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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 16 May 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 16 mai 2019

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us pray.
Prayer/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 13, 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): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 15, 2019, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Yurek has moved second reading of Bill 107, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Second reading vote deferred.

PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS MOST
ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2019

LOI DE 2019 POUR
PROTÉGER L'ESSENTIEL
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 15, 2019, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Projet de loi 100, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.

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

Miss Kinga Surma: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Often when we rise in this House, we say how proud and honoured we are to speak to a bill, but this is an especially important day and especially important to me as a new member in this House. It's incredibly exciting to participate in a budgetary process and contribute to the work, to be part of the team and propose our first budget bill.

I want to thank, of course, the Minister of Finance, his staff, the Premier, and all of cabinet and our colleagues who worked so tremendously hard on this bill.

Of course, I will start with my favourite subject, which I think has become very clear to the members in this House, and that is transportation. It's a very long history with transportation in the city of Toronto. As a member representing a Toronto riding—the members opposite have brought up the fact that there have been many plans in the past. They have been very dissatisfied with our proposal, which I think is one of the greatest proposals that Toronto and the region have ever seen, that we've worked tremendously hard on for the last 10 months with all of our colleagues and with the Premier and the Minister of Transportation.

But do you know what the biggest problem was, Mr. Speaker? There was never any shortage of plans, but the problem was that nobody wanted to take action, move forward and actually build something in this city and build something in this region. I know that many of my colleagues feel the same because we've all watched it on the news. There have been plans back and forth in a council term and changes of plans during every single city council election, and do you know what? It led to frustration. It led to people thinking that public transit was never going to be built in this city.

I remember when I was campaigning and I spoke to a young man, a young boy, 17 years old, and he asked me what the things were that I'm most passionate about. So I told him that I would like to help improve public transit in this city because it's something that I've endured myself as a resident. He looked at me and he said, "Well, you know what? It feels like nothing will ever be done," and he asked me why. I said, "Unfortunately, in most cases, it's actually politics. Politics gets in the way." That is why I am so incredibly proud to have contributed to the transportation plan, to work closely with my minister and my colleagues to make sure that we take concrete steps moving forward to actually build something in this city.

Transportation affects everybody. It affects moms and dads who go to work. It affects young people who want to get around their neighbourhood. It affects young people who want to enjoy the excitement of the city, tourists who

want to come visit and see different aspects of the city, and it affects the quality of day-to-day life. That has been missing, and I am just so excited to move forward.

We have been working with the city of Toronto. We've proposed a letter of reference. We've indicated our intentions. The Premier has been very clear that transportation—being a resident of this great city—is one of the most important things to him as Premier, improving it from a regional perspective and also in the city. We are now amending the Metrolinx Act, which will give us great leadership on the file. I am very excited to move forward.

What I'm most excited about, of course, is how it will impact my riding, the riding of Etobicoke Centre. My constituents have fought for three years. They have gone to community meetings. They have participated in working groups. They were very vocal during the election that they did not want to see Eglinton ripped up. That's not an unreasonable ask, because Eglinton is the busiest road in my riding, next to Martin Grove—the busiest road. The congestion—a year and a half ago, part of Eglinton was repaved, and I can tell you, just by blocking off a single lane it took me 45 minutes to get from one end of Eglinton in my riding to my home, which is on the west side. And to think that that was the proposal that my opponent, Mr. Baker, was encouraging is just incredibly frustrating.

So I am extremely proud that we made the right choice, that the minister, the Premier and our people listened to the concerns of my residents and that we are proposing the best option—a fast option, a reliable option—that will not add to the congestion in my riding. So I just want to thank the team again for being so supportive. It was incredibly important to me to be able to fulfill that campaign commitment, and it was truly one of the proudest days of my life. I am sure I will always remember it.

I just want to tell my constituents that, should there be construction, please do not be mad at me, because it is unfortunately a part of the process, but we will make sure we don't disrupt and disturb the residents as much as possible.

I will be splitting my time with the member from Mississauga—Erin Mills. My apologies, Madam Speaker.

In the last few months we've had many, many transportation announcements and improvements, such as increased GO train service to the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, as well as—

Mr. Jamie West: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Sorry. I recognize the member on a point of order.

Mr. Jamie West: Thank you, Speaker. I apologize to the member from Etobicoke Centre. I just want clarification if we're debating Bill 100, the budget, or Bill 107, which is transportation, because all the comments so far have been about transportation—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member's point of order. It would seem that she is speaking to schedule 54.

Mr. Jamie West: I apologize.

Miss Kinga Surma: To the member opposite, this is only the beginning of my remarks. I will be addressing

other things included in the budget bill, just to be clear about that.

0910

The second issue that I would like to speak to, which truly has come up very frequently in my riding at the doors, most recently now but certainly during the election campaign and even before then, is safety. Community safety is a big issue in my riding. Like I said before, I am a Toronto riding. There have been very tragic incidents in my riding over the last few months, as there have been many tragic incidents in the city of Toronto, and that has raised concerns.

I have a large population of seniors who want to feel safe in their communities and I have a lot of young families that are looking forward to raising their children and want to make sure that their neighbourhoods and their communities are safe, as well as established families that truly enjoy living in Etobicoke, in a safe community where they don't have to worry about having their children go outside to play hockey on the street or go see their friends and neighbours down the street.

Now that has become an issue in my riding. It's very unfortunate, because I always felt that Etobicoke was one of the safest places to live in the city of Toronto—and it is safe. But there have been tragic incidents in the city, and I think it has affected everyone's lifestyle. People are more concerned, and I think everyone worries about being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I am very pleased with the Solicitor General for taking action on this, and right away, as a government, by investing \$25 million to fight guns and gangs in the city of Toronto, as well as introducing the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act to restore respect for police officers so that they can better do their jobs and so that we restore faith in our police services in our cities. I know my constituents were very pleased with that investment and I am very grateful for her work on this.

Another item which I think we have taken very concrete steps in improving is health care. Hallway health care has become the most discussed topic in this province, I think. Everyone, whether it's a family member or a friend or even yourself when you've been sick and have gone to the hospital, has seen over the years that the quality of care has gone down. And you know what? The previous government claimed all of these investments and spent all this money, but they never looked at other solutions, such as reforming health care, using technology, innovation or new processes that can ensure that the moment a patient goes to a hospital and then needs further care, they get that care at home. Like I said before, I have a lot of seniors who are very active in the community, very engaged, love Etobicoke and are still very mobile. But they are very disappointed, and for those who don't have spouses any more or family members who live close by, they feel completely alone. Most of the time they have no idea how to access the care they need. They can't navigate the system. They don't know who to call for help. If their family lives a distance away, it's usually very troublesome for them to get the care they need. I am very proud of the

Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the fact that she had the courage to admit that we have failed our health care system, we have failed our seniors, we have failed the residents of Ontario, because the quality of care has gone down significantly.

I'm very blessed, Madam Speaker. I don't have any major health issues, but members of my family have, and I know that many members of my community rely on and need to have that good patient care which has been missing.

I just want to reiterate some of the investments we have made. We're providing 128 hospitals with funding to upgrade and maintain their facilities. We're adding 200 hospital beds in the greater Toronto area. We've announced additional long-term-care projects that will add 1,157 new beds across the province.

Do you know what's concerning? We are taking these steps, and the reason why this is so important to us is because we do have an aging population. We have an aging population that will need that access, that will be going to hospitals more and more. If we can't sustain the population and the needs now, then what are we going to do when an aging population needs that care?

I want to thank the minister. I think it is incredibly important that we take action. This will take some time to improve the care. But we had the courage to face the problem up front, to propose solutions, and we are going to move forward with that.

The most, I think, critical issue that came up during the election was, of course, affordability. As a Toronto riding, affordability comes up all the time, whether you're a young person and are doing everything you can to save for a home, a senior on a fixed income or a family trying to be fiscally responsible so they can invest in their future. That's why I am incredibly proud of introducing the new Low-income Individuals and Families Tax—LIFT—Credit, which will eliminate or reduce Ontario personal income tax for low-income Ontario taxpayers.

As well, reducing tuition rates: Madam Speaker, I was so shocked to find out how high tuition was in this province. I can say that had it been me paying the cost of tuition today, I'm not sure my family would have been able to sustain me going to school. I don't ever want a young person who has dreams, who works hard, who appreciates education and wants to make something of themselves, to not be able to go to school because tuition rates are too high. It's absolutely shameful that the previous government allowed this to happen, because I love young people. They are the future of the province. If they want to learn, they should have every right to do so.

I know I have only a few minutes left, but there is one thing in the budget that a few people don't realize that we did. It's something I shared with my riding on my Mother's Day breakfast on Saturday, and people really appreciated it: the introduction of requiring the Premier and the Minister of Finance to pay a penalty of 10% of Premier and ministerial salaries for each missed public reporting deadline. I am so incredibly proud of that policy that we put forward and included in the budget. Do you

know why, Madam Speaker? Because we are showing that we are accountable and transparent and that if we make a mistake, we will be held accountable and we will pay the cost for it.

Thank you very much for your indulgence, Madam Speaker and members. Have a very good day.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am grateful for the opportunity to rise today and support Bill 100, the Ontario budget.

Bill 100 is best explained in its name: the Protecting What Matters Most Act. We have gone out of our way to ensure that the core systems of Ontario are upheld and are preserved for future generations.

The debt accumulated over the last 15 years is very disturbing. The province compiling a debt of such a magnitude in such a short period of time is truly astonishing and a testament to the lack of responsibility of the previous Liberal government. They thought in the short term. They thought governance was about the next election cycle. By spending \$40 million more each day than what they brought in, the Liberals were digging our province into a hole, with no plan on how to get us out.

If we had come into governance with a simple slash-and-burn approach, we would have been thinking in the short term as well. That's why our great Premier and cabinet have taken a long-term approach. They know we have to put the real, lived experience of Ontarians at the centre of our decision-making. By showing Ontarians that we are responsible, we will restore their trust in the government of this great province.

I'll be talking today in greater detail about the segments of the budget I believe to be especially relevant to my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills: estate tax, auto insurance, and changes to employment services for skilled workers.

Firstly, estate tax is a practice which has always seemed to me an overreach. When we live and we work, we are asked to contribute a portion of our earnings to the community for the mutual benefit of the whole. What we have left after we have paid our share is for us and our families to build our lives. Yet, when we pass away, the taxman comes back around and takes a portion of what we had after the first round of taxes. This act of government overreach needed to be scaled back. The kin of someone who passes should not have the government breathing down their necks for a quick buck.

0920

I was very happy to see that the 2019 budget took action and, as of January 1, 2020, the estate tax will be eliminated for estates of \$50,000 or less. We will also be reviewing the estate tax on estates with larger assets, providing approximately a 20% reduction. There's a misconception that estate tax reductions are really only for the wealthy, but this is conception is unfounded. Our relief will benefit those with smaller estates, who get hurt the most.

Having discussed death and taxes, I should move on to something almost as unavoidable in modern life: auto

insurance. For Ontarians who live in the 905 and suburbs more broadly, commuting by car to and from work is nearly a necessity. Congestion, which I proudly note our government is now working to tackle, is stressful enough with the high cost of insurance, lack of consumer choice and lack of competition in the market. The budget lays out a multi-year strategy, one I am happy to endorse, which keeps drivers first and makes the auto insurance system more accessible, affordable and convenient.

In my professional life, I worked for various different tech firms, managing different networks. In the private sector, we were always on the front line of innovation, understanding the reality that our customers were hungry for a more convenient way to go about the unavoidable parts of our lives. Bill 100 puts forth electronic proof of insurance and innovative options and intends to meet the specific needs of drivers. We are furthering the ability of insurance firms to offer more discounts and a wider variety of plans. Claims will become easier to navigate, and strong anti-fraud measures will be introduced. This increase in choices and the ability to access products that meet specific needs are going to give drivers more control over how they spend their hard-earned money.

The Driver Care Plan doesn't only address the cost related to aspects of driver's insurance, but it's important to the care of those who are hurt in auto accidents. We will be streamlining access to care by making the claims process easier to navigate and providing improvement—

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's a pleasure for me to rise today and put some comments on the record regarding Bill 100. I would like to thank the member from Etobicoke Centre as well as the member from Mississauga—Erin Mills for their comments. Etobicoke Centre mentioned some very important goals, which is to help improve public transit. It has to do with the quality of day-to-day life for so many people. It's an equity issue, whether it includes seniors, people who are economically challenged, students, people who have disabilities, or environmental advocates.

The section I would like to take a look at today is section 17. With any legislation, we need to think about being responsible, being accountable and being transparent—all goals that this government claims to have. We hear the government using those words, but we don't see that in this legislation. In fact, we see the direct opposite of it. Section 17 is an attack on the ability to hold governments accountable. Governments cannot nor should not be above the law. In section 17, if a government-funded agency or a government-hired contractor makes mistakes, you can't add the crown to the lawsuit. Why is the government trying to immunize itself from responsibility, from accountability, from transparency?

Speaker, if you take a look at this, let's say that the government hires a friend of the Premier—I know; that's shocking. We would never see that happen. But let's say it happens, just for the sake of argument, and the contractor is terrible and messes everything up. Then you can sue

the contractor but not the government that's responsible for that hiring. That undermines all responsibility of the government and all the accountability of the government, and it is not transparent.

This is an abuse of power. This is an affront to the rule of law. Quite frankly, it is the centralization and consolidation of power, and something that we cannot support.

Speaker, I urge the government to take section 17 out of this legislation.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to thank the member from Etobicoke Centre and the member from Mississauga—Erin Mills for their speeches on this.

I think, really, when we're talking about the budget, we're talking about some of the best things for Ontario.

I'm going to address something specifically, though, that the member from London North Centre said. He said that we're not being transparent or accountable. Yet our finance minister and our Premier will take a financial hit of 10% of their salary if we don't meet the milestones that we've set in there. That is absolutely the definition of being transparent and accountable. They are personally accountable for what we're going to be doing in Ontario.

I'd like to talk about what we're doing in Ontario. There was an awful lot of discussion from the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills about transportation, and the question that you have to ask is, why? Why would you be talking so much about transportation? Our economy is driven by moving product to consumers, or moving consumers to product. If you can't do that, you don't see the economy growing. We're investing in transportation for that reason, because we know that a strong economy in Ontario means that everything else in Ontario is strong. As the economy rises, as there is more money that's being spent, the tax revenue on the retail side goes up, and money is being re-filtered through the system that way. It means that we're able to provide more services that matter the most to the people of Ontario.

We've got a financially sound budget here. We're trying to reduce the deficit that the Liberals left us with. It's insane that we're spending almost \$1 billion a month on interest. How much could we have in services if we didn't have to do that?

We're getting back to a balanced budget in a responsible way. It will take us five years to do it, but it will be responsible. We're not taking away from anything that matters—

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

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank the member for her remarks. I want to thank my colleagues who offered their remarks.

I'm going to take a little bit of a different angle on the government's budget bill because, as the critic for seniors, I've been paying a great deal of attention to the program that the government has put forward for dental care for low-income seniors.

Here's the thing: Wonderful idea, my friends, but far, far short of the ambition we need. This is a problem

I've had with many of my Conservative friends: They identify a problem and they lowball the means by which to address it.

The dental care program introduced by my friends here will impact seniors who make under \$19,300 a year pre-tax. That is about 100,000 seniors, according to their estimates—a little bit more, according to my own—but that is a pittance. When you think of the need in seniors' homes; when you think of the need of people that I've talked with at the door, seniors who can't sleep at night for days because of abscesses in their teeth—is this how we want to treat anybody who helped build this country up? It's a pitiful investment.

What worried me even more, when the minister responsible made an announcement about this program in Scarborough at a public health facility, which is the community health centre where these services are supposed to be delivered, the public health facility reported to the media that they had not been consulted on the rollout of this plan and how it would work in July. I can confirm that all the community health centres in the city of Ottawa have not been consulted.

So, when we talk about accountability and transparency, I want the government to imagine a way in which that works for seniors that is beyond a 10% reduction in the Premier's or the finance minister's pay.

We have seniors up at night, right now, who can't sleep because of abscesses in their teeth. So we either pay now or we pay later. What costs more—a proper investment to make sure every senior has the dental care they need, or seniors in emergency rooms because they haven't slept for four days? This is a massive underinvestment, and I demand that our friends do better.

0930

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

Mr. Michael Parsa: I want to first acknowledge the great speech that my colleague gave. She laid out some very, very important points that are all covered in the budget.

I want to start off with talking about the title of the budget and why it's so important: Protecting What Matters Most. It's very, very important because that set the tone of how responsible our government is going to be and the path that we're going to take to be able to serve Ontarians. It's very important to say that we are increasing in areas that matter most to Ontarians. That's what we were elected for. We're increasing education; we're increasing health care. Transportation: I know that my colleague spent some time talking about transportation. It's absolutely vital to spend more on transportation. Ontarians expect it. It takes longer to be able to get from point A to point B now than it did a few years ago, so, yes, absolutely we need to invest there.

We're taking care of seniors through the dental program. We are removing those who are earning minimum wage from the income tax bracket because they need it. That's the assistance that needs to be provided for them.

It's just that when you look at this budget, Madam Speaker—I'm proud to support this budget because it's

well thought out; it helps people from all walks. But it's important also to remember that we inherited a fiscal mess from the previous government; it's very important. Ontario had the title of having the most debt of any sub-sovereign nation in the world. It's really bad, when you look at the previous government and the way they governed and put us in that mess. We absolutely had to take some measures, but that was going to be done in a responsible manner. We are going to do it while we look after the people, and we will get to a balanced budget—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. I return to the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills for his follow-up comments.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to take the next two minutes to talk about the third element—I am proud to be part of a government that brought in this budget—which is development for the skilled trades. As a college professor, I believe that Bill 100 is crucial for the development of skilled trades professions in the future. Apprenticeships were made increasingly difficult to access over the past 15 years—the burden of red tape holding back many would-be young professionals from starting their careers.

Our government is focusing our efforts on helping businesses that are looking to hire and matching them with workers who are actively seeking opportunities. This approach isn't revolutionary; it's common sense, and the existing employment service system is anything but. It is overly complex and not focused on delivering results to employers and jobseekers. We are working to close this skills gap—something effectively ignored by the previous government for many years.

These are the reasons why I am very happy, Madam Speaker, to fully support Bill 100, the Ontario 2019 budget, Protecting What Matters Most.

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

Mr. Jamie West: Before I begin, I want to apologize again for interrupting the member for Etobicoke Centre. I realize that transportation is also in the budget bill. It's just that I was scheduled to speak for 20 minutes and I thought I had the wrong notes. I thought maybe I had the wrong House sheet. It was more about confirming it and that I was ready; it wasn't about trying to throw her off or interrupt her on it.

I also wanted to comment on the member from Peterborough—Kawartha, and also the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, who talked about transportation and how important it is to get goods and services moving. I hope I have your support on getting the rest of Highway 69 four-laned, because we only have 68 kilometres to go. It's essential to the northern economy that we get that done.

Speaker, it's always a pleasure and an honour to rise on behalf of the people of Sudbury. As their elected representative, I'm always proud to bring their perspective to the Legislature. I'm proud to talk about what matters most to Sudbury and also what matters most to the metropolis of Copper Cliff, which is also in my riding.

