsidized, by the way, to deal with the absolutely absurd—the initial fare was nearly \$30. Can you imagine?

Today many people take the UP Express, and they do value it, but you only have to look at visitors to Toronto wandering around confused under the bridge at Bloor and Dufferin, looking for the subway station, to see that this is not the seamless integration with the TTC that Metrolinx and the Liberals promised it would be.

Let's look at Presto. Presto was forced on the TTC by the provincial government. This is an example of the provincial government meddling in the affairs of transit in Toronto with the idea of saving money and moving forward with privatization. They forced the TTC to take Presto by saying, "If you don't take Presto, we're going to take the gas tax funding away from you." So the TTC said, "Okay, we'll take it." The Auditor General, even five years ago, said that Presto would be the most expensive fare card system in the world. A private company is essentially running Presto right now, making a profit out of it. Five years ago the Auditor General said that it could be, again, the most expensive fare system. What's so disturbing is that, talking to transit agencies, Presto is just going to get more expensive.

Interjection: Cha-ching.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, cha-ching, because they're increasing the rate that transit agencies are going to pay by about 9% of the fare price.

Let's face it, the technology for this is already outdated, and the government has signed a contract that's going to be difficult if not impossible to get out of. These are important decisions that directly impact what people pay, which I know matters to this government like it matters to us—what real people pay. Believe me, it's a huge chunk of many people's income to get back and forth to work using transit in this city.

Let's talk about operating funding, because under the previous government, the Liberals failed to restore the 50-50 operating funding to the TTC, allowing problems just to fester to the point that the TTC now needs \$33 billion over the next 15 years for maintenance alone. Instead of addressing that issue, this government is going to take it a step further, breaking the Premier's own promise to maintain gas tax transfers to Toronto by cancelling the planned increase. That decision is ripping \$1.1 billion away from Toronto, money that would have gone to maintenance and repairs, preventing some of those delays that I spoke about earlier, those very lengthy delays that people here are experiencing every single day.

I just want to go to something that was reported by CBC News. The transit agency's chief financial officer, Dan

Wright, said that signing off on the final capital budget after that cut made him feel “ill.” He said, “There is no way you can take \$1.1 billion out of our 10-year program and not have an impact on the efficient and effective running of a system—there is just no way,” adding that new bus and streetcar purchases in 2020 are now unlikely, if not impossible.

0950

So this is the context in which we are dealing with this bill, Speaker, and it’s why so many people aren’t buying what these members and this government are selling. I’ve heard it first-hand from riders in my community when we’ve done outreach on this issue; the refrain is always the same. There are big problems in our transit system, but no one asked for more fragmentation, more privatization or higher fees, and they certainly did not ask for existing transit planning at the city to be scrapped, yet again, to allow the Premier to play city planner for Queen’s Park.

The government’s consistent attacks on our city should also give anyone who is listening pause, anyone who thinks that maybe this upload scheme is in the best interests of the people of Toronto. I want to refer you to what’s happening with the public health cuts, with the attack here on local democracy, with the cuts to child care—6,000 subsidized spaces—and the cut to the gas tax, as mentioned earlier.

I’ve only got another two minutes, so I want to speak more specifically about some of the concerns locally that we have in Davenport around the Davenport bridge—sometimes it’s called the Davenport Diamond. Going back to that and the importance of community consultations, the previous government was ready, through Metrolinx, to just ram that baby through my neighbourhood, through the Junction Triangle, where many in my community live. When local people found out about this, they demanded public meetings. There was resistance. There were some public meeting opportunities, but they weren’t really looking for people’s input. Because the community got organized under groups like Options for Davenport and because they mobilized, they were able to pressure the local Liberal MPP at the time to try to get up and actually stand up for the community a little bit, and we were able to have some consultation and some input.

I should also mention that the environmental assessment approval of this requires them to move to electrification at some point, and I’m hoping that we will continue to see that happen. I’m looking at the Minister of Transportation and hoping that electrification continues to happen and that they don’t scrap that, because for the people in my community it will mean increases in asthma among children, it will really impact the lives of many people living there.

Anyway, we’ve now just learned that the contract has been divided, so now all the things, all the community benefits that the community won while they’re putting this giant thing through the community, have been separated out to a different contract for a later date. I’ve sent a letter to Metrolinx confirming that this is what’s happening and I really hope Metrolinx reconsiders this terrible decision.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Vincent Ke: It is my honour to rise and speak in favour of Bill 107. In my riding of Don Valley North, residents commute to complete their errands, go to school or to their jobs. Whether it is down the street, downtown or in the 905 area, some of them take their cars, but most of them rely on public transit to take them from point A to point B.

Our government is taking a vital leadership role to get public transit built in the GTA. The reality is that many people need to get to destinations beyond the 416 area code. They want a seamless transit experience that crosses Steeles Avenue to the north, Highway 427 in the west or east of the Rouge River.

Speaker, my residents of Don Valley North have waited long enough for the city of Toronto to build transit. As I have said before, the Toronto subway is 20 years behind when we compare it to similar-size cities. For example, Chicago has a 360-kilometre subway while Toronto only has 76 kilometres. Even Mexico City has an over 200-kilometre subway. The fact is, we really need more subways built. I’m very proud that—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

I recognize the member from London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I’d like to thank the member from Davenport for her comments about how the impacts of this bill will hurt her community. I think it’s important that we recognize that all great cities have great transport. It is one of the major equity issues that is facing people in this province, alongside affordable and public child care. It’s an equity issue. Students rely on effective transport, seniors rely on transport, and people who are not advantageously employed and people who were cut from the \$15 minimum wage also rely on transport.

But I’d also like to thank the member from Davenport for sharing the struggles of small business owners, the lifeblood of Ontario, and how construction can very dramatically impact their ability to do business, as well as the community impacts.

When we look at Bill 107, we see that this is going to result in a lot more political interference. If we allow transit to be further privatized, it is going to result in higher fees. That will be borne by the transit rider, and that’s something that we cannot support.

Furthermore, when we take a look at the ways in which transit has become such a politically hot topic and something that’s been interfered with, it really leads us to question the very nature of our democracy. If governments can come in without having solid platforms and start interfering and meddling in different projects, as was mentioned by the member from Davenport, then it really does make me question what a government’s intentions are. Further, do we live in a democracy, or do we live in a nanny state where the government can top-down handle all these projects and seize transit for their own benefit? That’s a question that this bill does not answer.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's an honour to rise here today in support of Bill 107, the Getting Ontario Moving Act. I'd like to thank the Minister of Transportation and his parliamentary assistant, the member from Etobicoke Centre, for their leadership on this bill.

Traffic gridlock in the GTA costs us \$11 billion every year. Uploading responsibility for our new subways will allow the province to expand on transit faster—and it will help the member from Davenport most of all—so that we can get to work faster and get home sooner.

Bill 107 will also cut red tape and make life easier and more affordable for job creators in Ontario, it will end the burdensome annual inspection for personal pickup trucks and trailers, and it will modernize our laws and allow more advanced technology, including wide-base single tires, in partnership with other provinces.

At the same time, Bill 107 will help make our roads more safe for everyone. New penalties will target dangerous drivers who threaten the safety of students on our school buses, or our front-line workers in construction or roadside assistance, including tow truck operators.

Madam Speaker, I know the Canadian Automobile Association was very pleased to see this. I'd also like to thank the president of the Ontario Safety League, Brian Patterson, for his support. Brian said, "Collectively, this bill addresses a number of road safety concerns, and will improve overall safety on the roads of Ontario."

Madam Speaker, I will be supporting this bill, and I want everybody to support it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

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Mr. Jamie West: I want to thank the member for Davenport for her comments, and just the reflections of how it's affecting her riding and how it's affecting Toronto in general.

One thing she brought up was about the Presto pass. I'm from Sudbury so I wasn't familiar with the Presto pass. Basically, what you have to do is you have to buy a little card that you're allowed to go on the subway and transit with, which doesn't make any sense to me because I can buy a candy bar with my phone. Somehow, we decided that we should give some money to a private company to help us take the bus, where everybody already has a card in their wallet—a debit card, a credit card or a phone—that they can use to purchase already. It doesn't make any sense to me. As fees go up and more and more money goes to private companies, I don't know see how it helps the public, especially the working poor who are taking this or the people who we cancelled their minimum wage from rising. It really doesn't help, but I know it's a Conservative idea that everything has to be privatized, it will be better, and we have to make our friends richer.

Another concern she had was about electric trains. I want to talk about that because the member opposite talked about increasing speed limits. What I thought about that was about risk assessments. It's important to do risk assessments. The posted speed limit is about 100 on the 400-series highways. So why don't we change the speed limit to what people are driving? Because let's be honest,

not everyone is doing 100; people are often going over 100. The reason you don't do that is because people go above the speed limit, and it becomes less safe. If you do a quick Google search, you will see that they have tried this in other cities, and it has increased the amount of fatalities that they're having. If you get your risk assessment wrong, you'll kill people.

Going back to the member from Davenport and her comments about electric trains: Being from a mining town, we use a lot of diesel equipment underground. We've discovered recently—mining companies across Canada have discovered—that diesel particulate matter, or DPMs, is a known carcinogen, and no amount is enough. So her concern about "my friends, my family, my children" breathing in these fumes is very important, because if you want to save health care costs, you don't want people breathing in fumes that are carcinogenic.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Now I return to the member from Davenport.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to thank the members from Don Valley North, London North Centre, Mississauga–Lake-shore and Sudbury for their comments in response to my comments. I really appreciated all the comments about equity issues, in particular, which I think are super important, and the environmental impacts.

The last time the Conservatives were in power, they started out by pouring concrete down a new subway that was being built. Politics and playing politics has often been a part of a Conservative government's policy.

I also want to say that when we are going to build transit, we should be thinking about the kind of questions we really do want to ask before we start to change things up. One of them is, will this benefit the most number of Ontarians—in this case, maybe Torontonians? Will this increase ridership? Is this value for money? We know privatization usually doesn't provide value for money. Will this help low-income people get access to cheap transit? These are the things that we should be asking and these are the questions that were never really discussed. This is not the basis of this bill.

I also want to just counter something that's often said, because the member from University–Rosedale mentioned yesterday here that the \$11.2 billion that's going to be going toward these transit projects, apparently, currently—the Ministry of Transportation has confirmed that—is not in the budget. I think that's a really interesting point, because they're going to be rewriting all this and digging into the planning again. I just want to remind the people who are listening, particularly the people in Toronto—they may not need to be reminded—that when this Premier and his folks had the reins at city hall, sure, spending didn't go out of control, because nothing got done. Everything ground to a standstill. And if anything did happen, it was, my goodness, because it happened in spite of them. I just want to make that point.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I recognize the member from Mississauga Centre.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Good morning.

It is a great honour to be able to rise today to speak to this bill and to speak on behalf of the people in my riding of Mississauga Centre. Bill 107, the Getting Ontario Moving Act, as with all other legislation our government has put forward, promises to put the people of Ontario first. It promises to keep them safe, to cut red tape, to help businesses grow and to build new infrastructure more quickly while saving on costs.

This is a bill that even the opposition should have no problem supporting, because how can anyone say no to safer roads? How can anyone say no to protecting roadside workers from careless drivers? And how can anyone argue against saving taxpayer dollars while also getting people home quicker? Because that's what we are doing with this bill.

I'd like to thank our Minister of Transportation and his PA, the member for Etobicoke Centre, for all their efforts in listening to Ontarians and delivering on our promise to get Ontario moving.

Of all the great things we're accomplishing with this legislation, there's one piece of this bill that I'd like to call attention to because it resonates with me, and I think many of us in this House will agree. It has to do with how we are making our roads safer for Ontario's children. Through Bill 107, we're giving municipalities the tools they need to catch and hold to account careless drivers who speed by stopped school buses without a care in the world, endangering the lives of children crossing the street to go to school or to go home. I've seen it happen many times. I've seen it in the morning on my way to work. I remember seeing it, growing up in this province, when I first immigrated here at age 12. And I saw it on the news just the other day. This news segment showed a dash-cam video in which we see a stopped school bus and six cars driving by it, not even slowing down, let alone stopping. I was stunned when I saw this video because I could just imagine a young student running out onto the road only to end up running in front of a car—something that could be easily avoidable. Thankfully, the bus driver in the video did not open the doors of the bus until cars came to a complete stop. But our bus drivers should not have to wait on cars to stop in the first place. When the bus is parked and the stop sign comes out, that means “stop”—no exceptions, because breaking that law could mean an end to a child's life.

When I saw this video, I couldn't help but think to myself how badly we need systems in place to not only catch these drivers who put kids in danger, but also a system to eliminate this kind of reckless driving behaviour altogether. We need a regulatory framework that is in sync with the reality we see on our roads, and we need that framework to keep up with modern developments in technology. We need to respond firmly to those who break the law, and that is exactly what our government is doing with this bill.

Speaker, what I saw in that video happens every day in Ontario. In fact, there was a study done in Waterloo not too long ago that looked at local data to find out how many of these kinds of violations happen daily. The researchers put cameras on six buses. Over 23 days, those six buses alone recorded 97 violations. That's 97 times there was a chance a child could have been hurt; that means four drivers a day breaking the law and endangering kids' lives.

And that was data from just six buses. The authors of the study extrapolated the number to all buses in the region, and in just Waterloo alone the data suggests there could be up to 130 violations every day.

I think we all agree, including the member for Kitchener-Waterloo, that this is a serious problem, and the best way to fix it is through the measures we are taking with Bill 107. We are empowering school bus operators by allowing for camera footage to be used in courts to prosecute those charged with breaking the law. We are putting laws in place to make it easier for municipalities to try reckless drivers through their own tribunal system instead of having to go through the courts. We are making it easier, quicker and more efficient to hold those reckless drivers to account, because as things stand right now, the law is not being enforced. Under the current system, school bus drivers need to take a day off to come to court to testify against those who have been charged. Under the current system, those who endanger children's lives on our roads are having an easier time getting off the hook. We are changing that. We are saving lives, and we are making sure to keep Ontario's roads among the safest not just in Canada but also in North America.

Cette loi rendra également les routes de l'Ontario plus sûres, notamment en protégeant les travailleurs de première ligne en renforçant les pénalités imposées aux chauffeurs imprudents qui risquent de mettre des vies en danger. Tous les jours dans notre province, des gens travaillent sur la route et sont exposés aux dangers des véhicules roulant à grande vitesse. Il y a des policiers qui se tiennent tous les jours au milieu de nos rues pour guider la circulation; il y a des policiers sur les côtés de nos autoroutes quand ils interceptent des automobilistes qui conduisent trop vite. Dans ces situations-là, et d'autres, ils risquent leur vie pour faire leur travail et pour protéger le public; alors, nous devrions faire tout ce qui est en notre pouvoir pour les protéger également. The same can be said for all those Ontarians who work in roadside maintenance and construction and the ones who work in medical recovery and the tow truck industry, all of whom are physically out on our roads every day doing jobs that need to be done. We need to make sure that we do our job, as a responsible government, by implementing the right steps to protect their safety.

1010

In the last few years, we've seen too many stories of construction workers who have been injured or killed on the road while directing traffic. In one year alone, there were six construction workers who died in Ontario after being struck by a vehicle, two of which were vehicles they were directing. Speaker, their deaths were tragic, and we owe it to them and to their families and to the people of Ontario to ensure we do everything we can to deter careless driving that puts workers' lives in danger.

This bill discourages reckless driving and protects the safety of our workers from harm's way. But we can't just stop there when it comes to safety, which is why this bill goes even further in protecting drivers, by allowing motorcyclists to use left-side lanes that are shared by high

occupancy vehicles, because we know, from all evidence, that motorcyclists are much safer using the side lanes than when they are boxed in between cars in the middle lane.

We also know that traffic signs keep people safe. Traffic signs tell people how fast they can drive, in which lanes they can drive and what kinds of cars are allowed on the road, which is why, when people vandalize or steal them, they are making our roads unsafe, they are delaying construction projects and they are costing taxpayer dollars by having to repair and replace them. By aligning this kind of behaviour as a provincial offence, we are improving road conditions, making communities safer and getting Ontario moving.

Speaker, the title of this bill is fitting, because it gets Ontario moving in so many ways. We are doing it by listening to the people, consulting with the public, working with the experts and looking at the evidence. We are listening to people's biggest concerns on the roads, and one of those problems we have heard is the issue of drivers not understanding that left-hand lanes on highways are meant for passing. Not only does this cause a lot of frustration on the road, which can lead to aggressive driving, it is a safety issue in its own right. If all the slow drivers were to keep in the right lane, then a faster driver could pass several of them at once instead of trying to do it by weaving through traffic at higher speeds. By creating laws that would keep slow drivers out of the left-hand lane, we are cutting down on the total number of lane changes passing cars need to do, while eliminating slowdowns. We are reducing the chance of accidents and improving overall road safety.

Speaker, I must say, I'm really excited about some of the pilot projects that we are also introducing with this bill, including launching a digital dealer registration pilot program. This pilot will give businesses the opportunity to apply for permits, plates and validation stickers, because we're not just looking at ways to save people money; we are also looking at all the ways to save people time.

We're also launching a province-wide consultation and pilot project to look at speed limits on highways, because the last time the province updated its highway speed was 40 years ago. That's 40 years ago, Speaker. What was the Liberal government doing all these years while they were drowning us in debt? I'll tell you what they were not doing: They were not getting Ontario moving. That is why I am so proud to be a member of this government and to support this bill, which is like no other, a bill that will get the people of Ontario moving and put them first.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member from Markham–Unionville may have a point of order.

Mr. Billy Pang: I am introducing visitors first.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay. Go ahead.

Mr. Billy Pang: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome Tanya, Diana, Yadira and David, along with their family and friends, who have come down to the Legislature to support me today. Thank you for being here, and welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Brenda Missen, Nancy Beverly, Lynne Missen Jolly, Gavin Jolly and Harriet Clunie, all relatives of Kathryn Missen, in support of 9-1-1 Everywhere. Thank you for coming to Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I would like to welcome my former colleague from the city of Markham, regional councillor Jim Jones, and councillor Andrew Keyes. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a real honour for me today to introduce to the Legislative Assembly some visitors from Ukraine. First of all, I'd like to introduce Mykola Kuleba, who is the ombudsman for children with the president of Ukraine; Oleksii Fedchenko, president of Save Ukraine through Samaritan's Purse; also Julia Shishlova, who works for the president of Ukraine in administration; Snezhana Derzhanovskaya, representative of Ukraine's ombudsman here in Toronto; and, a very difficult name for me to pronounce, Ed Dickson. He's the overseas director of Loads of Love and a good friend from Chatham. Welcome.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: In celebration of Mother's Day on Sunday, I am pleased to welcome back to Queen's Park today my mom, Susan McNaughton. Welcome.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Today my daughter Sarah is the page captain, so, in honour of that, my son Clayton Fee is here; my mom, Linda Trimble; and my legislative assistant, Brandon Crandall.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to welcome back once again some autism families: Michau van Speyk, Amy Moledzki, Kowthar Dore, Jonathan Abdilla, Angela Brandt, Crystal Burningham, Tangerine Stanley and Reshma Younge. Welcome back to Queen's Park again.

Mr. Doug Downey: I'm pleased to have with me today Anne Pettigrew, who first came to the House as the youth ambassador for juvenile diabetes. She's shadowing me all day. Please say hi when you see her in the halls.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I want to welcome to the House today my friend Roberta Scott, who is in the gallery.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Mr. Billy Pang: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Markham–Unionville has informed me he has a point of order.

Mr. Billy Pang: I'm seeking unanimous consent for members to wear purple ribbons to recognize lupus awareness day.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Markham–Unionville is seeking unanimous consent of the House to wear purple ribbons in recognition of lupus day. Agreed? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is for the Premier. When the government first announced plans to eliminate 42 of Ontario's 52 land ambulance services, the Ford government claimed that paramedics should be happy about the changes that will actually improve service. Now the Premier has also cut funding for emergency ambulance services. Does he believe that this funding cut to our services will spark joy and improve the services here in our province?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: That's not accurate. I'll tell you what's accurate: On June 7, this province voted for change. They voted for a government to come in there and be fiscally responsible. And on June 15, the first thing we did was that we announced we would scrap the cap-and-trade carbon tax, a carbon tax that is now implemented from the federal government that jacked up the gas prices, jacked up heating costs and jacked up everything in the stores. As a matter of fact, there was a convenience store we went into, and he was there repricing all the goods because of this terrible, terrible carbon tax.

On June 21, Mr. Speaker, we saved 7,500 jobs at the Pickering nuclear generating station. That's 7,500 families that would have been out of work. The NDP and the Liberals wanted to close it down. I was just wondering where they were getting the energy from, but they don't worry about that. They don't worry about the hydro bills that are the highest in North America. They implemented a plan to destroy the energy system in this province—

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

Ms. Sara Singh: Across the province, people who run our ambulance services are warning about the risks of this health care cut. As Ottawa emergency services scramble to deal with flooding, they admitted they'll have to revisit plans to hire paramedics needed to maintain response times. In Leeds–Grenville, the paramedic chief is advising to delay plans to build a new paramedic station that they desperately need. In Barrie, one paramedic was crystal clear: "Cuts will ultimately result in longer response times."

Why is the Premier making health care cuts that will leave families in our province waiting longer for the emergency care they need?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Once again, that's not accurate, but I'll tell you what is accurate. On June 27, we committed to building a memorial honouring the heroes of the war in Afghanistan. We support our military, unlike the opposition. The Leader of the Opposition, during the election, had anti-poppy people, anti-war people, anti-military, anti-police, but just stood by and let her caucus run around and criticize the military and our police.

On June 30, we reformed OHIP to support the people in greatest need. There are so many people in greatest need out there, but we reformed the OHIP program through our all-star Minister of Health.

On July 11, we removed the CEO and the board of governors of Hydro One. They're done; they're gone. We have to restructure hydro to make sure all the people that I met on the campaign trail in tears about their hydro bill—we're making changes at Hydro One, and we are—

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

1040

Ms. Sara Singh: Every day, the Ford government makes the ridiculous claim that they haven't cut health care, and every day, another news story breaks about health care cuts to ambulance services, to public health, to telemedicine or to our OHIP services.

Families in this province need to know that they can get affordable and reliable care when they need it. Why is this government chipping away at the services that families in our province rely on?

Hon. Doug Ford: I understand, Mr. Speaker, that they aren't very good with figures over on the other side, but when you look at the budget, which is open to the world to look at, you see \$1.3 billion more being spent in health care. So I'm not too sure how they're adding their numbers up—again, another inaccurate statement from the opposition.

We cancelled wasteful energy contracts totalling \$790 million, that were on the backs of every single Ontario resident who's paying their hydro. We demonstrated leadership on the illegal-border-crossing crisis. It's a crisis because 40,000 illegal border-crossers ended up, the vast majority, here in Toronto. We can't handle the infrastructure. We're trying to take care of our own people here.

Guess what, Mr. Speaker? The federal government owes us \$200 million. I haven't heard a peep, a word from the city of Toronto about the \$200 million. They would get a big chunk of that because they're carrying the burden as well. We're going to make sure we—

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

MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. Ambulance services are just one of the costs that the Ford government is further downloading to municipalities, and across Ontario, those municipalities are scrambling to deal with the government's decision to walk away from funding everything, from those ambulance services to flood prevention. That only means that municipalities have to cover that funding gap with service cuts or property tax hikes, or both.

How high a property tax hike does the Premier think is appropriate for his downloads?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, to the member of provincial Parliament who just asked the question: Where was he for the last 15 years as they dismantled, they destroyed one of the most prosperous provinces in the entire country? They were nowhere. They're worrying about that? As gas prices went up, as heating costs went up, as everything went up, and our debt went up over \$200 billion, they were

side by side; 98% of the time they were supporting the Liberal government.

I can tell you, what we did when we found out we were inheriting a bankrupt province—on July 17, we commissioned a line-by-line audit of government spending from one of the big five accounting firms for third-party verification.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the socialism that they believe in, the socialist mentality doesn't work anywhere in the world. You can't keep digging into the pockets of the people who are working in the factories, working in the offices. Socialism—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to come to order and the member for Essex to come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary question.

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again to the Premier: Almost every day since the Ford government's budget was revealed, municipal leaders have had to deal with a new cut—a cut to municipal transit transfers; a cut to the municipal partnership fund; cuts to public health units; cuts to ambulance services, cuts to library services, cuts to municipal child care spaces and cuts to tourism agencies.

How can the Premier pretend that downloading all these costs onto municipalities doesn't mean tax hikes and service cuts for families across Ontario?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I just want to remind the opposition that they were involved and schemed, I'll tell you, the largest tax hikes this province has ever, ever seen on businesses, on the average person, working hard. They understand one thing: Continue to tax people and continue to waste taxpayers' money—zero accountability.

Because they were spending and they were making the backroom deals with the cronies and all their buddies, on July 17, we launched the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry to find out who was getting rich off the backs of the taxpayers. That was a real eye-opener for the taxpayers. On July 18 to 20—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Doug Ford: —showed national leadership at the Council of the Federation. We had an agreement from all provinces to make sure the federal government is held accountable on illegal immigration, to pay back the \$200 million. It wasn't just me, Mr. Speaker; it was every single Premier in this country.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again to the Premier: Families expect governments to work together to ensure they have the services they need, whether it's reliable transit, vaccinations or library books. Instead, they have a Premier who is basically walking out of the restaurant and leaving mayors and councillors to deal with the bill.

Why can't the Premier actually work with municipal leaders to solve these problems instead of being the one who creates them and also being the one who even refuses to answer the questions regarding these issues?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: another inaccurate statement. On July 19, we fought for automotive jobs and trade talks in Washington, DC. I'll tell you what the Big Five automotive folks said: that the high hydro rates that they supported are killing automotive jobs; the heads of the unions were killing automotive jobs. There are places all over North America to produce cars. We need to make sure that we create the environment for companies to thrive in the automotive sector.

We supported the new lower Don project by cutting red tape. It was full of red tape. As we know, we have 385,000 regulations created by the NDP, created by the Liberals that stifle jobs, that stifle entrepreneurs from getting ahead in life. But we put an end to that and we cut red tape.

We introduced legislation to end the cap-and-trade carbon tax once and for all. Now we have—

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

The next question.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday our leader, the leader of the official opposition, tabled a resolution to officially declare a climate emergency here in Ontario. Across the province, we are seeing the devastating toll that climate change is taking on our communities, our environment and our economy. Increasing instances of natural disasters like tornadoes, forest fires and floods are tearing through Ontario at an alarming rate, threatening lives, displacing families and contributing to millions of dollars in damage.

Recognizing the very real threat climate change poses to our province shows that we are committed to taking immediate, decisive action to protect our people and the environment. Will the Premier support our motion to declare a climate emergency in Ontario?

Hon. Doug Ford: I'll tell you, one of the biggest climate crises right now is burdening the backs of businesses, burdening the backs of the people, day in and day out, with this terrible, terrible carbon tax. We've proved to the federal government we don't need a carbon tax to be environmentally friendly. Our Minister of the Environment has put together a solid plan, a great plan, to make sure we're environmentally conscious, to make sure we go after the big emitters. That's accurate, Mr. Speaker.

But we cancelled—and this is what destroyed the energy. The energy policies that they supported, along with the Liberals, destroyed this province. We cancelled the White Pines Wind Project and made a lot of people happy in Minister Smith's area, and across the province. It's unfortunate that we can't cancel the rest of them—driving up costs anywhere from 14 cents per kilowatt to 40 cents. They're gouging the people. There has never been a bigger transfer of wealth from the hard-working people of Ontario to the political insiders than this energy project and these—

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

Ms. Sara Singh: This resolution reflects the priorities of communities Canada-wide. Cities like Ottawa, Vancouver, Halifax, Hamilton and Kingston have all actually taken the same step. They all know that ignoring the threats of climate change will not stop it from destroying our communities. The Premier himself has even admitted that climate change is real and that it is contributing to the devastating floods that we're seeing in Ontario right now, so it's hard to understand what there is to disagree about here.

Will the Premier stand by his word, listen to Ontarians and support this motion that would make Ontario the first Legislature in Canada to declare a climate emergency: Yes or no?

1050

Hon. Doug Ford: The biggest crisis—it's real. You know something that's real, Mr. Speaker?

Interjections.

Hon. Doug Ford: I'll wait until they finish clapping.

Yes, it's real, but do you know what's real as well? Their energy policies, which they supported the Liberal government on, that lost 300,000 jobs. There were 300,000 families that couldn't pay the bills. They couldn't pay their hydro bills, they couldn't pay their rent, they couldn't pay their mortgage because of their policies.

We believe in climate change, but we also believe in supporting companies and people to create jobs. The carbon tax is the worst single tax you could put on the backs of the people of Ontario.

On July 26, York University, they were holding the students hostage—it's kind of similar to what's going on now, holding students hostage. But at York University, we legislated them back to work to get the students back into the classrooms, because we knew it was the right thing to do for the people of York University and the students.

We announced the Better Local Government Act, making sure that across the board, they're accountable—

Interjection.

Hon. Doug Ford: See you later, buddy. It's a good one. And the rest of you—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Wow.

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

Start the clock. Next question.

FLOODING

Ms. Jill Dunlop: My question is for the Premier. This spring, many regions in Ontario were hit with incredible flooding that caused havoc in our communities. Our hearts go out to the families that have had their lives turned upside down by these floods.

I'd like to thank the Premier for the strong leadership he has displayed. He has visited affected communities and met with municipalities to ensure that the people of

Ontario know our government stands with them. In fact, our entire team has stepped up during this very challenging time. We want every Ontarian to know that they have our government's full support during this most difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier speak about a few of the Ontario businesses that are doing their part for Ontario during this flood?

Hon. Doug Ford: I want to thank the member from Simcoe North, who's doing a great job in the Simcoe area. She's absolutely loved in that area. Thank you for the question.

Mr. Speaker, I've been up in northern Muskoka—I'll probably be up there again this weekend—talking to the three local mayors.

I want to first of all thank the essential service folks out there, the emergency folks who all came together around the table and supported the community, but most importantly the 2,000 Canadian Armed Forces members, who have been instrumental in helping people fill the sandbags, making sure that people feel secure there. They're just incredible heroes in this country. We're so fortunate to have them.

Hydro One has waived all reconnection fees. It's typically \$400 to reconnect. They've cancelled all those fees, and Hydro Ottawa has done the same. So we want to thank Hydro One, we want to thank Hydro Ottawa for making life a little bit easier for the people who have been affected in the flooded areas.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the Premier for his answer. Rising water levels have pushed many Ontarians out of their homes. Many more have seen significant damage to their property. This is a devastating situation, but I know our government is dedicated to assisting the people of Ontario in this trying time.

Some members of this House have undoubtedly heard concerns from flood-affected residents that the Electrical Safety Authority would be charging them a \$400 fee to reconnect their electricity. To put it simply, this is an unfair burden to place on Ontarians who have seen their homes and businesses damaged or destroyed by flooding.

Speaker, could the Premier please explain what actions our government is taking to ensure residents in flood-affected areas are not subjected to further costs?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Bill Walker: Speaker, through you, I want to thank my honourable colleague the member for Simcoe North for the great work she does and this very important question.

I want to first express my deepest sympathies to all those families who were affected by the recent flooding in Ontario. I know my thoughts and the thoughts of everyone in this House are with them. I can only imagine how difficult it is to be displaced from their homes in such a devastating way. For too many people, restoring their property after a flood can create significant hardship both emotionally and financially.

That's why I'm pleased to report that the Electrical Safety Authority will be waiving the reconnection fee for restoring electrical services in flood-damaged areas. I've been informed by the ESA that a full refund will be provided for anyone who has already paid this fee. I want to take a moment to let Ontarians know they can contact ESA's customer service centre by calling 1-877-372-7233.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to working with the dedicated staff on the ground and our partners in emergency services to ensure the safety and well-being of residents. I'm glad to see the ESA joining us in those efforts.

Finally, I want to personally thank all the responders—first responders, utilities and service providers—for supporting affected communities across Ontario during this difficult time.

MEMBER'S CONDUCT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, the Premier knows, or should know, that in a democracy, people can and should visit their local MPP when there are issues that concern them. That's why it was shocking to see the MPP for Niagara West call the police on a group of about 15 book club members and former librarians who visited the constituency office to raise concerns about library cuts. Janet Hodgkins, a book club member and a retired librarian who worked at the Welland Public Library for 28 years, told the press, "I don't think we looked threatening."

Speaker, does the Premier believe that this group of retired librarians posed a threat that required police intervention?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: The only people that pose a threat to the people of Ontario are their policies, the NDP and the Liberals' policies for the last 15 years. For the last 15 years, their policies have destroyed this province.

On August 2, we challenged the federal carbon tax in court. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, win, lose or draw in court, the people will decide in October where this carbon tax is going. It's not going to be the courts; it will be the people of this country. You'll see the blue sweep going right across this country. I think the feds need to wake up and smell the roses.

On August 7—one of their favourites—we issued a buck-a-beer challenge, and people took us up on the buck-a-beer challenge. Places were sold out at every store that sold it. That was on August 7.

On August 8, we responded to the forest fire crisis. We went up there. We made sure we put the resources needed to fight—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm disappointed. The Premier had an opportunity to show leadership in his answer and he did not take that opportunity at all, Speaker.

The government side should remember that we all answer to the people of Ontario, and talking to constituents is a part of this job, not something that requires a police escort. It should go without saying, Speaker, that our police have better things to do, constituents deserve to be heard, and no one should be calling the police on retired librarians politely raising concerns.

Speaker, will the Premier do the right thing, show some leadership in his answer and instruct the member to make a formal apology, and if he refuses, will the Premier do so on his behalf?

Interjections.

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

Premier to reply.

Hon. Doug Ford: You know, Mr. Speaker, I find that so rich, so ironic. Who talks to their constituents? I made five constituent calls in your area, by the way, the 519 area code, today. They're concerned about Essex. Once they find out the voting record and how they voted down all the tax breaks and all the incentives, it might be a different story, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The polling doesn't suggest that, Doug.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Opposition, come to order.

Hon. Doug Ford: On August 9, we invested \$25 million to fight guns and gangs. We saw an increase in shootings. It took us a few days to get the cheque over there to be implemented and they're fighting guns and gangs now.

On August 13, we announced the cannabis retail model, following federal legalization of cannabis. The previous government wanted to unionize it all, to make sure their buddies got their cut of the pie as well. We thought it would be better to let entrepreneurs thrive and prosper, open their own stores and create jobs themselves rather than being tied to the unions, as the NDP—

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

1100

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Miss Kinga Surma: Our government was elected on a promise that we would return Ontario to fiscal health. As we now know, the interest on the debt accumulated by the Liberal government is the single largest cut to front-line services in Ontario's history. Over the past few months, the government has been taking steps to reduce expenditures while investing in the people. For example, our CARE Tax Credit will provide about 300,000 families with up to 75% of their eligible child care expenses.

We have taken this action while working carefully and diligently to manage expenditures while protecting our front-line services. Can the President of the Treasury Board please tell this House how our government continues to work for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke Centre—what a great riding. That's where

I knocked on doors with the late great, Michael Wilson for many years in the 1980s. Thank you for the work that you continue to do in the tradition of Michael Wilson.

Mr. Speaker, Ontarians understand that we must right our fiscal ship. By spending \$40 million more a day than we were taking in—inherited from the previous government—we were on a course to put things at risk that matter most to the people of Ontario: our health care system and our education system. That's not ideology; that's math.

Later today I will table in the House the estimates for 2019-20. This milestone is another opportunity to engage in an objective conversation about the future of our province, a conversation we are happy to have. It's time to return to the core commitment behind our plan, a promise to protect what matters most. That's exactly what we're doing, and we will make no apology for it, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Miss Kinga Surma: Thank you, Mr. President. It's clear that the previous government's spending practices have taken their toll on our province. Instead of making critical investments to enhance economic growth, the previous government increased government spending and wasted billions of dollars. This was done at the expense of hard-working Ontarians.

You would think that with all of that spending, the services and programs that the people of Ontario depended on would have improved dramatically, but they didn't. The only thing that the people got more of was debt and mismanagement of hard-earned tax dollars. This is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, can the President of the Treasury Board inform the House on what the government is doing to repair the damage that was done by the previous Liberal government and bring relief to the people of Ontario?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Our government understands that reducing the burden of everyday expenses can make a huge difference in the lives of the people of Ontario. That's why we fought, through the great leadership of the Minister of Energy and his partner the Minister of the Environment, to fix the hydro mess so that more money stayed in the pockets of hard-working Ontarians. That's why we are working to bring over \$2 billion, through the hard work of the Minister of Finance, through our new Low-income Individuals and Families Tax Credit. That's why we invested \$1.6 billion to protect teacher jobs while boards align class sizes with other Canadian jurisdictions, through the hard work of our Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, we are protecting what matters most while we restore fiscal balance to this province. Ontarians deserve a better, brighter future, and that's what we are building, without apology and with tremendous care.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, five employment service agencies in London have been forced to lay off a dozen staff because of a \$2-million funding cut that took effect April 1. About half the

cut is the result of this government's cancellation of two province-wide programs focused on young people: the Employing Youth Talent Incentive, which provided subsidies for small business to hire youth; and the Youth Job Link. The loss of these programs will hurt hundreds of vulnerable youth in London and thousands more across the province.

Speaker, with the summer job season upon us and with so many Ontario youth struggling to find employment, why is this government eliminating programs that are specifically designed to help young people gain skills and valuable job experience?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Do you know what our employment program is? Creating jobs, which we created 123,000 private sector jobs. We have a labour shortage. There are so many jobs out there. Anyone who is healthy and physically able to work can go out there and get a job tomorrow. Every company I talk to needs people, no matter what sector it is, Mr. Speaker. We have created the environment to thrive and prosper in this great province. Before, we lost 300,000 jobs.

When it came on August 15, we ensured greater transparency and accountability at Hydro One. The six-million-dollar man: He's done; he's gone. And guess what? We made sure the compensation was 300% lower for the next CEO. That 300% lower is going in the pockets of rate-payers who pay their hydro bills.

We announced nine new OPP detachments. We love our OPP. We love our police, unlike the other side—

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

Hon. Doug Ford: They are police-haters.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Premier to withdraw.

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Premier: It's not only youth jobs and small businesses that are under attack. This government is also gutting funding for start-ups and innovative companies by as much as 50%. The supports available to early-stage firms are what keep these companies here in Ontario. Without these supports, they can and will go elsewhere.

In particular, cuts to Ontario Centres of Excellence will mean the loss of vital scale-up investment for later-stage businesses, which is known to be the biggest gap in Ontario's innovation ecosystem. These businesses will simply leave to find investors.

Speaker, other than signs on the border, does this government have any plan to keep high-potential firms in Ontario, creating jobs for Ontarians?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. Our government was elected with a strong mandate to restore trust and accountability in Ontario's finances and respect for tax dollars. I'll repeat that: respect for tax dollars and for the hard-working people who work so hard to earn those dollars. We, as a

government, are being financially responsible so that we can protect what matters most.

Our government is committed to delivering core services by focusing on putting the people first and ensuring that we are getting the best value for money. We looked at the employment service providers and many of them were not delivering on their targets. The people of Ontario expect their tax dollars to deliver results and not just maintain the status quo for the sake of maintaining the status quo. We are delivering on our promise to the people of Ontario to make Ontario open for business.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Premier. For years, the Ontario Municipal Board cost citizens and taxpayers millions of dollars. It's bad enough that deep-pocketed developers used the OMB to overturn local planning decisions. It's even worse that millions of tax dollars were wasted on these judicial disputes. In Guelph alone, the OMB hearings cost city taxpayers more than \$1 million in three years. Reviving the old OMB rules is a massive transfer of power and money from taxpayers to big developers.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier showing such disrespect for taxpayers by reviving an old OMB system that took so much money out of their pockets to overturn the decisions citizens made?

1110

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: First of all, the member's statements do not reflect the facts. In fact, what we are doing for the taxpayers—let me tell you the choices that we made. We've chosen to invest in projects like \$90 million in free dental care for 100,000 low-income seniors. We've chosen to invest \$1.75 billion to build 15,000 long-term-care beds. That's what we're doing for the taxpayer. We've chosen to invest \$2 billion to fund up to 75% of child care for 300,000 families. We've chosen to invest \$2 billion so that low-income earners no longer pay any provincial income tax. We have chosen to invest \$1 billion to add 30,000 child care spaces in our schools. That's what we have chosen to do for the taxpayers of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It would have been nice if the minister had actually answered the question I had asked.

We understand that you have chosen to dismantle programs that would fiscally responsibly prevent disasters, eliminating tree planting and flood protection. But you've also chosen, through Bill 108, to bring back OMB rules that resulted in a massive transfer of money and power to big developers.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier or the minister tell this House and the people of Ontario how much money in anticipated legal fees bringing back the OMB rules will cost municipal governments and municipal taxpayers?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I can tell you how many jobs we've created in Ontario since we've begun. The business climate that we have put out has created 123,000 jobs since we were elected. That's done by cutting \$880 million from the cap-and-trade carbon tax. That's done by freezing minimum wage at \$14, giving businesses a chance to catch up and save \$1.3 billion, which they've reinvested and hired those people. We froze WSIB fees and saved \$1.4 billion for the business community, which has reinvested that money and hired 123,000 people. We've invested \$1.4 billion in the accelerated capital costs. Businesses reinvested that money and hired 123,000 people. We froze the \$300-million Liberal tax. The businesses took that money, reinvested it in businesses and hired 123,000 people since we got elected. That's what we've been doing.

TAXATION

Mr. Stan Cho: My question this morning is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. This morning, I joined the minister in the great riding of Willowdale to bring attention to the harm the federal carbon tax is doing to small businesses.

Our government has been doing everything we can to create an environment where job creators can thrive. Unfortunately, the federal government is doing exactly the opposite. They have imposed a job-killing carbon tax in Ontario, on Ontario businesses and Ontario families. Small businesses in particular are being hurt by the Liberal carbon tax. The people running these businesses aren't billionaires, and they're certainly not going to climate conferences in their private jets. They're hard-working people just trying to make ends meet.

Could the minister please expand on how the federal carbon tax is harming small businesses across Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: It was great to be with the member from Willowdale in his riding this morning, talking about the devastating effects that the federal carbon tax will have on small business.

Since we were elected in June, our government has been doing everything we can, working tirelessly, to create an environment where businesses want to grow, invest and create jobs. But the federal government is doing everything they can to hold Ontario back. Their carbon tax is hurting all businesses—small, medium and large—with small businesses being hit the hardest, like Drewry's Variety that we were at this morning.

The CFIB has found that nearly half of carbon tax revenues—half of them—will be coming from small businesses. These businesses aren't able to absorb these kinds of costs, and they're going to have to cut back as a result. Half of the CFIB members say the carbon tax is pressuring them to freeze or cut salaries for their workers and causing them to delay investments in their business.

Mr. Speaker, Justin Trudeau and the federal government have a track record of hurting small business, and his carbon tax is no different.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Stan Cho: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Thanks to the minister for his answer.

I was also joined by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, who spoke at length about the progress our province has made to reduce emissions without a tax. It's clear that through great sacrifice and the meaningful efforts of individuals and small business, like Drewry's Variety, our province has done its fair share to fight climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Unfortunately, the federal government fails to grasp this concept. They believe that the only way to fight climate change is with a regressive carbon tax. Justin Trudeau continues to force his carbon tax on the people of this very proud province. Their carbon tax is hurting all businesses, with small business being hit the hardest.

Could the minister please explain what the sacrifices of Ontario's hard-working people have accomplished so far?

Hon. Todd Smith: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: Thank you for the question, thank you for the great work that he does, and thank you to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade for joining us today.

We've spoken in this Legislature about what Ontario has done. The new National Inventory Report came out just two weeks ago. While Ontario has reduced greenhouse gases by 22%, the rest of Canada has gone up 6%. Mr. Jeung, who owns Drewry's Variety, understands that. He knows that in addition to the \$1,000 a year that Justin Trudeau's carbon tax will add, the moves that have already been made to move us to a low-emissions economy have cost Mr. Jeung and other small businesses \$435 a month, \$5,000 a year. That's an investment that businesses have already made. That's why our made-in-Ontario plan focuses not on a penalizing, job-killing carbon tax, but on other pragmatic measures that will help us meet our targets but not hurt families and not hurt businesses.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier. It was clear from the start that the government's so-called education consultation was nothing more than a public relations exercise. The real plan for massive cuts and lost jobs was being hatched behind closed doors. The so-called consultation asked about improving outcomes in math, but their plan adds the distraction of large classes and takes away teaching supports. The so-called consultation talked about getting kids into technology, engineering and the skilled trades, but their plan is cancelling courses in technology, robotics and shop.

Given the turmoil the government has brought to our schools, does the Premier think this million-dollar survey was money well spent?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Someone needs to reply on behalf of the government. Minister of Finance?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Education.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Do you know what? The results of this consultation have informed us for education policy for years to come, and we've listened. We are investing like never before. We're investing in our capital investments in terms of schools, school repairs and builds across this province—\$13 billion over the next 10 years.

We heard loud and clear from the consultations that our students were graduating without the job skills they required. We are investing in math curriculum so we can get back to the fundamentals and get them back on track. We are supporting teachers as well in that regard so that they have the skills to teach the math fundamentals that our students have missed over the last 15 years.

We listened through that consultation and found that parents want to be included and engaged in the curriculum, and we are making sure that happens. That curriculum has given us so much opportunity to continue to listen and properly invest like never before, so ultimately that classroom is the best—

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

1120

Ms. Marit Stiles: The parents are actually saying that they're outraged by your cuts, Minister. Speaker, the Premier is forcing school boards to find cuts in the classroom in the name of efficiency, while his own so-called consultation came in 300% over budget.

But if they want some free feedback on their education plan and its impact, Speaker, they don't have to look very far. Just ask one of the 23 teachers declared redundant in Simcoe county last week, despite growing enrolment, or the counsellors and speech-language pathologists let go in Halton, or ask one of the students at Brampton Centennial, who will lose 30 course options next year. But, of course, this government shut the door on students yesterday, so they sure aren't listening to students.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't take \$1 million to find out that students, parents and education workers are united against these cuts. Will the Premier listen?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, Speaker, I want to remind that our purpose in getting education right is making sure that parents know they've been listened to, and we've done that loud and clear. We're investing \$1.6 billion in attrition protection funding. We're investing \$90 million in increased spending in special education. We're increasing our investment in student transportation by \$92 million.

Speaker, in our budget, we've dedicated an increase of \$700 million in Ontario education alone and, again, we're looking at over \$1 billion in new child care spaces: 30,000 spaces, of which 10,000 will be in schools.

Our investments are very, very clear in demonstrating that, through that consultation, we've listened to what matters and what's important. We're protecting what matters most. Our investments that we're demonstrating are absolutely clear that we're getting it right. Another example would be in terms of school renewals and school repairs. We're committing another \$1.4 billion—

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

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Michael Parsa: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Speaker, I've heard from many constituents who are frustrated with the complex, convoluted and constraining system set up by the previous government and the Ontario College of Trades. They're frustrated with the red tape and stifling regulation that the previous skilled trades framework created and the lack of action by the previous government to make life easier for tradespeople in Ontario.

That's why I was so pleased to see that our government introduced a plan to modernize the skilled trades in Ontario. Would the minister tell us how the government's modernization of the skilled trades will help make Ontario open for business and open for jobs?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you very much to the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill for his question and for his great work on behalf of his constituents.

Unlike the NDP, our government is committed to making Ontario open for business by reducing the burden on skilled workers. Our Modernizing the Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Act, if passed, will create a flexible system for the skilled trades in Ontario. It will reduce red tape for employers and apprentices. It will streamline service delivery and help promote the tremendous career opportunities that the skilled trades offer. This new framework will allow our workforce to respond to the demands of the job market, ensuring that Ontario is open for business and open for jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you to the minister for the answer. Speaker, I'm thrilled that we're taking decisive action to make life easier for our tradespeople, whether they're an apprentice or journeyperson. I know that this will come as a relief to many of my constituents and that it will make Ontario open for business.

Speaker, I have also heard from many constituents who are frustrated with the high membership fees charged by the Ontario College of Trades. I heard this again and again as I travelled across Ontario and listened and consulted with the people.

Would the minister tell us about what our government is doing to reduce the financial burden on tradespeople in our province, please?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: The member is absolutely right: The previous Liberal government increased fees on journeypersons by 300%, yet wages for tradespeople did not increase by 300% over that same period. That is why we have eliminated membership fees for apprentices and reduced the annual membership fees for journeypersons by 50%. These reductions will put more money back in the pockets of our tradespeople and encourage more people to pursue a career in the skilled trades.

I'm looking forward to the NDP supporting our government's actions.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Ian Arthur: My question is to the Acting Premier. This past week, the United Nations released a report stating that there are a million species currently at risk of disappearing altogether. We are in the midst of the sixth great extinction on earth, and the only one caused by us.

But instead of taking action to protect endangered species in Ontario, the Premier's newest scheme is going to allow developers—sprawl developers—to pay to break the law, to buy their way out of the Endangered Species Act. Under this government, Conservative government allies can now bulldoze previously protected areas and ignore best practices for development in Ontario.

How can we preserve natural diversity if we allow developers to pay to pave over protected areas?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity from the member's question to talk about our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan. It's a comprehensive plan. It is a plan that not only deals with climate, which we enjoy talking about, but also deals with other important issues, including species at risk. We are taking definitive action to make improvements on our plan.

Even your own House leader voted against the existing Species at Risk Act. I'm sure that the members from northern Ontario who are in the NDP caucus understand the challenges that this put in front of business. That's why we brought back a more balanced approach, just like our approach to the environment in general: balanced. We believe that you can balance a healthy economy and a healthy environment—not with the highest carbon tax in the world, but with an approach that understands that human habitation and the habitation of endangered species can coexist.

That's what your own House leader believed when this was passed 10 years ago. Why don't you talk to him about it?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Ian Arthur: Speaker, through you, again to the Acting Premier: We know the environmental sham is about opening up protected areas for the Premier's sprawl developer buddies. That is what it is about, and that is all it is about. It allows his developer friends to buy their way out of complying with the Endangered Species Act. It ignores science, it ignores best practices in development planning and it moves us further away from the sustainable province we want to pass on to our children and our grandchildren. Families deserve better. Our children and grandchildren deserve better.

Who lobbied the Premier to allow developers to pay to bypass endangered species protection laws?

Interjections.

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

The minister to reply again.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, our science-based approach will continue to protect species.

But I don't have to reference your House leader. Speak to your former leader; speak to Howard Hampton. He was

at the conference that I was at in Sault Ste. Marie. He stood up in front of the audience and talked about the essential need for changes to the Endangered Species Act to create that balance—once again, that balance that we talk about in our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, a balance when it comes to climate—not the highest carbon tax in the world, but a balance that hits our target; a balance when it comes to clean water—1,327 times, the government you supported allowed sewage to be put into clean waters and lakes in Ontario. We've stood up against that. We've said that municipalities will have to notify their constituents when that sewage is put in the water.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to make a difference to the environment. We're not going to be dogmatic, we're not going to be ideological; we are going to protect the environment for Ontarians with a balanced plan, not the ideology of the NDP.

1130

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Last week, the minister tabled a comprehensive piece of legislation that, if passed, will reduce red tape, increasing safety on our roads, highways and bridges, to get Ontarians moving. During the election, our government for the people committed to reducing the gridlock and improving transit across Ontario to bring relief to all commuters. I am proud to say that the Minister of Transportation has made many significant announcements that will get the people of our province moving. We have announced highway expansion projects, GO service expansions, the biggest subway expansion in history and so much more.

Can the Minister of Transportation share some of the great initiatives that are included in the Getting Ontario Moving Act?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks to the member from Mississauga—Erin Mills for that question. It's a great joy working with him, day in and day out.

Just last week, Mr. Speaker, I introduced the Getting Ontario Moving Act. As the member stated, it's quite a comprehensive piece of legislation that, if passed, will cut red tape for our province's job creators, keep our roads safe and make it easier to deal with the MTO, with those individuals throughout our province. Mr. Speaker, we are proposing changes that will build much-needed transit, reduce congestion and get commuters moving again.

Some of the proposed measures in my bill include: an administrative monetary penalty regime for improperly passing a school bus, increasing penalties for driving too slowly and failing to drive on the right-hand side of the roadway when you're driving slow and stronger penalties for driving carelessly around maintenance workers, construction workers, tow truck personnel and recovery workers on our highways.

Mr. Speaker, these are just but a few things that we're doing to get Ontario moving, and I'll have more to say in my supplemental.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you to the Minister of Transportation for the very informative response. I know my community of Mississauga—Erin Mills will be happy to hear the proposed measures in this bill.

It is so important that we are protecting our most vulnerable—our children—and ensuring that they get to and from school safely. Increasing fines for drivers who are driving too slow in the left-hand lane will also improve our road safety. I'm also pleased that we intend to better protect maintenance, construction, tow truck and recovery workers from dangerous drivers. I know these measures will help to keep all Ontarians safe while working and commuting.

Can the Minister of Transportation tell us more about some of the proposed measures introduced last week?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks again for that question. Mr. Speaker, not only did we introduce the Getting Ontario Moving Act, we've also initiated a number of regulatory changes that were posted this past week. We have proposed permitting single-occupant motorcycles to use the HOV lanes. We have proposed to amend Ontario's motorcycle handlebar height restrictions to allow for motorcycles with high-styled handlebars that are above the operator's shoulders, or below while seated. We'll also make it easier for charter buses to travel in Ontario through amendments that would align with requirements under the International Registration Plan. And we're also proposing to make life easier and expand customer choice by exempting people with personal-use pickup trucks from the burdensome annual inspections.

Mr. Speaker, the Getting Ontario Moving Act spells out a number of safety measures that are going to make our roads safer, improve business opportunities and help the individuals throughout our province. It's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition members voted against this bill without reading it. They're putting the safety of our children at risk. I hope they learn from their mistake and support us in the second reading vote.

ABORTION

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

Women across Ontario have fought really hard for their reproductive rights. Conservative MPPs joined an anti-choice rally outside Queen's Park just now and they told the protesters, "We pledge to fight to make abortion unthinkable in our lifetime." Does the Premier support his MPPs?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Of course we're protecting what matters, Mr. Speaker. We're focused on a health care system that addresses the needs of every person who lives in Ontario. We're concerned, for example, that a job-killing, regressive carbon tax would compromise the resources of hospitals and medical clinics across this province and across northern Ontario to serve the needs of the people of Ontario.

Moving forward, Mr. Speaker, we are protecting and investing in education, in health care and protecting seniors and making sure that the people of Ontario have access to the health services and programs they deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to go back to the Premier. I fail to see how this had anything to do with the question that I asked.

The Premier has been less than clear on this issue. He has courted the support of the anti-choice activists. I'm asking him this morning: Will he stand here today and say that he refutes his MPPs' comments and supports a woman's right to choose?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, our priority is protecting what matters most to Ontarians—most to northern Ontario, where sometimes programs, services and access to them can be compromised.

We're concerned about a \$27-million cut the federal government has made by invoking the job-killing, regressive carbon tax on our health care system here in Ontario. We are creating new long-term-care beds. We're investing in all sorts of health care programs that are particularly going to benefit the people of northern Ontario.

Moving forward, we will use every tool at our disposal to ensure that when it comes to access to health programs and services, particularly for northern Ontario—Mr. Speaker, as I speak through you to the member from Nickel Belt—we stand together on this side of the House, and with our other members over there, to ensure that the people of Ontario have the access to health services and programs that they need and deserve, no matter where they live in this great, beautiful province.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Speaker, it's clear from budget 2019 that our government is committed to filling the skills gap so we can make Ontario open for business and open for jobs. We know there are thousands of high-quality jobs in the skilled trades that are left unfilled because of a lack of workers trained for these jobs. These jobs are well-paying, fulfilling career opportunities for our young people.

Ontario's employers know that our government is on the right track in making it easier to enter the skilled trades and in addressing the skills gap. Can the minister please tell us how our government is listening to job creators by modernizing the skilled trades?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member from Sarnia-Lambton for the question and his great work on behalf of his riding.

Speaker, we are hearing from stakeholders across Ontario that our government's actions on the skilled trades are helping more young people enter skilled trades professions.

Yesterday, I met with the Ontario General Contractors Association, who requested that our government develop

a government-wide skills strategy, address barriers to entry into the trades, transform the perception of the skilled trades and create a flexible system for the trades. I'm proud to say that in budget 2019, our government is moving ahead with each of these measures. I'm looking forward to working with the OGCA to fill the skills gap and make Ontario open for business.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): A point of order? The Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I'd like to introduce my good friend Ferg Devins, who is from Kenora. He's the chair of Bladder Cancer Canada and a bladder cancer survivor himself. This national registered charity is committed to making a difference for patients and their caregivers. I'd like to remind everyone that this month, the month of May, is Bladder Cancer Awareness Month, and we welcome Ferg Devins to this magnificent House.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Premier on a point of order.

Hon. Doug Ford: I'd like to extend an invitation to those students leaving: Come to my office in 10 minutes and I'll take you on a tour.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for Oakville.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I'd like to introduce two friends from the riding of Oakville: John and Alysha Thistlethwaite. Welcome to Queen's Park.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Brampton Centre has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Premier concerning climate change. This matter will be debated Tuesday at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Guelph has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Finance concerning the old OMB. This matter will be debated Tuesday at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Essex has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning police intervention with library members from Niagara West. This matter will be debated Tuesday at 6 p.m.

The House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I would like to welcome my best friend and his friend, Ratnam Ganesh and Sivanesan Thiru, to the Legislative Assembly. This is their first time visiting the Parliament. I know you told me you were outside many times, and this is your first time inside. It is my pleasure to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Billy Pang: I would like to welcome representatives and affiliates of Lupus Ontario and Lupus Canada to the Legislature this afternoon in support of my private member's bill. They are lining up there and should be here soon. Thank you for being here, and welcome to Queen's Park.

ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next I'm going to recognize the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, I have a message from the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by her own hand.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the members to rise.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2020, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

Members may take their seats.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHILD CARE

Miss Monique Taylor: The Ford government is making it harder for Ontarians to afford child care. Ontario parents already pay the highest child care costs in the country, and still, all across the province, the Ford government is making funding cuts.

In Hamilton, we will see a \$3.5-million cut in child care funding. Hamilton uses provincial funding to subsidize licensed child care spaces, giving 14,000 parents a \$10-per-day discount on their child care bill. This government's short-sighted cuts could mean an end to this subsidy, which could leave families in my riding on the hook for up to \$2,400 more each year for child care costs.

Hamilton has a high number of low-income residents, and increasing the cost of child care further deepens poverty. High child care costs keep mothers and caregivers out of the workforce, or force them to spend a huge percentage of their earnings on care.

Further, this government is doing nothing to produce more high-quality, licensed not-for-profit child care spaces. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 71% of children in Hamilton live in a "child care desert." That means there are only three licensed child care spaces for every 10 children in Hamilton.

Instead of making child care more affordable and more accessible, this government is making it harder for families to reach those goals.

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I am pleased to rise in the Legislature to recognize National Nursing Week in Canada. This Sunday, May 12, also happens to be International Nurses Day, marking the anniversary of Florence Nightingale, who is recognized as the founder of modern

nursing for her efforts in professionalizing the role, in addition to her many achievements.

Every day and night, no matter the hour, nurses are on the front lines providing health care and treating patients to the best of their abilities with the resources available to them. Whether it's in a home, a hospital, in a public health unit or in a war zone, nurses work tirelessly to save lives. They are often the first person a patient sees when they come in seeking treatment, and they also tend to be the last person to bid patients goodbye once they have recovered.