What I can tell you, Speaker, is that the budget doesn't reflect the priorities of the people of Sudbury and Copper Cliff. The budget is taking things away from people living in rural and northern Ontario. The budget is going to hurt our seniors. It's going to hurt our most vulnerable. The Conservative government, when they speak about this, are being very selective about the parts of the budget that they want to talk about. That makes me interested in what we're not talking about, because the reality is that this budget contains cruel cuts that will hurt families in Ontario.

Some \$1 billion is being cut from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. That's the ministry that is supposed to protect our most vulnerable populations.

Education and health care are being funded less than inflation. According to the CCPA's Behind the Numbers report, the government would have had to increase program spending by 3.5% every year just to maintain the same services. Instead, the government's 2019 budget increases program spending by only an average of about 0.8% a year. I know they love talking about math, so 0.8% is much smaller than 3.5%. Let's do a math equation: If little Johnny requires a 3.5% increase just to maintain the same quality of services and the Conservatives only give him a 0.8% increase, how underfunded will little Johnny be? So, 3.5% minus 0.8% gives you 2.7%, which is nearly 3%. In that math problem, little Johnny, in case you didn't know, was actually the things we care about most: It was health care. It was education.

If people were unhappy with hallway medicine—and they were. The reason that the former government, the Liberals, are now an independent group and have such a small group was because people were fed up with hallway medicine. They were fed up with hydro and a bunch of things, but, really, hallway medicine was a hot-ticket item. How upset will Ontarians be now when they realize that we're not even funding enough to keep the lousy service they were fed up with before?

Frankly, the Conservative government's cuts are dragging Ontario backwards. Ontarians deserve to know all of the details of the budget, with an accurate reflection of how it will impact their lives. I want to use my time today to shed some more light on parts of the budget that are not being talked about but are equally important.

Let's talk about dental care for seniors. My colleague from Ottawa Centre mentioned this earlier. In the budget, the PC government announced that they're creating a new dental program for low-income seniors. I'm surprised they didn't stand and cheer, because any time you say anything, they stand and cheer.

The part they're not sharing, though: It's only for seniors with incomes of \$19,300 or less. That's a small portion.

Earlier, the members opposite talked about how the finance minister and the Premier are going to pay a penalty of 10% of their wages if they don't hit targets in the budget. Again, I love doing math: The Premier's salary is \$208,974. A 10% penalty would be \$1,597.40 more than these seniors who qualify make every year.

Getting back to the seniors with incomes of \$19,300 or less, that means that out of the three million seniors in Ontario, who, from hearing just a portion of their argument, believe they're going to have free dental care, 95% of them won't be covered under this new plan.

But let's say that you're one of the lucky 5% of seniors who might be eligible. It's still about 150,000 people.

Interjection.

Mr. Jamie West: My colleague said "just over 100,000." I'm an optimist—150,000 people. That's great for those people; 150,000 people is better than nothing. It's not so great for the 2,850,000 seniors who don't qualify. But you can't please everybody—except, this is a program that's being administered through public health units, through community health centres and Aboriginal health access centres. I'm curious, Speaker, what happens to this service when the government slashes the number of public health units in Ontario from 35 to 10, because that's what we're doing. We have 35, which I think is maybe too small of a number; I'm not an expert in health care. But the government, in the budget, is going to be slashing these from 35 to 10. As you know, I love math, and 35 minus 10 is 25 fewer.

0940

What happens is, those 150,000 seniors—that lucky 5% out of the three million seniors—who only earn \$19,300 or less are going to have to make it to one of those 10 public health units. If they don't live in one of those 10 lucky cities that still have a public health unit, those 150,000 lucky seniors are going to have to buy a bus ticket or get on Handi-Transit. They're going to travel hours to get the Conservatives' free dental care. This is what's known as a "plastic carrot." It sounds good, but when you get it, it's no good to you, because if you have to travel hours to get free dental care, you're not getting free anything. If you're on a budget and you have to be under \$19,300, you are not really being successful.

Meanwhile, we know that in Ontario, every three minutes someone visits a doctor's office or an emergency room to get emergency care for a dental problem. We know that poor oral health care can even lead to heart disease. New Democrats, on our side, believe that nobody should have to live in pain. We believe that we need to do more to support our seniors. New Democrats believe that dental care must be accessible for every Ontarian, including seniors who don't have retiree benefits and every family living on social assistance. We believe in helping everybody. New Democrats are committed to providing fully funded dental care for seniors.

Speaker, I'm missing some of my notes so I'm just going to go from memory on it. The other cuts we're having or things we're not talking about in the budget have to do with a crisis near and dear to my heart in Sudbury: the opioid crisis. We're having many, many deaths across Ontario in every city, but northern Ontario is leading in the number of deaths due to opioid overdoses. Sudbury is third on that list. I believe the number from last year, in the first six months of last year, was 600 deaths. I could be corrected, but it's in the hundreds. I have in my head 600; perhaps it's 300, but still it's hundreds.

In 1982, for those of you who remember this, there was someone going around poisoning Tylenol capsules. That's why, when you get Tylenol now, it has a safety seal; it has the aluminum foil over top of it. It's to prevent tampering with it so someone can't open it and poison it. Eight people were killed in 1982, Speaker, with poisoned Tylenol—eight of them—and the world froze. It was the top story in every news outlet. It's all we talked about across North America. It was happening in the States, but even in Canada we stopped and we were worried about it. The response to this, to these eight deaths, was amazing, the way everyone focused on it, the way the news focused on it. Johnson and Johnson, who make Tylenol, even today are applauded for their response, about raising the flag, about warning people about the deaths, about bringing action to it. If you take a course in public relations, they will talk about Johnson and Johnson's response to the Tylenol deaths. Eight people were killed.

We had more than eight people killed in February from opioid overdoses in Sudbury—in one month. As I said earlier, we've had 300 in Ontario. We're not doing anything about it. We're not focused on it. We're not talking about it. And we should be. This is important. It's important to all of us. It has gone from the point where you can't just say, "It's those people, who need to quit or go to jail." It has moved beyond that, because these people are struggling to quit. What we don't have in the budget and what we're not talking about is the safe consumption sites that people want, the help that people want. The rehab beds, the access to services so people can get help with their addiction, the resources to find out if the illegal drugs they're taking are clean and won't kill them: They don't exist, and they are not in the budget. The cost of killing people, the cost of sending people to emergency rooms, the effort to our police services who have to respond to this with naloxone, the cost to our community as people with addictions are begging on the streets or stealing because they're desperate, because they're addicted, is insurmountable. But we're not doing anything about this. Eight people from Tylenol; 300 people to opioid deaths.

The government, as we'll see during question period, love to stand and applaud. I'm always amazed at how they can stand and applaud and sit on their hands at the same time.

I want to talk about universities and post-secondary schools. This is near and dear to my heart as well, in Sudbury. I'm proud, in Sudbury, to be a graduate of both Cambrian College and Laurentian University. I'm proud that my oldest son is a graduate of Collège Boréal. I think it's important that you recognize the strength and the opportunity that post-secondary school gives to people.

I've talked before in this House about growing up in poverty. I was raised by a single mom who worked full-time. She worked full-time, and I say that specifically for the government side, because the government likes to say that the best pathway out of poverty is a job. My mom worked full-time, and we didn't make enough money to pay for our rent, so I lived in socialized housing, which also isn't talked about in the budget.

I went to post-secondary school. I went to Cambrian College, and when I got out, what I found was an economic situation that was created by the government of the day where people should be happy to even have a job, let alone a career, and with short-term contracts and low, low wages. I had tuition to pay for. I went to university because I thought maybe I had it wrong and that I should go to university instead of college. I graduated, and it was the same situation with these short-term contracts.

Tuition every year has been climbing and climbing, and the amount of grants have gone down, and you have students now, millennials, one of the most educated generations we've ever had, with these massive debts. In Ontario, post-secondary schools are the lowest-funded provincially, in Ontario, and across Canada. People have been desperate for lower tuition rates.

Like my colleague from Ottawa Centre said, the government aimed low. I think it's great that they're lowering tuition by 10%, I sincerely do, because tuition has gone up year after year after year, and you're going to exclude people living in poverty from being able to access it. Lowering tuition is great; I'd like to see it even lower. But lowering it by just telling the post-secondary institutions, "You make up the shortfall," is not what government's role is. Government's role is to help people be successful.

When you tell a university or a college, "You're now getting 10% less of your funding, so find it somewhere else," they cut services, and they cut access, they cut professors. You have more and more sessional professors. I would be surprised if you were to go to a college or university in this province and the sessional, part-time, precarious workers—they're at post-secondary institutions, these precarious workers, where we send our children to get careers—I would be surprised if you could find less than 40% who are part-time, precarious employees in institutions where we're selling the dream of careers and a brighter future.

When you cut 10% from that, you raise that number, because the university has to function somehow. You cut services. You create situations where students don't have access to their professors, situations where the students can't meet with them because they teach at different schools or they have other jobs, to make ends meet. They can't get advice. They can't find them year to year. They can't get recommendations for work afterwards.

I want to talk about work afterwards, because another thing we're doing in the budget when it comes to post-secondary is, there used to be a grace period when you graduated where your interest didn't accumulate. We got rid of that, and I don't know why. I don't believe the government feels that struggling students have it too good, but for some reason, we got rid of this grace period. So now, the minute you graduate, the clock starts ticking and your debt piles up. The minute you graduate, you start paying, and collecting interest on your debt.

I was at Laurentian University. I have a few colleagues who are professors there, and I was talking to Professor Eger. She was telling me that even her students, her brightest students—and she has many of them. They run

the CROSH program for research in occupational safety and health, doing cutting-edge stuff—it's amazing. But even those students with these bright futures, who are head-hunted, who have jobs that are starting: Many of them are not starting the day they graduate. They're starting at a point in the future. So, even under the best of circumstances, even the students who have worked the hardest, who have excelled the best, who have put everything into it, are being punished, because they're going to start collecting debt, more debt than they had, with these high rates and these high loans.

0950

Students today who are coming in to university are going to have less services. The government is offering an opt-out program where you can opt out of certain services. I'll tell you, as somebody who lived in poverty, who went to school in poverty, every single nickel, every single penny was important. We still had pennies back then. Every single penny was important, and if there was an opportunity to opt out, I don't care what I needed to do; I would opt out.

When I went to school, we didn't have a bus pass integrated into tuition fees, so I walked to school. It sounds like one of those stories where it was in the winter and uphill both ways, but honestly, it was longer than you would want to walk to school, but I couldn't afford a bus pass. So I would opt out if it was available, but I would need a bus pass.

When you opt out of these optional services, what happens is—our post-secondary schools have food banks. Students don't have enough food and are going to school, and they'll opt out of that. Some will opt out because they don't need it; others who need it will opt out because they can't afford it. They won't say, "I'm opting out of food banks," but, "I'm just opting out of paying this additional fee." And the food banks will close.

Our support for the LGBTQ community in schools—the gay-straight alliances will lose funding and they'll close.

At Laurentian University they have community radio called CKLU. It's been around for about 35 years. Some 85% of the funding for CKLU comes from student fees, optional fees. This is a format where it's driven by volunteers, where community artists have the opportunity to perform and to share their records. They don't have to rely on labels or iTunes or any other expenses. People with different tastes in music and variety are able to play the music they like and share it with the community. They talk about the community and they don't have to worry about advertising; they don't have to worry about influence from the outside; they get to be community-funded. What happens to a university or college radio station when the optional funding dries up and goes away? Because they won't get it from the university. The university, as I said earlier, has 10% less of their funding to deal with in the first place. There is nothing left. Their cupboards are bare.

This is a precarious situation. We're pretending that it's good, but it's not. Like I said earlier, Speaker, it's a plastic carrot we're dangling in front of people.

About a minute and a half to go: I want to talk about something else that we haven't talked about when it comes to post-secondary school and I think is equally important. I was visiting CROSH, the Centre for Research in Occupational Safety and Health, and I was talking to one of their students, a master's student. She said that when she applied for OSAP for loans, her family had made too much money. They're struggling to make ends meet, but that's the reality of the system. All of us know this from our constituency offices, that sometimes the system goes like this and people don't fit. In order to get her undergrad, she had to work two part-time jobs and get her grades high enough to get into a master's program. She was successful at it, but there is no way you can do a master's program and work two or three jobs. You just can't do it. And she told me, "Frankly, I wouldn't be in a master's program."

Her brother is entering second-year university. He also wants to do a master's program—same family. He won't qualify for OSAP. And now that they've extended it beyond four years, that same format, he won't qualify when he enters his master's program. So her brother now, she is telling me, also might not do his master's degree, and if he's not going to do his master's degree, what's the point of going to university?

This is the choice the government is making with this budget. We are dangling plastic carrots and we're telling people it's great—a 10% tuition fee cut. We're not telling them we're taking it out of the schools and out of the students' pockets. We're not telling them they're getting less resources. We're not telling them the whole story about dental care for seniors: that it's only seniors who make \$19,300 or less and only if you can get to one of those 10 public health units.

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

Mr. Vincent Ke: It is my honour to stand up and speak again in support of Bill 100, the Protecting What Matters Most Act.

Speaker, this bill outlines our government's plan to balance the budget in five years, by 2023-24, with no new tax increases. Our budget will restore sustainability, transparency and accountability to our financial house. As well, this budget also protects what matters most.

Speaker, I would like to highlight the investment that our government is investing in health care. We are putting patients first by ending hallway health care. Hospitals will receive an additional \$384 million this fiscal year to maintain capacity and services. This budget includes \$17 billion in capital grants over the next decade to build and renew our hospitals—

Interjections.

Mr. Vincent Ke: Thank you.

The introduction of an investment of a new dental program for low-income seniors—\$174 million will be provided to support mental health and addiction services, and we will commit \$1.75 billion over five years to create 15,000 new long-term-care beds.

By passing Bill 100, we will be protecting health care for the people who need the services the most.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Sudbury for his comments and for sharing his personal story. It's also important to recognize that he's an excellent advocate for his community, talking about the needs of Highway 69—the remaining 68 kilometres to be expanded.

I'd like to discuss the comments he made about the deep cuts to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services of \$1 billion a year. It has just come to the news recently that there was an internal report from the government entitled “High Sensitivity—Confidential Advice to Cabinet,” which talked about the deep cuts that this government was proposing, in particular to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. In that report, it says that the reckless and inhumane cuts to this ministry would result in “danger to life for children and youth at risk or in need of protection.” Many families “will be at higher risk of going into crises.” That's not “crisis,” singular; that's “crises,” government.

The government entitles this budget Protecting What Matters Most. But it's abundantly clear that vulnerable children do not matter to this government. Developmental services do not matter to this government, and children with special needs do not matter to this government. Otherwise, there would not be this report, which is exposing that these deep cuts, projected to be \$11 billion, would undermine the life and the safety and the health of so many people across this province.

I'm so glad that the government pulled back, but quite frankly \$1 billion a year out of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is reprehensible. It is hideous. It is going to destroy lives.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments? I recognize the member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Good morning, Madam Speaker. I listened intently to the member from Sudbury and how he spoke about seniors' dental care. I do work and currently spend a lot of time with many seniors' groups in the GTA who are hailing this as finally where a government is listening to them. I've received numerous emails. I've had many phone calls and many visits from seniors who believe that this is a great first step and thank our government for acknowledging and implementing this program—of course, if Bill 100 passes. I know that the opposition agrees with providing dental care for seniors, which is one of the reasons that they should support this budget.

Our government is protecting what matters most to Ontarians, which is why we are investing in health care and hospitals and we're providing \$17 billion over the next 10 years to modernize and increase capacity, hoping to end hallway health care. We're listening to the great people of this province, who told us that we had to tackle the overcrowding in hospitals, which is why we're allocating funds to build 15,000 new long-term-care beds to move those people out of the hospitals and into that alternative level of care, which they desperately need.

1000

I believe what is most important is to assist our constituents and help create the environment to make Ontario the best place to open a business, to expand and to hire. We are well on our way, here and all over the world, to tell the business community that this is the place to be.

Now, I have just a few moments, but I do want to talk about how the member from Sudbury spoke about being raised by a single mom. My father passed away when I was only eight years old, leaving my mom to raise six children by herself. She worked very hard—not only full-time; she actually opened a business. So I saw first-hand the difficulty in how it is for a single parent to raise children. That's why I think it gives us and our caucus a great reason to be here and to help raise all Ontarians out of poverty.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I would like to thank the member from Sudbury. He's very passionate and caring for the residents throughout Ontario, and bringing the decency to bring forward the reality that's going to happen to our seniors and their dental care, and making sure that we bring the point across and making sure that it's a fact that people know that we're going from 35 units to 10 across Ontario.

In this bill, it's just an unnecessary long list of amendments and policies. Not all of the amendments and enactments are bad—I think most of them are—however, this government once again is trying to reduce government accountability and attack unionized workers and small business owners, and it's through these policies that we, as the opposition, will oppose Bill 100.

One aspect that concerns me—again, mentioned by my other colleague here from London—is schedule 17, the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act. It's within this clause that the government releases themselves and the crown of being liable in lawsuits. They are stripping themselves, our ministries and our ministers' officials from essentially owning up to their own wrongdoings, whether that's presently or historically. It's truly sad that this government would implement a new act which could end up being detrimental to vulnerable populations such as our First Nations people: for example, class-action lawsuits brought forth by survivors of residential schools or lawsuits brought forth over issues concerning land ownership etc. This move proves that Premier Ford's government is out to abuse their powers. The Premier's own words were quite clear saying—

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

I return to the member from Sudbury for his comments.

Mr. Jamie West: I want to thank the member from St. Catharines for her comments, and also the member opposite—sorry, I wrote your name down instead of your riding—who talked about seniors and dental care and talked about her mom raising her and five of her siblings by herself. Understanding the struggle and hard work of people that are doing that is important to me.

When it comes to seniors' dental care, dental care is something that is important to me. As someone who grew up in poverty, we couldn't afford dental care. The first time I went to the dentist, I was eight years old; I had seven fillings. The second time I went to the dentist, I had a tooth pulled out of the side of my mouth. You can't see it on the camera, but if you're close enough you can see it on the left side of my mouth.

For the past 17 years, before the election, I was in a unionized company and we could afford dental care, and I could have it fixed; I could have a crown—I make a decent wage, especially here; we make good wages—but I don't, because I believe in dental care for all of us or none of us. When I'm concentrating, when I'm thinking about stuff, my tongue goes into that spot where my tooth used to be, and it reminds me there are inequities in this province. It reminds me that we need to think about people who can't afford that, people who, when they're in their twenties, get to have a tooth yanked out of their mouth because they can't afford the repairs that are needed.

I want to thank the member from London North Centre for his comments as well. I think that's the closest I'll get to be called an all-star, so thank you.

The member opposite from Don Valley North, who talked about what matters most—I think that's where we are divided. In the budget, we talk about rebranding; we talk about licence plates and logos. What matters most to me is shelter and taking care of the homeless. The Salvation Army men's shelter is closed. Geneva House hasn't had a raise for years. They protect women in vulnerable situations. What matters most to me is funding for autism and the size of our classrooms.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I'm pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of my constituents of Scarborough–Guildwood to speak to Bill 100. I will be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa–Vanier.

Madam Speaker, in 2018, Ontario's real GDP is projected to increase by a moderate 2.2%, following four years of stronger-than-average growth. Over the past four years, real GDP has averaged 2.5%, the fastest pace of growth since the mid-2000s and leading the G7.