Nurses don't just administer and evaluate patient treatment; they provide emotional support, counsel and educate families, actively listen to patients, work tirelessly, often without breaks, always putting their patients' needs before their own.

Few other professions spend as much time and provide as much care to patients as nurses, and for that we need to celebrate their efforts, accomplishments, devotion, and their passion for wanting to make a difference in people's lives. It is one of the reasons I decided to become a registered nurse and to dedicate my life to the service of others. It is why I still take shifts even as a parliamentarian. It is a job that I love doing—seeing my colleagues and taking care of patients. It keeps me grounded and gives me the opportunity to make a difference.

To all nurses everywhere, thank you for the work you do each and every day. Happy Nursing Week.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. John Vanthof: This morning, Andrea Horwath and the NDP moved a motion regarding the climate change emergency in this province. There is a great debate on how much humans are impacting the climate or how much they aren't.

But there should be no great debate about the things that we were experiencing last year in my riding. We had the fire that was supposed to be the 100-year fire—a few years ago, a flood.

And now, across the province, people are having to deal with flood waters again.

I was in Pembroke, and they talked about how 2017 was the flood of 100 years—and 2019.

I would just like to give a recognition—as we speak, the waters of Lake Nipissing are rising, the waters of Lake Timiskaming are rising. The municipality of West Nipissing has stations with sandbags—100 sandbags for each residence—and those stations are open 24 hours a day until the crisis passes. I'd like to thank them for their vigilance and thank the military for stepping in—I hope that the military does not need to step in in West Nipissing or Timiskaming, but I trust that the government will respond if it comes to that point. From our caucus, our deepest thoughts go to them—and we need to be prepared for what might not be the flood of the century.

ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to wish everybody happy Yom Ha'atzmaut.

It's Israel's 71st anniversary today. Seventy-one sounds like a lot of years and a lifetime for a human being, but for a country it's outrageously tiny. When you think of all that we have accomplished—the state of Israel, with support from the Jewish diaspora—it's just incredible, in terms of innovation, in terms of drip irrigation, in terms of all of the innovation coming out of Israel. I think they're the third highest in the world of stocks traded. It's just unbelievable, the advances that are coming out of such a small country.

I want to remind everybody that just a few days ago there were rocket barrage attacks from terrorists on Israel, rockets raining from the Gaza territories on Israel.

Tonight and last night we saw Israelis celebrating in the streets. We're going to see it for a long time. They don't give up. They continue to live their lives. They continue to persevere. They continue to create medical miracles, agricultural miracles that all of us benefit from.

I just want to say thank you to all the supporters of the state of Israel. We all wish for peace. We all want to live in peace. We all want to have prosperity. I hope that next year when I get up again to wish everybody a happy Yom Ha'atzmaut, we will have everlasting peace in the region.

GENEVRA HOUSE

Mr. Jamie West: Today I'd like to speak about Geneva House, a 32-bed women's shelter operated by YWCA Sudbury. They provide women who are fleeing abuse with shelter, clothing, food, counselling and help to find safe, affordable housing.

But for years now, Geneva House's funding has remained the same while the cost of providing their services have gone up. The shelter is doing its best to help every woman who walks through the door, but they simply aren't getting the funding they need. They weren't in the past, and they aren't today.

Sadly, Geneva House isn't the only shelter in our community with financial concerns. Two months ago, the Salvation Army announced that they'd be closing their men's shelter. And l'Association des jeunes de la rue intends to stop providing youth shelter beds at the beginning of September.

In Sudbury, winter temperatures are frequently below minus 20 degrees Celsius, and on cold nights, when people find themselves with nowhere else to go, shelters are a vital refuge for those in need.

Speaker, we need this government to do more to support these community organizations because they help our most vulnerable. What could matter more than making sure no one ever has to go a night without a safe place to stay, a roof over their head or a warm bed to sleep in?

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VEHICLE REGISTRATION

Mr. Mike Harris: It is with excitement that I can speak to a recent announcement from May 1 from our government by the Minister of Transportation regarding a new digital vehicle registration project. This is big news for businesses and consumers in my riding of Kitchener–

Conestoga and across Ontario, including our crucial auto sector. Our government is launching an expansive pilot project that will allow auto dealers to register vehicles sold at their dealerships in-house. I am already getting local dealerships reaching out to me, requesting to participate in this program, which shows that reform is desperately needed.

Currently vehicle dealers across the province must register and license newly purchased vehicles off-site, costing businesses and consumers time and money. My private member's bill, Bill 50, which passed second reading last November, sought to remove this burdensome red tape by amending the Highway Traffic Act to enable certain motor vehicle dealers to apply for permits, number plates, sticker validation and used vehicle information packages electronically.

This program will launch in spring 2020 and will be developed through a six-month, province-wide consultation, in close partnership with ServiceOntario network providers as well as car dealership and rental car and fleet vehicle organizations.

In my own riding, Colin Kropf, the general manager of Voisin Chrysler in Elmira, supports this initiative, remarking that moving digital would allow his transactions to be done quickly and “send the customer home happy the same day.”

With my PMB, I've been a strong advocate for Voisin and consumers and auto dealers across our province. Let me tell you, it is so great to see my work adopted into government policy.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Last weekend, like many times before, students from Brampton gathered to protest the cuts that this government is making to our education system in Ontario. These education cuts will have a devastating effect on education in Brampton. The school board, the teachers and the students have all made their voices heard.

The Peel District School Board sent an open letter to the Minister of Education, expressing just how badly these cuts will affect students in Brampton. Peel will lose 369 teachers. How are students supposed to learn and succeed in an environment with less and less support for them?

Schools in the area have already confirmed that our students will now have fewer course options. Courses that are proven to engage students in more individualized, teacher-supported and skills-based learning will be significantly reduced. The number of credit recovery and rescue courses will also be reduced. These changes will jeopardize the success of some of our most vulnerable students, the ones who need these supports the most to succeed.

One thing we have not talked about much is how much after-school programs will suffer. In my own riding, teachers have told me about how many after-school programs and clubs will be cut due to the teacher jobs being cut.

Mr. Speaker, parents, teachers and students are all worried about these cuts. Along with our constituents, we all hope that this government comes to their senses and reverses these callous cuts.

OAK RIDGES COMMUNITY CLEAN UP

Mr. Michael Parsa: Last Saturday, Speaker, my team and I participated in the 19th annual Oak Ridges Community Clean Up, organized by one of our most amazing and caring community members, Katherine Mabley. Katherine and her team of 110 volunteers have worked tirelessly to bring awareness to environmental stewardship.

Participants were divided into teams and equipped with gloves and garbage bags to clean up our parks and community, which lies in the heart of the Oak Ridges moraine. Thanks to the dedication of all the participants, and because of their hard work, 32 local conservation areas were cleaned as part of this great initiative.

Speaker, initiatives like the community cleanup make positive impacts on the environment and foster a deep sense of community belonging. We must remember that our beautiful environment and natural resources are an invaluable gift that all Ontarians should protect and cherish.

I want to thank my friends, family, staff and all the volunteers for joining me in working towards cleaning up our city. I encourage everyone to continue to get involved and to help keep our communities clean and beautiful. Thank you very much, Speaker.

COVIA

Mr. Dave Smith: Last month, I had the opportunity to visit the mining and processing facilities of Covia Corp. in my riding of Peterborough-Kawartha. Covia mines nepheline syenite—not to be confused with the poison cyanide. It's a mineral that most of us have never heard of before, but all of us see it and use it every day. It's a key ingredient in the manufacturing of glass, paints, plastics and more because it reduces the amount of energy needed to make these products and it increases their durability, clarity and strength. When you clean your painted walls in your kitchen and the paint doesn't come off, that's because of nepheline.

Covia mines, processes and exports nepheline to every corner of the world—about 1.2 million tonnes a year—including to Ontario manufacturers like Sherwin-Williams, Home Hardware and Owens Corning. But while Ontario has the highest-grade nepheline mineral deposit in the world, Covia still faces increased competition. That's why they are investing C\$100 million to further strengthen their operations and make them more efficient and environmentally sustainable.

Encouraging investment in Ontario is something that our government takes seriously, and we're attracting new companies as a result of it, such as Xinyi Glass. We should all realize that if Xinyi chooses to come to Ontario for their state-of-the-art floating glass plant, there will be significant spinoffs for Ontario businesses, including Covia.

Covia is a major employer in my riding and a great example of our government's commitment to ensure that Ontario is known worldwide as open for business and open for jobs.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LUPUS AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE SENSIBILISATION AU LUPUS

Mr. Pang moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to proclaim Lupus Awareness Day /
Projet de loi 112, Loi proclamant la Journée de sensibilisation au lupus.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member like to briefly explain his bill?

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill recognizes Lupus Awareness Day on the 10th of May of each calendar year henceforth. Establishing a day of awareness for lupus will help us all to better understand this poorly defined disease. Awareness promotes engagement, engagement promotes discussion, and discussion fosters solutions.

Lupus is an autoimmune disease and, like many other autoimmune diseases, its cause is not entirely understood. However, unlike other autoimmune diseases, lupus has not been equally studied in comparison. Therefore, a day of awareness would be conducive to reminding Ontarians that lupus exists, that it affects our family and friends, and that a solution is much needed.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES STAFF RECOGNITION WEEK

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise in the Legislature today to mark Correctional Services Staff Recognition Week, Probation Officers Week and National Nursing Week.

To the members who were able to join us at the memorial earlier today, thank you. I'm sure you found it as poignant and moving as I did.

During the first week of May, we celebrate the significant contributions that correctional services staff, probation and parole officers and nurses make to keep our province safe and secure. Our staff are valued members of the front-line family, and we rely on them to protect our

communities, stand up for victims and hold criminals accountable.

Throughout this week, many of my colleagues and I have visited correctional facilities and probation and parole offices across the province to hear and see first-hand the experiences and challenges that our staff face in their day-to-day work. We are dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of our staff.

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This week, we launched the staff wellness strategy to support the mental health needs of our front-line personnel, as well as improvements at our provincial adult correctional facilities. In collaboration with our joint provincial health and safety committee, the comprehensive wellness strategy for correctional staff focuses on wellness promotion, occupational stress injury prevention and enhanced support for those who are experiencing occupational stress injuries.

Over the past number of months, we have made improvements at adult correctional facilities across the province, including better health and wellness supports for our correctional officers and staff; reconfirming Ontario's commitment to build a new, modern correctional complex in Thunder Bay; expanding the female unit at Monteith Correctional Complex; having a dedicated canine unit at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre; increasing safety at the Kenora Jail by upgrading infrastructure; and strengthening corrections intelligence and partnerships between corrections staff and the enforcement community. Each and every day, we're taking action to improve the safety and well-being of those who contribute to the safety of our communities.

In my time as Ontario's Solicitor General, there's one thing that always comes through in my conversations with our front-line teams: their deep, resolute commitment to service. This commitment is evident in every aspect of corrections, whether it's behind institutional walls, in community offices or on the floor of a health care unit. Correctional services staff, probation and parole officers and nurses are essential partners in Ontario's justice system, but it also takes every one of our social workers, maintenance workers, administrative assistants and countless others to make sure our adult corrections system is running smoothly and safely. I want the members of this House and the people of this province to know that their hard work does not go unnoticed.

This government will provide the leadership, direction and vision our correctional system needs. This means making sure our correctional staff receive the tools, resources and support that will keep them safe.

Earlier today, we paid tribute to those who have fallen in the line of duty—19 souls who made the ultimate sacrifice—at the annual correctional services ceremony of remembrance held here at Queen's Park. I encourage my colleagues to meet with front-line staff, visit an adult correctional facility or schedule a stop at a probation and parole office to learn more about the great work that our corrections community does each and every day. There is no doubt that their work can be challenging and

demanding at times, but our province is infinitely stronger because of it.

On behalf of Premier Ford, our entire government and the people of Ontario, I want to thank Ontario's correctional services staff, probation and parole officers and nurses for helping to keep our province safe. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Mr. Kevin Yarde: It is an absolute pleasure, as the NDP critic on this file, to rise to speak to corrections week in Ontario. I have been on this file since getting elected, and I have had the pleasure of getting to know corrections, the union and the officers. It is my pleasure to welcome the people from corrections as we recognize the work they do, and I thank them very much for joining us today.

We met with correctional workers from across the province on their lobby day just over a month ago, and the things I heard that day, while always a shock, unfortunately were not a surprise.

We have talked extensively about the state of corrections and the work they do day in and day out. For all that they do—as the critic for corrections and from our entire caucus, we appreciate the work that our correctional workers do.

OPSEU corrections members who live in my riding of Brampton North—and there are several—often, we chat about their experiences and what we can do to make their workplace safer and less stressful. The point is that there is a real crisis in corrections, and while it has been there for a long time, make no mistake: It continues under this government. I'm not saying that fixing the problem is easy—only that solutions aren't mysterious. New Democrats, myself, our leader and the former critics on the file from our caucus, the member from Essex and the member from Oshawa, have been willing and continue to fight and roll up our sleeves for the needed changes in corrections.

The work that our corrections workers do is important and essential in the province, and we need to recognize and respect that, because the previous Liberal government and this government do not seem to understand that. Our correctional workers face violence and traumatizing situations every single day. The pain and suffering they carry can be hard to measure but should not be missed by us. Making a statement and saying thank you is not sufficient. We need to do better. We need to ensure that we fight and work together to ensure a safe workplace for our correctional workers.

A safe workplace for them also means a safe environment in which those who are incarcerated can find their way home again, and in our provincial offences system that should be every single inmate. I've been on this file for around nine months, Mr. Speaker. I have toured a few jails in the province and I have spoken to correctional officers in this province. I understand what the issues facing corrections are. It just boggles my mind that this government would try to nickel and dime its way through the program, hoping that the problems would go away.

Our jails are unsafe for everyone because, in reality, they are overcrowded and understaffed. We've been

calling on this government and the past Liberal government to address these issues. I actually want to recognize the member from Oshawa, who, as the past NDP critic on this file, fought hard to have these issues dealt with. Unfortunately, we are still fighting for the same thing. Staffing levels have not meaningfully changed yet and have not kept up, as the jails are overcrowded and the workload on our correctional workers has increased. Audit after audit shows the staffing levels in Ontario jails are underwhelming. We ask our correctional officers to do a difficult job. The least we can do is provide them with enough staff to do their job in a safe manner. I've heard from correctional workers—and I heard them today as well—that they are always playing catch-up and are always under pressure because there are just not enough staff members to complete all the tasks in a safe manner.

I spoke to some folks about Toronto South. I know that Toronto South is a direct-supervision facility. Officers are telling us that instead of providing the necessary staff members to assist them with direct supervision, positions have been cut. There have also been cuts to full-time health and safety positions.

What we need is for this government to provide adequate staffing support so the correctional workers can do their job in a safe and effective manner and so that programs that are available to assist correctional workers can be implemented safely.

The unfortunate part of all of this is that there are real consequences to the inaction by the government on this issue. Our correctional officers face abuse and assault in our jails at an occurrence more frequent than seen before. Between 2009 and 2014 alone, threats and intimidation of corrections staff have increased by 2,750%. That's right. Make no mistake about it: That means that inmate-on-inmate assaults are up as well. We aren't sentencing Ontarians to a Roman Colosseum. Increasing numbers of inmates have acute mental health needs, and our overburdened correctional staff are clear they are not equipped to deal with it.

In conclusion, I just want to thank all the corrections workers, officers, nurses, probation and parole officers and staff that drive the "goose" for all that they do.

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: C'est vraiment un privilège pour moi d'être ici au nom du caucus libéral et de notre chef intérimaire, John Fraser, to mark this year's Correctional Services Staff Recognition Week in the province of Ontario.

I was proud to stand in this chamber two years ago and recognize the very first Correctional Services Staff Recognition Week in my then role as Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Speaker, correctional services staff have a very vital role in our justice system. I have to say that during my time I have learned so much and appreciated and also respected the work they do.

When you look at this, after an arrest has been made or a sentence has been handed down, correctional services staff—including correctional officers and probation officers, health care professionals and social workers—support those in our custody and under our supervision in

the community, and put them on a path to rehabilitation. While they may not have the profile of police or the burden of the court in determining guilt or innocence, correctional services staff are—and I truthfully say this from the bottom of my heart—unsung heroes of the justice sector. This week pays tribute to the incredible work that they do.

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Supporting those front-line workers is a vast and dedicated network of correctional workers, parole and probation officers, social workers, nurses, programming staff, back office support workers, drivers, food services and maintenance staff, and administrators.

Speaker, I heard the minister acknowledging a few of the initiatives that this government is doing. It's my hope that the week that we are celebrating will be marked and has been marked at each and every institution and parole and probation office across the province.

Here at Queen's Park, a year ago, we unveiled the correctional services monument, across from the police officers' memorial, honouring staff who had fallen in the line of duty while serving in Ontario's correctional services. All parties—many of you—were there acknowledging those who had fallen, but also reflecting on the work that needs to be done. And yes, we were heading into an election. Big promises were made. It's not about this; it's about doing what's right for the workers and every single person who works in our institutions. I was hoping that we would see this yearly event continuing. I was not invited, so I'm not sure. I see some of you here, and I appreciate you being here today.

We need to recognize the challenging and sometimes dangerous work that correctional services staff perform on a daily basis.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is with a heavy heart almost that I'm standing in this House today, but I wanted to make sure our caucus had representation and were able to talk to all of you, because we can never forget those who fell, but those who work. I know there were numerous incidents that occurred year after year inside our institutions. We need to keep this non-partisan way. We need to do the right thing, and the right thing is providing more resources, better training, listening, thinking about how they have to return home every day, making sure that there are enough nurses, social workers and that those correctional and parole and probation officers have the tools they need.

So what I'm asking is, can we finally in Ontario not make this a partisan issue? We all in this House have had governments doing many things that we can all be faulted for. That's not fair. These individuals need our full attention—and also, they are there, helping our inmates throughout the process of rehabilitation and reintegration.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask members to present petitions, 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. Calandra assumes ballot item number 83 and Mrs. Wai assumes ballot item number 90.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: That's a heavy petition stack. I am receiving petitions from all over Ontario, and I've received one from Eda and Sam Cipolla of Dundas, Ontario.

"Time to Care Act—Bill 13.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of" long-term-care "homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

"Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in" long-term-care homes to keep up with the provincial standard; and

"Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in" long-term-care "homes to keep pace with residents' increasing needs and the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

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

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard to provide an average of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix."

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a great pleasure to rise today to present a petition to this House on behalf of 668 students at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. It is entitled "Increase Grants Not Loans, Access for All, Protect Student Rights.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas students in Ontario pay some of the highest tuition fees in the country and carry the heaviest debt loads, even with the recently announced 10%" tuition "reduction; and

"Whereas many students will now be forced to take on more loans rather than previously available non-repayable grants; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has failed to take action on the chronic underfunding of colleges and universities; and

"Whereas students must have an autonomous voice that is independent of administration and government to advocate on our behalf; and

"Whereas the proposed 'Student Choice Initiative' undermines students' ability to take collective action;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"—provide more grants, not loans;

"—eliminate tuition fees for all students;

"—increase public funding for public education;

"—protect students' independent voices; and

"—defend the right to organize."

I will sign these 668 signatures with pleasure and give it to page Sarah for the Clerks' table.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Mike Harris: I have a fantastic petition to read in to the Legislative Assembly here today.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government created a special-purpose account (SPA) in 1997;

"Whereas the SPA pools together all revenues from hunting and fishing licensing fees, fines and royalties;

"Whereas the funds in the SPA are legislated to be reinvested back into wildlife management to improve hunting and angling across the province;

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

"That we support the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry in completing a review of the spending of the SPA expenditures and revamping the account, ensuring revenue is directed towards conservation management."

I fully support this petition. I have already affixed my signature, and pass it to page Zoe to bring to the table.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My petition is to stop the Ford government's education cuts.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas" the government's "new education scheme seeks to dramatically increase class sizes starting in grade 4;

"Whereas the changes will mean thousands fewer teachers and education workers and less help for every student;

"Whereas secondary students will now be forced to take at least four of their classes online, with as many as 35 students in each course;

"Whereas" the government's "changes will rip over \$1 billion out of Ontario's education system by the end of the government's term; and

"Whereas kids in Ontario deserve more opportunities, not fewer;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Demand that the government halt the cuts to classrooms and invest to strengthen public education in Ontario.”

I agree with this petition and will be signing it and giving it to page Romeo to take to the Clerk.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas buying a home is a significant and important financial decision for all Ontarians;

“Whereas it is clear to Ontarians that Tarion is broken; and

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“Whereas the previous government failed to protect homebuyers by moving forward with key recommendations from the Honourable Douglas Cunningham’s independent report from 2016 of the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and Tarion;

“Whereas Justice Cunningham concluded that there was a perceived conflict of interest with Tarion carrying out both warranty administrator and builder regulator functions;

“Whereas the protection of homeowners is paramount in this current government;

“Whereas Ontario’s government is working for the people by taking action to protect hard-working Ontarians when making one of the biggest purchases in their life—a new home;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, support the current government’s plan to make Tarion truly accountable to the people by:

“—establishing a new and separate regulator from Tarion for new home builders and vendors to address conflicts of interest;

“—exploring the feasibility of a multi-provider insurance-based model for new home warranties and protections in Ontario;

“—planning to introduce legislative amendments that, if passed, would, among other things, enable the minister to require Tarion to make executive and board compensation publicly available and move to a more balanced skill-based board composition;” and finally,

“—introducing new initiatives to better inform and to better protect purchasers of cancelled condominium projects.”

I’ve already affixed my signature to this, and I’m going to hand it to Emily to bring to the front.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Sara Singh: I’d like to thank students from across the riding of Brampton Centre for collecting signatures from their peers for this petition entitled “Fund Our Schools.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas too many children are going to school in buildings without proper heating or cooling, with leaky roofs or stairways overdue for repair;

“Whereas after years of Conservative and Liberal governments neglecting schools, the backlog of needed repairs has reached \$16 billion;

“Whereas during the 2018 election, numerous members of the Conservative Party, including the ... Minister of Education, pledged to provide adequate, stable funding for Ontario’s schools;

“Whereas less than three weeks into the legislative session, Doug Ford”—Premier Ford; my apologies, Speaker—“and the Conservative government have already cut \$100 million in much-needed school repairs, leaving our children and educators to suffer in classrooms that are unsafe and unhealthy;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Education to immediately reverse the decision to cut \$100 million in school repair funding, and invest the \$16 billion needed to tackle the repair backlog in Ontario’s schools.”

I’m really proud to affix my name to this, and I’ll send it off with page Olivier.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Mike Harris: I have another petition to read into the Legislative Assembly today.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the ban on hunting and trapping in sections of Ontario to protect the eastern hybrid wolf was put in place without regard for the overall ecosystem;

“Whereas this ban has adversely affected the ability of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), hunters and trappers to properly manage animal populations and Ontario’s ecosystem;

“Whereas this ban is no longer needed and is in fact causing more damage to Ontario’s ecosystem and increasing unnecessary encounters between wildlife and Ontarians;

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

“That the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry immediately lift the ban on hunting and trapping set in place to protect the eastern hybrid wolf.”

I have already affixed my signature to this, Madam Speaker, and present it to page Helen to bring to the Clerks.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Jamie West: Another petition about education—I’m very proud of Amy Beauchamp from my alma mater of Laurentian University for collecting these signatures. The petition is called “Increase Grants, Not Loans. Access for All. Protect Student Rights.” It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas students in Ontario pay some of the highest tuition fees in the country and carry the heaviest debt

loads, even with the recently announced 10% reduction; and

“Whereas many students will now be forced to take on more loans rather than previously available non-repayable grants; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has failed to take action on the chronic underfunding of colleges and universities; and

“Whereas students must have an autonomous voice that is independent of administration and government to advocate on our behalf; and

“Whereas the proposed ‘Student Choice Initiative’ undermines students’ ability to take collective action;

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

—provide more grants, not loans;

—eliminate tuition fees for all students;

—increase public funding for public education;

—protect students’ independent voices; and

—defend the right to organize.”

I proudly affix my signature and I’ll give it to page Rishi.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Once again, another petition about affordable housing, and I would like to thank my constituent Nathan.

“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 fully support this petition and I’ll be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Caleah.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This petition is entitled “Workers’ Comp is a Right.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition and will be signing it and giving it to page Kate.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Brenda Missen, Nancy Beverly, Lynne Missen Jolly, Gavin Jolly, Meaghan Beverly, as well as Harriet Clunie, all members of the family of Kathryn Missen, for collecting those petitions. They read as follows:

“911 Emergency Response....

“Whereas, when we face an emergency we all know to dial 911 for help; and

“Whereas access to emergency services through 911 is not available in all regions of Ontario but most Ontarians believe that it is; and

“Whereas many Ontarians have discovered that 911 was not available while they faced an emergency; and

“Whereas all Ontarians expect and deserve access to 911 service throughout our province”;

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To provide 911 emergency response everywhere in Ontario by land line or cellphone.”

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s an honour for me to present a petition on behalf of the students of Western University, my alma mater. The petition is entitled “Increase Grants, Not Loans. Access for All. Protect Student Rights.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

“Whereas students in Ontario pay some of the highest tuition fees in the country and carry the heaviest debt loads, even with the recently announced 10% reduction; and

“Whereas many students will now be forced to take on more loans rather than previously available non-repayable grants; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has failed to take action on the chronic underfunding of colleges and universities; and

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“Whereas students must have an autonomous voice that is independent of administration and government to advocate on our behalf; and

“Whereas the proposed ‘Student Choice Initiative’ undermines students’ ability to take collective action;

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

“—provide more grants, not loans;

“—eliminate tuition fees for all students;

“—increase public funding for public education;

“—protect students’ independent voices; and

“—defend the right to organize.”

I fully support this petition, will be affixing my signature to it and giving it to pay Rishi.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

GENOCIDE AWARENESS, COMMEMORATION, PREVENTION AND EDUCATION MONTH ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LE MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION, DE LA COMMÉMORATION, DE LA PRÉVENTION ET DE L’ÉDUCATION À L’ÉGARD DES GÉNOCIDES

Mr. Babikian moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 97, An Act to proclaim Genocide Awareness, Commemoration, Prevention and Education Month/
Projet de loi 97, Loi proclamant le Mois de la sensibilisation, de la commémoration, de la prévention et de l’éducation à l’égard des génocides.

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

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am humbled to stand in this august chamber this afternoon as a descendant of an Armenian genocide survivor to lead the debate on Bill 97.

Before I do that, I would like to welcome delegates from 40 civil society organizations representing 11 different ethnic and religious communities in Ontario. They are all in the gallery here, and I’m going mention their names a little bit later in the debate.

Madam Speaker, genocide is a deliberate act to eradicate a group with a common religious, ethnic or national

origin. It is a crime against humanity which poses a threat to mankind. Dehumanization of the victims precedes, accompanies and follows such crimes. According to Helen Fein, a pre-eminent Holocaust and genocide scholar, it is estimated 38.6 million people were killed in the 20th century as a result of genocide. Additionally, 130 million people have been killed as a result of politicized mass killings, starvation, forced labour and concentration camps. Denial of these crimes further injures the traumatized survivors and their descendants.

Ontario and Canada are recognized as world-leading champions of human rights. Genocide has touched the lives of many communities and families in our province. Furthermore, a large number of survivors and descendants call this great province home. I believe Bill 97 will help these families and communities to overcome the trauma they have suffered as a result of genocide, in addition to providing a way to find healing and closure to the victims and their descendants.

This bill will also be an important tool for future generations to learn from the mistakes of the past so that we can prevent such crimes from happening ever again.

Madam Speaker, I cannot stand in this chamber and speak about this bill without recalling the horrors and the atrocities committed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria during the summer of 2014. At the time, the world watched helplessly as Yazidi women and children were taken hostage and were sold in slave markets.

Nadia Murad, the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and survivor of that genocide said, and I quote, “By acknowledging and remembering past and ongoing genocides, we hope to make ‘never again’ a reality.” Ms. Murad’s sentiments truly reflect the intention of this bill. “Never Again” is the message I want to bring across to the people of Ontario and Canada.

Other communities and populations of Iraq, Syria and Egypt were also victims of genocide and crimes against humanity by ISIS in 2014, until their defeat.

I recall people from the affected communities speaking to me about forcible removal from their homes, the destruction of places of worship, and worst of all, the annihilation of historic communities. The loss of material culture of ancient people and the endangerment of historical monuments reminds us that genocide does not only affect the victims, but rather humanity as a collective.

I hope this bill will help the victims find healing and closure as the gaping wounds left behind continue to haunt survivors—and many of them call Ontario home.

Madam Speaker, I also recall the victims of the genocide of 1915. Armenians, Greeks, Syrians, Assyrians and Chaldeans were all affected. Innocent men, women and children were massacred. Homes, villages and cities were destroyed. Worst of all, the crimes have continued to be denied. Victims and their descendants have lived with the trauma for more than 100 years. I hope this bill will ensure that these communities can now find comfort in the collective solidarity with the victims of other genocides and crimes against humanity who call Ontario home.

During the Second World War, the Jewish people of Europe and the Chinese population of Nanjing were the targets of genocide.

Rwandans are another group of victims who have made Ontario home. Tutsis, as victims, continue to live with the trauma they experienced in 1994. Over a million lives were lost in the span of 100 short days. I know from my friends in the Rwandan community that survivors have had to deal with the horrific and gruesome nature of the crimes they witnessed. I believe that we in Ontario can provide the victims who call this province home with a place where they can heal and begin new life.

In more recent times, the Tamil, Rohingya and Sikh communities have also experienced such criminal acts.

Some have asked, “Why are you trying to demonize perpetrator state members who call Ontario home?” This bill does not do such a thing. On the contrary, by acknowledging these crimes, we pay tribute to and honour all the virtuous individuals who risked their lives to save victims of genocide. We also pay tribute to those who openly commemorate, write about, discuss and atone for the mistakes of their predecessors. To honour the sacrifices of these righteous people—some of them live in Ontario and across Canada—it is our moral duty to stand up and support them in this Legislative Assembly.

Madam Speaker, the passing of Bill 97 will be a landmark acknowledgement of an important chapter in our history, and as such, will pay tribute to thousands of Canadians whose generosity and participation in Canada’s noble experiment have saved thousands from annihilation during the genocides of the 20th century.

Sara Corning, a Nova Scotia nurse who was in the Ottoman Empire at the time of the genocide, helped save 5,000 Armenian and Greek children from certain death. In fact, Canada was one of the leading countries to launch a relief effort to help the refugees and the orphans. Under the patronage of the Governor General of the time and Archbishop Neil McNeil, Canada played an active role in helping to raise \$300,000 to help the victims and the survivors of that genocide.

Furthermore, 109 orphan boys, later known as the Georgetown Boys, were brought to Canada and resettled on a farm near Georgetown in south-central Ontario, hence giving them a new lease on life.

Toronto’s Globe newspaper spearheaded the campaign to raise funds for the starving Armenians.

It is this type of compassionate and humanitarian vision that has helped to establish Canada’s reputation as a caring, welcoming, tolerant and enlightened country. Likewise, Bill 97 will honour the contributions of our ancestors.

Furthermore, it is also possible to teach and commemorate genocides without disliking the perpetrators. This is being done successfully in our educational system, where the Holocaust and the Armenian and Rwandan genocides are taught without blaming contemporary Germans, Turks and Hutus.

1400

The intent of Bill 97 is to preserve the memory of historical events, but also because the truth is a way of paying our respects to the victims.

Moreover, if genocides can be perpetrated and successfully denied, tyrants will draw their own conclusions, as the notorious statement by Adolph Hitler in 1939 testifies. Trying to justify his plans to invade Poland and annihilate the Jewish people there, the Nazi dictator said, “Who today remembers the annihilation of the Armenians?”

Finally, genocides that are denied tend to be forgotten, thus cutting us off from the knowledge that might help prevent future atrocities. For this reason, denial of genocide is not just an issue for Armenians, Jews, Ukrainians, Tutsis, Sikhs, Tamils, Chinese, Greeks, Syriacs, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Cambodians, Yazidis or Rohingyas: It is an issue for all humanity. Ignoring or denying genocide is an attack on history and the way we transmit the past to the future.

My bill lists genocides that have not been recognized in Ontario. The text of the bill states, “In addition to the genocides that either the Legislative Assembly of Ontario or the Parliament of Canada, or both, have recognized, Ontario recognizes the genocides committed against” a number of communities.

This was done in order to allow educators and schools to include these horrific crimes in teaching materials to help educate future generations in addition to the Holocaust and the Armenian, Rwandan, Ukrainian, Cambodian and Sikh genocides.

Finally, I’m convinced that once Bill 97 is passed, it will provide an opportunity to start the reconciliation process between affected groups. It is time for us to help end the trauma of the victims and send a message that we stand in solidarity with the victims.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: I rise today to speak on behalf of Bill 97, an act that would proclaim the month of April each year as Genocide Awareness, Commemoration, Prevention and Education Month.

As we debate this bill, I want to share the stories I have heard from my own community about genocide, in Toronto–St. Paul’s. Last Wednesday, I attended a Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration at Holy Blossom Temple in my riding. Standing in that room with Holocaust survivors, let me tell you, it felt like time stood still.

One story I want this House to hear is the story of Fay Kieffer. Not a breath could be heard while Fay recounted the atrocities she had personally experienced at the hands of the Nazis. At 15 years old, Fay was tortured, Fay was abused, and, at 15 years old, Fay lost both her father and brother in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

It’s the words of her brother I will share with this Legislature today—the last words Fay heard from him. He told her, “You must survive because you need to tell our story of what they did to us.”

To this Legislature I say that we have a responsibility to carry on this legacy, to ensure that in this concerning era of increasing Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism, we work to ensure Fay’s story and the story of her family is

told. History cannot keep repeating itself in this respect. Education and awareness-raising is the first step in eradicating all forms of violence, discrimination and persecution.

“Genocide” is not a word to be thrown around lightly, Speaker, and it is not something that we can afford to be imprecise about in its application. It does not serve any community group to leave some acts of violence out of a catalogue of crimes against humanity.

Recognition during this month is a powerful act of validation of what a community has experienced. It provides narrative and meaning to what they or their ancestors have gone through. It means that educational curricula, museum exhibits, days of significance and awareness campaigns will develop to draw attention to parts of global and national history that we don’t talk about enough.

In addition, understanding how genocide affects the lives of many communities in Ontario helps us identify and understand the ongoing impacts of intergenerational trauma, from physical and mental health to accessing resources, power and opportunities. We can use this understanding to identify and remove the barriers that many survivors of genocide continue to face today, and provide them with relevant supports.

This is what I think the most significant impact of such a month will be: spreading the understanding that the past is not just locked away in the past, but its impact can be felt today, and we can never afford to forget it.

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

Mr. Vincent Ke: It is my honour to speak to Bill 97, An Act to proclaim Genocide Awareness, Commemoration, Prevention and Education Month, introduced by my colleague and friend the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

Today, we are so fortunate that we live in a multi-cultural and diverse nation, a home to people of all faiths and ethnic communities. However, we cannot be allowed to forget the victims that succumbed to all genocides.

When we talk about genocide, historians look to our past for these incidents.

Speaker, I speak in support of Bill 97 in the House as a Canadian today, but I am also a Chinese who grew up in mainland China. I learned as a child about the tragedy of the Nanjing Massacre, which happened in December 1937. Over six weeks, hundreds of thousands of civilians and disarmed soldiers in Nanjing were extensively killed. There was a systematic, widespread rape of women of all ages by the occupying forces. Pregnant women were killed by the aggressors.

We remember these citizens who were killed and brutalized, and who suffered extreme hardship. We also pay tribute to the survivors of this dark period in history, who lived to tell their stories to future generations.

By passing Bill 97, we will acknowledge the terror of all genocides that this world has had to suffer. By learning about these events, it allows us to better understand these dark moments in world history.

Our country is one that advocates for equity, tolerance and compassion. We must learn the lessons of history and strengthen our commitment to love and peace.

The atrocities and genocides that have occurred around the world must be condemned on all counts and never happen again.

Speaker, I will support this bill, and I ask all of my legislative colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Madam Speaker. Today I would like to speak as a First Nations person, as an Indigenous person, about Bill 97, the Genocide Awareness, Commemoration, Prevention and Education Month Act.

The preamble of the bill lists acts of genocide committed against communities that are recognized by Ontario and Canada. These were terrible crimes against humanity that have no place in this world.

There are many examples that get left out of history, like what happened here in Canada. When we talk about reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada, Bill 97 does not talk about or include the history of genocide as experienced by Indigenous peoples. Bill 97 needs to go further to inform and create this awareness.

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I’d like to remind the House that the United Nations’ definition of genocide is “killing members of” national, ethnic, racial or religious groups. An example is, during the residential school era, thousands of Indigenous children died away from home.

Another definition is “causing ... bodily or mental harm” to members of a group. This government must acknowledge that there are thousands of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls who go unacknowledged.

One of the definitions, as well, is preventing births within a group. There is a historical legacy of forced sterilization of Indigenous women by hospitals across the country.

By these definitions, the treatment of First Nations and Indigenous people by the state, historically and in the present, can be defined as genocide. So, if the member’s bill wishes to inform the public about genocide, it must be a truthful one—a truthful one that seeks to accurately speak about our history in Ontario.

Meegwetch.

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: It is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak in support of Bill 97.

Throughout history, we have witnessed the horrible atrocities and crimes committed against humanity simply because they were seen to be different—different in ethnicity, different in religious beliefs or different in their lifestyle practices.

I lived in Sri Lanka during an intense period of racial strife and hatred and a period when most Tamils feared for their lives. In fact, members of my family were victimized

and lost their lives in Sri Lanka because of racial hatred and ethnic cleansing.

I fled Sri Lanka, my motherland, in 1983, as a political refugee in fear for my life. The emotional impact of living under such circumstances and being forced to leave your motherland cannot be described in words: not knowing if you can sleep safely in your own household, not knowing if you are safe to travel, not knowing who you can trust, and not knowing if the next day is your last day. No one should have to live their life in such fear, and I know many families in Ontario and Canada have also experienced pain and suffering.

Canadians have always stood firm and spoken loudly against heinous acts, regardless of where they have occurred in the world. Today, Ontario and Canada represent the benchmark for how diversity and tolerance can work and thrive, and it's why so many from around the world choose Canada as their new home.

Today we acknowledge and remember solemnly the Holocaust against the Jewish people, and, every April, the Armenian and Rwandan genocides.

In my former role as a Markham councillor, I was proud to lead the Markham council's resolution in 2009 recognizing, investigating and condemning the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Tamils in Sri Lanka during the civil war. It was a resolution passed unanimously, and Markham was the first municipality in Canada to do so.

Madam Speaker, I encourage the members of our Legislature to act together and support Bill 97 in the same spirit and in solidarity, as a voice that stands for tolerance, love, compassion and human rights. This bill will show the leadership of our Legislature to recognize and increase the awareness of genocide committed against many others around the world. It will also ensure that future generations won't forget the painful tragedies and unforgivable acts committed against millions around the world and, with these memories, will continue to stand strong against these crimes and diminish them over time.

The proclamation of Genocide Awareness, Commemoration, Prevention and Education Month every April will help to remind us and reinforce the right path forward, a path where everyone can practise their faith and live their life without fear.

Madam Speaker, I commend the member, my good friend, the MPP from Scarborough–Agincourt for his leadership on this bill, and encourage all members to provide their support. It is the right thing to do, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I want to thank the member for Scarborough–Agincourt for bringing forward this bill. It's such a critically important topic.

As an academic and a researcher, I've interviewed a great many survivors of genocide, and people who were deeply affected by the intergenerational results of it.

I know this is a particularly poignant month for Tamils. It's 10 years since the Mullivaikal genocide.

I know that Armenians still feel to their core the depth, the pain and the anguish of what happened a century ago, in part because Turkey has never admitted and accepted what happened.

Denial is so crucial an element of preventing healing. As the member from Kiiwetinoong was saying, a crucial part of healing is hearing the perpetrator say, "Yes, we did this; we apologize," and for that apology to be real and meaningful.

We need to think really carefully, when we put together a bill like this, about who is included specifically and then who is left out, and what that means. I think we need to maybe go forward and fill in those wrongs.

There were Greek people who did not feel completely heard and seen by what was in the bill. I know that that was true for the Sikh community. The member mentioned them in his remarks, but it isn't here in the bill. It matters, because the government of India is doing precisely what the government of Turkey is doing, in the sense of not accepting and apologizing to the victims of genocide. This is so absolutely crucial.

It is perhaps most crucial when we're closest to home, because we are in the midst of trying to grapple with what the TRC called a cultural genocide, but which my colleague the member for Kiiwetinoong just argued so persuasively went way beyond a cultural genocide. It was a genocide in other senses of the word as well. We in Ontario cannot move forward until we accept that that is what happened, that is what we did perpetrate, and that is what we are continuing to perpetrate. Not until we accept it can we actually move on meaningfully.

I was at a very powerful meeting last night where Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler presented the Minister of Indigenous Affairs with a copy of Treaty 9, which Ontario signed as well as the federal government. He said, "We are here as partners, not as stakeholders."

We need to bring this close to home and understand that we have played a part in this. We need to fix our own backyard.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I want to speak today to support MPP Aris Babikian's Bill 97. As a Canadian who believes in Canadian values and human rights, I support any and every bill which emphasizes and protects those rights—the right of freedom of speech, the right of freedom of religion, and the right of protection under the power of law for minorities.

Madam Speaker, these are the rights we cherish in Canada. We enjoy them. In a majority of cases, we take them for granted. We don't appreciate it as much as a human who escaped his homeland because of persecution or even his and his family's life getting threatened—many, many stories which, when we hear them, we can appreciate our beloved Canada.

1420

There is no justification whatsoever for threatening or killing any human for religious, ideological, political or any other reasons. When these acts are taken by any group

or power on a scale, we end up with a genocide where innocent people lose their lives.

Madam Speaker, why do I support the bill? I hope by doing my role to spotlight such actions, we are sending a message to the world, a reminder, so that it never happens again. All over the world, we see those atrocities happening, day in, day out. Does this make it okay? Absolutely not. We stand in solidarity with victims. More importantly, we stand united as humans supporting other humans.

Madam Speaker, this assembly is a symbol of our Canadian democracy. It is the conscious example which we are all proud of as Canadians. As a member of this assembly and as a human, I have to, and I am proud to, stand for our Canadian humanitarian values, against those heinous acts of discrimination and cleansing for any reason.

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: To heal from trauma, from pain, from oppression, the first step is to name and recognize the injustice that was done. That's why it's so important for government to have courage to speak truth and to recognize the gravest of injustices: genocide.

Genocide is the most serious crime that can be committed. It's the erasure of a people, their culture, their ways, their lives. Genocide marks not only the community, but hurts us all. We're all one, and a genocide against any of us is a genocide against all of us.

As a Sikh, the genocide that we experienced still has a devastating impact on us. That's why it was so powerful when all parties came together in this House to recognize the Sikh genocide. The passing of this motion was praised across the world because finally, after over three decades, our pain was legitimized. The grievous trauma we suffered was named and acknowledged.

In 1984, Sikhs were burned alive. We were victims of severe physical and sexual violence, and children were beheaded, all at the hands of the Indian government. So when the Ontario Legislature recognized this state-organized violence as genocide, it sent a message to the Sikh people, a message that the pain we suffered was not our fault, that we didn't deserve it, and more, that the Indian government was wrong for carrying it out. It's also why many Sikhs are really hurt that last November, when elected officials across Canada, across this world, rose to remember the 1984 Sikh genocide, members of this Conservative government were silent. It left the Sikh community wondering why, why they didn't choose to speak against this heinous genocide then.

So while I will be supporting this bill and I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Agincourt for having the courage today to name the Sikh genocide, I urge the Conservative government to amend this bill and explicitly name the Sikh genocide in it. The year 2019 marks 35 years since the Sikh genocide, and though this year we will be remembering our history throughout it, we'll also be remembering our trauma and the pain that the genocide created. With April being Sikh Heritage Month,

a time when Sikhs already come together, it's so fitting to have the Sikhs named in this bill. Naming the Sikh genocide will allow us to tell our own story in our own voice and, further, allow us to heal from this pain.

And more, in the spirit of Sarbat da bhalla, for the benefit of all, let us acknowledge other genocides committed to other communities included in this bill or otherwise—Indigenous, Tamil, Assyrian and more. Let us recognize their trauma as well, because when we lift others up, when we help others heal, we all rise.

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

The member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Mr. Aris Babikian: I would like to thank my colleagues from Toronto–St. Paul's, Don Valley North, Kiiwetinoong, Markham–Thornhill, Beaches–East York, Mississauga–Erin Mills and Brampton East for their support and for their solidarity with this bill.

Also, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the presence of many of the victim groups here. First of all, I would like to welcome Bishop Arshur Soro, the Chaldean Church bishop, and Father Niaz Toma from Hamilton. And I would like to recognize the names of the organizations who are here in support of this bill: the Canadian Hellenic Congress; Pan-Macedonian Federation of Canada; Hellenic Canadian Congress of Ontario; World Council of Pontian Hellenism; Panarcadian Federation of Canada; Hellenic Macedonian Association Agios Panteleimon; AHEPA Toronto; the Greek Community of Toronto; Pan-Korinthiaki Enosis Apostolos Pavlos; Cypriot Community of Toronto; Assn Kosmas Aitolos Aitololoacarnanias Avritanias; Pan-Messinian Federation of USA and Canada; Greek Canadian Veteran Association; Pan-Pontian Federation of USA and Canada; Pan-messinian Association of Toronto; the Thessalon Federation; Brotherhood Pontion; and the Athenian Association of Toronto.

I would like also to recognize the Alpha Education Group under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Wong. I would like to recognize also the Centre for Canadian-Assyrian Relations; Assyrian Church of the East; Assyrian Aid Society; Bet Nahrain cultural group; Chaldean Church of Toronto and Hamilton; Press-center of Russian Compatriot in Canada; United Communities of Canada; Russian Heritage of Canada; Heritage Beyond Borders; Bangla Radio; the Armenian National Committee of Toronto; St. Mary Armenian church; Armenian Youth Federation; Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam; Canadians for Peace Sri Lankan Alliance; Uthayan newspaper; and Rwandan Community Abroad.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful to all these organizations for standing by this bill. In the last few days and weeks, they have worked very diligently to write letters of support to members of Parliament. They signed petitions. Because it means so much for these communities—these communities are yearning for closure. They are not here to blame anyone. They are not here to cast blame on any nationality, state etc.; they just need a simple acknowledgment of what their predecessors—and some of them are still living here

in our province—have gone through. So that is why I urge my colleagues to pass this bill unanimously.

Thank you very much, and God bless everyone.

9-1-1 EVERYWHERE IN ONTARIO
ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LE 9-1-1
PARTOUT EN ONTARIO

Madame Gélinas moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to enact the 9-1-1 Everywhere in Ontario Act, 2019 and to amend the Ombudsman Act to create an Assistant Ombudsman responsible for the oversight of 9-1-1 operations / Projet de loi 75, Loi édictant la Loi de 2019 sur le 9-1-1 partout en Ontario et modifiant la Loi sur l'ombudsman pour créer le poste d'ombudsman adjoint chargé de surveiller les activités du système 9-1-1.

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

1430

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to start by thanking members of the family of Kathryn Missen who are with us this afternoon. They include Brenda Missen, Nancy Beverly, Lynne Missen Jolly, Gavin Jolly, Meaghan Beverly and Harriet Clunie.

I would also like to thank, from the OPFFA, Dan VanderLelie as well as Mark Train. Thank you for being here.

Since I introduced Bill 75 for first reading in March of this year, I have learned an awful lot about our 911 system, and I have learned an awful lot about the failings of our 911 system. The failings have contributed to catastrophic outcomes for many families. I will share with you a few of those stories.

The first one is the story of Helena Shepherd-Snider. She is a senior who lived on Tower Bay Road by Windy Lake in my riding. On June 30, 2016, her husband was having a heart attack. She picked up the phone and dialled 911 and was shocked to hear the following: “Your emergency call cannot be completed as dialled. This service is not available. Call ‘0’ for operator assistance.”

When she called the operator, after multiple rings there were six options to choose from. Not one of them was for emergency. After she finally reached the operator, there was some confusion, as the operator was not familiar with this type of call, and she told Mrs. Snider to dial 911. The operator did not seem to understand that she could not dial 911. This took quite a bit of time to explain, when time was of the essence.

Over the past three years, Mr. and Mrs. Snider, Stan and Helena, have spent countless hours over this upsetting situation, which has caused her family undue stress and anxiety. They have contacted Bell Canada, every ministry in Ontario, every government representative who might in any way be connected to this problem, every emergency

contact, several politicians, the Ombudsman, and a letter was sent to the editors of the Sudbury Star—all of this to no avail. In fact, in every case, they were left with the feeling that they were all passing the buck. They finally reached out to me and, with them, I have been working on this file.

They end by saying, “We sincerely hope that the government in its wisdom will provide 911 emergency response services everywhere in Ontario....” And so do I, Speaker.

There are many, many people that have reached out to us to let us know about the problem of not being able to reach 911. As soon as you leave the city of Sudbury, if you take Highway 144 to go from Sudbury to Timmins—as soon as you’re out of Sudbury, 911 doesn’t work anymore. If you need 911 service for the ambulance, you need to dial 705-673-1117. For the OPP, you need to dial 1-888-310-1122. For fire, you need to dial 705-673-1542. What are the chances that any of you would remember this in the case of an emergency?

If you keep on going just a little bit further, then the numbers change. For ambulance, if you go from Cartier or Geneva Lake and drive to the watershed—the people who are from my area will know that, for us, it’s less than an hour’s drive; it doesn’t seem like a big distance; I realize that in Toronto it would be, but for us, we’re used to this—then you dial 877-351-2345 for an ambulance, the police stays the same and the fire becomes 705-235-1306. This is in Shining Tree.

If you continue to Gogama, those numbers will change again. Mattagami First Nation: new numbers again. Foleyet: new numbers again. You get the idea, Speaker. This is very difficult on everyone.

I’ve had a number of people who want this to be changed. I will talk about Mike Shantz. He is the president of Northern 911. He says, “As someone who works in a 911 emergency communication call centre, I know how important 911 calls can be. I strongly support you”—me—“in your effort to getting this important service to all of your constituents and to the entire population of the province.”

I also would like to quote from Daniel Beaupre, who is a superintendent at the Kirkland Lake Gold mine, who goes on to say, “The 911 service is the right of all individuals, and we strongly feel that this should be provided to our location.” He’s talking about the mine. And the list goes on and on.

The first part of the bill is to do away with those 1-800 numbers. We have the technology. Other provinces have done it. We teach our kids from the time they’re four years old that if something happens, dial 911. We’ve all seen the video where a little kid who can barely reach up to a phone will phone and save somebody’s life, because 911 saves lives. But 1-800-whatever-whatever brings confusion. That’s the first part of the bill.

The second part of the bill is based on an inquest that was done by the coroners. The inquest was following the deaths of Matthew Robert Humeniuk, Michael Isaac Kritz, Stephanie Joelle Bertrand and Kathryn Missen. The first

three—Matthew, Michael and Stephanie—died in my riding on Lake Wanapitei on June 30, 2013. For Kathryn Missen—she died on September 3, 2014.

The coroner's report came out in October 2018, a few months ago. The first 19 recommendations in his report are directly targeted at the provincial government. What I've done is I've taken the 19 recommendations and put them in the body of the bill so that what happened in 2014 in Casselman, a community near Ottawa, never happens again.

Kathryn Missen had 911 access. She dialled 911, but a series of problems from the call taker to the dispatch to the first responder had tragic consequences. During a severe asthma attack, she was having difficulty breathing and she could not communicate verbally to the call taker at the other end of the 911 call. Speaker, Kathryn did everything right, but the system that we rely on in an emergency failed her. Help did not arrive until two days later. It was far too late. Kathryn Missen was found deceased in her home next to her phone. We can do better, Speaker. We can learn from the recommendations from the coroners, put in place those recommendations and make sure that Kathryn's life was not lost in vain.

1440

The third part of the bill is to give the Ombudsman the right to receive complaints. The death of Kathryn was in 2014. The deaths of Matthew, Michael and Stephanie were in 2013. It took those brave families years to convince the coroners to do an inquest. They wanted a no-blame process. All they wanted were answers: What happened to their loved ones?

I have nothing against coroners. They do a good job, but there has to be an easier way for families who run into problems with the 911 system to gain answers, and that would be through the Ombudsman. So the third part of the bill gives the Ombudsman the right to take complaints against 911 and the right to look into those complaints, because right now, from Bell Canada to the call taker to the dispatcher, the police, the fire, the ambulance, the volunteers and MNR, there is no way for people to get answers, and when tragedy strikes, it doesn't look as to where it strikes.

There are stories that come from the 905. There is a very sad story of another young person with asthma who died. In Minister Mulroney's office—four members of the same family died in that tragic fire. It doesn't matter where you live, it doesn't matter who you are; I don't wish harm upon any of us, upon anybody, but tragedy will strike again. We have an opportunity to give those families who want answers an opportunity to turn the page, and this is to let the Ombudsman do an investigation for them, find answers to their questions, so that the family can grieve, the family can turn the page and things can go better.

I'm hopeful that everybody in this House will support the bill. We will have an opportunity when we vote on the bill to change things for the better. We will have an opportunity to save lives. Let's make sure we act upon it.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: As a volunteer firefighter with the county of Brant for the last 11 years, it is my sincere privilege to rise and speak to this compelling bill that shines a spotlight on the work of first responders across Ontario in communities big and small. I want to reach to my right to the honourable member of the opposition from Nickel Belt, who has taken the time to advance that conversation about emergency services in Ontario.

The people of our province can only benefit when we turn our attention to such important matters as these in this House. If I may, Madam Speaker, honestly, private members' bills should not be necessary to fix problems like this across the province of Ontario, and yet here we are.

Ours is a government that honours, appreciates and stands up for our first responders and for the people of Ontario, the police officers and firefighters, paramedics and emergency personnel who are there when nothing else matters. Our communities rely on 911 services to keep the people of Ontario safe, which is why our government is committed to building the emergency communications infrastructure needed to enable quick and effective responses in emergency situations.

Emergencies obviously can strike any time and anywhere, and our government is partnering with our communities, our first responders and emergency personnel to ensure everyone in Ontario can live with the same expectation of safety. That's why I think this is such a good private member's bill.

The people of Ontario should expect a team of dedicated and coordinated emergency responders to be there when they need them, when their lives or their homes or their loved ones are at risk. In those moments, people need to know their families and friends are in the capable and professional hands of Ontario's first responders. When a matter of moments can mean the difference between a successful rescue and a tragedy, we know that every second counts. They consider it in that magic window of 10 minutes, where with every minute that goes by, you lose by 10% the chance of making a recovery.

The professional men and women who drive the success of 911 voice services are often unsung heroes. The dispatchers often also suffer from PTSD. They don't always get the credit they should. They don't participate in many photo ops, but everyone who has dialled 911 in a moment when their family or friends were in crisis knows how valuable their work is, how reassuring their professionalism and empathy can be and how central they are to the success of our emergency response system. Everyone in Ontario should be able to easily access that. These professionals are a true lifeline, Madam Speaker.

Our government recognizes there is more that we can do to support these professionals and the people that they work to protect. We are committed to ensuring that the people of this province are safe wherever they are. Telecommunication service providers' networks are evolving and will soon offer much more than the traditional 911 voice services. In the midst of rapid technological change, we will create a world-class system in Ontario. These advances in technologies will provide new opportunities

for rural and remote regions to access vital emergency services.

Speaker, I would like to point out what our government already did in a mere matter of months to support our front-line officers and keep our communities safe. We took immediate action to keep Ontarians safe and protect communities by replacing the province's crumbling Public Safety Radio Network, which front-line and emergency responders rely on during emergencies. It's important to point out that Ontario's Public Safety Radio Network is one of the largest and most complex in North America, and yet one of the last not to comply with the North American standard. The daily outages experienced with the network compromised our front-line and emergency responders' ability to react to emergencies and put the safety of the public at risk. Speaker, this modernization project was long overdue.

Our front-line and emergency responders need to have reliable, modern tools and resources in place to do their jobs, and our government is going to make sure that this life-saving system gets under way. The Public Safety Radio Network is essential to helping front-line responders communicate with each other to provide Ontarians with vital emergency services. By replacing this aging system with state-of-the-art technology, our government is providing resources to paramedics, police officers, fire services and others to keep Ontarians safe.

Speaker, in closing, I hope this is a conversation that will continue in this House and across our province, and I know it will. Our government demonstrated that matters of public safety are a clear priority for us and the people of this province. In fact, when we speak about protecting what matters most, these are the critical front-line services that we are speaking about. Our Premier and our Solicitor General—thank you for being in the House—are tremendous advocates and supporters of our first responders, and they have shown great leadership on these matters that impact each of our communities and each of our constituents.

I'd like to once again say that it is a privilege to address this important issue and speak on behalf of the people of Brantford–Brant and my colleagues in this House. Again, I would like to reach out to the member from Nickel Belt and congratulate her for her great work on this file, and to all the people who are here to see about this too. I look forward to resolving these issues and moving forward.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Madam Speaker, good afternoon. Today, I would like to speak on Bill 75, the 9-1-1 Everywhere in Ontario Act. This bill is certainly important to me personally, as most of the people who live in my riding of Kiiwetinoong do not have access to 911 services. They deserve access to the same services as the rest of Ontario.

There is a report called A Report on Matters Related to Emergency 9-1-1 Services. It is a non-partisan report done by the CRTC. In this report, there's a map, and in yellow are all the areas that don't have 911. It's not surprising, though, that in my riding, with all the remote communities

we have, there's a lot of yellow. Community members across the Far North have stated they need access to an effective system of communication to access first responders in an emergency. A 911 in the Far North is needed.

On Saturday, I visited the community of Big Trout Lake. I did a community visit after a tragic fire. Locally, you dial a local number to access. Every community has their local number for police. But we have to understand as well that we don't have ambulance services. Our ambulance is Ornge; that's a flight. When I saw the fire as well, there was a non-functioning fire response team—a system that's not there. I believe that a standardized system is required that is consistent across communities in Ontario. How many more people need to die in Ontario because they don't have access to 911 emergency help, before we take action?

1450

I thank you for allowing me to share my comments. Again, when I'm thinking about this bill, when communities have 911 but they don't have the infrastructure in place to do it—we need more resources or more infrastructure on-reserve to be able to have 911. I just wanted to say those things very quickly. I thank you for listening. Meegwetch.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I am actually very proud to rise today in the House to speak on Bill 75. I'd like to recognize the importance of the work of my colleague from Nickel Belt, who has highlighted the crucial role of first responders, who keep people in Ontario safe. I appreciated you sharing your stories from your community and other communities of some tragic events that have happened over the years.

Our government has been clear: Our first responders have our backs and we have theirs. We rely on first responders at the most crucial times, and we recognize their commitment to service and the sacrifices they have made for our great province. In rural and urban communities, we are grateful for the bravery of our distinguished police officers, firefighters, paramedics and emergency personnel, who are the first on the scene in times of crisis.

Ontario's communities depend on our 911 system to be the first call when they most need help. Our government understands the vital role that 911 services play in keeping our province safe, and that's why we are unwavering in our commitment to building the essential communication infrastructure needed in times of emergency.