The Ford government inherited a strong economy. Ontarians need to know that the \$15-billion deficit never existed and that the Ford government will continue to use it as a club to drive down spending and justify deep cuts to services that the people of Ontario depend on.

The governor of the Bank of Canada, Stephen Poloz, noted last month that the government of Ontario's spending cuts will drag down Canada's overall economy. The Ford Conservative budget leads to a decline in Canada's financial outlook by 0.2%. Fiscal spending at the federal and in some provincial levels has actually increased during this time, but the aggressive austerity here in Ontario is enough to offset all of those increases.

What this government is doing is hurting our economy, it's hurting our province and it is dragging down Canada's economy. Governments are meant to support individuals

and create an economy in which they are able to flourish. By cutting spending to a level that fails to provide a lot of the basic services that governments are responsible for providing, you're trying to balance the books on the backs of people, and those people who need it the most. Cuts hurt, and cuts are going to hurt more with the most vulnerable: those communities in the north, those priority communities, those places where vulnerable people reside. This government's inaction in areas to provide protection for vulnerable people will have dire consequences.

Campaign 2000 measures the rates of child poverty by riding across the country. Sadly, in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood and, in fact, in four of the Scarborough ridings, we make the top 30 in all of Canada for rates of child poverty. Even with those stark numbers, this government's cuts to services like public health will hurt people. It puts breakfast programs and meal programs at risk.

In spite of Ontario's per capita provincial spending already being lower than the rest of Canada—20% lower—the Ford government is determined to widen that gap. As predicted, this government will be making substantial cuts in government services, using that manufactured \$15 billion as a deficit club to justify their needless cuts to programs and services that people rely on.

As the Financial Accountability Officer revealed recently, Ontario invests less in public services than any other province and is falling further and further behind. In fact, this budget takes us even further. The FAO's report in February compared Ontario's spending to the rest of Canada and shows the truth: that we are not in the dire situation that the Ford government is repeating. In fact, this is fearmongering to everyday Ontarians.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Kitchener–Conestoga will come to order.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: At \$9,829, Ontario spends about \$2,000 less per person on provincial programs than the average of other provinces. In 2017, Ontario collected \$10,415 per person when it comes to collection of revenue. That's the lowest in the country. So this government must understand that we're spending the lowest per person on programs and services, we're collecting the least amount in revenues from taxes, and that impacts the level of services on people. So there is no justification for these deep, callous cuts.

1010

Health spending will increase by 1.6%, according to this budget, but that's well below the rate of inflation. So, really, our health spending is seeing a cut. In addition, the Ford government has committed to cutting public health by \$200 million per year, downloading its responsibility onto the backs of municipalities. We only have one taxpayer, Madam Speaker, and if services are to be provided, where is this resource going to be coming from? Where is this resource going to be coming from? Is this an additional Ford tax? Some of our municipalities are actually threatening to reopen their budgets and add this Ford tax

to cover those services that they are required to provide but that are experiencing cuts from this government.

Public health units are often on the front lines of both prevention and treatment, and keep stress out of hospitals and their emergency rooms. It makes it more manageable. Without these public health units, people will be left behind to scramble and find alternative means of support in the health care system. I've talked in this House about how northern communities feel these cuts the most. They go deeper, considering their vast geography.

Education will also see cuts. I know that in the budget, we see perhaps a slight increase, but what comprises that increase? Is it simply accounting changes as it relates to the recognition of pensions? When we look at the specific numbers of what we're spending on a per-pupil basis, we see that that has gone down from \$12,300 per pupil to \$12,246. Madam Speaker, when you see this decline, behind that decline, it means less teachers, less support staff, less caretakers, less EAs, less support in our classrooms. These cuts will hurt students. Ontario's 5,000 schools and two million students and their families deserve better. Deprioritizing our education hurts our future, frankly.

Let's look at post-secondary education and training. That's going to be cut by over \$700 million in this budget—talk about deprioritizing the skills and the talents of our future. How will we prepare for responses for the next generation? How will we grow our economy?

Children and social services spending will decline by an average of 2.1% per year, and the estimates confirm this cut. Ontario's children, community, and social services ministry will receive roughly \$1 billion in cuts—\$1 billion, Madam Speaker—cuts to the Family Responsibility Office, to the financial and employment supports that people rely on, the most vulnerable in our community, children and youth at risk, women's issues, language training and settlement supports. No wonder the Premier was booed recently at the Special Olympics opening ceremonies. These are some of the casualties from this government's rampage on social services. Why are they attacking the most vulnerable in our communities? With these cuts, and the estimates confirming them, we know that this will have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable Ontarians.

I cannot close my remarks, Madam Speaker, without talking about the cuts to Indigenous affairs. This ministry will see a reduction by almost half in supports. This just shows and confirms the lack of respect for truth and reconciliation and Indigenous peoples in terms of the supports that are required.

Let's look at justice—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I apologize for interrupting the member. She will have more time in the next round of debate.

Third 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 today.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I wish to begin by welcoming some guests who are with us in the Speaker's gallery this morning: Julie Colehour and Bryan Cohen from Seattle, Washington, and Ciro Dias dos Reis from Sao Paulo, Brazil; with their Canadian Public Relations Organisation International partners Howard Brown and Kim Cohen. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Also in the Speaker's gallery are representatives from the Canadian Celiac Association, and they are Melissa Secord, Jessica Danford, David Congram, Janet Bolton and Dr. Maria Ines Pinto Sanchez. They are joining us this morning as part of Celiac Awareness Day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: Once again, I'd like to welcome back to the Legislature Amy Moledzki, Michau van Speyk, Kowthar Dore, Faith Munoz and her son, Jeremy Changoo. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I also want to mention that we have some members of the Canadian Celiac Association here. Everybody should have a green button to raise awareness of celiac disease. There's also a photo on the grand staircase right after the vote after question period. I hope to see many of you there.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I proudly would like to introduce Sue Milling, the executive director of ACTRA Toronto; David Sparrow, national president of ACTRA; and Deb McGrath, general council member. I'm looking forward to meeting with them today.

I'd also like to welcome Gwyn Chapman, who has brought 66 Black youth to the Legislature once again to inspire our youth in politics. Thank you, and welcome to your House.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'd like to introduce to the Legislature this morning the regional director of Ontario for Cystic Fibrosis Canada, Patricia McLaughlin; a parent from the Brantford-Hamilton area, Danielle Weil; and, from my great riding of Chatham-Kent, I would also like to introduce Ann Pharazyn.

I'd like to remind all members that there is a cystic fibrosis luncheon in room 228 immediately following question period.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to introduce, in the west gallery, John Landreville and his wife, Janet Lee; as well as Allison Knudsen and her wife, Shauna Budden; and Anne Marie Canning. They were here for a press conference. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm thrilled to welcome to Queen's Park Nicholas Canade and his mother, Mary. As assistant captain to the Mississauga Steelheads, Nic is a leader on the ice and in the community. He raised \$6,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society and was recognized as the OHL's Humanitarian of the Year and winner of the Hazel McCallion Community Service Award. Welcome.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I just want to introduce my constituent, Julie Dale, who is here, I'm sure, in support of her page, Cameron Dale.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to welcome Kevin Dahi, the president and founder of White Distillery, a

proud Ontarian entrepreneur who is here today to discuss red tape issues and share some of his advice to help open Ontario for business.

Mr. Aris Babikian: I would like to welcome Ciprian Nastase, a resident of Scarborough–Agincourt and the father of page captain Maria Nastase. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I’m pleased to introduce Caitlin Burkholder, who is a former team member in my constituency office and an intern now at Queen’s Park. Welcome, Caitlin.

Mr. Paul Miller: Joining us today is ACTRA Toronto. They are here en masse, and I’m going to introduce some of the members of the actors guild. We have Amanda Joy, Angelica Alejandro, Ayla Lukic-Roman, Chandra Galasso, David Fox, David Gale, Debra McGrath, Emily Nixon, Joey Klein, Ron Lea and Samora Smallwood. Welcome.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I’m excited to introduce Dr. Oleh Waler and Markian Waler, the brother and father of Laryssa Waler. They are great Canadians hailing from St. Catharines. Welcome to the people’s Legislature.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I would like to introduce my friends from China: Chen Qingwei, Ding Gounan and Ding Yue Feng. They have come to Canada for a business trip, and they just arrived at the airport last night. Welcome to the Queen’s Park.

Ms. Doly Begum: I would like to introduce my good friend, Lele Truong, in the House today. Welcome.

Hon. Doug Ford: I’d like to wish a happy birthday to two of my all-star team members, Jessica Lippert, director of legislative affairs, and Andrew Koolsbergen, my director of issues management.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I am honoured to welcome the parents and family members of Caleah Burke, our page who is here today: her mother, Jana Burke, and father Stephen Burke, as well as her uncles and aunts Timothy Burke, Kathryn Mooij and Nicola Keene. Welcome.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I have a couple of introductions. I’d like to welcome students who will be visiting Queen’s Park today from Crawford Adventist Academy, grades 5 and 6.

I’d also like to welcome Jeremy, from George B. Little Public School in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood.

I noticed that in the media gallery we have Kerry Lee Crawford from G98.7, Steps After Dark. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, not to outdo the Premier but we had four birthdays this week: Jill Andrew, Gilles Bisson, Gurratan Singh and Rima Berns-McGown. To everybody who is celebrating their birthday this week, congratulations.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let’s keep this mood going for the next hour and a bit.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I’m pleased to introduce Clara Pistocia, who is here in the Ontario Legislature. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Stan Cho: It’s my privilege to introduce Richelle Nemeth and her son, Reese. Reese served as my canvass-

ing chair during my campaign. It’s exciting to see him continue to make his family proud by being here at Queen’s Park for the summer as part of the PC caucus intern program. A big welcome to Reese and Richelle.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Before I welcome my guests today I want to say to all the pages, since this is your last day here, that I’m very proud of all the accomplishments and the amazing things that I have seen. I’ve seen you grow over the last few weeks here since your first orientation day. My daughter Sarah is with you this time. I would like to welcome my husband and her father, Craig Fee, to the Legislature.

1040

Hon. Todd Smith: I just wanted to introduce my good friend Gwyn Chapman. She’s coming into the Legislature very shortly here. She’s trying to get a great group of sharp-dressed students from Crawford Seventh-day Adventist school into the Legislature for question period. They’re participating in the Inspiring and Empowering Youth and Canadian Black Caucus inspiring youth politically event. Here they are right there. I told you they were sharply dressed, Mr. Speaker. Don’t they look great?

Applause.

Hon. Todd Smith: A couple other of Gwyn’s friends are here: Carol Shirliff-Hinds and Kerry-Lee Crawford has already been introduced, and Brenda Foreman as well.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Mr. Speaker, I’d like to make a point of order. I believe we have unanimous consent to wear pins to commemorate that May is Celiac Awareness Month. I know it’s an issue that was near and dear to your heart when you were just a lowly MPP like us.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Thornhill is seeking unanimous consent of the House to wear pins in recognition of Celiac Awareness Month. Agreed? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The Ford government has repeatedly claimed that no Ontarian will have to pay out of pocket for essential health services, and that OHIP coverage will be there for people with serious medical needs. Does the Premier stand by this commitment?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Of course we will be there to cover essential medical needs, but of course you understand what we inherited from the previous government, a \$15-billion deficit.

We are here to protect what matters most. We have undertaken a line-by-line review of everything in our

government, and we are focusing on the things that matter most to people, the things that are going to provide the best value to people. We need to modernize our health system to make sure it responds to the needs of people now and into the future. That's what we're concentrating on.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, Allison Knudsen and John Landreville are joining us today in the Legislature. They're in the opposition gallery. They both live with kidney failure and need regular dialysis treatments to stay healthy. On October 1, the Premier is planning to eliminate out-of-country health care coverage from OHIP, which will include coverage for dialysis. People like Allison and John can't get private travel insurance for dialysis treatments because insurance companies will not provide that coverage. So they will not be able to get private insurance.

Does the Premier feel they should never be allowed to leave the province, or that they should go in debt to do so?

Hon. Christine Elliott: The Out-of-Country Travellers Program spends a third of its funding on administration alone and has not historically provided Ontarians with meaningful travel coverage. People have been led to believe that they have greater coverage than they actually do, and I think it's important to tell Ontarians the truth so that they can provide for their own coverage when they're out of country.

Now, that said, I understand there are certain people we've discovered through our consultations, people who are on dialysis, who have difficulty obtaining private coverage. We look forward to working with you and with your guests today to work that out, to make sure they are able to travel and they are able to receive the coverage they need.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, this is exactly what happens when you cut before you consult, exactly the kind of problem that this government is creating all across our province. I can guarantee the Premier of this province that the thing that matters the most to Allison and to John is their health and their ability to get dialysis and live the kind of life they want to live.

Ontarians who need these life-saving treatments deserve the same opportunities as everyone else. That's why our public health care system is supposed to provide exactly that. With these cuts to OHIP, the Premier is effectively blocking people like Allison and John from leaving the province to visit their families, to go to school and to advance their careers. Will the Premier listen to Allison, John and those living with kidney failure across Ontario and reverse their reckless cuts to health care?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Speaker, through you, I would say to the leader of the official opposition that, again, a third of the expenses related to the out-of-country travellers program were being spent on administration. That is not providing good value to Ontario taxpayers. We want

to make sure that we put the money directly into front-line services.

We do understand that there may be special circumstances, people who are on dialysis programs who find it very difficult to obtain private coverage. We want to work with them to make sure they can receive the coverage they need so that they are able to travel.

We would also urge all Ontarians, when they are travelling, to please purchase private insurance. For most people it is not expensive and is easily obtained, but there are special circumstances and we look forward to working with you to resolve those issues.

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier, but I think the Minister of Health just acknowledged that people are going to have to pay out of pocket for health care, which is something the people of Ontario don't want. They don't want to have to pay out of pocket for health care, because only the people who can afford it will be able to do so, Speaker.

Today's Toronto Star reveals disturbing details of internal documents warning the Ford government that their plans for deep budget cuts would put families "at higher risk of going into crises" and pose "a danger to life for children and youth at risk or in need of protection."

Did the Premier read that document, Speaker? And if so, why did he cut \$1 billion from children, community and social services?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Once again, I reject the premise of the leader of the official opposition's question. She knows full well that \$1 billion was not taken from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. In fact, the budget this year has increased by almost \$300 million.

We have made historic investments in combatting violence against women. We have doubled the funding for autism services in the province of Ontario to over \$600 million. But we were elected to get this province back on track after 15 years of reckless spending, waste and mismanagement so that we could protect what matters most, and that is children and youth, community and social services, poverty reduction, immigrants, newcomers, veterans. That's who we're standing up for, Speaker, and that is why we considered a number of different options that were provided to us and why we rejected those that hurt the most vulnerable.

This is a government that will continue to protect what matters most, and I will have no part of listening to the fearmongering of the member opposite.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary question?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The government can spin all they want, Speaker, but the estimates are clear and the budget was clear. In last month's budget, the government

ignored warnings and made very deep cuts to Ontario's most vulnerable people, and they've made it clear that there are more cuts on the way.

How much more pain, how much more suffering, Speaker, can families in need expect from this Premier and his government?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, again, the leader of the official opposition is going down this path of fear-mongering, scaring people and trying to rile up Ontario's most vulnerable people. We were elected with a mandate to protect what matters most. We left no stone unturned. We looked at all of the options; we rejected most of those options.

But, Speaker, this is what this ministry has done: Since taking office, we have brought in a 1.5% increase in social assistance right across the board. This is a government that invested a historic \$174.5 million to combat violence against women. Our investments into autism services in the province of Ontario are well over \$600 million. We're doing that because we recognize that our health care system, our education system and our social service system are what people rely on right across this province. If the member opposite wants to engage in reckless rhetoric, she can continue to do that, but at every turn she'd better understand one thing: I will call her out and I will make sure—

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

Interjections.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I would respectfully submit that it is the government of Ontario, the Conservative government, that has already instilled fear in the people in our province who are the most vulnerable, and it is their reckless cuts that have done so. It is clear now exactly where the Ford government wants to take this province and the people of Ontario, especially the most vulnerable. Those people are the ones who are going to pay the highest price. This government has been warned that their cuts will put people's lives at risk including children's lives, devastate families, and will result in increased costs in health care, increased costs in policing, and increased costs in corrections, just to name a few.

1050

When will this Premier stop bellowing and start listening?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The member opposite engages in baseless rhetoric. She understands full well from the article that that was a draft document that was circulated in November, a full several months before the budget was tabled on April 11, which is the fiscal plan moving forward—which is what is protecting what matters most within the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, with historic investments into autism services, investing in children's treatment centres, ensuring that we can have a sustainable social assistance program, with the ministerial wraparound throughout the rest of government.

But let me be perfectly clear: She can talk about a draft, unsigned document all she wants. I'll talk about our

budget, which was tabled on April 11, and the estimates, where I look forward to actually engaging with the members opposite on what the truth is about the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, and this government for the people.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier, but I can assure the government that \$1 billion cut from children, community and social services—there's nothing “draft” about it. It is real and it is hurting people today.

For over a week now, the Sudbury hospital, Health Sciences North, has been struggling with a serious overcrowding situation. Last weekend, the hospital cancelled six surgeries and took the step of warning the public to expect longer-than-normal wait times and to receive care in hallways, closets and bathrooms. They now say that they're on the verge of declaring something called a code orange. A code orange is usually called to deal with community disasters such as large-scale accidents and occurrences with mass casualties. But the only large-scale disaster that's hitting Sudbury is the Ford government's disastrous health cuts.

Can the Premier tell us why he's making hallway medicine worse instead of better?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: We are certainly aware that Health Sciences North has faced financial problems over the last several years, and that they are working through it with the Ministry of Health officials. We are provided frequent reports about what's going on, but I think it is important to note that we are working on the front lines of health care, and are investing an extra \$384 million for Ontario's hospitals for next year.

We're certainly aware that many of Ontario's hospitals are overcapacity right now, that they are struggling with placing people in hallways and storage rooms and other inappropriate places. We've promised the people of Ontario that we would end hallway health care. We are putting that money into hospital operations this year, which should help to ease many of the situations Ontario hospitals are facing, including Health Sciences North.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the government's hospital funding barely keeps pace with inflation, much less the needs of a growing and aging population. But that's matched with funding cuts to eHealth, to public health and to health research, all of which mean less coordination, less disease prevention and more patients heading to emergency rooms already struggling with hallway medicine. That's what this government is bringing to Ontarians.

The Ford government promised investments to handle hallway medicine, but families are seeing nothing but cuts, cuts and more cuts, hospitals in crisis, front-line workers getting layoff notices, and more Ontarians in hallways.

Why is this what the government is offering Ontarians when they promised so much, much more?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Through you, Speaker: I think I need to remind the Leader of the Opposition of what we inherited last June—a \$15-billion deficit that we have to work through. We have to make choices. We went line by line—all of us went line by line—through our various budgets, and we are committed to protecting what matters most: health care and education.

In fact, in our budget, we committed to spending \$1.2 billion more in public health care. That is to help ease hallway health care, to help promote mental health and addictions plans, to modernize our health care system that we've spoken about many times here in the Legislature, and to make sure that we can respond to the needs of people now and into the future.