The safety and security of our province is government's most important responsibility. I am very privileged to rise today in this House and say that our government will stand shoulder to shoulder with the heroes who protect us. We have worked and we will continue to work with our partners on the front lines to respond when emergencies arise and to ensure that no matter where Ontarians live, they can feel safe and secure in their communities, knowing that their government and their emergency services are there in times of crisis.

We know that emergencies can happen any time and anywhere. Of course, no one likes to imagine they may one day be affected by an emergency, but Ontarians deserve to know that, should the need arise, our emergency personnel will be there to work with you to make things better.

Speaker, we know that the networks used by telecommunication service providers are often evolving. Soon these service providers will be able to offer so much more than traditional 911 services. These technological advances will undoubtedly provide new opportunities for northern, rural and remote communities to access crucial emergency services. Through disruptive technological change, Ontarians can be confident that we are committed to creating a world-class emergency response system in our province. We have a lot of work ahead of us, there is no doubt. But in a short amount of time, our government has made great strides in improving public safety.

In a matter of months, we took immediate action to replace the province's crumbling Public Safety Radio Network. Our front-line and emergency responders rely on the radio network during emergency situations, and our government launched a massive province-wide modernization project that was far too long overdue.

Our government knows that front-line and emergency responders need to have reliable, modern tools and resources in place so they can do their jobs. By replacing the aging system with state-of-the-art technology, we will provide resources to paramedics, police officers, fire services and other emergency personnel to keep Ontarians safe.

Speaker, we made life easier for rural Ontarians by cutting red tape that prevented citizens from serving as volunteer firefighters, something many of us were fighting for for years. Finally, firefighters who want to help their neighbours by acting as volunteer firefighters are protected instead of penalized.

We passed historic policing legislation that restored respect for our heroic police officers. This legislation is a key part of our promise to make Ontario safer, to stand up for victims and to hold criminals accountable for their actions. We restored fairness and respect for police. We enhanced oversight and improved governance, training and transparency. Our legislation is based on fairness and respect for the profession of policing. That is why we gave the public confidence that when they phone 911, a trained, accountable police officer will show up—something not guaranteed under the previous government's legislation.

Last fall, our government announced changes to protect police officers who attempt to save a life by delivering naloxone. We also announced two phases of our plan to help police crack down on gun violence and break up the gangs that prey on young people far too often. Our government has shown, time and time again, that we are here to make the necessary changes that keep our people safe.

In conclusion, I would like to express our government's sincere appreciation to our first responders, who are there to help when emergencies happen. I'd like to give a shout-

out to Candace in my riding and Gino, who is a paramedic. I thank all those for their services. To all of our 911 services, police, paramedics, firefighters, staff and municipalities, who work together with our government to ensure that safety is there for all Ontarians, we are thankful for their continued dedication and service to our province.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: On behalf of the residents of Timiskaming-Cochrane, it's an honour for me to be able to stand here today and talk about Bill 75, 9-1-1 Everywhere in Ontario Act. I'd like to commend the member from Nickel Belt and her staff for being so diligent on this, and I'd like to recognize the families who suffered so much because of this.

Now, 911 is successful. Everyone knows: In an emergency, dial 911. It's probably the best-known issue in the province, in North America. No one is questioning how great our first responders are, how great our police officers are; that's not the issue. That's not the issue. The issue is, in parts of this province, you can't dial 911.

It's very serious in remote parts of the province, like the member for Kiiwetinoong's riding, but there are tourists from all over the world who come to my riding, and in towns like Matachewan, Elk Lake, cottage areas all over where they have electricity, they have phones—some places even have cellphones; there are a lot of places, Speaker, where we don't have cellphones in northern Ontario. But where we have land lines, those people assume that they have the same service as the rest of the province, and quite frankly they don't.

We've heard a couple of Conservative members talk about the new radio system they're putting in, and I commend them for doing this. When it was first announced, the first thing I did—I was excited—I went to the then minister who was responsible for the system and I said, "Great. When does that fix the 911 problem?" And I was not assured that that was going to fix the 911 problem. So this system is great, I guess, but there is no guarantee that this system is going to fix it.

1500

Going to the moon is hard. But having people across Ontario have the same service—basically 911—that's pretty crucial. This has got nothing to do with what the past government has done or what the future government will do; this has got something to do with a common piece of knowledge that every person in this province knows from the time they can understand language: If you have an emergency, you dial 911.

There are large parts of this province where you try and it doesn't happen. People have died and will continue to die, despite the fantastic services we have, if we don't fix it. We need to pass this bill today and we need to make sure it's law and it actually is enacted. Thank you.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I too want to thank the member from Nickel Belt, who has done some fantastic work, along with her staff. I want to acknowledge the families

that are here on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin, many of whom don't have 911 service.

Those who came up before me talked about situations in regard to their respective areas. I want to tell you one story about a small community, an unorganized area, that went through the challenges of trying to get 911. They identified themselves as, "We want these services so we can have access to ambulance and also to fire departments and the OPP." So they went through the process. They were told by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines that they would have to get organized, so they organized themselves. They became a local services board. They had to go through a whole notice process in order to get the empowerment, in order to go through the application process in order to get the empowerment of becoming one.

Once they became empowered they were told, "Wait a sec, you can't get 911 just now because you need an operating fire department." Well, they went through a fundraising process in order to get the fire department going. But lo and behold, as they were going through that process as well, they found out that—you know what?—there's no government funding to get a fire department. They tried to look at other options: "Do we get a pumphouse? What exactly do we need in order to do this?"

As they were going through all of this frustration and all the momentum they had built up, people got frustrated because—guess what?—it costs money to do this. We're talking low-income areas. People just gave up. What did they do? They did what they're democratically entitled to do: They dissolved their local services board, and to this day they still don't have 911 services.

This is happening in a few areas of my riding. With today's technology that we have available at the tip of our fingers—we have it—we know we can do this. I look at the Solicitor General and I'm really happy that she's here listening to all this debate today.

The important part about today—we hear the good stories and we hear the fantastic words and we know that our front-line workers are there and emergency staff are there. Unfortunately, the family had to come here for this, but I'm really happy that you're here. But once we leave from here today and we have that good-sense feeling and we feel like we're going to do something good because all the good words were said from all sides of this House, we can't let this collect dust on a shelf. We have to take action. We have to mobilize and we have to take the steps and say, "This is not just a good idea. We're going to implement this idea."

I look to my friend across the way to make sure that we take this off the shelf and we take the next step to making sure that we have safer communities.

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

Mr. Kevin Yarde: It's an absolute pleasure to rise today to speak in support of this very important bill. I thank the member from Nickel Belt and her initiative to address this important issue.

As a resident of the GTA, it is second nature for me to pick up the phone and dial 911 in case of an emergency.

I'm proud to say that we have some of the finest folks with the fire, paramedic and police services that are available to help us in our need with just a single call. When I learned that this is not a standard service across the province, I was quite shocked, Madam Speaker.

First of all, it is absurd to me that we have such a great service available to us in southern Ontario and it's lacking to people in northern Ontario. Everyone in Ontario should be able to dial 911 and seek help in an emergency. The fact that there's a lack of 911 infrastructure and service in northern Ontario means tragic and unnecessary deaths and is saddening. Imagine a situation where you or your loved one needs help in an emergency but are unable to access or contact emergency services.

I also want to take a moment to speak to this bill from the perspective of our first responders. Imagine being a first responder and receiving a call for help and not being able to help, due to the deficiencies of 911. That must be a devastating feeling for these first responders.

This is a traumatic event that no first responder should have to experience. We should strive to arm our first responders with the best tools, so they can do their job effectively and minimize the impacts of traumatic events on their mental health that can lead to PTSD.

In conclusion, I just want to state that no one in Ontario should suffer or die because of a lack of 911 service. People in northern Ontario deserve better. I'm hoping that all my colleagues in this House will join me today in voting in favour of this bill, to ensure that they get better.

I also want to thank the family members who are here today. I'm sorry you had to be here for this reason, but you're here hoping to make a change so that other families don't have to go through what you went through.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Imagine that your 82-year-old husband is having a heart attack. You dial 911 and you get this: "Your emergency call cannot be completed as dialed. This service is not available. Call '0' for operator assistance." In shock and disbelief, you hang up, you dial "0," and the operator does not know what to do and tells you to dial 911.

Imagine that you are a mine superintendent responsible for hundreds of workers, many contractors who come on your site for a few days at a time. You need to teach each and every one of those workers three different 1-800 numbers in case of an emergency on this work site.

Imagine that your son is critically injured, and your emergency plan is to run for half a kilometre to the nearest place where you can dial 911.

Imagine that you are an elderly man with a heart condition. You had a heart attack in 2012. You had a stent put in during an angiogram. You take blood-thinner medication daily. You know that you do not have 911. So you tape the three emergency 1-800 numbers all over your house, because if one of your grandkids finds you collapsed on the ground someday, they will know not to dial 911 but to dial one of those 1-800 numbers.

Imagine that you are one of the two million Ontarians who have asthma and, like Kathryn Missen did, you dial for help but cannot speak.

There are three parts to the bill: Bring 911 everywhere; implement the coroner's recommendations, one of them being having a protocol for people who dial 911 but cannot speak; and, last, give the Ombudsman the responsibility to investigate complaints against the 911 system.

Tragedy does not discriminate. If you are shocked that many areas of Ontario do not have 911, it is a sure sign that this bill is overdue. I hope that all parties come together so that this afternoon, we can start to save lives.

END THE PUBLIC FUNDING
OF PARTISAN GOVERNMENT
ADVERTISING ACT, 2019
LOI DE 2019 VISANT À METTRE FIN
AU FINANCEMENT PUBLIC
DE LA PUBLICITÉ
GOUVERNEMENTALE PARTISANE

Mr. Natyshak moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 101, An Act to amend the Government Advertising Act, 2004 / Projet de loi 101, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2004 sur la publicité gouvernementale.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I thank the colleagues who have joined me in the House today. I promise you this will be the most fun that you can have on a Thursday afternoon in the time that we have remaining.

1510

Speaker, this is a bill that I've been excited to debate since I tabled it a couple of weeks ago, and it's one that has a lot of merit. It's that old adage that if there's a good idea, it doesn't really matter who takes the credit for it. I will, in fact, give the credit to our current Solicitor General, the member from Dufferin-Caledon, because she was the one in 2017 who initially crafted this bill out of the need to quell the previous government's use of government advertising to promote their own message and their own brand. We saw it very clearly during that time, Speaker. We saw messaging going out, in fact, even on hydro bills. I think that was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Shortly after that, with a lot of uproar from the public and members of this chamber, Ms. Jones crafted that bill, and it received support. New Democrats supported it because it was a good idea. It is our job in here to ensure that taxpayer-funded advertising is not of a partisan nature and that it delivers information. I would hope that this government continues at this time to see the merit, because I believe that we need this now more than ever, given the actions of this current government.

It's quite apparent that without the rules being in place, without the changes that this bill proposes, those types of

circumventions of the current rules will continue to happen. Why do I say that, Speaker? Because we now have this entity floating around Queen's Park and outside the bubble of Queen's Park called Ontario News Now. It's a government-directed news network. You would almost think it was a legitimate news network. Unfortunately, it is not. It is a vehicle of propaganda that the government has brought forward to follow the Premier and various ministers around and to promote their own singular message.

It's really a weird thing, Speaker. It has raised the alarms of free speech advocates and taxpayer protection advocates to say, "What is this? Is this actually legitimate? Is this delivering information to taxpayers, or is it simply delivering the message that the government wants people to hear?" That isn't a good use of public dollars. It's something that we, as New Democrats, think should be looked at, and that's what this bill does. It essentially returns to what was normal practice, where the Auditor General would have oversight on public advertising. The Auditor General would take a look and see whether it fits the parameters of something that the public requires and the public needs, and deservedly should be under public costing and paid for by the public, or something that is explicitly partisan and overtly partisan.

When we see stickers on gas pumps that regurgitate the messaging from this government, that's obviously something that we have to raise some alarms around. When we see billboards at border crossings that have no functional effect other than promoting a tag line from the Premier's campaign, that's something we have to actually call out. When we see licence plate logos, again, with campaign rhetoric on them, that's something not only that New Democrats have to call out, but you're hearing it from the general public each and every day. That's not a correct use of taxpayer dollars, and we can do better, and this bill will allow us to do better.

If the Conservatives were actually the defenders of taxpayer dollars, they would not only pass this bill—and I hope they do—but they would put this bill on a rocket ship and make sure it is law as soon as possible.

I want to let them know something, Speaker, a little secret: They're not going to be the government forever. In fact, we think it's only a matter of time. Looking at the polls today, it's only about three years and a couple of days.

I would say the Liberals—if we had some Liberals who were able to debate on this bill. In retrospect, Speaker—and I've been here for eight years—the Liberals, I guess, probably are sad that they didn't pass this bill, are sad today that they're not standing or sitting in a House that has these protections. Because at that time, the arrogance was running quite high with the Liberals, and they thought that they were going to be the perennial government here forever, but things change. But what should stay the same is that every member in this House should always have the taxpayers' dollars at heart and ensure that they are protected.

During the debate under the previous incarnation of this bill, we were able to add some of our comments to it, and

I want to read some of the best comments I've heard. They're actually from the initiator of the bill, the member from Dufferin–Caledon. She says, "It's very telling when you actually compare what the government ads are saying and what the Liberal Party is walking around in terms of brochures. Methinks the similarities are a little too close. If we had the AG's oversight, as we had for almost 10 years, this would not be happening. It's inappropriate, people see through it, and it must stop." Speaker, I could not agree more with those wise, wise words.

Let me give you another one: "These ads don't pass the smell test. Ontarians want the government to respect their tax dollars, not prop up the Liberal Party." My goodness, this could be coming out of my mouth. I mean, this is what I believe. This is what we all believe. But in fact, it's the member from Dufferin–Caledon who gave us that sage advice.

Here's one from the member from Leeds–Grenville. He was a wonderful opposition member at that time and quite wise. He says, "We need to give the veto power on advertising back to the Auditor General. It's the only way to ensure"—

Interjections.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you. "It's the only way to ensure that the next time Premier Wynne does a partisan ad blitz, it will be the Liberal Party of Ontario, not the taxpayers, that will pick up the tab." Well, the member from Leeds–Grenville, I want to commend him on that advice that he gave us. It was wise, it was sage. It is as true now as it was then.

There was another member, the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. He says, "My constituents in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound are those people, and they're offended. They're offended that the Ontario Liberals believe they can get away with spending millions of people's hard-earned money to tell them how wonderful the Liberal Party is"—again, such wisdom coming out of, then, the opposition party. I hope to hear those types of words coming out of the members of the government today, because we are seeing a government that is taking advantage of that gap, that loophole that exists in the rules, and one that they've already committed and promised they would change. If they put their mouths where the people's money is, or put the money where the people's—whatever. I don't know.

Interjection: You got it right the first time.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I got it right the first time. If they do the right thing and show the leadership that people expect in here, we can all be better served, and I think taxpayers would all be better served.

It's something that people are asking for. The level of cynicism in politics these days is at a fever pitch. I think that by moving this bill forward and making it law, we can start to lower the temperature on people's disappointment with all levels of government, but certainly let's start here. What they're seeing when they walk around and they see stickers on gas pumps, and bumper sticker logos—I know the Premier has a penchant for stickers. That was his previous career: He was a sticker- and label-maker. We

just think that if he's about to do that, or if this government thinks that's the appropriate action, they should pass it through the Auditor General. Put it to an impartial third party's set of eyes, someone who's respected, someone who's valued, someone who knows the rule of law and knows what actually protects taxpayers in this province.

It would be reasonable to think that any government worth its salt could promote their ideas through policy and not through propaganda. Unfortunately, as New Democrats—the general public out there, what they're seeing is exactly that: an exercise in propaganda and messaging unlike what we've ever heard before.

Speaker, there's so much money that could be saved. There are protections that could be afforded to the taxpayers here, and it's built into this bill. I want to thank, again, the Solicitor General for the hard work she did. I want to thank all of those members who had previously commented on and put their support behind that bill.

Unfortunately, at that time, if you can imagine, the current Liberals did not want to see this bill pass. They were afraid of this bill because they understood that if they were allowed that little loophole, they could then use taxpayers' dollars, the people's money, to get their messaging out. It's completely wrong. It was wrong then, it is wrong now, and it's something that New Democrats are happy to take up the challenge on, on behalf of the taxpayers, and let people know that there's a little bit more protection in this House for their hard-earned dollars.

1520

My hope is that every member in this House votes unanimously and supports this bill. I want to specifically encourage the new members, the backbenchers, who have an opportunity to use some influence here. This one is really easy. This one should have total support. There's no reason why you can't support it, because, in fact, it was your bill at a point in time. It is your baby, and I'm happy to give you a second chance at bat with this thing, to get it through this House and to make sure that it becomes a measure of law. If you're sincere about protecting taxpayer dollars and you're sincere about the abhorrent use of taxpayer dollars to promote partisan messaging and advertising, then you'll stand, you'll vote and you will do everything that you can to ensure that this becomes law in as quick a time as possible.

We've seen that happen in this House, Speaker. We know that the government has all the tools and levers to make sure that bills become law like that. We hope that this is one that they see fit and one that receives a ringing endorsement. I look forward to hearing those ringing endorsements from the members of the government.

I thank you so much, Speaker. For the attention of my colleagues, thank you very much.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Be seated, please. Order, please.

Further debate? The member for Willowdale.

Mr. Stan Cho: Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to rise today in the House. The member opposite mentioned the backbenchers here. I prefer to call

this “mezzanine centre court seating.” Call it a difference of semantics.

But I do want to say that I really did like what the member opposite said about respecting the taxpayers’ dollars, taking the taxpayers’ dollars to heart. I look forward to referencing that in future debate, because that is really what it’s about for me here. What else it’s about for me here is bringing down the cost of living for the people of Ontario and to better the lives of Ontarians. I really think that that’s a common goal that we all have here. I would love to see us stick to that—maybe we disagree on how to get there, but to stick to that central message and to put away political games. That’s really what I would love to see here.

The members opposite should know that our government has already committed to explore options to review government advertising, so my comments here will be very brief. All I want to get across and say is that unlike the previous government, this government will absolutely ensure that the citizens of Ontario are kept informed on government initiatives while protecting their hard-earned tax dollars, taking their tax dollars to heart.

I do refer the members—and I hope all the members in this House, including the members opposite, have read the government’s official response to the 2018 Auditor General’s report. On page 717, it reads, “The government will ... explore options for the review of government advertising.... In support of this priority, the government will continually review advertising paid for by the government of Ontario to ensure it is delivered in the most efficient and effective manner, and delivers” the best value for money to the taxpayer.

So, Madam Speaker, to be perfectly clear, this government has already committed to exploring options for the review of government advertising. We are in the process of exploring those options right now.

I will conclude there and say thank you for your comments today, and thank you for the opportunity to speak in the House. Go, Raptors!

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It’s an honour to speak on this bill, Bill 101, the End the Public Funding of Partisan Government Advertising Act. I’d like to commend the member for actually helping the current government and taking one of their bills, because it was the Solicitor General’s, who was then in opposition, and she put forward a really good bill. I sat on a few committees with the current Solicitor General. We do not always agree—we certainly don’t—but I respect her ability to look at legislation, and this is a good, good piece of legislation.

Basically what the legislation says, in a nutshell, is that it would give the Auditor General the ability to look at government advertising and make sure that it actually provided a public service, not a political service. That’s basically what this bill is about. It’s a good bill.

I would also like to quote the current Solicitor General. In a statement to the Toronto Star regarding her bill—and it was regarding the last government—she said, “If the

Liberal party wants to spend money promoting their policies, have at it. But this is taxpayers’ money that should be going to important issues.” I fully agree: If the Conservative Party wants to have someone posing as a reporter and asking the Premier questions, and it’s saying, “Paid for by the Conservative Party,” have at it.

But that is not what Ontario News Now is doing. Ontario News Now is posing as a legitimate news service that never asks a tough question and that is being paid for by the taxpayers of Ontario. So, the Auditor General should have the ability to look at Ontario News Now and make a ruling.

The previous member just said that the government is making strides—and it said, on something like page 717, that the government is looking at what the government is doing. That’s this whole issue: It shouldn’t be the government looking at the government. It should be an independent body looking at the government. We have one, a strong one: the Auditor General. I fully agree with the now-Solicitor General in her opinion of the past. We should unanimously pass this bill. It makes government better for all of us.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise to speak today on Bill 101, An Act to amend the Government Advertising Act.

For a long time, Greens have been opposed to citizens paying for government-sponsored partisan ads with their tax dollars. It was wrong when the Liberals were in power, it’s wrong when the Conservatives are in power, and it will be wrong someday when the Greens are in power. So I encourage all members of this House to vote in favour of restoring the Auditor General’s oversight of government advertising. I supported this bill when I was outside the Legislature and the current Solicitor General was a member of the opposition and she put forward the bill, and I support it now that the member from Essex has reintroduced it.

I would like to remind members of this House and those watching from home that in 2015, the previous government removed the Auditor General’s ability to review and approve government advertising. The member from Dufferin–Caledon first introduced a bill to reverse this in 2017, and like some of the other members, I’d like to quote this member. Back then, the member said, “It is shameful that this government refuses to respect taxpayer dollars and restore the Auditor General’s authority to review and approve government advertising.”

I wonder if this member and this member’s colleagues feel the same way about their own government today, especially since the current Conservative government has put this kind of advertising on steroids with the partisan funding of advertising and moving it into grey areas such as taxpayer funding of the Premier’s propaganda network—oh, I mean Ontario News Now—and their latest requirement forcing gas stations to display government-mandated stickers, with the threat of a \$10,000-a-day fine.

I find it unbelievable that any government in a free society with free markets and that supposedly believes in

free speech would require a privately owned business to display government propaganda, at the risk of a fine. No wonder organizations as diverse as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association have all denounced the government stickers. The CCLA has even gone so far as to warn the government that it's a violation of charter rights.

A little over a year ago, the member from Dufferin–Caledon reintroduced her bill for the second time. I'd like to quote a news release that accompanied the reintroduction of the bill: "This is just another example of the Wynne Liberals not respecting taxpayers," the member said.

The member went on to say, "The PC Party has committed to restoring Auditor General oversight of government advertising, but last time the Liberals voted" it down. "Reintroducing this important legislation is a second chance for the Liberals to do the right thing and ensure that taxpayer dollars are respected and ensure oversight is" restored "to the Auditor General." I'd like to end the quote there.

1530

I hope the members opposite still agree with this quote. I hope the members opposite will vote in favour of Bill 101. I hope the members opposite avoid saying one thing in opposition and another thing when they form government. Surely, the members opposite want to avoid disrespecting the taxpayers.

Speaker, I believe deeply in democracy. I will continue to work hard to maintain the integrity of our democracy. That's why I continue to speak out against cash-for-access fundraising events. That's why I even introduced a private member's bill to place restrictions on those events. And that's why I will continue to fight against government-funded partisan advertising—because it also undermines the integrity of our democracy, it undermines trust in government and it sows the seeds of cynicism.

I believe everyone in this House, regardless of party or independent affiliation, has a responsibility to maintain the integrity of our democracy. That is why I want to thank the member from Essex for bringing this bill forward, and why I will be reaching across party lines to vote in support of Bill 101.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm very pleased to be able to add my comments and congratulations to the member from Essex for this excellent bill, on behalf of my constituents in the great riding of Davenport. I appreciate that this is a reintroduction of a bill put forward previously by the now Solicitor General, and I'm so hopeful that the now government will see their way to endorsing this bill.

Madam Speaker, Ontarians deserve a government that uses public money to fund things families need, like education and health care, not self-serving ads that further their political aims. Under the previous government, as has already been noted, we saw a gutting of the rules around government advertising, removing the Auditor General's power to veto ads that use public money to promote the government of the day.

I seem to recall that at the time, the government of the day, the Liberals, were spinning this notion that their government ads were caught up in the red tape of this review process. I remember they focused on things like a red apple in an ad for education or something and how that was getting caught up. I think we can all agree, yes, that would be a bit silly. But that's not what this was about.

What they did was water down the ability of the Auditor General to investigate ads for factual accuracy, context and tone, and to determine, ultimately, if an ad was partisan. There were many ways they could have gone a different route. For example, they could have simply provided more clarity and clearer definitions. Instead, they chose to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Accountability and transparency: These are measures put in place not to make life difficult for governments; this is about providing a measure of confidence for the people of Ontario that the government isn't misusing the public dollars. With this government, they may have reason for concern; others have already noted that.

I want to look for a moment at the 300% cost overrun for the so-called education consultation that the government undertook in the fall. We now have learned that the company they hired to do that—really, a public relations company—still has an open contract, presumably to continue to sell whatever was already hatched up in the backrooms while this so-called consultation was going on. That's creative, I would say, on the part of the government but not, perhaps, the best use of public dollars.

Speaker, I am very, very happy to support this legislation. I think if we pass this legislation, we can all hold our heads high in our constituencies and feel confident that we have served their best interests.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour for me to rise today and speak in support of Bill 101, from the member for Essex. This is an excellent piece of legislation and shows what governments should do. We're working across the floor with one another, because this piece of legislation was first brought forward twice by the now Solicitor General. This is what governments should do.

I also wanted to return to my former role as a teacher and discuss a little bit of media literacy. It's easy for a teacher to give children facts, but it's a little more difficult to lead out someone's conscience. That's my goal today, Speaker: to try to get the government to think about their actions.

Slogans are great. They allow people to look at a few words and unpack a variety of ideas. But if someone relies on slogans too much, then you would often say that they are devoid of actual substance. Furthermore, when we think about people who will describe themselves—when ever someone describes themselves as having integrity, doesn't that make your eyes roll? Doesn't that make you really wonder about what that person is actually trying to sell you?

I also wanted to bring up my father in this House today. My father was a newspaper columnist, as some of you may

know. He had a chance to interview some of the world's greatest sports heroes. He attended almost every single Olympic Games. His favourite sport of all, though, was boxing. He loved the pure, raw athleticism, as well as the mental tenacity necessary to be a champion in that sport. He knew a lot of tough people, but you know what, Speaker? The toughest ones never described themselves as tough. They didn't have to. They let their record speak for itself. People who have to puff themselves up, people who have to speak loudly about how wonderful they are—well, they're trying to sell you a false bill of goods.

To the government: Make changes during your mandate, as is your purview. Spoiler alert: You're a majority government. You get to do more or less what you want. You should also have the backbone and the fortitude to be able to stand on that as your record and not have to use taxpayer dollars in order to pat yourself on the back. That's embarrassing. Invest in education. Invest in health care. Do the right thing.

I'd like to congratulate the member from Essex. He did a wonderful job of presenting this bill, pointing out how the Liberals used hydro bills and the current government is using Ontario News Now, licence plates and more.

Do the right thing, government. Stand on your own record. Have your own backbone. You shouldn't need to use taxpayer dollars to make yourselves feel better.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a real pleasure to rise in support of this bill from my colleague the member for Essex. What can I say, Speaker? This is a great bill.

For those who have been around for a little bit of time, this is Groundhog Day, right? I went back and I read my notes when we first debated this bill, and I was so good. I urge all of you to read Hansard, because I just nailed it. But having said that, I wasn't as good as the Conservative opposition. They were so much better than me.

Mr. John Vanthof: They were fantastic. On this one, they were fantastic.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Man, the language they used, it was poetry. It was Shakespeare in the Legislature; that's what it was.

For those who were here, it's a lot like Groundhog Day. It's Punxsutawney Phil, not Warton Willie, but it's still the same thing going on: this government looking after itself, making sure that it will be able to put whatever ads it wants on whatever medium it wants, to praise itself to the heavens—with the hard-earned money that people actually put into making sure they have schools that function and hospitals that don't have people in the hallways. That's what people want. They don't want government spending their money on advertising to praise itself.

The only speaker we've had so far is the member from Willowdale, who I have a lot of respect for. He was given a tough job. He did his best. But I have to say that my sense, my intuition—and maybe one of the other members can correct me on this—is the government may not support this really good bill from its current Solicitor General. It could be that they won't do it, and it would be

the height of something. Now, I don't know what it would be the height of—maybe, Speaker, you can think of a word that I can't say here. But I think it would be the height of something to ignore a bill that was so powerfully put forward by the Solicitor General in her time. She was fabulous. I have nothing but praise for her performance as a member of the opposition.

1540

Speaker, the member didn't just bring the bill forward; she brought it back again in the spring of 2018—twice. She put out a press release, and I have to read it because, again, it was poetry. It is undervalued and it should be taught in school:

“The PC Party has committed to restoring Auditor General oversight of government advertising, but last time the Liberals voted down this legislation. Reintroducing this important legislation is a second chance for the Liberals to do the right thing and ensure that taxpayer dollars are respected and ensure oversight is to the Auditor General,” said Jones.”

Man, it's so good, so good. I'm hoping the House leader will go with it. You have to be moved by those words, House leader. You have to feel—

Hon. Todd Smith: Poetry in motion.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, you are going to vote for this, because you can't resist. It's this inexorable draw into supporting the bill from my colleague the member for Essex, a brilliant man who knows how to filch a piece of legislation, cross out the old name, put his name on it and whack it down on the table and say, “Yes, that's what we're going to do.”

Speaker, I've run out of time, and there's so much good material here. I'm really sorry. If I had another half hour, I would go through it, because I know you would all find it tremendously educational.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Be seated, please. Further debate? Further debate?

Back to the member for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, I'm blushing a little bit here. I haven't been so highly feted, I think, in my life, and I wish I could take credit for it. But I have to give credit to the wisdom of the Solicitor General when she was in opposition. It seemed like they had a conscience that was laser-focused and clearly dedicated to protecting taxpayers' dollars, and I hope that that conscience still remains to this day and I hope that the members of the Conservative Party, the government right now, also believe that and are following the proud history of the PCs as opposition members. I would like to see them back in opposition some day soon, as well.

Speaker, I want to thank the members from Willowdale, Timiskaming-Cochrane, Guelph, Davenport, London North Centre, and of course my colleague from Toronto-Danforth. Did I not tell you that was going to be the funnest afternoon you could have on a Thursday here at Queen's Park?

Speaker, I say that in jest, but this is a serious issue. It is one that we are using because it was a good idea. We

think that you have the ability. We hope that you have the political will to do this. Don't just do it because we put the pressure on you; do it because it's the right thing. In all fairness, do it because it's the right thing to protect taxpayers. They will see this. In your constituencies, the ones that you're speaking to, the ones that are taxpayer-minded and looking for value for those dollars, they'll see if you let this thing languish on the order paper. They'll see it, for sure, because all of us New Democrats, as opposition, will remind them every day that you're not protecting their hard-earned taxpayer dollars and you continue to abuse partisan advertising under the current regime.

You have the ability to change it. The power rests in the Auditor General. The bill is right here. It's verbatim. I haven't changed a thing. There's no rationale for you not to support it and make it law as soon as possible.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Be seated, please.

The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

GENOCIDE AWARENESS,
COMMEMORATION, PREVENTION
AND EDUCATION MONTH ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LE MOIS
DE LA SENSIBILISATION,
DE LA COMMÉMORATION,
DE LA PRÉVENTION ET DE L'ÉDUCATION
À L'ÉGARD DES GÉNOCIDES

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): We will deal first with ballot item number 67, standing in the name of Mr. Babikian.

Mr. Babikian has moved second reading of Bill 97, An Act to proclaim Genocide Awareness, Commemoration, Prevention and Education Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? That's carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House. Mr. Babikian?

Mr. Aris Babikian: I would recommend referral of the bill to the justice committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Agreed? That's carried.

9-1-1 EVERYWHERE IN ONTARIO
ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LE 9-1-1
PARTOUT EN ONTARIO

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Madame Gélinas has moved second reading of Bill 75, An Act to enact the 9-1-1 Everywhere in Ontario Act, 2019 and to amend the Ombudsman Act to create an Assistant Ombudsman responsible for the oversight of 9-1-1 operations.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? That is carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House. Madame Gélinas?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would prefer it goes to the committee for social policy, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Is it the pleasure of the House that that carries? Agreed? Agreed.

END THE PUBLIC FUNDING
OF PARTISAN GOVERNMENT
ADVERTISING ACT, 2019
LOI DE 2019 VISANT À METTRE FIN
AU FINANCEMENT PUBLIC
DE LA PUBLICITÉ
GOUVERNEMENTALE PARTISANE

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Natyshak has moved second reading of Bill 101, An Act to amend the Government Advertising Act, 2004. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? That is carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House. Mr. Natyshak?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I would like it to go to finance and economic affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MORE HOMES, MORE CHOICE
ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 POUR PLUS DE LOGEMENTS
ET PLUS DE CHOIX

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 8, 2019, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 108, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing, other development and various other matters / Projet de loi 108, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement, les autres aménagements et d'autres questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The last time we debated the bill, Ms. Armstrong had the floor. I recognize the member for London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's always an honour to speak in this House on behalf of the constituents of London–Fanshawe, and especially, housing and affordable housing is an issue important to me. The need for more affordable housing is essential to my constituents, to my riding, but also, of course, to the rest of Ontario. We

question whether this bill will create affordable housing that the people and families of Ontario desperately need in this province.

This bill vastly amends 15 acts, including but not limited to: the Conservation Authorities Act, Endangered Species Act, Environmental Protection Act, the Labour Relations Act, Ontario Water Resources Act and the Ontario Heritage Act. These regulations were put in place to safeguard our environment, our health and our history, and now they are being scrapped under the guise of affordable housing. Like many of the explanations given by this government on legislation that's come forth in this House, we have doubts that the intent of this bill will actually fulfill the outcome of what the government proposes it will do.

From listening to my constituents and what they've experienced in housing, it will make it harder, not easier, for younger families to afford a house. It will definitely not allow the working poor in our community to be able to attain housing, but it will make it easier for the government's developer friends to get rich off massive development. Speaker, a connection that I want to talk about is that in London, we have a housing crisis where affordability is out of control. Abe Oudshoorn of the London Homeless Coalition said it "may make it easier to build and buy homes, but won't necessarily address climbing prices that are out of reach for many Londoners."

He continued: "'For helping folks get out of shelter, helping folks find that permanent home, we need a specific focus on affordability, specific tools to create affordable units, not just more units,' he said. 'This strategy is just the government hoping that stock will create more affordability.'"

Speaker, the vacancy rate in 2008 in London was 2.1%, up from an 18-year low of 1.8% in 2017. Rent on a two-bedroom apartment averages more than \$1,080, and housing prices continue to climb. As well, more than 4,000 are on a wait-list for rent-geared-to-income units, with thousands of others looking for modest rents.

1550

In my constituency office of London-Fanshawe, our office estimates that 98% of the housing crisis casework that we get are also people who happen to be on social assistance. London has seen unprecedented development in the last 10 years, but that has not helped our housing crisis one bit. It is not enough to simply encourage development that doesn't directly affect affordable housing issues.

In January of 2019, the city of London, using data from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., issued a report that described a shocking reality for many families dealing with housing affordability. Nearly one in six London families are struggling to pay their rent or mortgage and are considered to be house-poor. The report suggests that 14% of all London households are considered house poor, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their household income on shelter. For those considered house poor, the average shelter-to-income ratio for homeowners in London before taxes is 54%, while renters in that category

spend 49%. It's an ongoing problem in London, and it's an ongoing problem in this province.

What needs to happen is for city planners, public participation, politicians and the building community to come together to create a solution that works for everyone, not just for rich landlords and developers. We need to look at new models for development and recognize the situations that young families, millennials and seniors are currently living in.

The housing crisis is affecting everybody. This government needs to do a better job finding solutions that benefit everyone, from people working in all income levels, to seniors, to low-income earners, to people leaving abusive relationships, to people on ODSP and OW. We need to do more. I'm not sure that this bill will produce the affordable housing that this government claims, but it will certainly help the rich friends of this Ford government profit from development.

On that note, I would like to share my time with the member from Spadina-Fort York.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Does the member from Spadina-Fort York know that? He does. I recognize the member from Spadina-Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for sharing the time and allowing me to speak on this bill.

I have two concerns with this bill. We have two major problems with housing in this province. One is homelessness and the other is affordability, and this bill doesn't address either of those. There are 12,000 people who sleep on the street every night in this province. There's a 98% occupancy rate in the shelters in the city of Toronto every night. Depending on where the members of this Legislature stay when they're in Toronto, you may be walking around people sleeping on the sidewalk in the morning.

I've got to ask you about the priorities of this government when you give a \$127-million tax credit to the wealthiest people of this province and yet you're doing nothing to address the homelessness crisis. In fact, you're adding to the homelessness crisis.

Interjection.

Mr. Chris Glover: You cancelled the basic minimum income pilot and you cut the increase in Ontario Works. I'm sorry, the member from—

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thornhill.

Mr. Chris Glover: Sorry, Orléans?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thornhill.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thornhill. The member from Thornhill was saying—you did actually cut the Ontario Works increase. It was supposed to go up by—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Order, please. Through the Chair. Thank you.

Mr. Chris Glover: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr. Speaker: The government did cut the increase to Ontario Works. It was supposed to go up by \$20, from \$725 a month to \$745 a month. But this government felt that was too exorbitant, too extravagant for people—what would they do with \$745 a month?—so they decided that people would live on \$735. And we wonder why we have

12,000 people a night sleeping on the streets in Toronto. A lot of it has to do with this government. Instead of fixing this homelessness crisis, they're adding to it.

The other threat that this government has made—and I was at a street mission in my riding last week. The people there are deeply concerned because they serve, often, people with mental health issues. This government has said that they're going to change the definition of a disability. If they change the definition of a disability, if they make it more restrictive, it means that people will be kicked off of ODSP, the Ontario Disability Support Program, and put on Ontario Works. They will go from having support of \$1,200 a month to \$735 a month. What the workers at the street mission were saying is that that's going to drastically increase the homelessness crisis that we're facing.

The shame of this bill is that it does nothing to address homelessness. It has nothing to do with actually making sure that every person in this province has roof over their house—or a roof over their head.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Or both of them.

Mr. Chris Glover: A roof over their house? Well, a roof over the house is good, too.

The other thing about the direction of this bill is the affordability. Many, many people in this province are being priced out of either rents or purchasing a property. The ideology of the government is, "Well, if we increase the housing supply, then the prices will go down." I'll come back to that in a minute, to what's wrong with that.

What they're doing is they're increasing the power of the developers with the OMB. They're bringing back OMB-style rules so that developers will be able to overrule the planning decisions that have been made by municipalities and by communities. They're cutting funding to local projects to provide infrastructure and they're cutting the regulations around protecting heritage properties. They think that by cutting protections for heritage properties and by giving developers greater say in OMB hearings, or LPAT hearings, they're going to increase the supply of housing.

The problem with these strategies is that developers—and there are many good developers who actually want to build neighbourhoods, who want to build communities with parks and schools and recreation areas, but there are also developers who just want to go in, build a tower, maximize their profit and get out. The challenge is that with the deregulation and the lack of protection for heritage properties, what could be left is just towers or buildings without neighbourhoods. People want to live in neighbourhoods. They want to have those amenities in their areas.

I'll give you an example of where the OMB went wrong. I was a trustee in Etobicoke Centre for many years, for eight years. During that time, the community of Etobicoke Centre was fighting a development at Humbertown. They rallied and they fought that development. Doug Ford came to some of those meetings and he criticized the OMB. He said that it's not right that the OMB is able to

overrule and allow a development of the scale that was going up at Humbertown. Yet now that he's Premier, he's actually bringing back the powers of the OMB to overrule communities.

There are two more developments coming up in that area. Bexhill and St. Stevens are coming up, and the community is now being stripped of its power to fight for developments that would fit the scale of the community that they were hoping for.

The other thing about this bill is that housing prices in Toronto are being driven up by speculation, particularly in Toronto and Vancouver, where housing has become not a right, but a hotly-traded commodity with ever-increasing prices that are out of sync with local incomes and rents. The problem isn't that there aren't enough units. There are 100,000 units that are considered irregularly occupied in the GTA, according to the 2016 census. Why are they empty? Well, some are Airbnb, some are short-term rentals; that's part of it. But a big part of it is speculation. One in three homes sold in Toronto is sold having never been occupied. People buy the homes. They hang onto them for a couple of years. They think the market has peaked and then they sell. So what we are facing is, potentially, a huge speculative bubble.

The Swiss Bank, UBS, states that Toronto and Vancouver have the world's third- and fourth-largest housing bubbles. Their study, called the 2018 Global Real Estate Bubble Index, describes a Toronto real estate market driven by speculation. If they are correct, the Ford government's solution of stripping planning regulations will not only create underserved neighbourhoods, it will feed the bubble and create an even worse downturn once the bubble bursts.

I'm almost out of time. I did want to talk about solutions that have been done by the government before. The Ontario government between 1964 and 1992 built 150,000 public housing units, and yet the minister yesterday announced that the government is not in the business of building housing. When we wonder why there are 12,000 people sleeping on the streets, it's because the Conservative government of Mike Harris stopped building housing units, the Liberals never picked it up and this government says that it's not their responsibility. But I say it's the responsibility of everyone in this province to make sure that everyone—all of us—has a roof over our heads.

1600

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

Mr. Michael Parsa: Speaker, I'm happy to rise today to speak in favour of the More Homes, More Choice Act. This act takes important steps in ensuring our government continues to serve the people. Housing is often the largest financial decision one will ever make, and it is essential to get this decision right. This act fixes the housing supply mess that we inherited from the previous Liberal government by creating more selection and affordable housing options.

Ontario families have been hurt for far too long by the lack of supply and the financial unfeasibility of ownership.

According to the Ontario Real Estate Association, in March 2019, the average home price in the GTA was \$795,946, whereas the average home in Ontario was only \$594,297.

Besides addressing the supply and cost of homes, our government is committed to reducing red tape and protecting our environment.

Speaker, our government is happy to make changes to the local planning tribunal by reducing bureaucracy and the complex processes that slowed down the housing supply. Legacy case backlogs from the Ontario Municipal Board are causing undue delays. Cutting this red tape will ensure fairness at the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal.

This bill also endeavours to maintain strong environmental protection standards, including those for endangered species. This bill shows that we can protect the environment while building more homes.

Our government is committed to making life in Ontario more affordable, and I'm thrilled to be here to help deliver on this commitment. I want to thank the minister and his hard-working parliamentary assistant for all the work they did to deliver on this bill, and I certainly hope that it passes.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's a pleasure to respond to the comments made by the member from London—Fanshawe and my colleague from Spadina—Fort York. It was really great for the member from London—Fanshawe to share the experiences of the housing crisis in London.

For many of you who don't know, I actually had the great opportunity to live in London for about four or five years while my husband completed his PhD at Western University. We loved the Forest City and we still consider it a second home in many ways. But the interesting thing about our time that we lived in London is that in the four years we lived there, we lived in three homes because the lack of affordable housing and the lack of tenant protections in this province really left us high and dry in a lot of ways.

We ended up having to leave our second home there because we were evicted for the personal use of the landlord. We had no real recourse to be able to stay in that home, and we loved it. It was a split duplex. We had a senior woman who lived in the front half of the house, and her name was Myrtle. I still remember the first day we met Myrtle. She came and introduced herself and she said, "Hi. My name is Myrtle. It rhymes with turtle but with an M." I'll never forget that. Myrtle was the greatest. Myrtle, if you're watching, I love you. She also brought us banana bread all the time.

It speaks more to the point that a housing crisis is more than a roof over your head. It makes it difficult for young families, especially, to establish a sense of community when you're being re-novicted and uprooted from your home and having to move to different neighbourhoods every few years. In our four years in London, I lived in three different electoral districts. It means I've had the pleasure now of living in London West, London—

Fanshawe and London North Centre, all NDP colleagues. I've proudly called all of your ridings home for very brief periods of time.

The sense of community you build around yourself when you have a home is so important. When we don't have protections for tenants, we deny tenants the ability to establish strong foundations where they can grow their families, grow their community and contribute to the fabric of their neighbourhoods. I think it's shameful that this government isn't doing more to protect tenants.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: It's a pleasure and an honour to rise today to speak to this important piece of legislation. I'm pleased to sit right next to the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. She has worked very hard on this bill, so thank you for that.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is going to bring a number of positive amendments to how everything works. For example, the proposed changes are going to help increase housing options for the people of Ontario and make the up-front costs of building housing more predictable. This would encourage the development of new apartments and affordable housing, allowing development charges for rental housing and not-for-profit housing to be paid over a five-year period instead of up front.

This is a big deal, because I know that in my riding of Carleton there is a big lack of affordable housing. We desperately need more affordable housing there—not just for young families, but also for seniors and for people from all walks of life.

With the past policies of the previous government, things have become so unaffordable in Ontario that people can't even afford to buy homes anymore. It shouldn't be like that. When my parents came to this country 30 years ago, this was the land of opportunity. They worked hard, they saved their money, they played by the rules, and they were able to afford to buy a house. But these days, more and more millennials—people my age—are just going to be renting for the rest of their lives because they will never get to a point where they can afford to buy a home, because of the disastrous policies of the previous government. This bill will help rectify that. This bill will help give people in my generation and future generations a chance to be able to buy their dream home and a chance to be able to work hard and save money and get that affordable housing that they so desperately need.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to support this bill, and I hope that my colleagues on the other side of the House will do so as well.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: I do encourage the member opposite to read the BILD report. It's an independent, third-party report that looks at the construction of homes within the region and whether they're in keeping with immigration levels. What this report found is that within the actual 416 we are building more homes and more condos than are needed to tackle the increase in the population coming in. It is not just about supply.

This bill, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019, does nothing to make housing affordable—nothing. What it does is, it helps developers. It helps developers by delaying and reducing development charges that go to building the kind of infrastructure that makes development and intensification palatable. We're talking about libraries. We're talking about sewage systems. We're talking about transit operations costs. We're talking about daycare facilities. It should include schools. This bill reduces that amount, and that's a shame.

This bill also moves us back from the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal process—you're keeping the same name; maybe the government is trying to confuse people. I don't know. But the reality is, it's going back to the OMB process, which is deeply concerning because it does mean that the city, elected officials, local residents' associations and people who have reasonable concerns have very little influence over the planning process—and not only that; from our reading, it means that developers can appeal to the OMB, but residents' associations and other groups cannot. So accessing the OMB is something developers can do, but not everyone else, and that's a real shame.

But the biggest shame of all is that it does nothing to actually make homes affordable for all the people in Ontario who rent—nothing to do with illegal evictions—nothing at all. You're gutting inclusionary zoning from all new builds, which would actually tackle the affordable housing—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you.

We'll return to the member from London—Fanshawe to sum up what she just heard in questions and comments.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I thank all my colleagues who made some questions and comments.

To the rental piece that people are talking about: In addition to the housing crisis here and across the province, the government has proceeded to get rid of rent controls. That was a piece to make sure people who have challenges around income are able to afford those rents. And it looks like they're continuing to eliminate tenant protections, attempting to bring more landlords into the market.

When we look at what's happening with previous legislation that actually overlaps into people's lives, this Ontario government has slashed legal aid by \$133 million, retroactively to April 1, with additional cuts over the next three years. What legal aid clinics do is, they help people who can't afford legal representation. Tenants who are being evicted seek legal aid, and they're not going to have that access.

I talked about an example that happened in my constituency office—and I'm sure throughout Ontario and others. A landlord approached tenants to sign an agreement and said, "I'm going to give you this X amount of money if you move out by this date." Well, they found they couldn't find rent comparable to where they were, so they wanted to back out. But the landlord said, "No, no, no. You signed that agreement." They're now evicting them based on that agreement. They went to legal aid and they're getting representation to fight to stay in the unit they're in because that's the only rent they can afford.

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By cutting legal aid, by making policies like that, you're affecting people who are in places that they can't afford. Building development and building more new homes and more rental units, opening up the private market, isn't going to solve the affordability crisis. "Let the market dictate" is not going to help people who are low-income who can't afford the rent that's being charged for market value.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I beg to inform the House that, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

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

An Act to amend various statutes related to energy / Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'énergie.

MORE HOMES, MORE CHOICE ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 POUR PLUS DE LOGEMENTS ET PLUS DE CHOIX

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: It's always a pleasure to rise again and talk on important bills. Today we're talking about Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act. Before I start, I'd like to say that I'll be sharing my time with the member for Peterborough—Kawartha—God's country.

Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, his PA and the ministry staff for their hard work. I'm actually part of the caucus advisory team, so this bill is very important to me as well. Why? Because this will bring relief to people all across the province and their families.

I would also like to thank my staff members. I want to take the opportunity to thank my staff members Peyton and Cait for their support so that I can express my views here in the House.

Madam Speaker, I started thinking, "Well, how would I start?" So I looked at Google. I wanted to see what the definition of "home" is. As per Google, home is "the place where one lives permanently, especially as a member of a family or household." I found it too little. I think it should be that a home is really a place where one has a feeling of security, respect and love. It is a place where you're able to live, laugh and learn. This is a place where you can grow. Home gives people a sense of security and independence while also allowing them to create a family, an opportunity to grow. For a sustainable society, a home is a huge factor.

As of right now—two things which I want to touch base on. First are the young adults and new Canadians, which I

was at one point. Young adults and new Canadians at this time can't afford the prices of homes which we are having right now. That's one reason that many young adults tend to live longer with their parents or friends: because they can't pay the price of a house, or the rent. New Canadians come here with big dreams. They look at the prices; they look at the rents. There's an affordability issue. We come to a place where we want to grow, and we have to see that we can't even afford to stay.

Time and again, we talk about homelessness. I want to actually talk about something which is called hidden homelessness. Hidden homelessness is defined as people who live temporarily with others without having access to a permanent residence. The reason? Because they don't have any options. You'll be surprised; there are about 150,000 to 300,000 people in our province who have a place to live, but it's not their own. It's not even rented for themselves. It's like a hidden homelessness. It's not a permanent place for them. What does that mean? They have a lack of security. They have a lack of independence.

That is why this is an issue which is very important and needs to be fixed, because no one deserves to live without the security and the privacy of a home. It should be guaranteed that everyone is safe and has a home to come back to at the end of the day, which is not the case right now.

Let's talk about Peel. On a given day—I'm talking about April 24, 2018—there was a PiT count survey, and it was found that 922 people were homeless on that one single day. That's ridiculous. Just in the region of Peel, 50% of the respondents first experienced homelessness before the age of 25—our youth—and 40% first experienced homelessness between the ages of 25 and 54. Why?

Many times, I actually had an opportunity to go to a youth shelter, and I had an opportunity to talk to some of the youth. Something that stuck in my mind was from talking to them. They had a conflict with a parent, had a fight over a parent, and left the house. They couldn't afford to rent. What happened next? They became homeless.

Talking about new Canadians, I do remember one case. It was an engineer who came to Canada, rented a place, couldn't find a job for about six months, and used up all her money. What happened next? She became homeless.

Madam Speaker, every morning when I start from home, it takes me about an hour and 15 minutes to come here, and it takes about an hour to go back, and we have long days here. When we come here, we sit here and we talk, we debate. Why do we do this? We do this because there is a responsibility that we have.

Every time I think about the five core commitments from our party—I want to talk about two today that have stuck with me. The first one is, put more money in the people's pockets. The second one is, create jobs. Why are these two important here, in this context? Because affordability is the one issue. If they don't have a job, if a youth doesn't have a job, if new Canadians don't have a job, if Ontarians don't have a job, they don't have money, and that will lead to homelessness.

That is why I'm so proud to be part of a government, I'm so proud to be part of a team, that is investing in social

and affordable housing through our Community Housing Renewal Strategy. Our government is investing over \$1 billion—that's "1" with nine zeros—this year alone to help sustain, repair and grow community housing.

I'm happy to be part of Habitat for Humanity, and another organization, Services and Housing in the Province, or SHIP. They're doing a wonderful job.

Our government is working to build a housing system through our Community Housing Renewal Strategy as well as our Housing Supply Action Plan, so that all Ontarians can find a home that meets their needs and their budgets.

Why did this really happen? I'm just going to go back to the region of Peel. One of the reasons is because it has grown rapidly, more than other municipalities and regions. Some 39% of the people—it has gone up since 2001, and it is expected to continue to increase by 42% by 2041. Madam Speaker, if we don't do anything today, the problem is going to become bigger.

Just look at the average price. In 2005, if a house was priced at \$300,000, today it's \$722,000. That's about 138% more.

A home is not a luxury; it is a necessity. But thankfully, our government is working on it. By passing Bill 108, we can work on increasing housing supply, including rentals, which would make housing more affordable. It's demand and supply. Once we have more supply, the price is going to come down. Our plan will cut red tape, build more housing and increase choices of homes and, by doing so, the people of Ontario, where we owe the responsibility, who are struggling to find affordable homes, will see relief.

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The More Homes, More Choice Act introduces new measures across multiple ministries that will focus on five themes: speed, cost, mix, rent and innovation. What is this going to do? It will improve housing supply and affordability while protecting health and safety—and not just that—while protecting the agricultural sector and the environment as well.

Madam Speaker, finally, to summarize, I just want to say this. This is what we're doing: We want to continue to look for improvements in the development process, as well as work with municipal and federal partners to gather the data needed to drive informed decisions. We aim to provide homeowners with a user-friendly checklist so they can build legal second units, have educational material on innovative arrangements, as well as help tenants and landlords to know their rights so they can resolve their disputes. We will consider ways to enable other innovative forms of tenure, building design and partnership to help increase housing supply and attract investment.

Why are we doing this, Madam Speaker? The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has introduced this legislation to bring positive change for Ontarians, to give Ontarians what they need to grow. As I said earlier, housing is not a luxury; it is a necessary step to improve the quality of life in Ontario. If passed, Bill 108 will result

in exactly what the title says: It will provide Ontarians more homes and it will give them more choice.

I'm looking forward to working with the minister and the rest of our caucus team and the team from the other side, so that we can bring positive change to Ontario by passing Bill 108.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I recognize the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As my colleague said, one of the main things we're trying to do is we're trying to put affordable home ownership back into the reach of Ontario families.

I'm going to talk primarily about my riding, Peterborough–Kawartha. Let me give you some statistics. This past January, the average home sale price in Peterborough, which will sound very inexpensive to those of you from the GTA, was \$416,000. A year ago, it was \$369,000. In 2010, it was \$201,000. It has skyrocketed in nine years. It has gone up more than 100% in nine years.

Now, my colleague from University–Rosedale mentioned that Toronto has more than enough housing being built. That's not the case in Peterborough–Kawartha. We're averaging about 350 homes for sale each month. The problem isn't that we have too many buyers; the problem is we have historic lows in the number of homes for sale. In Peterborough in 2018—think of this; it's a population of 84,000 people—there were six building permits issued for single-family homes. It's a population of 84,000, and only six single-family-home building permits were issued.

The problem is we don't have the inventory. We have a vacancy rate right now of less than 1%. It's a university and college town—less than 1%. There isn't housing, and there isn't housing because there have been too many barriers put in place over the years preventing things.

In our area right now, having spoken to a number of developers, it's 12 years for them to have a development project from the time they start until they can break ground—not complete it; just break ground.

The OMB process, the LPAT process: It's taking far too long. We need to make some changes to that. We need to be able to put shovels in the ground and start that construction. It doesn't matter whether it's a single family home, whether it is a condominium, whether it's apartments; we're just not able to build. We're not able to build because the process is too difficult. There are too many barriers that have been put in place. What this bill will do is that it's going to reduce some of those barriers. We're talking about removing some of those issues of red tape.

We're talking about predictability, then, in cost. I come back to the average home sale: \$416,000 this year, up from \$369,000 last year—a \$50,000 increase in one year alone. It's not sustainable. First-time homebuyers need to come up with a downpayment. You can carry a \$300,000 mortgage if your family income is \$60,000. The problem is, if your family income is \$60,000, you can't come up with \$30,000 for the downpayment. That's where the barrier is. The barrier is not the ability to get the mortgage;

the barrier is the ability to come up with the downpayment for it.

As housing prices increase, you can still carry the mortgage but you're not able to come up with that downpayment. If we don't have first-time homebuyers coming into the market, we don't have second-time or third-time homebuyers, and so on through. We're getting to the position where it's a barrier for people to get into home ownership.

We've talked a little bit about renting. The rental market is another one. There are so many barriers that are put in front of the developer to do that. What we're seeing, especially in the larger urban areas, is that it is taking so long to build and the builder has so much money tied up for that length of time, they no longer want to build purpose-built apartments. What they do instead is they build condominiums, because they can sell the condominium, retrieve their money and then move on. They're going to have to have that money sitting out there again for another decade or so, but they're able to retrieve their money.

Instead, what's happening is that the small investor is buying those condominiums and they, in turn, turn around and they rent it, which increases the price of the rental. If you take a condominium where the price to build it is \$300,000 and they turn around and they sell it for \$400,000, that \$100,000 needs to be made up. And it gets made up by the person who has to rent it. Instead, if we go down the path where we can have that purpose-built rental, we can reduce the cost of renting. If we can reduce the cost of renting, then those who have the ability to carry a mortgage have more money in their pocket that they can put into some other type of investment, so that they can build to have that downpayment; so they can buy their own home; so they can have that pride of ownership, of owning their own place.

If you're in a position where you're renting for your entire life, you can't get ahead. We need to change that. We need to change that whole process so that people have the ability to experience home ownership themselves. We need to have a system that's in place that doesn't prevent development for decades on end. That's the system that we have right now.

Another one of the changes that we want to do is innovative approaches to housing design and home ownership. My colleague from Durham introduced a bill, the Golden Girls Act. It is absolutely a fabulous idea. Right now, though, it's really difficult for something like that, for different people who aren't of the same biological family to have home ownership and have a differently designed home. This bill will allow for something like that to happen, so that our seniors who do want to stay in their home can come together as a group. They can have a differently built home, something that has the ability to have home care there and have a home care provider living in the facility with them. We don't have that capability right now under the existing rules. This is something that we need to explore when we're looking at other types of development.

A lot of my colleagues here are from very urban areas. They don't know what it's like in the rural areas. I have a

development that has been proposed in my area. It is in the rural part of the province and it is delayed. Right now, they're on year eight. The reason it's delayed is because it has birch trees and the developer wants to be responsible. The developer does not want to remove those birch trees. They want to build what effectively is a subdivision, but the lots are approximately an acre because you have to have a septic system and you have to have a well.

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What they want to do is they want to build the houses in a different way so that they don't have to remove those birch trees. And what's been said to them is that this project would have been approved earlier if they would just clear-cut, if they take all of those trees out. Birch trees are an endangered species. If they would take them all out and guarantee that they're going to plant new ones, the project would have been approved already.

We have a developer who wants to do the responsible thing. They want to build residences in an area that people want to live in and they want to protect the environment. Yet our current system doesn't allow them to do that. Making these types of changes allows those responsible developers to do the things that they need to do to protect the environment, to provide the houses that people need, to provide that purpose-built housing that people want.

This is an excellent bill and I would hope that everyone in the House will support it as we move forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jill Andrew: I'm glad to stand and speak on the government Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act.

I just wanted to reference some comments made by the members from Mississauga–Malton and Peterborough–Kawartha, statements such as “putting more money into the pockets of people,” and “helping people get by.” It's very interesting that this government uses these sorts of phrases that imply that they're caring about the average Joe in Ontario. This bill is not going to help renters, necessarily. More houses is not necessarily the answer. I think if the government really wants to invest in making things better for renters, let's get rid of AGIs. AGIs are killing people's pockets. We've got a guideline of 1.8% when, in fact, some people are being gouged with 4.8% AGIs. And we need to ensure that capital repairs are transparent. I was just sitting in the home of a renter yesterday who was saying that we can't only think about homeowners; we've got to think about renters who are investing, in some cases, more than 30% of their income into a dump, into a place that is consistently ravaged by disrepair.