We are bringing forward digital health. We are bringing forward a mental health and addictions plan. We are supporting hospitals. We are supporting front-line care. That's what people care about. That's what we committed to doing. We are being responsible stewards of public money, and that is what we're going to make sure that we do for the people of Ontario, because that's what's most important to them.

JOB CREATION

Miss Kinga Surma: This question is for the Premier. Fifteen years of Liberal governance in our province has made life harder for Ontarians. The cost of hydro rates skyrocketed under a government that refused to listen to the people. The former Liberal government led Ontario down an unsustainable path. Endless taxes and unprecedented hydro rates burdened hard-working families and our most vulnerable.

Ontario voted for change last year. Our PC government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, is bringing relief to the province while restoring accountability and trust in our elected officials. Speaker, can the Premier please highlight the policies our government has introduced to provide relief for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our all-star MPP from Etobicoke Centre—absolute champion.

Mr. Speaker, after spending numerous years—actually decades—creating jobs here in Canada, creating jobs in the US, I understand what it takes to create jobs. We're making this atmosphere a lot easier for job creators to put money back into their business, to invest in equipment, to invest in people, to get the province going.

Mr. Speaker, under the previous government under the Liberals, we saw 300,000 jobs exit this province with the help of the NDP. They voted with the Liberals 98% of the time. They were connected at the hip. They destroyed this province and jacked up hydro rates. But guess what, Mr. Speaker? We're turning the province around. Just last month alone, we created 30,000 jobs for young people and a total of—

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

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary question.

Miss Kinga Surma: What's absolutely clear is that this is a government that is for the people. We have committed to making life more affordable today and for years to come. While the federal government continues to make life more expensive through their senseless carbon tax, our government remains steadfast in delivering on our promises to the people of Ontario. We are standing up for seniors, students, front-line workers and everyone in between. Our accomplishments so far demonstrate that.

Could the Premier please tell us more about this government and how he is standing up for the people of this province?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I thank the MPP from Etobicoke Centre for her question.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, just last month alone, in April, we created 30,000 jobs for young people, 47,000 in total in April. This is unprecedented in Ontario: In 10 months, we created 170,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker, and it sure wasn't from the help of the NDP, who get up there and all they want to do is raise taxes, tax the people to death. They're constantly having their hands in their pockets, along with their buddies the Liberals.

It's all about tax and spend with the opposition; we took a different approach. We got elected to straighten out the fiscal disaster. We inherited a bankrupt province, Mr. Speaker. We inherited a \$15-billion deficit, the largest subsovereign debt in the entire world, created by them. They destroyed the province. We're turning it around—

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Next question.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the member for Brantford-Brant took to Twitter, apparently shocked and confused by stories of cancelled courses at schools in his riding, and he pleaded with constituents to tell him if they have had courses cancelled so he could "see what's going on."

Speaker, I can help explain what's going on. The Grand Erie District School Board has already told 21 elementary teachers and 84 secondary teachers they won't have jobs this fall. Students in every community will be directly impacted, no matter which side of this House their MPP sits on. So far, the Premier has refused to take responsibility for these painful cuts. Will he listen to his own members?

1100

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the MPP from Brantford is an absolute champion. I've been out there. The people love him. He has created thousands of jobs in his riding. He's listening to the people. He's instrumental in turning this province around. He's a true leader in our caucus.

I just want to remind the opposition that we increased education by \$700 million. It's simple. Anyone can figure two plus two out. Maybe the opposition can't figure out what two plus two is. We're creating more spots for education, putting money back into the classroom.

It's very simple. You add up the teachers. All the teachers in the province is roughly 200,000 of them. Guess how many students there are? There's two million. Do the math, Mr. Speaker. That's one in 10—one in 10.

We're putting money back into the classrooms, not all the layers of bureaucracy, not all the school boards that sit there—

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I think the Premier needs to go back and learn how to read a budget, because we are seeing the impact of these devastating cuts in our classrooms today, and it's only getting worse.

Every single day, the devastating impact of these cuts—*Interjections.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the member for Davenport for having to interrupt her. I will ask the government members once again to come to order.

Start the clock. The member for Davenport.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I appreciate that it's difficult news for the government, but every day, the devastating impact of these cuts is more apparent, and every day, this Premier and his Minister of Education deny and deflect and delay.

Next week, as the members opposite head back to their ridings, they'll have to answer to their own constituents about why they want to shortchange our kids: cutting courses, cutting supports, reducing one-on-one time with teachers. Will the Premier use next week to rethink this disastrous plan and come back with one that will strengthen our public education system and put students first?

Hon. Doug Ford: You know, the member and the opposition keep saying "cuts." What cuts? They can't name any because there haven't been any.

We've increased \$700 million. I'm going to send them to a math class, each and every one of them, because they can't add. It's \$700 million we're putting back into education. But that's not it: We're putting \$1.6 billion more in education, protecting every teacher's job. I can't wait till September so all the rhetoric and nonsense that we've heard from the opposition, all the rhetoric we've heard from the teachers' unions, which don't have the teachers' best interests—you know, Mr. Speaker, in September, we're going to say, "We told you so. There weren't any cuts."

We're putting more money into education, more money into the classroom. That's what it's about. We're in this shape because they spent \$15 billion.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: My question is for the minister who builds up success, the Minister of Infrastructure. Last week I was in Red Rock for an exciting announcement. Our government for the people marked the start of a new Red Rock waste water treatment plant.

Water quality, as you know, is fundamental to healthy and sustainable communities. This new investment supports quality infrastructure that people need. Red Rock's new water treatment facility will keep citizens healthy, protect the environment and allow more people to enjoy Nipigon Bay. This critical project is especially important because Nipigon Bay is identified as an area of concern under the Canada-US Great Lakes water treatment agreement.

Can the minister please tell us about this great project and how this investment will not just grow the economy but help the environment?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the member from Barrie–Innisfil for that excellent question. The new waste water treatment project in Red Rock that the parliamentary assistant announced on behalf of our government will benefit people and the environment. Our government is contributing two thirds of the total cost of this project, Mr. Speaker, more than \$17 million. This plant will improve water quality in the region, to ensure economic prosperity for area residents and protect waterways and fish habitats.

Infrastructure truly matters. With this critical investment, we are ensuring quality water for the community while following through on our environmental commitment through our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan.

This is yet another way we're highlighting our commitment to helping the environment without the need of Justin Trudeau's carbon tax. With the right infrastructure investments, we're protecting what matters most and putting people at the centre of everything that we do.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you for that wonderful answer, Minister. My follow-up question is to see the encouraging benefits of this project that will bring benefits to the members of Red Rock and to Nipigon Bay. It's another example of how our made-in-Ontario plan for the environment is working. And it's an environment plan—it's not a tax plan—that will not only help our environment, but protect our economy and enable economic development in places like Thunder Bay, Red Rock and Nipigon Bay.

As you've seen, 15 years of fiscal mismanagement by the NDP-Liberal coalition left many vulnerable communities in a state where they need a lot of help. But there is hope, Mr. Speaker, hope again, that our government is now keeping our promise to bring the province back on track for fiscal responsibility.

My follow-up question to the minister is: Can he tell this House why it's so important to protect what matters most and to balance the books in Ontario, to bring us back to prosperity?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you again to the member for that great question. Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more. Putting this province back on track means getting our fiscal house in order. We are turning this province around. We're building smart infrastructure investments at the right time and in the right place.

Ontario's 2019 budget lays out a comprehensive five-year path to balance while protecting what matters most to the people of this province. This \$17-million investment means economic development in the region, making it attractive for businesses and good jobs. It's the right investment that will directly improve water quality on Nipigon Bay.

Northern Ontario is truly now open for jobs. We're helping communities with their critical infrastructure needs and fulfilling our commitment to helping the environment, all while creating jobs, helping families and protecting what matters most.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is for the Premier. On March 26, the Peel District School Board sent a letter to the Minister of Education outlining serious concerns with this government's cuts to education. Because the minister failed to respond, yesterday the school board sent another letter, highlighting the impact that the government's cuts and larger class sizes will have on students in Brampton and the Peel region.

I can appreciate that the minister maybe gets a lot of emails, so I'm happy, if a page is willing to come over, to send this letter over to the minister so that she can review it, and there is a copy here for the Premier as well.

In this letter, they warn that schools will be left with limited or no elective courses, which will have "significant, negative impact on some subject areas."

Does the Premier believe that cutting all elective courses will improve learning outcomes for students in Brampton and across the Peel region?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Education.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, it's another day and another opportunity to talk about how we need to get this province back on track. The fact of the matter is, we're spending \$36 million a day in interest on the debt and deficit that we inherited from a failed Liberal government, so we all have to do our part.

When I'm consulting across this province, I'm hearing from teachers, "Look to the boards," to see what they can do to find some savings. Really, we're standing with teachers, we're standing with students and we're standing with parents when we say: "School boards, stop the fear-mongering." Opposition party, stop the fear-mongering. The fact of the matter is, they are able to look within and find the appropriate savings.

Let's focus on what matters most and protect what matters most. That's the learning environment in the classroom. School boards have—

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

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Ms. Sara Singh: Students across the Peel region have spoken out about the cuts to their education. Whether it's cancelling courses, cutting jobs or increasing class sizes, people across this province are concerned, concerned about the cancelled elective courses. The Peel District

School Board says, "For certain students, these types of courses are key to their ongoing engagement in school, as they are disciplines that inspire and motivate learners. The elimination or reduction of these courses can decrease student engagement, which is directly linked to student achievement, credit acquisition and, ultimately," these students' "ability to graduate."

So I'll ask again: Why is this Premier making it so hard for students in this province to complete the courses they need to graduate and earn their high school diplomas?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, what we just heard from the member opposite is absolutely a positive proof point of why we need to have a board governance review. That nonsense that's coming from that board is absolutely mean-spirited. They're purposely creating anxiety for students and parents and teachers alike.

We look forward to making sure that school boards pull up their socks, because they can look from within to find savings to make sure we have the best learning—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Leader of the Opposition has to come to order. The opposition caucus has to come to order so as to allow the Minister of Education to respond.

Minister?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, I am very, very pointed when I say it's not an accident that people across this province have asked us to do a board governance review, because they are sick and tired of the mismanagement at the board level. Absolutely, the rhetoric that comes from that board is unacceptable, because we need to make sure that our school boards are a responsible administration. They can look within to find savings as opposed to fear-mongering with students and teachers.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The next question: the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. OBIO came to Queen's Park this week to talk about the importance—

Interjections.

Mr. Doug Downey: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There are no points of order during question period.

I've been advised that the member for Guelph has asked a question in this round and is not eligible to ask a question at this time.

Next question.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Our government's plan for social assistance is about a more effective, sustainable approach to helping people prepare to return to work and achieve better outcomes.

The minister has often said that the best social safety net is a compassionate society, and the best social program in the province of Ontario is a job. Our government has

created 170,000 new jobs since June 2018. Can the minister outline how our government's social assistance reforms will allow the province's most vulnerable to lift themselves out of poverty?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I think that was a very important question, and I'm glad to be able to answer it. As we all know, social assistance in the province of Ontario costs Ontario about \$10 billion. We have about a million people who are on social assistance, yet still, one in seven people live or are trapped in the cycle of poverty. We need to change that.

Over the past 15 years, the number of Ontarians forced to go on social assistance has skyrocketed by a whopping 55%, yet at the same time we know we have 200,000 jobs that remain unfilled in the province of Ontario. In the last several months, after taking office, Premier Ford and our finance minister and our team have been able to grow the economy by another 170,000 jobs, which we're very proud of.

We believe there are hundreds of thousands of people on social assistance who are employable, who deserve the dignity and respect of a job. That's why we're creating wraparound supports with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities so that we can train people for the jobs that are out there, so that they can actually have a paycheque from a company and they can ensure that they are looking after themselves and their families. We believe the best social—

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Thank you to the minister for the work she is doing to support the province's most vulnerable.

Almost one million Ontarians are on some form of social assistance. Under the previous Liberal government, these individuals were met with a system of disjointed and patchwork supports that trapped our neighbours in a cycle of poverty that is difficult to escape.

I was disappointed to learn that, as a result, only 1% of people on social assistance re-enter the workforce in a given month.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on how our government's social assistance reforms will help Ontario's most vulnerable get themselves back on a path towards self-reliance?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I think that it's important that we have strong families, safer streets and self-reliance in the province of Ontario. That is what we aim to do in the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. That's why we're working with the other ministries in the humanities so that we can best approach the wraparound supports that are needed by those who are on social assistance, so they can get back into the workforce, they can get the mental health support that they need, they can get the child care that they desperately require, and ensure that they don't pay as much tax, which is why we brought in the LIFT tax credit.

This is a government that's doing things differently. We're working together. We're leveraging the whole-of-

government approach, which is something I'm quite proud of.

And as I mentioned at the beginning of the question, we're working with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to get people employment-ready so they can get back into the workforce, they can have the dignity and respect of a job, and they can contribute to our great and wonderful society here in the province of Ontario.

But, Speaker, as we continue the reforms in social assistance, I must say that we want to continue to protect what matters most. What matters most is a compassionate society in the province of Ontario, which is what we're continuing to build.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Last Friday, we got word in the region of Waterloo that their public health unit was to be merged with Peel and Halton regions, as well as Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph. This new public health unit will serve nearly three million people with very different needs over a large geographic area.

Couple this with millions of dollars in cuts, and people and medical officers are justifiably worried. Why? Because there will be less money to serve more people, and there is no evidence to suggest that the government understands the consequences of their cuts and of this move.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government not thinking before they act?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: We are modernizing our public health system so that it's going to be able to respond to the needs of Ontarians now and into the future.

The document that the member was referring to is a consultation document. No boundaries have been decided upon yet. That is subject to consultations with the local health units as well as with the municipalities, just for purposes of discussion, to understand what the appropriate boundaries should be.

There is nothing carved in stone as yet. I think that will become clearer as we have those discussions and as we speak with municipalities and the public health units. There is no need to push the panic button.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: And yet the Peterborough medical officer says that there was no consultation about the proposed boundaries of the new public health agencies. She said, "We've not even been given any rationale for why the regions look the way they do."

Mr. Speaker, public health works because it prevents the spread of disease and other negative health outcomes. For every \$1 spent on immunizations there are \$45 worth of savings to the health care system. These are smart investments in the health care system.

At a time when hospitals are overcrowded, we have a record number of people dying from opioid overdoses and

measles cases have been reported in Toronto, these public health cuts are frankly irresponsible. Public health officers and medical experts are telling the government this. Why are you not listening?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I remind the members to make their comments through the Chair. I recognize the minister again to reply.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you, Speaker.

While, in fact, consultations are happening through technical tables that have been established, there will be consultation with the local health units. There will be consultation with municipalities about the appropriate boundaries, to make sure that the needs of Ontarians are going to be met.

I am confident that, with the monies that the local health units and the broader, bigger health units, as they're established, are going to receive, they will be able to meet the public health needs of their communities, making sure that people receive the vaccinations that they need, making sure that the children's and other breakfast and lunch programs are continued, making sure that the needs of people with special needs are being met. All of those things can and will be accomplished if people set their minds to the priorities of what public health units are set up for.

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We were established to be financial stewards of public funds provincially. We take that seriously, and we know that the public health units will do the same, to make sure that those priorities are covered.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Speaker, my question is to the Solicitor General. Parliamentarians of all political stripes have a duty to stand up in the defence of tolerance, inclusion and freedom. Disturbingly, in 2019, in this pluralistic liberal democracy, we are seeing a troubling escalation of hate crimes targeting people of all faiths, including against Jews in this country—anti-Semitic acts perpetrated to divide, to intimidate and to inflict violence.

It is incumbent on all members of this Legislature to denounce this hate and to name it and to shame it. In communities like my own, in Vaughan, and across this province and the globe, we've seen the highest number of hate crimes ever recorded targeting our Jewish neighbours. Most recently, a more perverse, new anti-Semitism is emerging that demonizes Israel and her citizens, the homeland of the Jewish people.

To the Solicitor General: Will you commit to an unrelenting campaign, a whole-of-government effort, to combat anti-Semitism and all forms of hate in communities across this province?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the member from King–Vaughan for raising this important issue today. It deserves the attention of every single member, as he mentioned.

I want to start by stating that our government has absolutely zero tolerance for hate, racism, discrimination or

violence in all its forms. This is not a partisan issue. I know that members and colleagues from both sides will, at every opportunity, join me in denouncing racial discrimination.

Let me be clear: Ontario is one of the safest and most accepting jurisdictions in the entire world in which to be a minority. But sadly, hate persists on the margins, promoted by a destructive few who seek to sow divisions within our communities.

We know that racism, in its many forms, is a threat here in Ontario. Some people in Ontario, including in the Black, Indigenous, Jewish and Muslim communities, deal with systemic racism and bias on a regular basis.

As Solicitor General and the minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate, I can firmly say that we won't stand idle and allow these acts to continue.

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Back to the minister: Learned members of this House will take note of Sir Winston Churchill's comments. He said, "Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it."

Every member of this House has a moral duty to stand up against acts of violence and racism targeting minority faith communities in this country. We live in a time when anti-Semitism is on the rise across the globe, from Toronto to Paris to Buenos Aires. Here at home, we expect all levels of government to denounce violence and division within the province.

With the proliferation of hatred targeting Jews around world, now more than ever it is incumbent on our federal government to advance a principled foreign policy that promotes the values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

To the Solicitor General: Can you outline the steps this government is taking to keep people safe, to stand up for victims, and to get tough on those who target Canadians simply because of their faith?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the member for taking a leadership role on these important issues. Government also has a leading role to play in eliminating anti-Semitism and all forms of hate across our province. We're working with our partners and the people of Ontario to address these threats to the safety of our communities and everyone who calls Ontario home.

As a government, we've promised to give our police the tools, resources and support they need to do their job. That includes fighting hate crimes.

But building a more inclusive society doesn't just fall to government. It is on us, as citizens, to learn about hatred in all of its forms; to learn about history so that it doesn't repeat itself; and to recognize our own biases.

Most importantly, it's up to each and every one of us to call out racism and hatred when we witness it. That takes courage to do sometimes, Speaker, but we absolutely must do it. Together we can ensure that the rights and freedoms of everyone in Ontario are respected, and we can work together to combat the threat of racial discrimination in the places where we work, where we go to school and the communities where we live, for the future of our children.

PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Earlier this month, the government told the Middlesex-London Paramedic Service that their budget would be frozen for this year. This week, the Middlesex-London Paramedic Service released their projections on what that funding freeze will mean to paramedic services in the London area, and it's not good. They are projecting a \$750,000 hole in their budget, which will be made up by possible increases to Londoners' property tax bills so that services don't need to be cut.

Why is the Premier forcing London to contemplate raising property taxes so they can properly fund life-saving paramedic services?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Paramedic services are extremely important both in terms of their traditional role and some less traditional roles that they are fulfilling, but we are consistently sticking with a stable funding for paramedics to make sure that they can continue to do the work that they're doing.

We also want to make sure that we can upgrade their technology so that they can have faster-access dispatch and sending people out so that by the time the paramedics arrive on the scene, they understand what the specific circumstances are that they need to deal with and they can provide those life-saving services faster, because time is of the essence, as you know. We want to make sure that people can get the treatment they need, whether en route to hospital or maybe even being directly provided by paramedics.