Of course, the government will say, “More choices. Move if you don't like it.” But guess what? In Toronto–St. Paul's and in many of our ridings, you can't move. You are literally stuck because of how expensive it is to rent, because of how expensive it is to survive.

I really think that we have to do more for our renters as well. We're talking about developers and giving developers a break. What about developers giving the community a break? What about inclusionary zoning? If you're going to put up a million condos, at least have some

of these units available for affordable housing. Try inclusionary zoning so that people can actually live.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm proud to speak today in support of Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act. I would like to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and his parliamentary assistant, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, for their leadership on this bill.

After many years of Liberal mismanagement, Mississauga has one of the least affordable housing markets in North America. Madam Speaker, it's almost never been more difficult or more expensive to buy a home or rent a home in Mississauga.

The Liberals nearly doubled the number of provincial regulations, from 200,000 to 383,000. They added over 10,000 new regulations every year for 15 years. That's an average of 30 new regulations every single day. The Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario has warned that this is complicating the development process, leading to more delays, higher costs and less affordable housing for those most in need.

The measures proposed in Bill 108 will streamline the approvals process and cut unnecessary duplication and red tape, while still protecting a healthy and a safe community. They will make it easier to build new housing supply and provide more choice and affordability for people who need it most. Builders will be able to build a mix of different types of housing, from family-sized condos to starter townhouses to mid-rise rentals, to help bring the Canadian dream of home ownership—like my parents and most of our parents had—back within reach for people at every stage of their life.

Bill 108 will fix our housing crisis without developing in the greenbelt—and I'll repeat—without developing in the greenbelt. I'm proud to support this new legislation, and I urge all members to join me today in supporting the More Homes, More Choice Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions or comments?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm pleased to be rising to speak briefly to this legislation and to respond to the member for Mississauga–Malton's comments. I did appreciate his words about the importance of home, of having a home, calling a space “home,” and feeling safe and supported in that environment and how important—it really is a basic right to have adequate, safe housing.

But I just want to be clear: This bill—this bill that I think is wrongly called the More Homes, More Choice Act—this isn't about homes; this isn't about housing. This bill is about sidling up to the trough. This bill is about creating more opportunities for developers to exploit opportunities to build in our communities. In my own community, there are numerous developments happening, and I can tell you that this is an absolutely massive gift to developers. I'm sure many of them donate to the members opposite, and they'll be thrilled to donate again. But what it means is—and I can tell you—developers have never and will never build affordable housing units unless there is some stick to be used in that conversation.

Taking away things like section 37, taking away any of the regulations and protections that exist in there and the ability for municipalities to really negotiate any terms that are a benefit to communities, is really reprehensible. This bill doesn't create a single affordable housing unit. I'm not talking like "a little more affordable"; I'm talking that what we really need is truly affordable housing in our communities across this province. I think it's really an insult to call it the More Homes, More Choice Act because what this is going to leave Ontarians with is fewer opportunities and fewer choices for truly affordable housing.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments? The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for letting me have the opportunity today. This is an exciting bill, and I'm so proud to be part of this. Before I go on, I just really want to correct some records.

The member earlier, from Spadina–Fort York, mentioned Humbertown. I just want to say that I actually sat at the OMB hearing for Humbertown. It was a nine-day hearing. Do you know who won the day at that OMB hearing? The residents; the ratepayers. At the end of the day at that hearing from the OMB, the ratepayers won; the developers, unfortunately, lost. The ratepayers were able to have the character and the design that they wanted. I just wanted to make sure that that was on the record: that the ratepayers won that hearing.

I was actually quite surprised that the member from St. Paul's talked about more housing—that more housing is not the answer. Well, you are incorrect. More housing is the answer. I have toured around the province; people want more housing of all types. We want more rental housing. We want more co-op housing. We want more townhouses. We want more condominiums. We need more housing, because the more the supply, the price goes down.

So this bill is helping to lower the prices and to get people to develop more development so we can have more housing at the price we deserve, the price we need and the choice people deserve. People deserve home ownership. That is what they're asking for, and they want it where they want to live. A lot of people want it to be near transit, because not everybody wants to have a car, not everybody wants to drive, or their family may only have one vehicle. Especially with the price of gas these days with the carbon tax, we can't actually afford, sometimes, to put gas in our cars, so we want to make sure that we can drive on transit. That's another thing our government is doing: We are putting \$28 billion into transit so we can get people moving from A to B.

Cars are not always the answer. Let's build housing. Let's build more homes. Let's give people more choice.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank the members from Toronto–St. Paul's, Mississauga–Lakeshore, Davenport, and Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

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I'll start with the member from Toronto–St. Paul's. I guess she missed, or rather conveniently ignored, all of my comments on purpose-built properties and on renting. She completely missed all the points I made there.

The member from Davenport: I'd like to remind her that there is a world outside of Toronto; I live in it. We have a problem right now in my area with a vacancy rate of less than 1%, and that's because we don't have purpose-built property for them.

We have a great project in our area that is mainly about affordable and accessible housing. It's referred to as the Mount. What we've done: Our community as a community purchased an old nunnery, and they're converting it to affordable and accessible housing. It's significantly below market rent, and every single one of those units is accessible. It's called Shared Dreams. This bill will allow them to further develop; they're blocked right now. It's a need that we have in our community, and this bill helps address that. They don't know about it in Toronto because they don't know that there's a world outside of this bubble here.

We have significant challenges in other parts of this province, and this bill addresses a lot of those for us. It helps us. I would welcome all of the members who are speaking against this to come out and see what it's like in Peterborough–Kawartha. Come out to my riding and see the world that exists outside of Toronto, because you're Toronto-centric and you have no concept of what challenges these people face. We're trying to address those.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House to speak about issues that are of great importance to my constituents. If you talk to folks in my riding of Toronto Centre, there are few issues that resonate as strongly as the housing crisis does. This is a housing crisis that we feel most acutely in downtown Toronto. Rent is not affordable for an average family, let alone for seniors on fixed incomes or for new graduates. Home ownership is out of reach for many across Ontario and for most in Toronto.

For 15 years, the former Liberal government turned a blind eye while the housing crisis came to a boil in this province. They ignored the struggles that everyday Ontarians were facing. They never took bold action on real rent control. They neglected social housing, allowing the capital repair backlog to grow to \$2.6 billion in Toronto alone, and that's according to the 2017 Auditor General's report. Under their watch, they allowed the wait-list for community housing to grow, in some cities, to more than 15 years.

Speaker, I grew up on the Toronto Community Housing wait-list. When my mom became a single mom when I was nine, our future didn't look very bright. We were all on our own. My mom didn't have a job, and with only a 10th grade education, our options weren't exactly vast. That year, we went on the TCH wait-list while my mom went on Ontario Works and then transitioned on to OSAP when

she went back to school two years later, after getting her GED. We were lucky enough at that point to be able to move into subsidized housing on campus at U of T while she completed her undergraduate and Master's degrees.

But once she was done school, not only had we still not moved to the top of the wait-list, but my mom was now sitting on 10 years' and two degrees' worth of student loans. My mom was not placed in the subsidized housing unit in the city of Toronto until I was in my mid-twenties. By that point, I had moved in with my partner, and my mom was no longer a single mom with two girls; she was an aging parent, almost a senior, living with a disability. Yes, she was housed now, but then she waited another two years on the internal medical priority transfer wait-list to get a truly wheelchair-accessible apartment.

Speaker, make no mistake: The current Conservative government is taking a horrendous situation and making it worse. Somehow, since June of last year, this government has been actively making life worse for tenants and for homeowners while rolling out the red carpet for your developer friends. I can tell you first-hand that maximizing profit for developers while leaving everyday Ontarians behind is a misplaced priority, and my constituents do not share it. There is no issue that comes up at the door in my riding more frequently than housing. People are struggling and they are scared about how they're going to make ends meet.

In Toronto Centre, we are proud to say that we are the riding with the highest concentration of community housing and the highest concentration of co-ops in Ontario, and we do have a healthy mix of high-rise rental buildings, condos and single-family dwellings. People are proud to call our community home, but with lax protections for tenants, rising rental costs, rising home prices and issues with repairs and maintenance, people are struggling.

In community housing, I see the crumbling infrastructure—I see the broken windows, the holes in the ceilings, the broken elevators and the bedbugs—all because there simply isn't enough money for basic repairs. In fact, going back again to the 2017 Auditor General's report, we learned that Toronto is at risk of losing 46,000 units by next year because of lack of funds for capital repairs, and 37% of tenants indicated that they had pests or bedbugs in their units.

When I go into rental housing, I'm confronted with negligent landlords who don't do basic upkeep and maintenance and yet still magically are finding ways to impose above-guideline rent increases year over year over year. People are breaking under the weight of bad policy decision after bad policy decision made by Liberal and now Conservative governments.

According to the CMHC, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., the average rental vacancy rate in a metropolitan area in Canada is 3.4%. In Ontario, in our urban centres, we are doing much, much worse than the national average. In Ottawa, we see a vacancy rate of only 3%; in Kingston, it's only 2.6%; in Kitchener-Waterloo, it's 2.2%; and, astonishingly, in Toronto our vacancy rate is 1.1%. That is not a healthy level. Compare this to

Quebec: Quebec City is sitting at 4.9%, and Montreal is at 3.6%.

It seems rather curious to me that in the province of Quebec, which has continued to encourage purpose-built rental housing and where they do have real rent control, they've managed to maintain a healthy and stable vacancy rate, but here in Ontario one of the first things this government did when they came into power was eliminate rent control on new builds, a policy decision that continues to baffle experts because it defies all logic.

Geordie Dent, the executive director of the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations, deputed at committee just back in the fall. This is in the Hansard: "We don't think that repealing rent control on new units is going to result in any new units being built. Instead, it's going to simply increase misery and suffering for tenants who are going to face rent increases just for asking for the stove to be repaired or telling the superintendent not to come in when they're in the shower...."

"Exempting rent control from new units does not and did not increase the development of rental units. Here's the evidence.... In fact, I've looked into this for years. There's not a single example anyone can give me of cutting rent control leading to more units or bringing it in leading to fewer units. It just doesn't exist in the academic literature."

So even if we were to believe that the bill before the House today would generate new housing, including new rental housing, none of it would be affordable for tenants who are already struggling to make ends meet. And any new housing this government does succeed in generating will not be protected by rent control. Tenants will not be protected. This bill is a handout to developers and does not put tenants' rights first or their best interests first.

When we look at public housing, things are even more dire. Since the last Progressive Conservative government downloaded public housing onto municipalities without providing them with any realistic means to pay for the maintenance of that critical infrastructure—and as I said earlier, the capital repair backlog is estimated at \$2.6 billion, and we now have more folks sitting on a wait-list for community housing than are actually housed in units. Things are bad for tenants, they are bad for residents in social housing, and they are bad for homebuyers.

According to the CMHC, in November 2018, in the GTA, the average price of a semi-detached house was just above \$815,000. In Toronto proper, that average was \$1.25 million. Speaker, imagine being a young couple carrying student debt, working good jobs, trying to start a family, and you have to mortgage yourselves to the tune of a million dollars just to get into the housing market for the first time. That is shameful.

I'd like to share some stories from some of my constituents who have shared their housing experiences with me. Moilene is a constituent who lives in Toronto Centre. Moilene's grandmother lives in an abusive relationship that she feels unable to get out of. In trying to get her grandmother to safety, Moilene has applied to every Toronto Community Housing building in the area. Short of moving her into a shelter, there is nothing that Moilene can

do. Her grandmother is being forced to survive intense daily verbal abuse from her partner rather than deal with the uncertainties of our shelter system. The emergency priority wait-list is still two years long. Moilene calls Housing Connections at least once a week for updates, and the wait-list feels stuck.

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I have another constituent, Saleem, who is trying to make ends meet. Saleem has been working hard for the last several years in an addiction recovery program. He has completed this program and is now living in a transitional housing environment. During this time, he has given back to the community by volunteering and has reconnected with his young daughter. Saleem is employed and ready to live independently but has struggled to find housing he can afford, as the move-out is looming over his head in the coming months. He's worried that once his time is up in supportive housing, he would be forced to access the shelter system. This would be a particularly concerning outcome for him as a person who previously used drugs problematically and no longer does. He considers that being in an environment that would potentially include current drug users would be very difficult for him.

Thankfully, Saleem's housing was extended and he's not currently being forced to look for housing. But he will be again in just a few years' time. Hopefully at that time he'll be able to find affordable market housing or finally be at the top of the Housing Connections wait-list. Securing affordability housing would allow Saleem to feel safe and secure moving forward, and allow him to focus on his goals and spend time with his family.

Finally, I have a story from Janet, who is a renter who resides in Toronto Centre as well. Janet's landlord tried to evict her without following proper processes at the Landlord and Tenant Board. Initially, her landlord tried to evict her without going to the board—but instead, by not depositing her rent cheques. She applied to the board about various maintenance issues and her suspected illegal eviction.

Her building was recently sold by her landlord, with whom she had a very good relationship, to a landlord who she believes isn't familiar with the laws and responsibilities of being a landlord. She wanted to leave the apartment anyway because it had become such an unpleasant place to live but did not want to leave on New Year's Eve, as her landlord was trying to force her to do, because she was not given enough notice.

She experienced delays with scheduling a hearing at the board because her landlord didn't share their address with her, and the board eventually had to track down her landlord through the assessment roll at the city.

Speaker, we must do better, and we can. But I can tell you that the bill before us today is not the right way to go about it. Do you want to know why? Because, despite the name of this bill, the More Homes, More Choice Act, it's not actually a housing bill. Let me say it again: This is not a housing bill. There are more schedules in this bill that gut environmental and heritage protections in this province than any policy measures that will directly increase

housing supply in Ontario. You are rolling out the red carpet for your developer friends, many of whom, I'm sure, are on the Progressive Conservative Party donor lists, and all on the pipe dream that paving over protected lands or taking municipal planning decisions away from municipalities will magically fix the housing crisis.

The bill that we have in front of us today leaves a lot of questions unanswered in terms of the exact changes that will take place should it pass. The bill seeks to amend more than 10 different pieces of pre-existing legislation, and significant components of this bill are not directly addressed but, instead, left to regulation.

Speaker, I'm concerned by many provisions in this bill that also make no concrete plans to improve the reality of housing for tenants and homeowners. Tenants' rights or supports for first-time homebuyers are not addressed at all in this legislation.

But the three things that I find most concerning in this bill in front of us are the changes to the Development Charges Act, the new powers of the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal and the gutting—the absolute gutting—of inclusionary zoning.

The Development Charges Act, as it reads, distinguishes between two types of services: hard services and soft services. Hard services are physical infrastructure that a developer and a municipality would have to think about when building something new. This looks like roads and sewage and electricity and police and fire services. Soft services, on the other hand, are things that make a community a community: its parks, its community centres, its daycares.

Hard services are paid for at 100%, as it currently stands, and soft services get a 10% discount. But this bill effectively proposes to cap expenses for soft services based on a prescribed percentage of the value of the land. Of course, given that the devil is in the details, we don't know what that prescribed percentage may be because it's being left to the regulations. Speaker, I feel pretty strongly that parks and daycares and community centres are not optional in our neighbourhoods. In fact, for many families it's what determines where they want to raise their families and grow old.

Looking at the changes, next, to the LPAT, the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, this is a move that will hurt downtown urban communities, who have fought long and hard to put decision-making about development back into the hands of people, not developers. I'd like to read some of the correspondence that my office has received about this government's plan to return many of the old Ontario Municipal Board powers back to the LPAT.

I have a letter here from Frank, and it reads:

“As a Toronto resident I am very concerned about the provincial intention to reinstate the old OMB rules. Planning decisions belong to the people that are directly affected by those decisions and not developers and their lawyers whose main goal is to put money into their pockets.

“City planners must be allowed to do their jobs, to ensure that money is not what drives our planning. As a city

we spend millions on planning and then millions more defending those decisions at the OMB. This is unnecessary and completely unacceptable.”

This is where Frank says, “I have supported the PC until now but if this decision stands I will no longer be able to support this government.”

I think that’s a pretty powerful letter.

I have another letter here from a constituent named Steve:

“To see a return of OMB rules is very upsetting. Plans developed by our city’s professional planners working with our elected representatives should not be so easily overturned by a small appointed body that more often appears to be the rubber stamp of developers. We need rational planning and the ability to develop community benefits without being derailed. This is an abuse of ‘open for business.’”

As you can see, Speaker, many constituents in my riding are worried and they are upset about the proposed changes to allow the LPAT to overturn decisions made by democratically elected representatives at municipal governments across this province.

Our municipal governments are democratically elected bodies, and the staff are experts at planning who take their work seriously. This bill rips powers away from the cities and gives them to private, for-profit developers who have exactly one interest, and that interest is profit. It’s not people; it’s not communities; it’s not neighbourhoods that are vibrant and livable, that are transit-oriented. It’s just profit.

When we look at schedule 12 of this bill, there’s a proposal to claw back the ability that municipalities currently have to create policies that mandate inclusionary zoning. For those of you who are unaware, inclusionary zoning is a tool municipalities can use to mandate the inclusion of a certain amount of affordable housing in new developments. Inclusionary zoning has been used in cities across the US to respond to shortages in affordable housing. New York City’s mandatory policy is that some neighbourhoods have to have 20% to 30% of units that remain permanently affordable by controlling the sale or rental price to below market rates. So under the current policy, these units will never lose their rent stabilization. I find it truly concerning that the government is proposing to claw inclusionary zoning back from municipalities, with only the exception of protecting inclusionary zoning around transit hubs or by permit of the minister.

This is not how you fix a housing crisis, Speaker. You don’t gut rent control. You don’t cut inclusionary zoning. You don’t give planning powers to developers and take away the ability of a municipality to do its job. You don’t ignore a \$2.6-billion capital backlog or a 15-year wait-list in community housing. You certainly do not draft omnibus legislation that is more about paving over protected environmental lands than actually building housing.

What you can and what you should be doing is upholding the motion that passed in this Legislature in the fall—my very first private member’s motion—declaring housing as a human right and committing to addressing

affordable housing and clearing the wait-list in social housing. Honour that motion. You supported it. You voted in favour of it. It passed.

In March, I tabled a private member’s bill called the St. James Town Act. That bill came about on the heels of a major electrical fire in the St. James Town neighbourhood in my riding. This was back in August, and to this day 1,500 of my residents are still displaced from that fire.

All across Ontario, we are seeing an aging stock of high-rise purpose-built rental units that went up, largely, quickly and cheaply in the 1960s. The critical infrastructure in those buildings is starting to come to the end of their natural lifespan. We have negligent landlords who have not made any preparations to fix those issues in those buildings, and buildings are catching on fire in my riding.

1700

What you could be doing: Support the St. James Town Act when it comes up for second reading, which would mandate that landlords of large buildings have to put aside a set percentage of their rent every month into a repair fund. It would prohibit landlords from applying for an above-guideline rent increase while there is still money in that fund. And it would allow tenants to apply for rent abatements, in a user-friendly way, if repairs in their buildings or their units aren’t being done. These are things that you could be concretely doing to improve the state of housing for tenants in this province.

If this government was truly committed to addressing the housing crisis, we would be here today discussing an actual housing bill—say it with me, friends—not a developers’ dream bill. My constituents do not believe what this government is trying to shill in this bill, and neither do I. It’s the wrong approach to a housing crisis that we are 15 years late to the table to fix—15 years. For 15 years, the Liberals neglected the housing crisis, and you all are making it a whole lot worse. And you’re doing it real fast, let me tell you.

Ontarians deserve so much better. We deserve housing that meets our needs. We deserve housing that is affordable. We deserve an end to the housing crisis, and this is not how you deliver on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Vincent Ke: It is my honour to rise and speak in favour of Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019. The proposed bill will amend various statutes with respect to housing and other development matters in 13 schedules.

We have an affordability crisis in the province of Ontario when it comes to home ownership. The previous government did everything to limit increasing the housing supply. Because of this, we have record low vacancy rates and there is a short supply of homes for Ontarians. With little supply, the demand for housing went up. So did the cost of homes, whether it was buying a house or renting properties.

Speaker, by passing this bill, our government will make it easier to build all types of housing, including rental properties. As more rental units are built, tenants will have

more options for their homes and rents should come down. As a government, we maintain hundreds of unused properties that are a drain on the taxpayers on an annual basis. Our plans to sell surplus properties will make it easier to free up space for affordable housing and long-term-care spaces. These proceeds will allow us to invest in protecting our health care and education services.

Passing Bill 108 will address the housing affordability and supply issues we currently face.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I just want to thank the member from Toronto Centre for that brilliant speech. She went through the analysis that we need in this chamber to understand what we require to, in fact, provide us with housing and why this bill is nowhere near going to provide us with that—not even a start, not even a glimmer. She went through what people are facing in the city and, frankly, across Ontario, finding it very difficult to get housing that's affordable.

When you don't actually bring forward a housing bill that addresses things like rent control, doesn't address things like speculation, doesn't address things like rational planning, then you don't get the outcome that you want. You are not going to get housing that people can afford, and you're not going to get housing that will be supplied with infrastructure that municipalities can afford to provide.

She spoke very movingly about the difficulties that people are facing in holding on to their housing, even getting into housing. The reality is that since—I guess it was 1997 or 1998 when the cost of social affordable housing was dumped on municipalities. Those municipalities have struggled to keep that housing standing. The province has not been putting money into housing for those with lower incomes, which has meant huge waiting lists and misery beyond recounting. That's the reality that she addressed in her speech, very ably, very powerfully. My hope is that the government will listen to that. It may be a faint hope, but it's still a hope, because she has set out the case for making the investment that's necessary and bringing forward legislation that will actually make a difference.

Thank you, member from Toronto Centre.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: It's a great honour and privilege to rise and speak on Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act, in this august chamber.

Madam Speaker, I came to this beautiful country as an international student, and I can understand how challenging and hard it is to buy a home or even think of buying a home for a newcomer and for young families, especially in the GTA area.

I want to congratulate the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for introducing Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act. Our government will help build the right types of homes in the right places to make housing more affordable for everyone in Ontario. We are removing

unnecessary delays, duplication and barriers, making it easier to build more homes and provide more housing choices more quickly.

We're making it easier to build rental housing, including secondary suites like basement apartments or laneway homes, as well as large apartment buildings. As more rental units are built, tenants will have more options, and rents should come down.

Bill 108, if passed, will help young families who are searching for their first home close to schools, where they can build a life and raise children. It will help seniors who are thinking about downsizing to homes that meet their needs as they age, and staying in neighbourhoods they love.

Our plan will cut red tape, build more housing and increase the number of affordable homes. By doing so, people will see relief who are struggling to find affordable homes.

Once again, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for introducing this bill to bring positive change to Ontario by giving Ontarians what they need to grow. I would urge all members to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Toronto Centre for that excellent speech, outlining all the issues that are facing not only the residents in Toronto Centre but the residents who live in downtown Toronto and beyond.

There is no question that we have a housing crisis in Ontario, especially in urban centres. When I go door to door, I experience the stories that are very similar to the ones that the member for Toronto Centre experiences. People are telling me that they're giving up, they don't want to live in Toronto anymore, they can't afford it and they have to move—or parents who have their kids in a school that they love, and their kids are in grade 2, grade 3, and they have friends, they have a life, and they're being forced to move, meaning that they will have to make new friends, they will have to find new daycare, they will have to find new schools, and they're leaving a community that they don't want to leave.

I think we can agree that this is a problem that we need to fix. I believe that there are many sensible solutions that we can move forward on that would tangibly fix the housing crisis in the near term, and the member for Toronto Centre mentioned many of them: introducing inclusionary zoning and sticking to it; tackling the illegal renovations issue that is at crisis point all across our area; having real rent control so that people know how much rent they're going to pay and they can afford it; and properly maintaining homes so that people can live in a rental property where the oven works, where it's safe and secure, where there's no mould and there are no bedbugs. They are near-term solutions.

The idea of building our way out of our housing crisis—I don't disagree that we need more supply. We do need more supply, but it is not the only fix, and if we only focus on that, we are not going to get the answers, we are not

going to solve this housing crisis, and that's what both sides of the House want to do.

1710

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Toronto Centre.

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's been an absolute pleasure to rise and speak to this bill today. Again, like I've said, housing is an issue that is incredibly important to my constituents in Toronto Centre.

I want to thank the members for Don Valley North, Brampton West, University–Rosedale and especially Toronto–Danforth for their comments. Peter, I learned from the best, so thank you.

This bill, the More Homes, More Choice Act, seems to be rather lacking in both homes and choice. Instead, it seeks to break apart inclusionary zoning, it guts the heritage act, it changes the Development Charges Act and it returns the powers that the OMB used to have to the LPAT. It is unclear to me and to many folks in Ontario how the changes to the Development Charges Act will affect soft services, and if the cap on those charges for things like daycares and community centres will be detrimental to our communities.

It's perplexing how, exactly, we will protect endangered species in this province as this government is choosing to adopt a rather *laissez faire* approach to that particular issue. It's certainly clear that this bill is nothing more than an effort to buddy up to developers, and that this government has no issue with overturning decisions made by democratically elected councils of municipalities, while relying on a board that is made up of appointed decision-makers.

Every day, my constituents tell me that they are suffering and they are struggling to make ends meet—tenants, homeowners, folks who live in community housing. The housing crisis is real on the ground and it affects Ontarians from all walks of life. My story and the stories of the constituents that I've shared in this House today—many of them are struggling to pay rent and put food on the table, or to get prescriptions filled. It all adds up.

I call on this government to actually do something meaningful about the housing crisis in this province. Put rent control back on the table, fund the capital repair backlog in social housing and get back in the business of building housing.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate? The member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to see you in the chair this afternoon.

I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019. This legislation is all about helping Ontarians gain access to more affordable housing, and it is long overdue. Our province is currently experiencing a housing crisis, and this bill will help turn that around. The More Homes, More Choice Act will achieve this through advancing the government's commitment to making regulatory processes more streamlined in the province by cutting red tape.

Let me emphasize that the changes being made here are no small drop in the bucket. Bill 108 amends several acts

and reforms legislation across various ministries. It does this because our government must use a broad brush to turn every rock and examine every crevice of the government in search of unnecessary duplication and burdensome red tape if we are to deliver a real change to the people of this fine province. Ontarians need that change, so we must not hold back.

Allow me to expand a little bit further on this and provide a bit more context as to why this bill is so important. The crisis that our province currently finds itself in is nothing new. It developed for years under the previous government. We have come to a point in this province where major city centres do not have the supply to match the demand of an economy that now, especially with the positive policies of the current government, wants and needs to grow. The neglect of the previous government allowed vacancy rates to reach all-time lows.

The market cannot be satisfied with the housing and development it needs because it is being choked by overly restrictive processes and regulations. The result of this is that housing prices and rental rates have skyrocketed to the extent that they have become unaffordable for many, if not most, hard-working Ontarians.

Here are some of the problems we face: Less than 7% of new housing built in recent years was intended for rentals. Again, the dynamics of the market and levels of supply are not working in favour of the people in most need of affordable options. It is no surprise that rental prices are up 10% to 15%—this while incomes are only up 2% a year. This is a crisis, plain and simple.

To give you a taste of the burdensome red tape that developers face: two years. That is how long it takes for a site plan approval for new buildings and major renovations. It is not a problem so much of supply, but lengthy approvals and high costs have slowed down the building of new houses and new rental properties. Local home builders in my riding like Thomasfield Homes and Schlegel Urban Developments are telling me that it's taking them up to 10 years—10 years—in some cases to get housing projects even started. Even when they complete a subdivision, they're having to charge hundreds of thousands of dollars more per house because of complicated and burdensome application and approval processes. What consumers and home builders are asking for is just a little bit more—dare I say it?—common sense, Madam Speaker. The More Homes, More Choice Act provides this.

Bill 108 is welcome news to my constituents of Kitchener–Conestoga and the residents across Waterloo region. My riding and the larger region has experienced substantial population and economic growth in the recent decades, only accelerated by our government's open for business, open for jobs agenda. While this is great news, a growing number of folks, especially seniors and young adults, are being left behind when it comes to participating in the housing market, a stark reality for the last 15 years. In a recent meeting with the Kitchener–Waterloo realtors' association, they informed that the average house price in the rural townships of Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich

is now pushing well beyond half a million dollars. I've heard from local mayors and constituents that a lack of supply is resulting in higher prices. This is forcing seniors to hold off selling their homes and downgrading, as they can't find anything affordable in the community, and stopping young families from being able to remain in their hometowns when purchasing their first home as they enter the labour force.

The intent behind Bill 108 is to boost housing supply and rental supply in Ontario, to provide options that are convenient and affordable for families. The solutions provided for in Bill 108 reflect the commitments of our government's Housing Supply Action Plan.

Our plan is one that works for the housing providers and one that works for consumers. Its vision rests on three principal pillars: cutting red tape, making housing affordable, and keeping money in people's pockets, Madam Speaker. Our plan proposes we remove red tape and speed up the development approval process. This involves looking at every step of the development process and removing regulatory rot. Bill 108 delivers on this.

With the bill's amendments to the Planning Act, we're helping to accelerate the process behind local planning decisions through making the appeals process more efficient. Permits, approvals and associated costs are working against the interest of housing supply expansion. We plan to make costs more predictable and remove unnecessary approvals so as to encourage more development.

It doesn't end there. Our government wants to make it easier to build different types of housing. More Homes, More Choice proposes new measures that would make it faster and easier to build a range and mix of housing for people to rent or own. Whether it be detached houses, townhomes, family-sized condos or mid-rise rental apartments, Ontarians need and deserve more choice. This choice will benefit growing families by providing them with more convenient and flexible options, and it will help others by providing them more affordability.