So we support them, we appreciate the great work that they're doing, and we are supplying them with stable funding.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: According to the warden of Middlesex county, the paramedic services budget is "the lowest possible it can be. With the cuts now we can only look at reopening the budget, but realistically there isn't much to shave off." The government's funding freeze will put the people of London and Middlesex county at risk. When people have a medical emergency, they call 911, and they know that the emergency medical services will be there to help save their lives. Why is the Premier freezing funding that paramedic services need to save lives?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Municipalities received a 5.8% increase in ambulance service funding in 2017 and a 5.3% increase in funding in 2018. Our government is providing stable funding this year to provide the paramedics and the services they provide with the revenue that they need. Again, I need to remind the member that we inherited a \$15-billion deficit, the largest subsovereign debt in the world. We have to balance that against the needs of people, to provide people with a quality education and the health services that they need.

I am confident, with the increases that they've had over the past years and with the stable funding that they're

receiving this year, our paramedics will be able to continue to do the great work that they do in communities across Ontario.

HOUSING

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Most of us in this House have likely rented at least once in their lifetime. For some, it was when you left your parents' home for the first time. For others, it was when moving to a new city. And some could be renting now.

However, Mr. Speaker, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find rentals in Mississauga and across Ontario. There are record low vacancy rates, and it is clear that there are not enough homes for the people of Ontario, which in turn drives up costs. When rent control was expanded in 2017, there were reports of planned purpose-built rental units being cancelled. That is unacceptable.

Can the minister please inform the House of what actions our government has taken to help make rentals more affordable and accessible across Ontario?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member for Mississauga East-Cooksville for that great question and also for his advocacy on the housing file in his riding.

Interjections.

Hon. Steve Clark: Yes, you should give him a hand.

Speaker, as I've said many times in this House, we have a supply problem. As the member notes, we were seeing record vacancy shortages in many communities across Ontario. We're putting forward a number of measures to increase the housing supply in Ontario, especially purpose-built rentals that our province needs so desperately.

Last fall, as part of our fall economic statement, we exempted new rental units from rent controls, while protecting existing tenants. This exemption creates a positive investment environment. Again, we hope it will spur on new purpose-built rentals.

Through this change and many others—and I'll get to some of those other changes in our supplementary—we are providing more homes and more choice, a very important issue to bring forward in this House.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the minister for that great answer.

Speaker, in my riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville, people from all walks of life are struggling to find a home or rental unit. In Ontario, more than half of renters find the average rent for a two-bedroom to be too much for their budget—that is, if they could find a quality rental in the first place. This means young adults leaving home or seniors looking to downsize are struggling to move into the next stage of their life. Thankfully, our government wants to put affordable home ownership in reach of more Ontario families and provide more people with the opportunity to live closer to where they work.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister further expand on what our government is doing to incentivize the building of more rental units across all of Ontario?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, I want to thank the honourable member for that question and those great points.

Speaker, to encourage the building of more rentals, our government is proposing to allow development charges for rental housing to be paid over a five-year period instead of up front. Deferring those development charges until the units are occupied would, again, make it more attractive for rental units to be built.

We are also exempting second units from development charges to again encourage the development of more secondary units. These are things like basement apartments and laneway units.

Further, Speaker, we're working with Tribunals Ontario to fill the gaps and increase resources at the Landlord and Tenant Board. We're encouraging the building of affordable housing and rental units around major transit station areas so Ontarians can get to work and home a lot quicker.

Speaker, these proposed changes, we believe, will provide more homes and more choice. I want to again thank the honourable member for that wonderful question.

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

M. Gilles Bisson: Ma question est pour la ministre de l'Éducation. En raison des coupures du premier ministre dans notre système d'éducation—et de vous, madame la Ministre—les programmes d'immersion française à travers la province sont en péril.

Le conseil du district de Toronto prévoit une réduction de plus de 12 millions de dollars en immersion française pour être capable de combler leur budget. Les élèves à Hamilton craignent qu'ils ne pourront pas suivre les programmes d'immersion française à leurs écoles cet automne en raison de l'augmentation du nombre d'élèves par classe. Le conseil scolaire du district d'Upper Grand nous a alerté du fait que des classes moins nombreuses et des programmes spécialisés comme l'immersion française pourraient devenir non viables.

Pourquoi, madame la Ministre, êtes-vous en train de réduire les programmes d'immersion en français dans cette province?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, let me be perfectly clear: We're investing in education across this province, both English and French. French immersion is very important. I've had wonderful meetings with our good working partners, and we're going to make sure that we are honouring the expectations and the necessities that go along with ensuring that we're a bilingual province.

The fact of the matter is, school boards are doing nothing but fearmongering. The member opposite is perpetuating it. I can't wait for September to come along, when teachers are in place and courses are in place. The fact of the matter is, we're focusing in on student achievement, and no matter what the members opposite say, we're investing, as the Premier said earlier this morning, \$700 million in education and we're going to get it back on track no matter what the message is that member opposite—

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

M. Gilles Bisson: Madame la Ministre, vous êtes en train d'accuser les conseils scolaires, et tout le temps, c'est vous et vos coupures qui sont au centre de ce qui épeure le monde dans cette province. So je vais le répéter : il n'y a personne qui essaye d'épeurer en Ontario, autrement que vos coupures. Les conseils scolaires, d'un bord de la province à l'autre, sont en train de dire la même affaire : qu'ils ont besoin de faire des décisions de réduire les programmes d'immersion. Pourquoi? Parce qu'il y a ces coupures que votre ministère est en train de passer aux conseils scolaires.

So donc, je vous demande la question encore : pourquoi êtes-vous en train de mettre en péril les programmes d'immersion dans cette province?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, you know what?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Opposition, come to order. Allow the minister to reply.

Minister?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I am just finding the claims coming from the party opposite to be absolutely amusing at this stage of the game. Day in and day out, this party is doing nothing but making fools out of themselves, because when this fall comes around, we are going to have absolute evidence that they were doing nothing but fearmongering.

We're investing in education like no other government has. We are investing in financial literacy. We're investing in math. We're investing in making sure that there are good learning environments for francophone students, and we're getting education back on track. They can say the sky is falling, they can push all the panic buttons they want, but the reality is that we're going to—

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

SKILLED TRADES

Ms. Jill Dunlop: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The skilled trades are a critical aspect of our economy, yet many jobs in the trades continue to go unfilled. I have heard from employers in my riding who are frustrated with the red tape and stifling regulations 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 in budget 2019 to modernize the skilled trades in Ontario. Can the minister tell us about how our government's modernization of the skilled trades will help make Ontario open for business and open for jobs?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member from Simcoe North for her great work and for the question.

Unlike the NDP, our government is committed to making Ontario open for business and open for jobs by reducing the burden on skilled workers. In the fall, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act was passed, and

immediately reduced journey-person-to-apprenticeship ratios to a standard 1 to 1.

In budget 2019, we introduced the Modernizing the Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Act, which, if passed, will create a flexible system for the skilled trades in Ontario. It will reduce red tape for employers and apprentices, streamline service delivery and help promote the tremendous career opportunities in the skilled trades.

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.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the minister for your answer.

Speaker, it's great to hear that we are taking decisive action to address the failing skilled trades framework left behind by the previous Liberal government. It's clear our government is listening to employers and it's clear that our plan will reduce red tape, improve access to the skilled trades and make Ontario open for business.

I know that our government recognizes the urgent need to fill the skills gap and open up well-paying, rewarding career pathways for our young people. Can the minister tell us more about how our plan for the skilled trades is already helping to create good jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you again to the member for the question.

Speaker, our government has heard loud and clear from employers that our plan is working. During committee hearings for Bill 100, Stephen Hamilton of the Ontario Home Builders' Association highlighted several association members who have been active in hiring apprentices since our change to 1-to-1 ratios.

"Jamie Adam from Pioneer Craftsmen in Waterloo region has already hired an additional three carpentry apprentices;

"Gary Burch from Haliburton county has hired an additional two apprentices;

"Peder Madsen from CCR Building and Remodeling in London has hired six additional carpentry apprentices."

These are just a few examples of the jobs that have been created as a direct result of our actions, a sign—

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

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr. Faisal Hassan: My question is to the Premier. Toronto Public Health provides essential health services to the people of Toronto, but in my riding of York South–Weston alone, there are 102 programs at risk of being defunded because of the government's cuts to public health, like school breakfast programs that service thousands of students in my community or dental care—

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: That's not true. That isn't true.

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

Once again, restart the clock. I go back to the member to ask a question.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Toronto Public Health provides essential health services to the people of Toronto, but in my riding of York South–Weston alone, there are 102 programs at risk of being defunded because of the government's cuts to public health, like school breakfast programs that serve thousands of students in my community or a dental-care-for-seniors program that help keeps their smiles bright.

Why is this government turning its back on the people of Ontario, their health and their well-being?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I can certainly agree with the member that public health is extremely important. We have committed to providing the city of Toronto with \$114 million for public health this year, which will enable them to provide those vital services, like vaccinations.

The breakfast programs will continue. They are also partially funded through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. We will also be funding the programs and services necessary to support children with special needs. If the Toronto Board of Health concentrates on those issues, they will be able to provide those vital services.

But what has been floated lately is that instead of doing the hard work and getting down to looking through, line by line, everything they do—as we had to do—the automatic answer is, "Let's raise taxes." That's not the answer. What the city of Toronto needs to do is take a look, do the hard work and figure out what changes need to be made, to make sure they can concentrate on those vital public services.

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

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Again, my question is to the Premier. We must learn from our past to make sure that history does not repeat itself. Public health units were identified as one of the ways to ensure that tragedies such as Walkerton or the Toronto SARS outbreak never happen again.

Investment in our public health system is vital to keeping Ontario strong and healthy, but cutting public health funding and putting over 100 health programs at risk in my community of York South–Weston alone will be damaging to the long-term health of our community.

Will this government do the right thing and commit to reversing cuts made to public health across this province?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Again I would say to the member the Ministry of Health is committed to providing the city of Toronto with \$114 million for public health for this year. That is more than an adequate amount of money for them to be able to provide the necessary programs and services.

But I would suggest that what the city should be doing is taking a look, line by line, through all of the public health services they provide to make sure they are providing the services that matter most to people. What I have certainly heard from people is that they care about

vaccinations. They care about those breakfast programs. They care about supporting people with special needs. We've also invested \$90 million for a dental program for low-income seniors.

We are making the investments in services that matter most. I am sure that if the city of Toronto gets down and goes through, line by line, all of those programs and services, they will find that there is more than enough money to provide the services that people care about, the essential public services that matter most, to keep people safe and healthy in the city of Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. That concludes our question period for today.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Sudbury, first of all, has informed me he has a point of order.

Mr. Jamie West: I'd like to rise on a point of order to correct my record. This morning, I was estimating that 300 Ontarians died from opioid overdoses in six months. The correct number is actually much higher. It was 629 who died from opioid overdoses in the first six months of 2018, from January to June.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Brantford—Brant on a point of order.

Mr. Will Bouma: I just wanted to take a moment and introduce my daughter to the House, who's visiting today. She's my oldest. She's in second year at Mohawk in graphic design. I'm extremely proud of her, but she'll always be my little girl. Thank you, Lena, for visiting us today.

Applause.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask our pages to assemble at this time because it's now time for us to acknowledge this great group of legislative pages.

Our pages are hard-working, trustworthy and smart. They are indispensable to all that goes on in this chamber, and we are indeed fortunate to have all of them here.

Our pages will now go home, having made new friends, with a better understanding of parliamentary democracy and with memories that will last them a lifetime.

In the coming years, each of them will continue their studies and, in time, contribute to their communities, their province and their country in important ways. And who knows, maybe some of them will take their seats in the House as members or as staff here. We wish all of you well.

I would like to ask all members to now please join me in showing our appreciation for this great group of legislative pages.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. They deserve a raise, I think.

Laughter.

DEFERRED VOTES

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)

Deferred vote 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): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the members to please take their seats.

On May 8, 2019, Mr. Yurek moved second reading of Bill 107. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gretzky, Lisa	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harden, Joel	Schreiner, Mike
Arthur, Ian	Hassan, Faisal	Shaw, Sandy

Begum, Doly	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Gurratan
Bell, Jessica	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Sara
Berns-McGown, Rima	Karpoche, Bhutla	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bisson, Gilles	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique
French, Jennifer K.	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Morrison, Suze	Yarde, Kevin
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	
Glover, Chris	Rakocevic, Tom	

Janet lives in your riding, Mr. Speaker. Anyhow, welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PUBLIC HEALTH

Ms. Doly Begum: In Toronto alone, the government is cutting \$1 billion in public health funding over the next 10 years. I have spoken to a lot of residents who aren't exactly sure what the cut to public health will mean for Scarborough, both in my riding of Scarborough Southwest as well as the five other communities represented by other MPPs at the Legislature.

In fact, the Premier himself doesn't seem to understand how crucial these public health services are. In a radio interview, he called these nurses and health professionals "the folks that go ... into restaurants and put the little sticker saying it's safe to eat here."

Speaker, for us Scarberians, public health means an awful lot more than that. In my riding, a billion dollars in public health cuts would jeopardize student breakfast and lunch programs at 33 schools.

The cuts would threaten skill-building programs for at-risk youth at the West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre as well as the Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre.

These cuts would also mean 130 schools across all of Scarborough losing student immunization programs.

These cuts come at the same time as news yesterday of a confirmed case of an adult measles outbreak in Scarborough and possible public exposure. Speaker, protecting people from measles is not a partisan issue.

This government must rethink their dangerous cuts to Toronto public health. We all need to do better. We all need to stand up and fight for the health of our communities.

ABOUTFACE

Mr. Michael Parsa: I'm happy to deliver a statement on behalf of the great MPP for Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte.

For more than 30 years, AboutFace, a Canadian charity headquartered in Toronto, has been supporting individuals and families affected by facial differences through programs and services which focus on psychosocial health and well-being. AboutFace estimates that more than two million Canadians live with a facial difference, which refers to anyone whose appearance, from the neck and above, has been affected by a congenital, acquired or episodic condition or syndrome.

Living with a facial difference is something you cannot hide. It can often create barriers to communication, socialization, education, employment and aspirations, and can affect one's mental, emotional and social health.

Starting tomorrow, global celebrations will begin, for the first time ever, for International Face Equality Week.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 64; the nays are 37.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 15, 2019, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Leader of the Opposition has a point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I just wanted to acknowledge that we had, in the media gallery, Kerry-Lee Crawford from G98.7, who is probably here because this afternoon there will be a tribute to his former boss, the late Fitzroy Gordon. I thought it was important to acknowledge he was here.

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

This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1156 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Susan Gapka of the Toronto Trans Coalition Project, who will be joining us here today in recognition of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to welcome Brian Craig, the office manager and events specialist with Life Sciences Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to welcome my friend Chiara Padovani, and also the North York Harvest Food Bank, who are doing a fantastic job in my riding of York South-Weston.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Introduction of visitors?

It's now time for—oh, sorry. Introduction of visitors. The member for Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: No, I'm just kidding. I wasn't standing up quickly enough.

I would like to welcome some guests from the Canadian Celiac Association. We have Melissa Secord, the executive director, and Jessica Danford, David Congram, Janet Bolton and Dr. Maria Ines Pinto-Sanchez. I believe that

The main goals of the week focus on raising public awareness of facial differences, promoting the fair treatment of people with facial differences, and working at breaking down barriers for individuals living with a difference.

Just as we rightly work to increase inclusion of those of different backgrounds than us, AboutFace and International Face Equality Week work to increase inclusion of those with facial differences.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Chris Glover: Last weekend I had the honour and pleasure of working at the Liberty Village respite centre and helping a number of volunteers from a group called Project Comfort serve lunch to the people who were there, many of them—well, all of them homeless, many with mental health issues.

I want to congratulate the volunteers for the work that they've done and that they are continuing to do. The serving of the lunch is just one part of it. The bigger part of the work they're doing is actually building relationships with people who are homeless, listening to their stories and understanding their stories.

The stories that I heard that day are not the stories that we would expect. Many of the people who were homeless there have university degrees. They've had professions before. They had a blip in their income; they lost a job. It speaks to how quickly people can go from being housed to homeless in our society.

The real danger, too, that some of the staff were highlighting for me was the danger that's posed by this government's decision, or potential decision, to redefine what a disability is. If they redefine a disability, they will drop people from ODSP at \$1,200 a month down to Ontario Works at \$735 a month. That will lead to hundreds and hundreds of people losing their homes, and there will be more people at that respite centre.

No matter how many meals we serve, it won't make up for the loss of their homes. So, Mr. Speaker, I ask the government to reconsider redefining what a disability is.

CELIAC DISEASE

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to inform the House that today is International Celiac Awareness Day and May is Celiac Awareness Month in Canada. I'm very pleased that we have some members of the Canadian Celiac Association here today to raise awareness.

Celiac disease impacts 1% to 2% of Ontarians—that's over 150,000 people—and another 5% have gluten sensitivity. It's often misunderstood as a gluten allergy, but it's actually an autoimmune disease, highly linked with type 1 diabetes as well as thyroid disease. Unlike many other diseases, there's no cure. The only treatment is to go on a gluten-free diet for life.

Many people with celiac disease suffer for as long as 10 years before they're actually properly diagnosed because the symptoms can vary so widely. The symptoms can include migraines, anemia, gastrointestinal issues, fatigue,

reproductive issues, malnutrition and low bone density. Sometimes there are no obvious symptoms at all. If left untreated, celiac disease can lead to very dangerous cancers of the gut and devastating neurological problems.

We know that a lot of people are going gluten-free because they think it's healthier. It's kind of a health fad that's going on now, and a hot new trend. But today, in honour of celiac awareness day, let's remember that for Ontarians with celiac disease, gluten-free is definitely not a fad; it's a medical necessity.

I want to thank the member for Peterborough—Kawartha for joining me at a meeting. He pointed out that the prevalence is much higher in special-needs communities, especially with Down's syndrome.

HIATUS HOUSE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Hiatus House is the only 24-hour crisis intervention and emergency shelter for abused women and children in Windsor and Essex. Their mission is to break the cycle of domestic violence through public education, research and specialized counselling and outreach services. I cannot overstate how important their work is in our community.

1310

In Windsor, one in four women live below the low-income line. Windsor also has the highest rate of children growing up in low-income households: about 16,000 children.

Despite this clear need, the Conservative government has cut funding to domestic violence services by \$17 million—

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: That's not true.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The minister really shouldn't heckle me while I'm saying this. She should be listening.

In Windsor, we recently learned that Hiatus House has removed six beds because the province is two months late in providing them with their annual budget, and they are anticipating cuts.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I met with Hiatus House—

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services should be listening, not heckling. This is serious, and it's her ministry.

Last year in March—

Interjection.

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

I apologize to the member for Windsor West. I will give you extra time.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker.

Last year in March, I held a press conference with Hiatus House and a number of other community service agencies in Windsor. At the press conference, Hiatus House reported that they were forced to turn away 141 women and 118 children from the shelter over the past year. A recent needs assessment has identified that Hiatus House needed 40 more beds to match the average number of beds available in other communities. Hiatus House

hasn't had a funding increase in over 10 years, but the demand on their services keeps growing.

I am imploring this Conservative government to consider the gravity of the decisions they are making. The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services cannot claim to support women and children while cutting domestic violence services, forcing vulnerable people to stay in dangerous situations. They must change course now. Give Hiatus House and domestic violence services the resources they need to save lives.

Interjection.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: And the minister needs to stop heckling and actually listen to the people in this province.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Deepak Anand: Today I rise to share a funding announcement. I believe that we all deserve to be happy. We all deserve to live a life that lights us up. Mr. Speaker, too many people struggle silently with their mental health. Mental health is a health.

Mr. Speaker, one in five Canadians experience a mental illness and/or addiction problem.

I'm excited to share the news of the funding announcement by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for mental health and addictions services. As part of the investment, health care service providers in my riding of Mississauga–Malton will receive \$3 million in funding. In other words, relief is on the way.

Some 40% of respondents in Canada, in response to a survey, agreed that they have experienced anxiety or depression but never got any help. It is time to end the stigma around mental health and to do something.

The health care service providers receiving the funding are: Associated Youth Services of Peel; PCHS; Peel Addiction Assessment and Referral Centre; Peel Children's Centre; and Services and Housing In the Province. To these organizations: Thank you for choosing Mississauga–Malton, and thank you for your service. The funding will be going towards reducing wait times, creating additional housing, building capacity and investing in services for the Indigenous community.

To the residents of Mississauga–Malton: It is always a pleasure to be your voice at Queen's Park. I am committed to working with the ministers to make sure Mississauga–Malton and all of Ontario have the resources available for the mental health and addictions support it needs.

TRAFFIC FATALITY MURRAY THOMSON

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm sad to rise today on two sombre notes from home. This morning at 7:20 a.m., a cyclist was hit at the intersection of Laurier and Elgin. The 50-year-old gentleman succumbed to his injuries in hospital this morning. Unfortunately, the person who hit him fled, at first in a van and then on foot. The Ottawa police are

asking anybody who knows anything about this incident to please call 613-236-1222, extension 2481, and to please leave your information.

To the gentleman at risk: Your conscience is never going to recover from this. I encourage you to step forward and do the right thing and make sure that this cyclist and this person's family can make amends, and that you can make amends with yourself.

I also want to say, Speaker, we lost a giant in Ottawa Centre on May 2: Murray Thomson. Murray Thomson was 96 years old. He was a recipient of the Pearson peace prize. He was a recipient of the Order of Canada. He was a lifelong constructive troublemaker I admired, and he believed in a world without nuclear weapons.

He started his life in his 20s with the RCAF, and what he saw was a world, decade after decade, that was becoming increasingly more violent.

Murray, the image that you gave me and so many others in Ottawa was an image of peace. You told me once in a conversation over tea that we could bomb the world to pieces, but we can't bomb it into peace. I agree with you, my friend, and I agree with all of us who are trying to fight for a more just and stable world. Keep up that fight.

Murray, we will always remember you. Thank you.

CREDIT RIVER BRIDGE

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Recently, I joined the member for Etobicoke Centre, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, in Mississauga to announce that our government is investing in repairing the QEW bridge over the Credit River.

Originally built in 1934, the Credit River bridge was the first major bridge construction for the future QEW. A signature heritage bridge, its design set standards for major bridge construction along this corridor.

Thousands of commuters and commercial vehicles cross this bridge every single day, and for thousands of young athletes who use the Credit River for canoeing and kayaking, including my two sons, this bridge is a symbol of the Credit River Valley.

However, at over 80 years old, it needs repairs now to ensure it remains safe for the public. Ensuring our bridges are in a good state of repair to keeps drivers safe.

It will also improve traffic flow and help support economic growth in Mississauga–Lakeshore and across Ontario.

LIFE SCIENCES ONTARIO SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Last week, I welcomed the Premier to my great riding of Mississauga–Streetsville, where he attended the announcement of our Life Sciences Ontario Scholarship Program.

I'd like to begin with how we conceived of this scholarship and mentorship program. Soon after being elected, I met with Roche, where I first heard that my riding was home to "Pill Hill," due to its large number of pharmaceutical companies. I learned about the immense contribution

that the industry plays in Ontario's economy, the vast number of well-paying jobs, and how we are the perfect place for clinical trials.

Soon after, during a visit with Novo Nordisk, we heard of the challenges it faces, from issues with the federal government's PMPRB to the cost of doing business in Ontario, and attracting and retaining great employees. It is a well-known fact that a company invests immense resources to train new employees, only to lose that worker once they find employment closer to home and to their families. It would also leave companies to poach from one another, coming at great expense.

A possible solution? "Let's build a bigger talent pool"—and the Life Sciences Ontario Scholarship Program was born. Thank you to Life Sciences Ontario for administering and monitoring this program and thank you to all of the companies that take part in making a massive difference in these students' lives. Novo Nordisk, Roche, Sanofi, Horizon pharma, Bayer, Gilead, AstraZeneca and GlaxoSmithKline, thank you.

To those of you interested, please call my office, 905-569-1643, for more information.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

TORONTO NEWCOMER DAY INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND BIPHOBIA

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I'm delighted to rise in the House today as we and all Ontarians recognize today as newcomer day and tomorrow as International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

It's perhaps fitting that I'm able to share a comment from my ministry on both of these issues as, very often, there is a significant overlap when it comes to those fleeing persecution in other countries, hoping for a better and safer life right here in Canada.

Ontario's multicultural mosaic is apparent to all of us. From big cities to small towns, the mom-and-pop shops and industry leaders—people who have come to Ontario for a better life have each brought unique stories with them. Many of those stories are nothing short of remarkable. It's a tough task to move halfway around the world with nothing in your pocket, sometimes fleeing terror and persecution, and then have to adapt quickly to provide for your family.

With low birth rates and an aging population, we need—and in Ontario, we want—immigrants to fill jobs and become entrepreneurs to drive our economy. Let the message be perfectly clear: Ontario wants you, and we want you to succeed. I encourage all newcomers to access the range of programs and services available to newcomers to settle in and thrive within our communities. This is particularly important for the LGBTQ+ persons who

have often been forced out of their homeland, who turn to Ontario for a better, safer life.

1320

Tomorrow, on May 17, we proudly stand with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, two-spirited and queer—LGBT2SQ—people and organizations against homophobia, transphobia, biphobia and all forms of discrimination against LGBTQ+ communities.

Much of my pride stems from our province's shared values of fairness, equity, inclusion and respect for all Ontarians. No person or community anywhere across the globe should ever experience discrimination or violence because of their gender identity, gender expression or their sexual orientation.

Canada became one of the first countries in the Western world to admit refugees on the basis of sexual orientation almost 30 years ago, in 1991. Since then, our federal Conservative counterparts have been strong advocates on this issue. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs, John Baird, who I succeeded in this House as the MPP for then Nepean–Carleton, has regularly stood up against the persecution of LGBTQ+ people throughout the world.

Rainbow Railroad was first supported under the Harper government and does important work. They are regularly working on up to 50 open cases to usher LGBTQ+ people fleeing persecution to a safe country such as Canada.

Homophobia, transphobia and biphobia can have dangerous consequences. For children and youth, discrimination can destabilize their lives before they've even begun. We know children and youth who identify as LGBTQ+ experience risks and challenges because of their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. This includes an increased risk of homelessness, school and workplace harassment, unemployment, mental health concerns and addictions, gender-based violence, sex trafficking and, sadly, overrepresentation in Ontario's child welfare system.

We also know that supportive adults and access to inclusive and gender-affirming services can make a significant difference in the lives of these children and youth. That's why our ministry is committed to supporting service providers, caregivers and leaders as they work to better support LGBTQ+ children and youth in Ontario.

Among other things: My ministry released an LGBTQ+ resource guide to increase the capacity of the child welfare sector to respond to the needs of these children and youth who are involved in the child welfare system. Our Youth-in-Transition Worker Program supports youth as they transition out of child protection, including dedicated support right here in the city of Toronto. Our youth outreach workers provide inclusive and gender-affirming services to youth by connecting them to local supports. Our Youth Mentorship Program provides inclusive and gender-affirming services to help youth increase their confidence and work toward their goals. And my ministry has held workshops across the province to help front-line staff work more effectively with LGBTQ+ youth involved in the youth justice system.

While this is impressive and while this is encouraging, we know there is more that we can do. Speaker, the

LGBTQ+ communities and newcomers to our province should always feel protected, and they should know that they live in a safe and supportive environment and a safe and supportive province. I ask all members in this House today to join me and our government in condemning all forms of hate, including homophobia, transphobia and biphobia, in the strongest possible terms.

To the LGBTQ+ communities and our newcomers, I want them to know, on behalf of the government for the people, Ontario stands with you. We want you to have the best possible chance of finding your place in our great province, and we will continue to work hard to help you do that and to ensure you are treated with the respect that you deserve.

FITZROY GORDON

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege for me to rise today to recognize a distinguished member of our community whom we lost very recently. It's with great sadness that I learned of the death of Fitzroy Gordon on April 30 of this year. He died at the young age of 65.

Fitzroy, "Mr. G," was a leader in Toronto's Black community as a broadcaster and founder of CKFG-FM, G98.7 radio. Fitzroy was literally a voice for Caribbean Canadians, a towering cultural figure and advocate who spoke passionately on urban issues, the arts and cultural growth here in the city.

Fitzroy était littéralement une voix pour les Antillo-Canadiens, une figure prédominante et un défenseur du monde culturel, qui parlait avec passion d'enjeux urbains, des arts et de la croissance culturelle de la ville.

Born in Jamaica, he arrived in Canada in 1979 and began his radio career with Toronto's multicultural radio station CHIN as an overnight call-in host. As a journalist, he also contributed to Canadian and Caribbean publications, and his journey mirrored the challenges and successes of many newcomers to Canada.

It was two decades ago that Fitzroy decided to seek a broadcast licence to serve greater Toronto's Caribbean and African communities. Fitzroy was able to launch G98.7 in 2011, bringing to the city a unique blend of music not available anywhere else. G98.7 became a vital part of life and conversation in the city and a respected resource in our media landscape.

Every Sunday, Mr. G hosted the Grapevine show, a forum for sharing information on current affairs and politics and to encourage civic engagement among his many listeners.

Le dimanche, Monsieur G animait l'émission Grapevine, un forum pour échanger de l'information sur les affaires publiques et la politique et pour encourager la mobilisation citoyenne chez ses nombreux auditeurs.

I recall numerous occasions participating in discussions during Grapevine, speaking about addictions and mental health in our community, issues that are huge in our community.

Mr. G was inspirational. He truly cared about our city, our province and our community. I recall him one day

calling me after the Amatrice earthquake in Italy, saying, "Could you come down and have a talk. Let's get our community engaged and involved and help the people in Italy." I was truly touched by that. It was an outreach that was truly felt in the Italian community, and I thanked him for his care and his concern.

He engaged his audience on social issues with his own special blend of empathy and passion. I truly loved talking to him, whether we were on the air or in private conversations that we often had, one on one.

I'll truly miss my time with Mr. G. I knew Fitzroy, as I said, personally, and I knew what a remarkable person he was. I admired him for his ardent commitment to Toronto and its residents and for his great energy and his warmth. He lived with "amore" and "passione," with love and passion. He was a person who would never take no for an answer and believed that with God's inspiration and guidance, any and all issues could be resolved.

Mr. G was a huge presence in the city. He was a visionary. He was a person who spoke for the arts, for urban development and for empowerment. His enthusiasm and his compassion influenced his audience and everyone who had the good fortune to work with him or know him.

Fitzroy Gordon will be missed by many. He made Toronto and our province a better place because of his time and his commitment to this great city and this great province.

Mr. Speaker, he taught me humility, brotherhood, compassion and, above all else, that love conquers all.

1330

I ask my fellow members in the House today to join me in extending condolences to his family, to his friends and to his many fans and media colleagues in Toronto and around the world.

His wife joins us this afternoon, Marvette Gordon.

Thank you. Our condolences on behalf of the government of Ontario and all members present and all members not present. God bless. Thank you for sharing Fitzroy and his life with us.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND BIPHOBIA

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour to rise in this House to recognize the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. I'd like to thank the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services for her earlier words.

As a member of the LGBTQ community, I know today must not simply be an opportunity to symbolically support the LGBTQ community; it's an opportunity to speak truth to power. It's a day to name and confront homophobia, transphobia and biphobia wherever they are present.

Speaker, there's a troubling pattern of behaviour in this government that has left many of Ontario's LGBTQ community feeling worried, alone and without support. It began last summer when the government called an early

session to repeal the 2015 health and physical education curriculum—a curriculum that included modern sex ed programs that recognized LGBTQ students and families. Instead of continuing this level of support, the government reverted back to the 1998 curriculum. This was a curriculum implemented before gay marriage was even legal in Canada.

And now the government has delayed teaching gender expression until grade 8, when it is “age-appropriate.” But there’s nothing inappropriate about seeing you or your family reflected in Ontario’s education curriculum. We know trans students need support long before grade 8. Policy like this sends a clear message to the LGBTQ community. We hear and feel those words.

It isn’t the first time this government has ignored the needs of trans Ontarians. Last November, the Premier refused to take a few steps outside of his office to join us for a moving ceremony on the Trans Day of Remembrance outside Queen’s Park. This is a day to honour and mourn members of the trans community lost to us as a result of transphobic violence, and yet the Premier refused to mourn these lives alongside us.

Outside this Legislature, the Conservatives passed a resolution at their convention calling gender identity an unscientific ideology. This is a direct attack on the trans community and their right to exist and express themselves. You would hope that senior party members and representatives of this government would call out transphobic behaviour in their very own party. Instead, on the International Day of Pink, the Minister of Education stated that the words “homophobia” and “transphobia” weren’t even in her vocabulary.

Today can’t just be a symbolic gesture without action or without a plan for the future. LGBTQ Ontarians need more than just words to believe this government is committed to LGBTQ rights and equality.

FITZROY GORDON

Ms. Jill Andrew: Mr. Fitzroy Gordon, founder, president and CEO of G98.7 FM, Canada’s only Black- and Caribbean-owned-and-operated radio station, passed away last month. I was honoured to rise in the House seeking unanimous consent for a moment of silence to acknowledge this giant of a man and his formidable contributions to our arts and culture sector.

I attended his home-going at Global Kingdom Ministries in Scarborough, where hundreds, if not well over 1,000, were in attendance.

Mr. Gordon was also affectionately known as “Dr. Love.” He was a trailblazer in our African, Black and Caribbean communities across the province, the country and internationally. Mr. Gordon was a husband, a father, a brother, a friend, a radio host, a producer, an entrepreneur, a sports enthusiast, a mentor, a confidant, and more. He was a cultural icon. He was a boss.

To me, he was a motivating force to keep plugging forward. Years before I’d actually ever get to meet Mr. Gordon, he was a figure I had only heard about. I had just broken into my 20s, I was unemployed with two degrees

and, frankly, feeling defeated. I was sitting at an unemployment centre working on my resumé when I learned of this man who had a dream to create a Black-owned radio station, one that would not only place our sound and souls on the map locally, but across borders. Learning about Mr. Gordon’s vision to not only revolutionize Canadian radio through Black ownership and our dynamic sound—but his passion for uplifting our communities by promoting and working with our small businesses, truly inspired me.

Mr. Gordon was, and will remain, an inspiration to our community. He has created a road map of excellence. His next stop was our nation’s first Black- and Caribbean-owned television station.

To Mr. Gordon’s family, his wife, Marvette, his children and his family at G98.7 FM: Thank you for sharing this man with us. He will forever continue to inspire my hustle and my groove.

Mr. Gordon’s legacy must be protected. We need our provincial government to do its part and uphold and uplift his legacy. This means properly funding culture and education, and not tearing away resources. It means supporting our music so that we can continue to facilitate the dreams of the next Fitzroy Gordon, because, to quote Mr. Gordon, “Dreams never die.”

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND BIPHOBIA

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Speaker, I have two responses today.

In advance of Friday’s observance of the 2019 International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, today I stand in solidarity against all forms of persecution, oppression and torture of LGBTQ people around the globe and here in Ontario.

I want to welcome my friend Susan Gapka, who I’ve known for many years.

Speaker, I was asked to preside over the model Parliament for high school students a few months ago. The students were debating a gender-neutral washroom. It was really interesting to listen to our high school students and their intrinsic understanding that we have to have fairness in our society and every person needs to be able to do what is natural and normal for them.

Millions of LGBTQ people around the world struggle to secure their basic human rights and gain visibility. Some live under the threat of the death penalty simply because of who they are. This is unacceptable.

We have a duty to ensure that everyone in this province feels safe. We must ensure that this province remains inclusive and accessible for everyone. There is no room for hate, fear or violence in our province.

FITZROY GORDON

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I am honoured to stand here today to talk about my friend Fitzroy Gordon, a legend and a cultural icon. A fellow Jamaican, he’s a soldier.

Fitzroy came from Jamaica to Canada in his 20s, and when he arrived here, the city was a very different place than it is now. Fitzroy Gordon always believed in creating a space for Black and Caribbean people to realize their full potential.

It is no surprise that Fitzroy Gordon achieved his life-long dream of launching Canada's only Black- and Caribbean-owned- and -operated radio station, G98.7 FM, The Way We Groove. G98.7 amplified the voices of the Black community and offered us a unique platform to share our lived experiences.

I would like to say a special thank you to Kerry-Lee Crawford, a member of the G98.7 family, for being here today in support of Fitzroy. I know that you are here representing the G98.7 family.

G98.7 can be relied upon to play the rhythms of our cultural heritage, reminding us all of our roots, evoking a sense of pride and gratitude in the Black, Caribbean and African diaspora. The news sources and talk shows, including Grapevine, allowed the airing and debate of issues affecting the Black community in an authentic and real manner. It featured voices unfiltered. Young artists were given an opportunity to be heard and listened to, enabling a dialogue on key issues affecting the Black community.

Fitzroy made history once again when he was granted approval from the CRTC to operate Canada's first national Black and Caribbean TV station, something that can further be realized into the future.

Fitzroy was recognized locally, nationally and internationally. Yes, Fitzroy's message of love, compassion and acceptance went beyond borders.

1340

Fitzroy Gordon's legacy demonstrates how one man, through persistence and perseverance, transformed an entire generation of Black Canadians. I was one of them. I met Mr. Gordon, Dr. Love, when I was 19 years old. He gave myself and my fellow colleagues an opportunity to be interviewed many times on air. Fitzroy gave us a voice, and we have a duty to use this voice to empower our communities.

To say that Fitzroy Gordon was loved is an understatement. His friends, his fans and his community are mourning the loss of a cultural icon. Today we have Marsha Brown, Lennox Richards and Selwyn Richards, who has the Art of Catering. I know that you are brothers, and that this is a hard moment. But please understand that his legacy is for all of us to build on.

Marvette, Nelson, Tennyson, the entire family—we mourn with you. We stand with you. He will never be forgotten. He has left a voice, and he is truly missed. He will continue to always be Dr. Love. May his legacy live on. May he rest in peace.

Applause.

PETITIONS

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

Ms. Jessica Bell: This is a petition called "The TTC Belongs to Toronto...."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the TTC has owned, operated and maintained Toronto's public transit system since 1921; and

"Whereas the people of Toronto have paid for the TTC at the fare box and through their property taxes; and

"Whereas uploading the subway will mean higher fares, reduced service and less say for transit riders; and

"Whereas the TTC is accountable to the people of Toronto because elected Toronto city councillors sit on its board;

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

"Reject legislation that uploads any aspect of the TTC to the province of Ontario, and reject the privatization or contracting out of any part of the TTC."

I fully support these many petitions. I will be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Maria.

TUITION

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition entitled "Support our Students: Stop Cuts to OSAP!"

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario has the highest tuition rates in Canada, lowest per-student funding from the province and highest student debt, and the government's changes will only make the situation worse;

"Whereas removing the interest-free six-month grace period means students will end up paying more, and are pressured to pay their loans even before finding a job or starting a career;

"Whereas the" Conservative Party's "decision to cancel grants and force students to take loans instead" adds "another barrier to college and university;

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

"Direct the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to reverse the recently announced OSAP cuts, protect the existing tuition grants and reinstate the six-month interest-free grace period after graduation."

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

ACCIDENT BENEFITS

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My petition is to remove the minor injury guideline, sections 18(1) and 18(2) of the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule, and incorporate rebuttal examination reports back into the system.

The petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario Regulation 347/13 has made four changes to the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule (SABS), also known as Ontario Regulation 34/10 effective February 1, 2014. These regulations have considerably reduced the dollar amounts allocated for patients receiving assessments and treatment following a motor vehicle accident;

“Whereas the \$3,500 minor injury guideline cap is an insufficient amount of funds provided since assessments on all patients are required to ensure their safe ability in performing tasks associated with attendant care, house-keeping and caregiving...;

“Whereas this petition is to validate that the \$3,500 minor injury guideline monetary fund is an insufficient amount to enable auto accident patients with soft tissue injury ... to reach optimal recovery to their pre-accident status...;

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

“To remove the minor injury guideline, sections 18(1) and 18(2), of the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule and incorporate rebuttal examination reports back into the system.”

I support this petition, will be affixing my signature and will be giving it to page Wolfgang to deliver to the Clerks.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to thank Brandon Machado, who collected this petition.

“Fund Our Schools....

“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 current Minister of Education, pledged to provide adequate, stable funding for Ontario’s schools;

“Whereas less than three weeks into the legislative session, Doug Ford 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 fully support this petition. I will be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Leo to deliver to the table.

CAMPUS RADIO STATIONS

Mr. Joel Harden: I have a petition here, and I want to thank Julia Maiorino, from 11 Oblats Avenue, back in Ottawa, for initiating this petition. It’s called “Campus Radio Stations are an Essential Service.” It’s celebrating, in particular, the radio station at the University of Ottawa, CHUO.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario campus radio stations consist of over 150 staff members and 3,500 volunteers, a majority of them youth and students;

“Whereas campus radio stations offer training and development for students ... as part of their ... course curriculum and within the community at large,” preparing them for careers in journalism and in broadcasting;

“Whereas campus radio stations ... are key providers of emergency information under the National Public Alerting System;

“Whereas campus radio stations are an independent news and media outlet for students and communities that provides a platform for marginalized voices;

“Whereas campus radio stations have a high fixed cost compared to other student services;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to deem campus radio stations an essential fee under the Student Choice Initiative.”

I am happy to sign this petition, and I’ll be giving it to page Jedd for the Clerks’ table.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I have a petition here from Mari Mannisto from Geraldton, Ontario.

“Support Ontario’s Public Libraries.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, according to the statement of public library funding dated Thursday, April 18, 2019, by the Minister of Tourism,” Michael Tibollo, “we appreciate that base funding for public libraries will be maintained, we call into question the statement that the Ontario Library Service agencies ‘have no involvement in day-to-day operations of Ontario’s public libraries’;

“Whereas Ontario Library Service—North and Southern Ontario Library Service provide the support for inter-library loans, staff and board training, bulk purchasing, collaborative programming, technological supports, our shared electronic book collection and our shared catalogue database itself;

“Whereas we question how involved the agencies need to be in order to be considered crucial for the day-to-day operations of all provincial libraries, but even more specifically for small, northern and rural libraries;

“Whereas value for money and respect for taxpayer dollars are the umbrella under which the agencies operate—allowing libraries to share resources and expertise in an efficient and cost-effective manner—while also allowing them to best serve their individual communities;

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

“—for the reinstatement of funding to the Ontario Library Service (north and south) agencies to, at minimum, the 2017-18 funding levels, in order for these agencies to continue the day-to-day support of Ontario public library services;

“—to continue to maintain base funding for Ontario public libraries.”

I gladly sign this petition, and I will give it to page Olivier to bring to the Clerks' desk.

1350

LEGAL AID

Ms. Jill Andrew: This petition is entitled "Ensure that Low-Income Ontarians Have Access to Justice.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has cut the funding for Legal Aid Ontario by almost one third;

"Whereas provincial funding for the immigration and refugee law program at Legal Aid Ontario has been completely cut;

"Whereas access to legal aid is essential to low-income Ontarians who are facing legal proceedings such as in immigration, criminal, family, mental health, poverty law and child protection cases;

"Whereas vulnerable populations like refugees will be left to represent themselves in a complex and already overburdened legal system...;

"Whereas the cuts will lead to backlogs and delays throughout the justice system, causing chaos in the courts and costing taxpayers more, not less;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the cuts to Legal Aid Ontario that have already begun to impact the most vulnerable people in Ontario...."

I firmly support this petition. I sign it and hand it over to Maria.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: "Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

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

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

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

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

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

LEGAL AID

Ms. Sara Singh: I'm happy to present this petition entitled "Ensure that Low-Income Ontarians Have Access to Justice.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has cut the funding" for legal aid "by almost one third;

"Whereas provincial funding for the immigration and refugee law program at Legal Aid Ontario has been completely cut;

"Whereas access to legal aid is essential to low-income Ontarians who are facing legal proceedings such as in immigration, criminal, family, mental health, poverty law and child protection cases;

"Whereas vulnerable populations like refugees will be left to represent themselves in a complex and already overburdened legal system, where a negative decision leads to deportation to countries where lives may be at risk;

"Whereas the cuts will lead to backlogs and delays throughout the justice system, causing chaos in the courts and costing taxpayers more, not less;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the cuts" to legal aid and to ensure that the most vulnerable people in Ontario, including immigrants and refugees, have access to justice.

I'm happy to sign my name to this and send this off with page Jedd.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Kevin Yarde: "Ensure that Low-Income Ontarians Have Access to Justice.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has cut the funding for Legal Aid Ontario by almost one third;

"Whereas provincial funding for the immigration and refugee law program at Legal Aid Ontario has been completely cut;

"Whereas access to legal aid is essential to low-income Ontarians who are facing legal proceedings such as in immigration, criminal, family, mental health, poverty law and child protection cases;

"Whereas vulnerable populations like refugees will be left to represent themselves in a complex and already overburdened legal system, where a negative decision leads to deportation to countries where lives may be at risk;

"Whereas the cuts will lead to backlogs and delays throughout the justice system, causing chaos in the courts and costing taxpayers more, not less;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the cuts to Legal Aid Ontario that have already begun to impact the most vulnerable people in Ontario, including immigrants and refugees."

I fully endorse this petition. I will sign my name and give it to page Kate.

WASTE REDUCTION

Ms. Jill Andrew: This petition is on behalf of my community in Toronto–St. Paul's.

“Ban Single-use Consumer Plastics

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario is known around the world for its iconic, pure and pristine waters;

“Whereas 85% of marine litter affecting beaches and waterways worldwide is made up of plastic waste material. Plastics are also littering Ontario’s beaches and waterways, polluting our ecosystems and fisheries, affecting our health, tourism and industry;

“Whereas throwaway single-use plastics, including foam food containers ... wrappers and plastic bottle caps, are by and large the most frequently polluted items found littering our beaches, rivers and waterways....

“Whereas throwaway plastics like plastic straws, stir sticks etc. are used once then sent to landfills;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to develop consumption reduction targets, establish life cycle obligations for producers, and ultimately implement a complete ban on consumer single-use plastics by 2024.”

I enthusiastically support this petition, sign it and hand it over to Rishi.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Ms. Jill Andrew: “Petition to Restore Arts Funding and the Indigenous Culture Fund at the Ontario Arts Council.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has cut its level of base funding to the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) by \$5 million for the 2018-19 fiscal year...;

“Whereas the Ontario government has also cut its funding to the Indigenous Culture Fund (ICF) at the OAC by \$2.25 million for the 2018-19 year...;

“Whereas the ICF will not accept new grant applications this year while the program is under review, entailing the layoff of Indigenous staff in permanent positions;...

“Whereas the ICF was part of the Ontario government’s response to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;

“Whereas the ICF supported traditional culture, languages, teachings, protocols, knowledge, youth and elderled and engaged community cultural projects;

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

“(a) Restore OAC’s funding;

“(b) Restore the ICF’s funding” and to “retain all ICF staff positions, and commit to funding the ICF at this level in the years moving forward.”

I support, sign and hand this over to Wolfgang.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time for petitions has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT (SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESEARCH COMMISSION), 2019

LOI DE 2019 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE MINISTÈRE DES SERVICES SOCIAUX ET COMMUNAUTAIRES (COMMISSION DE RECHERCHE SUR L’AIDE SOCIALE)

Mr. Paul Miller moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 60, An Act to amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance Research Commission / Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires afin de créer la Commission de recherche sur l’aide sociale.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, I’m delighted to welcome to the Legislature today the many people who have taken time out of their day to travel all the way up from Hamilton and around the province to show support for this bill.

From Hamilton Food Share we have Joanne Santucci, Celeste Taylor and Karen Randell.

From the Daily Bread Food Bank we have Talia Bronstein.

From North York Harvest we have Sarah Watson, Ryan Noble and Chiara Padovani.

From the Windsor Essex Food Bank Association we have Lynda Davidson.

From Feed Ontario we have Amanda King, Ashley Quan, Sarah Wimpenny, Claire Ward-Beveridge and Rachel Dixon. Welcome.

I want especially to recognize Tom Cooper and Laura Cattari of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction. Tom and Laura are tireless advocates for those in need. These two have been pushing for evidence-based social assistance rates for over a decade.

I also want to extend my immense gratitude to Craig Foye. He is not in attendance today, but Craig was the staff lawyer with the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic who contributed enormously to the bill we are debating today. The idea for this bill originated with Craig 12 years ago. He produced the original draft that led to the bill that we are introducing today. More than anyone else, I’d like to thank him for his creativity, hard work and passionate advocacy. Thank you, Craig.

1400

Finally, I would like to recognize the co-sponsor of Bill 60, MPP Robert Bailey from Sarnia–Lambton. MPP Bailey and I have worked in the past on other significant pieces of legislation. One private members’ bill resulted in

the creation of Ontario's call-before-you-dig One Call program, which is now used throughout the province to protect underground infrastructure and prevent harm to excavators, construction workers, public workers and homeowners. Thank you, Bob.

Speaker, social assistance rates in Ontario suffered severe cuts under the Harris government that have never been reversed and have in fact been reduced further due to recent budget cuts. Real, inflation-adjusted rates are substantially lower today than they were prior to 1996. They've been on a steady downward trend for the last two decades. Currently, rates are set arbitrarily, without any reference to the real cost of living. As a result, recipients are mired in deep poverty, and they struggle to access nutritious food and adequate shelter.

We cannot allow programs as critical as income security to be politicized. To take the politics out of social assistance, this bill proposes that an expert independent panel should recommend rates based on the best evidence available of what is the real cost for living in Ontario communities.

In 2016, both the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic and the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction recommended an arm's-length social assistance rates board to assess the adequacy, based on the actual cost of living in Ontario regions, and provide advice on the levels of income support required for people to live in good health and dignity. Other groups echoed this call in other consultations around the province, including the ODSP Action Coalition, the Income Security Advocacy Centre, and Legal Assistance of Windsor/Community Legal Aid. Many of these organizations have been asking for this for years.

More groups have been in contact with my office, ranging from food security advocates to basic income supporters. The one thing they all have in common is the understanding that the way we are currently providing our social assistance is not working, and is in fact becoming worse by every measurable outcome. All of these various groups coming together on this one issue goes to show you, Madam Speaker, that public input is supremely important when establishing the budget of this province. The people who testify have expertise and personal experience in how government policies affect their lives. They know all too well of its failures and its inadequacies, and they also have imaginative and smart ideas on how to correct these problems. Fortunately, my colleagues and I were listening. The proof can be seen in this bill today.

Speaker, the majority of unemployed workers in Ontario are not eligible for employment insurance benefits. People don't realize this, and this misunderstanding is but one of the many sources of negative and ill-founded stereotypes against people struggling to survive on social assistance.

The EI system is particularly poorly adapted to the realities of precarious work in our urban centres. In Toronto, less than 20% of the unemployed workers are eligible for EI. With nowhere else to turn, it's no surprise that so many of them are forced to rely on social assistance

in order just to survive. In Hamilton, where rent costs have skyrocketed over the past five years, people who are looking for a small studio apartment, for example, are looking at paying nearly \$900 a month. How is it possible, then, for a person on Ontario Works to afford such basic housing with a shelter allowance of only \$390?

Decisions on social assistance rates have the most profound consequences for the lives of over 900,000 Ontarians. Over 900,000 people in this province rely on Ontario Works or ODSP, but more than half of these families do not have enough to eat. Why has this happened? Isn't social assistance supposed to provide a secure safety net to prevent people from falling into destitution, and to ensure that even the least fortunate in our society have the resources to access at least adequate shelter, eat sufficient and nutritious food, clothe themselves and live with some health and dignity?

Again, why has this happened? First, obviously, there were cuts in the 1990s, but the real cause is that rates are arbitrary and are set by the political whim of the government of the day. There is no process. There is no framework, no research and no evidence-based decision-making. Social assistance rates are not indexed to inflation. Social assistance rates are not connected to the cost of living. And with the exception of a flat northern supplement, social assistance rates do not recognize the very different costs of living in the very different communities in this vast province.

People receiving social assistance are living on below-subsistence incomes. In my own city of Hamilton, 75% to 80% of the people turning to food banks are in receipt of provincial social assistance. They should be able to afford, at least, their food.

Children who grow up hungry suffer lasting ill effects on their health. They don't concentrate as well in school as their peers. They are more likely to end up with preventable chronic diseases such as asthma and diabetes. And they internalize the shame and social stigma that go with being poor. Even a short time spent in poverty compromises their educational and employment outcomes. The inadequacies of our social assistance system are robbing children of the equal opportunity to succeed, and they are perpetuating inequalities that are resonating for decades and through generations.

Speaker, while many here may doubt it, out of the world's richest countries, Canada is one of the more unequal societies for children. I quote from the UNICEF report, cited in a 2016 article: "The growing gaps suggest that life is becoming more difficult for the most excluded children as social inequality has widened, and it is showing up in their physical and mental health" well-being.

A failure to address such crucial disparities creates lasting economic and social divisions that reverberate, at great cost, for generations to come.

We know that it doesn't have to be this way at all. Other provinces and countries have implemented highly effective policies to reduce poverty and food insecurity, particularly among children. In fact, we have an example

that operates in this province under the jurisdiction of the federal government, where incomes are indexed to the cost of living. It's called CPP, Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. It's an excellent poverty reduction program targeted at seniors. It's so effective, Speaker, that seniors have the lowest rate of food insecurity in Canada, even lower than adults who are employed. As a result, turning 65 drops the risk of food insecurity in half for low-income adults in Canada.

But it makes you wonder, Speaker, why income support programs for the under-65s are so inadequate. Is there anything special about being 65 instead of 64? Why do we have a system where a 64-year-old in Ontario can live in grinding poverty, but once they turn 65, it's a bonanza and we'll double our efforts to ensure that they have health and dignity after 65? This isn't a system informed by research, by evidence and by morality. What you find in effective poverty reduction strategies everywhere, like our programs for seniors, is that benefits are set at levels sufficient to cover basic needs. They are based on evidence and research. That is exactly what we need in our social assistance program, Speaker: evidence-based rates.

Too few people in this chamber and in the government have the lived experience of poverty. They don't understand what it's like to not have fresh fruit or vegetables, or to not socialize because they can't afford shampoo or deodorant for one week, or to go without the basic dignity of a warm cup of coffee in their apartment, or to never feel the pride of a new pair of shoes on the first day of school. It's hard for many people in this province to imagine how life would be without air conditioning in the summer, and I do not believe that there are many in this chamber who would willingly sacrifice their comforts without a lot of resistance. That's why it's so important to listen to people who do have direct lived experience. That's why the Social Assistance Research Commission will have at least one member with direct lived experience of Ontario Works and one member with direct lived experience of ODSP.

We want this panel to be both expert and representative. We want it to be independent. We want its reports and recommendations to be public, because it's critical that the public has access to the evidence on which important decisions such as these are made, both to inform public debate and to hold the government accountable.

1410

None of the members of this Legislature, I would think, have the expertise or experience necessary to be deciding the incomes of 900,000 of the poorest people in our province, but that is what is currently happening. Instead, I would like the government and the members of this House to be provided with recommendations and advice based on best expertise and experience available so they can make informed decisions.

One of the additional features of this bill utilizes the expertise of the existing commission to periodically explore some other aspects of social assistance policy, such as how it interacts with precarious work, child support payments and workplace injury benefits. If you

already have expertise, why not leverage it for the maximum benefit of the public? It would be wasteful not to, or to spend time and money establishing another one-time, single-purpose body.

A final quote, a Bill Gates quote: "I believe that if you show people the"—

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was going to give him my time—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I haven't recognized the member yet, but I'm looking forward to it.

I recognize the member from Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I was going to give him my time to go ahead and speak. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for recognizing me.

I want to say from the get-go that it's a pleasure to rise today and add my comments to Bill 60, the Ministry of Community and Social Services Amendment Act, which I co-sponsored with my colleague the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

I'm also going to say right now that I'm going to be splitting my time today with my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Leamington and the member from Cambridge.

Madam Speaker, when the member approached me to co-sponsor this bill, I was extremely pleased to be able to lend my assistance. The member and I have had the opportunity in prior years to sit in the back of the west lobby and discuss the important issues of the day. We don't get those opportunities much anymore, so I certainly wanted to take this opportunity to work with the member on this important initiative. I listened closely to his remarks, and I agree with a lot of them about poverty. As he said, very few members in this chamber, thank God, had the opportunity—or missed opportunity, I guess—to grow up in those kinds of situations. So it is incumbent upon all of us to do whatever we can to change those circumstances.

When he mentioned the people here from the food banks, it made me think of my private member's bill that I sponsored a number of years ago—I think in 2012. No, that was the one-call bill. Anyway, it was about a food tax credit for surplus food to go to food banks and churches, and I'm glad the member of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek brought it up. That's something I'm very proud of. I'm glad you're here today. I hope it's working for you.

In brief, Bill 60, if passed, will establish an advisory group called the Social Assistance Research Commission. The member didn't speak too much about this, so I'll speak about it. He covered a lot of other areas. This would consist of one current or recent Ontario Works recipient and one ODSP recipient, to recommend OW and ODSP rates for each region of Ontario based on economic geography and the cost of living in those areas.

New rates would be determined by the cost of necessities in a particular region; additional expenses incurred by those individuals living with disabilities in order for them to fully participate in society, as is their wont; and

additional expenses incurred by people who face long-term barriers to employment.

Additionally, at least once every five years this commission would recommend policy with respect to how social assistance programs interact with precarious employment and with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, and with respect to the treatment of child support payments received by families who also receive social assistance.

Bill 60 also requires that the minister make any commission reports public and prepare a written response to those recommendations, and that would also be made public.

I think what we have here in this bill are some very common-sense suggestions that can support our government's plan to strengthen social assistance programs that was put forward by my colleague the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

In fact, Speaker, I'm very interested in this initiative because it reflects a lot of the work that my staff back in my constituency office do every day with my constituents, and I'm sure many of the members here do as well.

On many occasions during my 12 years as the MPP for Sarnia-Lambton, we have pulled together all those local social service agencies in Lambton county and Sarnia to address gaps in funding for people in need. Medication, medical devices, housing and food—you name it—we've tried to help in my office.

Most recently, we've been working on a program to help people without the ability to pay for something as basic as government ID, because without government identification you can't apply for Ontario Works, ODSP or even OHIP. So who's going to help these folks? My office pulled together all the agencies to find a local solution. I'm proud to say that we were able to accomplish that. I'm also working on making that a permanent solution, but that's a discussion for another day, under a different subject.

Madam Speaker, as one in seven people live in poverty in this province, and almost one million Ontarians are on some form of social assistance, our government is working night and day to change that. I think that this commission will help support that and help bring ideas and solutions forward.

As a co-sponsor of Bill 60, I fully support its intent to bring more voices to the table to help figure out how best the provincial government can support those in need. I look forward to rest of the debate, and I hope to see Bill 60 passed here today and implemented at some future date.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: It's an honour to speak to this bill. I think this is a great example of some collective action that this Legislature can take. Some people may think, "Why study this? This issue has been studied. We have volumes of reports on the living conditions of people living in poverty," but what I welcome in this bill is the fact that it's specifically linked to people's lived experience and adjusting rates which have long had the call to adjust them,

but we haven't necessarily had it from a point-of-use perspective.

If people want to know what that looks like, I'm standing right here. For five years, my mom and my brother and I lived on social assistance. And that kept us alive. That, and the church that we went to, kept us alive. That put food on our table. But it wasn't easy to be the kid at school who didn't have the stuff the other kids had. Those memories are seared into my mind, Speaker. When we work with families now in Ottawa Centre who go through that same experience, my heart goes out to them.

When we have the kind of research that this work will yield to us, we hope, because it comes from lived experience, because it comes from the advocates like the folks over here in the members' gallery who provide people the measures for dignity, that's actually going to motivate good policy decisions.

I want to rise and mention, in the time that I have, two other folks who mean a great deal to me when I talk about the issue of poverty and what my friend the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek is putting forward. I want to talk about my grandmother, Juliette Harden, whose birthday was Wednesday this week. She passed away not that long ago. She ran a small business. When my mom remarried and I was no longer on social assistance, it was the Harden family who wrapped its arms around me, sent me to school and gave me employment for many of my teenage years.

What I learned later in life is that my grandma had a bunch of side hustles with her business, and some of them were very compassionate in nature. If people watching this know Hawkesbury, Ontario, it's one of the most poverty-ridden places in the entire province, because there used to be a lot of manufacturing in Hawkesbury, but those jobs have gone. Because of trade deals signed by ill-informed governments, those jobs have gone and a lot of people in Hawkesbury are living in dire poverty.

When I was growing up in the 1980s, oblivious to a lot of this as a kid because I had won the sweepstakes—I happened to marry into a family that was much better off. My grandma had side hustles. Every Christmas, every birthday, every wedding with families that couldn't afford to buy things at our family's jewellery store, she would figure out barter arrangements for those families. Let's say they had a kid who could cut grass; let's say they had a farm and they could exchange eggs or milk—they had a bunch of those sorts of arrangements, so when birthdays happened, when Christmas happened, those families could have dignity. I want to say that right now in the province of Ontario, because of the broken system we have, there are millions of Ontarians doing that right now—millions.

Another who I'm thinking of today—and I'll try to struggle my way through this—is Richard Downing. Richard Downing just passed away this week, one of my good friend's dad, 74 years old. He worked every day of his life, he said, from age 12. When I was young and I thought I knew everything in high school, reading a couple of things, Richard would sit me down and calmly explain to me that I, in fact, knew nothing, and that if I wanted to

learn something, I needed to start working at somewhere other than my parents' jewellery store. He encouraged me to go work on farms in eastern Ontario, so I did. Boy, was he ever right.

When I thought I'd learned the work ethic, and I would go to Christmas Eve parties at the Downings' house and thought I could pronounce upon why everybody else was lazy and why I'd discovered the work ethic, Richard would sit me down again and he would say, "Well, hold on. What you don't understand is the fact that you're from the Harden family, and you can vicariously figure a way out around work ethic. What you don't see are the people struggling all over this area, the people your grandmother has helped quietly, the people your dad has helped, your mom has helped. I don't ever want you to think that having a strong work ethic should come at the expense of somebody else who hasn't had the life chances you've had."

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So I'm off this weekend to remember Richard, and I want to thank you, Richard. You're no longer with us, but I'll be there with Mark and with Eric and with Ryan. Thank you, Richard, for teaching me.

Last but not least—let me try to recover with a bit of passion before I hand it over to my friend from Beaches—East York: Why the heck, Speaker, are we having this debate with our friend from Sarnia, our friend from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, who are moving this very, very good piece of legislation? I suspect we are not going to have a member from the Liberal Party contribute to this debate. Why? Fifteen years they were in power here. Fifteen years they kept social assistance rates and ODSP frozen. Fifteen years they went to their cash-for-access fundraisers and all of their friends on Bay Street, lavishing themselves at their expense while people suffered.

Now, I know that a lot of people in this place, when we've had debates, have said that it was the energy file that killed them. I want to say that it was also the poverty issue related to that that killed them. The Liberal Party has been judged, and they ought to be judged. When they have their reckoning moment, they should be realizing who, in fact, they stand for. They want to issue bromides and platitudes about poor people and fighting for the middle class? Then you show up when this report yields its recommendations, and you back the assistance rates that families deserve. That's when the Liberal Party will gain some respect from me. It has zilch from me right now. It has a lot of rhetoric and very little action.

I want to thank the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek and the member from Sarnia for putting this forward. It takes a lot of courage. Let's get it done.

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

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: I'm pleased to rise in support of this bill as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. I want to thank the members from both Sarnia—Lambton and, of course, Hamilton East—Stoney Creek for their work on this and for bringing this back to the House. I know that the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek has been

working on this for a while, and even before he took it up, I know that others had also been championing something along the same lines, going as far back as 12 years ago, when a bill was introduced but was never called for second reading.

The social assistance system in Ontario today, which we inherited from the previous government, is an ineffective, disjointed patchwork of supports that traps people and denies them meaningful opportunities to find jobs and get their lives back on track. Madam Speaker, I think this bill ties in nicely with what the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services announced back in November, specifically the government's plan to improve social assistance programs like Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.

Talk to someone living on ODSP, for example, especially those who want to work or who have no other options, and they'll tell you that change is needed. We know that the same is true for the Ontario Works program as well. I have met with individuals and groups, with representatives of organizations not only in my riding of Cambridge but also across Waterloo region and across Ontario, people who have told me that change is very much needed. The status quo isn't working, Madam Speaker. It wasn't working in 2007 and it wasn't working in 2016. That's why our government is looking at changes that the previous government failed to make. It's simple: The Liberals left a system that needs to be fixed, and that's what our government is going to do.

If passed, this bill would amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish a commission called the Social Assistance Research Commission. That commission would consist of people with expertise relevant to the commission's work, providing recommendations on social assistance rates as well as other recommendations related to social assistance policy in this province. New rates, for example, would be determined by the cost of necessities in a particular region, additional expenses incurred by individuals living with disabilities in order for them to fully participate in society, and additional expenses incurred by people who face long-term barriers to employment.

In my opinion, something that is very important here is the focus on hearing from those who know best: the experts and the people who have real, honest, lived experience and can speak to what they know and to what matters most to Ontarians who live with similar circumstances. The bill would see that there is a requirement of at least two appointees to the commission with specific knowledge of the economic and financial challenges faced by individuals living with disabilities.

One in seven people live in poverty in this province, and almost one million Ontarians are on some form of social assistance. This is why we have decided as a government that we need a better system across all ministries to support those who are living in vulnerable circumstances.

Again, I'm happy to give my support for this bill. I want to thank my caucus colleague the member from Sarnia—

Lambton and the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for helping to bring this forward and for asking me if I would be able to speak in support of it.

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: It's an enormous honour to be able to speak to this bill today, put forward by the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and co-signed by the member for Sarnia–Lambton.

I couldn't support this bill strongly enough. It is absolutely crucial, when we are thinking about setting social assistance rates, that we listen to evidence, that we listen to the people with lived experience of these conditions, that we know what we're talking about, and, in effect, that we consult before we act. I really wish that the government had had this in place at the very start of its mandate, but I do hope that it passes the bill and then really acts on it and listens to what the panel has to say.

Since I became the critic for poverty and homelessness for the official opposition, I have heard from advocate after advocate—people who have been working with people experiencing poverty and homelessness—and even before this. My daughter, who is a social worker, has been working for Anishnawbe Health Toronto for the past three years. She's now a mental health and addictions outreach worker, but before that she was a housing advocate. I have been hearing, first-hand, these stories for the past three years.

People are suffering. They don't have enough money, and they can't manage. The rates that were flatlined for OW and ODSP are not enough. They were promised an increase of 3%, and they got 1.5%. It is simply not enough. It is particularly not enough in any place where there's a housing crisis, which is true, in fact, across Ontario but particularly true in the city of Toronto. It is going to be compounded if the government does go ahead and redefine eligibility criteria for ODSP, which would mean that further ODSP recipients won't receive it and will have to go on OW, which is roughly half of the ODSP rates.

If any of you have tried to find a roof to put over your head, you can't do it at \$735 a month. You cannot do it. That's even before you have to try to eat or clothe yourself such that you could go out and look for one of the jobs that the government keeps touting as the solution. It just doesn't work. The math doesn't work. People are desperate. They're absolutely desperate. They're coming to my office, week after week after week, and saying, "How is this supposed to happen? How is this supposed to work?" When you compound that with the fact that we don't have enough affordable housing and we have a bill that the government is bringing forward that doesn't build affordable housing, and you compound that with the fact that people are getting reconvicted and now they don't have legal aid that they can turn to, because that has been cut as well, and when you compound that with the fact that there have been public health cuts that mean that school nutrition programs are in danger, we have a crisis.

I want to point the government to Colour of Poverty. I wish that the minister would actually sit down with these

folks, because when she was talking in an exchange we had the other day, she said something very interesting. She talked about growing up in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia—New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, where families would look out for each other if somebody couldn't work and where a job actually was the solution. New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, in the last census, had a population of 9,000 people. I'll guarantee you that the population of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, does not look like Toronto. There are systemic barriers that Black people, Indigenous people and other racialized people face in school, in finding employment and in finding housing that white people simply do not face. If you don't have that as your frame of reference, you're not going to understand it, so please sit down and talk to the folks at Colour of Poverty.

On top of that, you need to sit down and talk to the folks at the Shelter and Housing Justice Network, because they will tell you how the homeless population in Toronto has doubled over the last four years—doubled—from about 4,000 in 2013 to about 9,000 today. So we have a real crisis, and they are very concerned that the lack of affordable housing, and all the other factors I mentioned, mean that people are going to be pushed into homelessness, and that's going to go up further.

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If what you're concerned about is social justice, this is not okay, and if what you're concerned about is the fiscal health of the economy, this is not okay, because either way, it's going to be way more expensive. It is so much more expensive to house people in jail; it is so much more expensive to house people in hospitals, when they become ill, than to prevent them from becoming homeless and to support them in the first place, to give them OW and ODSP that they can actually live on—and that people can put their lives together and actually be able to move forward.

You also need to think about putting back basic income. I spoke to somebody yesterday who had made her way to Toronto from Hamilton with the Protecting ODSP OW Funding coalition, who said that basic income had been helping her do that, and now without it, she's back to square one.

Please listen. Please put this panel together.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I want to congratulate the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek as well as our infamous member from Sarnia–Lambton, Mr. Bailey, on co-sponsoring this particular bill. They're the dynamic duo when it comes to PMBs, and they do a great job as well.

Of course, I'm pleased to stand here and talk about Bill 60, An Act to amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance Research Commission.

Speaker, social assistance in Ontario today is an ineffective, disjointed patchwork of supports that traps people and denies them meaningful opportunities to find jobs and get their lives back on track. Our plan is about a more effective, sustainable approach to helping people

prepare to return to work and achieve better outcomes. Bill 60 perfectly fits with that plan, and I'm very happy to see that it has bipartisan support in this House.

We need data. Data is the difference between a well-intentioned mistake and a well-targeted solution. This reality could not be more true than in the context of social assistance. It has been over 22 years since our major legislation on social assistance in Ontario was updated, and our economy has changed majorly since then.

The commission being arranged by this private members' bill would gather data on a region-by-region comparative basis. Our government believes in an integrated and holistic approach to policy-making and community-building. The work of this research commission on social assistance in Ontario will complement the rest of our agenda, and produce data to have us better connect our policies and our services.

This work will build on our historic Low-income Individuals and Families Tax Credit, known as the LIFT Credit, which incentivizes people to leave social assistance and find work. If passed, LIFT would provide \$850 in relief to an individual earning \$30,000 per year, and \$1,250 in relief to a family earning \$60,000 per year.

Speaker, our government is creating a clearing house for connecting prospective employers with those who want to work. The province has launched a website to make matching job seekers with employment opportunities easier: Ontario's Open for Business website. You can find it at ontario.ca/openforbusiness. Employers can also post job opportunities at employer.jobbank.gc.ca.

Speaker, we will reduce red tape, eliminate unnecessary rules and create an individual action plan for each person who can work, to identify supports that address needs and put them on a pathway back to self-reliance.

This is not a cookie-cutter approach. We are committed to helping people behind the numbers.

MPPs Miller and Bailey are what I call the PMB equivalents to Babe Ruth. They always hit a home run together, as this isn't the first time they've co-sponsored PMBs.

And by the way, Speaker, if you haven't guessed it already, I support Bill 60.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the speakers to the bill. I'd like to thank the member from Sarnia–Lambton, of course, my co-sponsor; the member from Cambridge, the member from Chatham–Kent–Leamington and, of course, the members from Beaches–East York and Ottawa Centre for their passionate speeches.

I could probably finish my last page that I couldn't get in, Speaker, right here.

One of the additional features of this bill is that it utilizes the expertise of the existing commission to periodically explore some other aspects of social assistance policy, such as how it interacts with precarious work, child support payments and workplace injury benefits. Because if you already have expertise, why not leverage it for the

maximum benefit to the public? It would be wasteful not to do so, or to spend time and money establishing another one-time, single-purpose body.

The need to explore these interactions is clear. Our increasingly precarious labour market makes it easier than ever for people to fall into the social assistance system, but harder than ever to make a re-entry into permanent, secure employment.

How often in this place do we have the opportunity to make real change, to improve the life prospects of almost a million people, to help them towards health, dignity and a brighter future? This is but a footstep on the long road to ending poverty, Speaker, but it is an important one.

I hope that all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support it today, at third reading and to make it law, and to ensure that this bill gets to committee and also gets royal assent.

Once again, I'd like to quote Mr. Gates—I said it kind of quickly: “I believe that if you show people the problems and you show them the solutions, they will move to act on them.”

I appreciate the support for this bill. I appreciate my colleagues' honesty and togetherness on this. It's nice, once in a while in this House, Speaker, when people can get good things done.

MANDATORY POLICE TRAINING ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA FORMATION OBLIGATOIRE DE LA POLICE

Ms. Kusendova moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act with respect to the training required of police officers and others / Projet de loi 105, Loi relative à la formation requise des agents de police et autre personnel policier.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I am humbled to stand in the House today to lead the debate on Bill 105, an act that would require all police services across Ontario to be trained in the administration of naloxone.

As a registered nurse working in the ER, I have witnessed the tragic results of the opioid crisis first-hand. On the front lines, I have heard from many fellow nurses, paramedics and police services about the need to address this increasingly prevalent health care issue in our province. It is extremely important to highlight that there is an opioid crisis in Canada and in Ontario, and people are dying.

I would like to start by thanking Mr. Rick Frayne and Dr. Darryl Gebien for being here with us this afternoon. Rick Frayne is one of the founders of a Mississauga opioid awareness group called Music with a Message. Rick lost his brother and a friend's son to opioids and now devotes his time to raising awareness on this issue.

Dr. Darryl Gebien is an emergency room doctor who is not currently practising, who became a victim of opioid addiction, and has since made a full recovery. What began as a prescription for chronic back pain became a habit for stress relief that led to his incarceration. His journey to recovery has inspired others, and he now actively speaks out to raise this issue.

I would also like to thank Mr. Allan Malek, executive vice-president and chief pharmacy officer of the Ontario Pharmacists Association, who joined me this morning at my press conference. The OPA plays a key role in providing naloxone kits across the province, and I'm grateful to be able to count on their support.

I would also like to thank Dr. Doris Grinspun from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, who was also present this morning and spoke in support of Bill 105.

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Finally, I would like to thank my OLIP intern, Peter Supierz-Szczyglowski, who was instrumental in helping me to bring this bill forward. Thank you, Peter.

Over the last few years, we've seen a rising trend of opioid overdoses across Canada. Between January 2016 and September 2018, a period of less than three years, more than 10,300 Canadians lost their lives as a result of an apparent opioid overdose. These numbers have been steadily increasing year by year, with no signs of slowing down.

Since 2003, the number of deaths in Ontario due to opioids has increased by 246%. Here in Ontario, we have some of the highest rates of opioid overdoses in the country. We see it most in places like Thunder Bay, Brantford, Sault Ste. Marie, Belleville, Toronto and St. Catharines. But these increasing trends are also taking a toll on my community in the city of Mississauga.

Let me be clear: The opioid crisis is not a partisan issue. It is a human issue, and we must work together across all political aisles and all levels of government to ensure that our first responders have the knowledge, resources and tools to respond to victims and save lives. Whether it's firefighters, paramedics or police officers, it is important that our front-line first responders not only have the knowledge to respond to an overdose, but also feel empowered to do so.

That is precisely why our government made the right decision to change the regulations for police officers to be able to carry and administer naloxone without having to always worry about being subjected to SIU investigations in the unfortunate event of a victim's death.

Speaker, we know that knowledge is power. With Bill 105, we are empowering all police services to be trained in administering naloxone and to save lives. Some 60% of opioid overdoses happen at home, and police are often the first to arrive at the scene, which is why it is absolutely critical that we move forward with this bill. The alternative is simply unacceptable.

This bill cannot come a day too soon. Even this very morning we heard on CP24 how police officers from Halton were instrumental in saving two young teens' lives by administering naloxone.

I would like to take the liberty to read directly from the CP24 statement: "Halton police have launched an investigation after two youths lost consciousness and began to experience seizures after reportedly consuming what they had assumed was cannabis at a Milton home.

"Police say that officers were dispatched to the residence shortly after 2 p.m. on Wednesday after receiving a 911 call from a neighbour.

"Police say that once officers arrived on scene