With the continuously rising prices of our market, more and more professionals and families are looking to rent instead of buying a home. That is why, under our plan, we are making it easier to build rental housing. To encourage secondary suites, our government is proposing to exempt secondary units from development charges. This would include basement apartments or laneway houses. We are also producing a user-friendly checklist for homeowners, to help them build legal second units, Madam Speaker. This will help landlords navigate the building code approvals process. These simple measures are innovative and can go far in supplying the market with what it needs.

Our plan encourages Ontario's housing and rental suppliers to be creative in finding solutions to the shortages in the market by getting the government out of the way. Such innovation will be found in new designs, forms of ownership, and partnerships with the government, private and non-profit sectors. All of these solutions are united in their respect for the hard-earned taxpayer dollars of Ontario. The pillars of our plan are collectively

realized in the provisions of more choice to consumers, choice that comes through close examination and reform of the current rules governing the system rather than choice that requires excessive government expenditure. Our plan isn't one structured around the government taking unilateral action to command the construction of more homes; rather, we take a more sustainable approach. Government cannot fix the housing shortage on its own, so we're calling on home builders, municipalities, not-for-profits and communities to work together.

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The philosophy behind our plan is to create the conditions where non-profits, municipalities and home builders can make the decisions they need to make in order to remedy the gaps and shortages that currently exist in the market.

It is important to point out also that the solutions we have provided did not come out of thin air. As has been done with many of the other major policies and plans that our government has put forward, Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan was the product of province-wide consultations. Our government received over 2,000 submissions, over 85% of which came from the public. The findings of these consultations are clearly reflected in the contents of the plan that we have brought forward. Over 50% of the respondents said that affordability was their top issue as it pertains to the expansion of housing in Ontario. The remainder chose having transit, schools and other services nearby. Our plan is first and foremost a plan for affordability, but also one that is built for flexibility and convenience.

The government's work on the housing file does not begin or end, however, with Bill 108 or the Housing Supply Action Plan. Just last month, on April 17, the honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced our government's commitment to devote more than \$1 billion to the repair of affordable housing units and to combat homelessness across Ontario. This is a bold measure to protect some of Ontario's most vulnerable citizens. Not only is our government being very careful with our taxpayer spends; we are making decisive decisions to improve the standard of living across the province for all those who reside here. This funding is being provided under the auspices of our government's Community Housing Renewal Strategy.

The escalating rental rates have perpetuated increased demand for social housing. If you can believe it, the CBC reports that some residents have been waiting five to seven years for supportive housing. The region of Waterloo, responsible for affordable housing since the year 2000, has consistently warned me and my neighbouring PC MPPs about a growing wait-list and a need for additional rental units and supportive housing, with over 4,000 households waiting for support and with a steady decline of those receiving support over the last decade.

On top of this, there is a growing list of existing units that need maintenance and repair. Despite the crisis we find ourselves in, the fact remains that none of Ontario's working families deserve to be left without homes.

Funding received last month from this government totalled \$18.5 million for the region of Waterloo. As part of Ontario's \$1-billion investment that will help to get people off the streets and into homes, it's definitely welcome.

Waterloo region service managers who received funding included: Affordable Housing in Ontario, a little over \$2 million; the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, a little over \$10 million; the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative, almost \$4 million; Home for Good, \$1.5 million; and the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative, just over \$500,000.

While this public funding is welcome, what is needed is larger transformational reform that will spur public and, more importantly, private development to increase housing supply. This is what consumers and home builders are asking for.

If you can believe it, 83% of buyers on the market cannot afford the resale home price. And here's another stat for you, Mr. Speaker: 56% of renters cannot afford an average two-bedroom apartment.

The consequences of this trend are dire. Allowing the housing crisis to escalate means finding an increasing amount of Ontarians resorting to homeless shelters and other last-resort options.

The fact is, home prices and rents in many large and mid-sized cities have risen faster than incomes in recent years. We can't have this, and we won't have this, because we put the people and families first.

The minister made clear the intention of our government to work with municipalities and non-profits to address issues surrounding wait-lists, overcrowding and safety. No longer will the government sit idly by, watching long wait-lists form for social housing, as it did under the previous administration. Our government takes this issue seriously, and we are delivering serious solutions. We need to build up the families of this province and ensure a better future for our youth. That begins with making sure they have a roof over their head. Basic necessities are not what children in this province should be worrying about. That is what our Community Housing Renewal Strategy is about.

I know that I cannot bear the thought of any of my five children having to worry about such basic things. I want my children to worry about succeeding in school and having fun with their friends. I am sure this is a sentiment that rings true for all parents across this province.

Serious policy reform means the exercise of prudence in making tough decisions when determining the essential priorities and function of governments. We have made a lot of tough decisions to get this province back on track, but we have not lost our compassion. You don't need to have one without the other; you just need to be smart in how you craft your policies. Our government is calculated in cutting back on duplication and expanding options for the market to boost its supply, but we are also compassionate towards Ontario's hard-working families because we know they are the backbone of this province.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with the job that our minister and his team have done. The amendments made under Bill 108 to increase the housing supply are going to benefit Ontarians of all ages, families of all sizes and the businesses that depend on them to prosper and grow.

Both seniors and young professionals will benefit from what our government has proposed here. They're going to benefit from increased access to affordable housing in our Community Housing Renewal Strategy and housing supply in general, and a safer system in which to be a tenant.

We shouldn't have to fear for our personal safety or for that of our children when we are just trying to go about our day-to-day lives; fortunately, our government is taking action to make sure we won't have to. Under our government's new Community Housing Renewal Strategy, social housing providers can be a bit more selective and more easily weed out the bad from the good.

The mayor of Toronto, for years, at the will of his council and constituents, has been calling on the Ontario government to bring in change, but to no avail. The previous government was intent on sitting on its hands. Our government? We've been clear: The buck stops here. A few bad apples cannot spoil the bunch. That is why our government is responding to the long-standing request of major municipalities in this province, such as Toronto, and empowering social housing providers to reject tenants who have been previously evicted for criminal activity.

More choice: That is what this bill is about—more choice for landlords, more choice for consumers. Not only have we put in these measures to make our system safer through our Community Housing Renewal Strategy, but as I previously mentioned, we are, with Bill 108, advancing measures that will ultimately ensure greater flexibility and affordability for consumers in the housing and/or rental options they are provided. Whether you're buying for the first time, a growing family looking for a larger place, or an empty-nester downsizing into a smaller, more accessible home, our plan will make sure that Ontarians young and old can find what they are looking for.

Allow me to highlight just some of how our government's policies are going to benefit seniors, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this year, the member for Durham tabled a private member's bill called the Golden Girls Act. I commend the member for putting forward this smart policy. I want to take a moment to summarize the objectives of Bill 69 because I think it really speaks to the intentions of our government and the direction that we are heading.

Bill 69 proposes that all levels of government should recognize that Ontario has an aging population and should encourage innovative housing options and should recognize that unrelated seniors living together can reap significant health, economic and social benefits, and that clarity be provided to municipalities that the Planning Act should be interpreted in a way that encourages and permits home-sharing by unrelated seniors as a housing solution.

The fact is that the Housing Supply Action Plan and Bill 108 advance the principles of Bill 69. We are making

amendments to the Planning Act that are in the spirit of Bill 69's objectives and are encouraging other innovative solutions to our housing crisis.

Mr. Speaker, every pillar of our plan works for Ontario families, and especially those trying to move into a new home for the first time. The reality of today's economy is that we can't, as a government, look at the way things were in the past and use them as a model for how to map our direction in the future. Ontario's professionals need to be mobile more often than before in today's economy because they're no longer zeroed in on attaining one solo career during the life of their professions. Many professionals today work several different careers across the span of their adult lives. Ontario's working parents and professionals need a housing and rental market that can provide them with the flexibility they need to pursue the career paths they desire.

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Since taking office, our government has wasted no time in confronting the poor management of the previous government. We took the reins of a province that was saddled by debt and facing one of the worst housing crises to emerge in recent memory. We had to deliver solutions to the people of Ontario that would combat the housing crisis by making their options more affordable while taking seriously our obligations to combat the provincial debt.

Devising such solutions requires a government that is willing and able to think outside the box; a government that does not simply resort to throwing hard-earned taxpayers' dollars at the province's problems; a government that can make tough decisions while protecting the most vulnerable. Our government is that kind of government. We have proven this in the solutions that we have delivered to the people of Ontario through our housing plan and Bill 108. I will proudly be voting in favour of this bill, and I strongly encourage all members of the House to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, it's great to see you in the chair this afternoon. I think this is your first time—a round of applause for the Speaker this afternoon.

Applause.

Mr. Mike Harris: I hope somebody is around to get a picture. It's very fitting on him. I think he looks very good up there. Hopefully, he has some family tuned in watching debate this afternoon. I believe my wife and kids are actually watching debate this afternoon. They're waiting for me to get home. I'm very happy that the decorum in the House has been partly brought to you by me, actually, which I think is pretty neat for once. It has allowed debate to flow very freely today. I can't thank you all enough for allowing me to be part of debate today—I'm trying to stretch this out for another seven seconds. I think I'm probably just going to call it a day at this point.

Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. It's been wonderful.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Parsa): I thank the honourable member for his kind comments.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've actually enjoyed the debate. It's been interesting to hear the

views expressed, and I'd just like to report some of the things that I've heard.

The member for Kitchener–Conestoga said that rents are up 10% to 15%, and my response would be: Well, part of that has got to be due to this government's decision to cut rent controls.

The member for Mississauga–Malton mentioned that there were 21,000 homeless people in one night in the province of Ontario—people sleeping on the streets. But this bill, the housing bill that this government has introduced, does nothing to address homelessness.

The member for Peterborough–Kawartha mentioned a municipal affordable housing project, and that sounds wonderful. But my question is, what is your government doing to contribute? How much money are they contributing to that project?

Mr. Dave Smith: Just wait for the announcement.

Mr. Chris Glover: You can respond—if there is something, you can respond in the responses.

The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore talked about co-op housing. I think co-op housing is a wonderful solution to the affordable housing crisis, but there's no co-op housing in this bill. What this bill does, instead of building homes for the homeless and co-op housing and other affordable housing solutions, is that it strips municipalities of the power to protect heritage properties, to protect their environment. It strips them of section 37, which is money that goes into schools, daycare, community centres and parks. People don't want just homes; they want neighbourhoods, they want communities, and those things are part of the community.

The solution to these problems, to our affordable housing and homelessness problems, comes from what we've done in the past. Between 1964 and 1992, the Ontario Housing Corp. built 153,000 public housing units. The government also built co-op housing units at that time. So if we want solutions to the problem we face today, we need to look at the past.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Parsa): Questions and comments. I now recognize the member for Mississauga Centre.

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Merci, monsieur le Président. Vous êtes vraiment charmant dans votre siège aujourd'hui.

Je suis très fière de me lever et parler aujourd'hui du projet de loi 108. Je remercie le député de Kitchener–Conestoga pour son discours cet après-midi.

Monsieur le Président, notre gouvernement s'est engagé à aider les gens qui ont du mal à trouver un logement abordable qui correspond au budget de leur famille. Nous avons présenté un plan qui apportera un réel soulagement et un réel choix aux habitants de Mississauga-Centre.

Plus de logements, plus de choix : le plan d'action pour la construction de logements en Ontario s'attaquera à la crise du logement en Ontario. Avec ce plan, notre gouvernement encourage nos partenaires à faire leur part pour construire plus de logements qui correspondent aux besoins des gens dans ma circonscription de Mississauga-

Centre et dans toute la province. Nous encouragerons l'industrie à relever des défis tels que l'abordabilité, la taille des unités locatives et le type de logement.

Trouver une maison est un défi pour beaucoup de familles et de gens à Mississauga. Le gouvernement précédent a créé un système complexe qui est impossible à naviguer. Les formalités administratives et les frais gouvernementaux peuvent ajouter des années de paperasserie et des milliers de dollars au coût d'une maison moyenne, ce qui entraîne une hausse des prix pour les locataires et les acheteurs.

Les gens passent trop de temps dans les embouteillages pour se rendre au travail. C'est loin de leur famille, de leurs amis et de ce qui compte le plus. Notre plan faciliterait la construction de logements à proximité des transports en commun et des commodités et aiderait à créer des quartiers dynamiques.

La construction de davantage de logements rendra Mississauga-Centre plus attrayante pour les entreprises et les investisseurs, prouvant que l'Ontario est ouvert aux affaires et ouvert aux emplois. C'est pourquoi je suis fier de soutenir ce projet de loi.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Parsa): Questions and comments? I now turn to the member for Toronto—

Ms. Jill Andrew: St. Paul's.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Parsa): Toronto—St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: There you go. Thank you very much, Speaker.

I just wanted to reiterate some points that I made earlier. Speaker, 60% of residents in Toronto—St. Paul's are renters. That's 60% just last night sitting in their homes, talking about how scared they are about the increases, the AGIs, about the fact that they're worried. They've got friends who live in the building, in some cases, who are seniors who can't afford to move anywhere else because they've got a fixed income. Sixty per cent: Let that number ring. That's the number of renters. The majority of them are spending 30% or more of their income for their house.

Yes, housing is a human right and housing is something that we should be able to feel safe and happy in. But in order to do that, we have to have housing keep up with repairs. We need to have housing that allows us to feel safe. We need to have elevators that work. We need to have space where our kids can play safely and we can look at them outside of the window and not have to worry about some construction sites dropping on their heads. Right?

This bill right here is not a bill that's going to do much for people who are renting. It's not a bill that's necessarily a housing bill. It's just something that is going to give a gift to developers. As I said earlier and we said last night—the folks I was sitting with last night said the same thing—what about inclusionary zoning? Why is it that some people have this NIMBYism effect, where it's okay to talk about doing great things but nobody wants it in their backyard? If developers really care about communities, if this government cares about housing, they will ensure that things like rent control are protected, and absolutely inclusionary zoning—that's a must for affordable housing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Parsa): Continuing debate, I now recognize the member for Markham—Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I'm pleased to rise today and talk about Bill 108. It's very near and dear to my heart. As a former councillor in the city of Markham, I advocated for affordable housing and diverse housing stock, how we can build innovatively and creatively to bring more housing units into the city of Markham.

A reason I haven't said, Mr. Speaker, is there are 8,000 basement apartments existing in my riding. I'm a former councillor for ward 7 for 20 years. People are seeking affordable housing through the underground basements, which is not acceptable. There is no safety. The low-income people, new Canadians, single mothers or the seniors—a tsunami wave of seniors is coming to all the cities, especially Markham, my riding.

The way the previous government set up the bill, there were a lot of barriers to build more housing stock into the cities and neighbourhoods.

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I have to tell you one story; I don't have time to talk about my many stories. People have talked here about affordable housing. The net-zero buildings in Ontario are built in my riding by small developers. These are visionary developers. With geothermal technology, the condominium fees won't go up higher. Most of the people are running away from condominiums after two years because of the condominium fees. We helped them to create and produce and build so many affordable housing units under \$300,000.

My understanding and my way of looking at Bill 108—I was talking to the wonderful Minister of Municipal Affairs, and this bill has allowed us to build more creative and innovative ways to bring affordable housing—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Parsa): Thank you very much.

I now return to the member for Kitchener—Conestoga for his closing remarks.

Mr. Mike Harris: I'd like to thank the members who took part in today's debate. Thank you to the member for Spadina—Fort York, vraiment, merci à la députée pour Mississauga-Centre, the member for Toronto—St. Paul's and, of course, the illustrious member for Markham—Thornhill.

One thing that we really need to keep in mind here with what we're doing—and this does go to the ethos of the comments that the member from Toronto—St. Paul's made. We really do need to keep on top of maintenance. We really do need to make sure that landlords are holding up their end of the deal. We really do need to make sure that we are actually giving the people of not only Toronto, but all across Ontario the ability to live in a safe neighbourhood or in safe community housing.

These aren't things that are going to be put by the wayside with this bill. We're making investments into making sure that upkeep is being done. We're making sure that community housing is able to refuse tenants who have been evicted for violent crimes or other various unsavoury

activities in the past. Those elements are contained within this bill, and I think they should be celebrated. Under the previous government, the mismanagement, the ballooning of the debt, throwing money at problems—they weren't fixing anything. We need to take a very fulsome approach to what we're doing.

I would also like to thank the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore because she has played an integral part, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in what we see here with Bill 108.

I'm looking forward to seeing more supply. I'm looking forward to seeing more choice.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it's great to see you in the chair this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Parsa): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill today.

First of all, this is kind of a weird bill. I read a lot of bills; the education minister across from me has read a lot of bills in her time—some of which you liked, some of which you didn't; I understand that. This is just a weird bill.

It seems to me, and I think some of my colleagues said this earlier, that this was a bill written by developers, for developers—just one of those purpose-built constructions that is out there to make Mattamy Homes as happy as they can be. I don't actually expect it to solve any housing problems. I do expect it to make developers richer, no question about that; I think it will be very effective that way. There will be more money in their pockets at the end of the day than there is now.

If you're actually going to deal with the housing problem, with the cost of housing, with the supply of housing, you've got to look at a variety of other factors, none of which is addressed in this bill and none of which I've heard addressed by this government in the time they've been here. I'll speak to a few, not in any particular order.

First of all, there's money laundering. This morning, people who may have read the *Globe and Mail*, not normally known for its left-wing leanings, saw a really good editorial about money laundering in Canada and the volume of money that's going through. In fact, they quoted a number of sources, but the high source was the C.D. Howe Institute—again, not particularly left-leaning. I don't think the Premier would refer to it as a socialist outfit. They estimated about \$130 billion a year is laundered through Canada—\$130 billion. That's the total revenue of three of the biggest banks in Canada. Now, here in Ontario, we've ignored this problem. There's not a peep in this legislation about looking at money laundering and its impact on demand for housing—not a peep.

In BC, under the previous Liberals—or, as the *Globe and Mail* says, not really Liberals but Conservatives; but in my mind, it's all the same—the person who was assigned to look at money laundering in the casino sector was fired when he pointed out there was money laundering going on in the casino sector. But that Liberal government

was fired, and the new government actually has looked in greater depth at the money laundering in the casino sector. They're looking at it right now in terms of luxury cars, and they're going to be looking at it in terms of housing, because there is a huge opportunity in housing to launder money in bulk. We're not talking \$20,000; we're not talking \$40,000; we're not talking suitcases full of cash; we're talking pickup trucks full of cash—a really good laundromat in that area.

In fact, in the *Globe and Mail* article today, they noted that about a third of the most expensive houses were owned by opaque institutions, numbered companies. So if you want to park a million dollars and hide it from another jurisdiction, if you want to put through money that you've gained illicitly through drugs, prostitution or gambling, what better? If you're talking \$140 billion a year coursing through Canada's economy, equal to the revenue of three of the biggest banks, you can have a real impact on housing prices. That isn't addressed here.

In BC, they brought in a Land Owner Transparency Act, so that it's on public record who owns a house, who owns a commercial property. In Ontario right now, you can set up a numbered company, and it can be very difficult to find out who actually, in the end, is the owner. That's a significant problem for us. If we're going to deal with demand that's far outside the growth of the population, the growth of income, you need to look at this whole question of money laundering. This bill is silent on that matter—not a word—and that's an issue that needs to be addressed.

I had an opportunity in 2017 to go after the former Liberal government on rent control. As you may remember, Speaker, there was a series of stories in the CBC about people living in condos whose rents would go up 100% because they weren't covered by rent control. I brought in a bill to change the rent control legislation and the Mike-Harris-era rules, which said that any building built after I think it was 1991 was exempt. That's how owners of condo units were able legally to say to their tenants, "Pay double or get out." There was even a CBC reporter who was couch-surfing—that's the way she was living—because she couldn't afford a unit, which is pretty extraordinary.

In the course of the debates that went on and the interviews, I had an opportunity to meet a fellow called John Pasalis, who runs a real estate company called Realosophy, which, to my surprise, is in my riding. I walked into this real estate office one day and I thought, "Whoa. Hey, that's Johnny. That's Realosophy. This is the guy who has been talking about the impact of speculation on real estate prices." He actually had done a lot of analysis of what was happening with demand and how units were being purchased and held for speculative gains. I don't know whether this was money laundering as well—it could have been—but what he was saying was that very large volumes of sales—and, if I remember correctly, he was talking about how almost a third of the sales in the northern part of York region were made to companies that weren't that interested in renting out at the economic cost

of those units, and who could take a loss because they figured they could make it up with speculative gains later. That's a lot of money driving up cost. That is a substantial problem.

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None of that speculation is addressed in this bill. I want to say to you, Speaker, if you don't address money laundering and you don't address speculation, you're not going to be able to address those profound factors that are driving up costs outside the reach of normal working people, and that's an issue. I've forgotten which person earlier was talking about the impact of these high prices on new Canadians. Well, it has a huge impact on them and on all other Canadians when they can't compete with speculators and money launderers. That's an issue not addressed.

Of course, the other part of all this is—and it was noted by the member from Kitchener–Conestoga—that for the last 30 years, incomes for the bulk of the population have been stagnant or dropping. That's the simple reality. In this country, about 20% of the population has half the income and the other 80% has half the income. I know this because at the time I was going through all that rent control stuff, I actually had to look at the income stats to understand why people were having such a tough time. The top 20% of the population had something like 70% of the wealth in the country. The bottom 80% had 20% of the wealth.

So you've got this big divide going on, and for the bottom 80%, life is tough. It's no wonder people are frustrated in their lives, because they can't afford things; and they know that the way things are structured, some people are doing really well—not them, but others are doing really well. And then, when they try to secure a home, a place where they can live out their lives, be secure, be safe, have a sense of themselves, they're frustrated; they can't do that.

That is a huge issue—not addressed here. In fact, because this government wouldn't even support an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour has increased that disparity, increased that difficulty for the 80% of the population that is trying to live on half the income. That's a substantial problem.

Now, the demand in Toronto drives prices up outside Toronto. People from Hamilton, you know this story. People from Toronto can't afford—in my riding, Toronto–Danforth, many people can't afford to buy a house there. They grow up there. They're in their twenties, and they're just locked out, so they go to Hamilton. What happens in Hamilton? That drives up the demand there. My guess is, it's the same in Markham. My guess is, it's in Oshawa, in Pickering, Newmarket, Aurora. People within commuting distance feel the pressure from that downtown Toronto market that's making life so difficult for people in Toronto. That pain is transferred, and it's moved out.

The member from Peterborough–Kawartha was talking about increasing prices in his area. I think there's a VIA train connection or a GO train—no, it must be a VIA train connection into Toronto from Peterborough, and that's extraordinarily—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No. I'm being corrected by the member, and I appreciate the correction, sir.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, sir. That part is not true.

Those who are fast drivers, those with the lead foot who can make it from Peterborough to Toronto in the morning, can buy a relatively—compared to Toronto—inexpensive house, driving up demand in Peterborough and making that price shock move out in waves from downtown Toronto. That's a substantial problem.

If you don't deal with the issues that I've noted—stagnant incomes, speculation, money laundering—then you're not going to be able to resolve this problem. It just ain't going to happen.

One other example I want to talk about of that price shock moving out from Toronto: In my riding right now, I have three small apartment building where whole buildings have been given eviction notices. I've been meeting with the people in those buildings and, overwhelmingly, the demographic is this: They're mostly seniors who are on the Canada Pension Plan and OAS. They've lived in those buildings for 20 or 30 years, or they're students, or they're people who are doing work that's not really well paid, good enough work but not a lot of money. Some of them are paying \$800 to a thousand a month for a one-bedroom in downtown Toronto.

Speculators come along and they say, “Holy cow, man. If I buy this building for cheap, I can crank up the rent. I can triple it; I can make a fortune,” and that's what they are trying to do. They give everyone an eviction notice. In fact, they give them an eviction notice and try and scare them. And when you're in your eighties, this is all the money you've got and this has been your home for decades, you can be made really anxious by an aggressive landlord who wants to get you out. Or they say to them, “Okay. I've given you an eviction notice. If you leave quickly and quietly, I'll give you 3,000 bucks.” One woman at 245 Logan did that. Unfortunately, she didn't check where she was going to live before she took the money and moved. She had to move to Newmarket to find a place that was affordable. So somewhere in Newmarket right now, there's another demand on units that's pushing up prices there.

You've got to deal with these questions of stability for tenants; you've got to deal with the speculation; and you've got to deal with the profiteering, if you're actually going to have affordable housing. It's as fundamental as that.

Speaker, I want to go through some of the elements in this bill that don't deal with actually making housing more affordable or more available, because I reject the premise that the government is operating on: that it's all a problem of red tape. If you look at the real estate industry, it's not an industry where people are mired in poverty every day. I'm talking about the owners of the real estate development companies. They don't drive around in small, 20-year-old cars. They're not the people who frequent the day-old bread sales. They're doing pretty well. They've

got a lot of cash. They're interested in making a lot more cash, and they're about to be helped.

The interesting thing here about the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act—not so much in this bill, but the cutting of the funding for flood control for conservation authorities. It's going to be harder to protect flood plains from unruly and thoughtless development if the conservation authorities are weakened and if their flood control efforts are undermined. But it does mean that land that could be pretty cheap now because it's under water every 10 years will be more available. And that actually ties into the endangered species changes.

I've never seen Endangered Species Act changes in a housing bill. It only makes sense when you think that, "Yes, in southern Ontario, in the Niagara region, there are wetlands that haven't been developed yet. There are probably protected species in those areas." And in this extraordinary bill, the protection for those species is dramatically reduced. In fact, you don't have to protect anything if you're willing to "pay to pave," as they say. That damages us because, frankly, the environment that we live in is a very complex machine with a wide variety of moving parts. When you start taking parts out, eventually the machine doesn't work anymore. If you open the hood of your car and you start pulling parts out randomly—if you're lucky, if you take out the windshield washer stuff, that's not too bad. If you reach in further and there is some decorative piece and you throw that out, that's not so bad. But if you start pulling up cables, after a while you have a car that doesn't function. Well, nature is a lot bigger and a lot more complex. If you start wiping out more and more species, eventually you stop getting the water cleaning, the pollination and the life-giving processes that actually make it possible for us to live well. That's a mistake with this bill.

One other part—and that's why I want to tie back to flood control. If you start building in wetlands, it might look good for a year or two, but when that 100-year storm comes—and they seem to come every four or five years—you're going to get flooded out. It was interesting to me, reading about the floods that were happening in Montreal and about people who had bought houses in the northern part of Montreal which they thought were totally fine until they found sewage flowing through their living room and, when they dug further, found out that previously it had been a wetland and was redeveloped. Well, when you wipe out, when you weaken, endangered species legislation, you undermine not only the web of life but you put people at risk, because it's a very good chance in southern Ontario that you're putting them into marshland, so that they will be vulnerable to flooding in future. No favour to them; a cheap house full of sewage is not a good house. It's a bad deal. And you, Speaker, know from Windsor the kinds of damage to people's lives that happen when they're put in those vulnerable positions.

So this bill can only be understood as making it easier for developers to build on marginal land. Endangered species? Who cares? Flooding in the future? Who cares? That's what this bill is about.

Now, there are amazing things in this. The Development Charges Act: Speaker, when developers build new homes in a community, they should not be subsidized by the existing residents. I think the term is that, development pays for development. If you're putting in a new subdivision or a new townhouse complex, you should be paying for the infrastructure necessary to make that work.

But, in fact, this legislation substantially cuts back on that—substantially cuts back on that. So municipalities will be faced with higher property taxes or a reduction in services to help developers make a killing. That doesn't mean we're going to have more housing. It means we're going to have municipalities with bigger financial problems and people living in areas that are not properly serviced.

Now, it's fascinating to me that the way development charges—in a reduced way—are going to be calculated is based on the amount of land that gets used up. Municipalities, now chronically and financially in difficult positions, are going to be tempted to maximize the amount of land area that gets redeveloped, which means more sprawl. The simple reality is this: When you have sprawl, you have a very expensive urban form to look after.

On my street, there are about 20 houses and there are three light standards. My house is 15-feet wide. I know, back in suburban Hamilton where I grew up, house lots were about 45 feet. It's a lot more expensive per house to service sprawl than it is denser housing.

This bill is setting things up so that that housing and its infrastructure will be permanently more expensive. It may mean a lower cost up front, but it will mean much higher taxes in the long run. That doesn't help people. That doesn't make it affordable. That just means that the developer gets to make a killing at the front end. That is bad news, Speaker—really bad news.

Oh, yes, I did talk about endangered species. I sort of covered that. That works.

The Environmental Assessment Act is pared back. Speaker, I think people can agree that there are some areas where you don't have to have all the bells and whistles. But you'd have to have a government that you had confidence actually cared about the environment before you allow them to cut back environmental protection. I don't have any confidence that this government has that as part of its thinking. I think they see it as an expensive frill, and it's a frill until, again, flood waters go through your home. That is a huge problem.

I see that my time is short, and my guess is that your patience may be short as well, Speaker, because we're coming to the end of the day. So to all those who are here to the bitter end, my thanks for your patience. I hope you have a good weekend. I hope you enjoyed my speech. Take care.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10:30 a.m. on Monday, May 13, 2019.

The House adjourned at 1803.

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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 (IND)	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	Solicitor General / Solliciteuse générale
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 of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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 (IND)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce 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 Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
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, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop
Wayne Gates, Randy Hillier
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, Stephen Crawford
Doug Downey, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Kaleed Rasheed
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Dave Smith
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, Chris Glover
Christine Hogarth, Logan Kanapathi
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Dave Smith, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Lorne Coe, Michael Coteau
Mike Harris, Faisal Hassan
Jane McKenna, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Toby Barrett, Catherine Fife
Goldie Ghamari, Michael Gravelle
Jim McDonell, Norman Miller
Christina Maria Mitas, Suze Morrison
Michael Parsa, Peggy Sattler
Kinga Surma
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: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma
Will Bouma, Paul Calandra
Lorne Coe, Stephen Crawford
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
John Fraser, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie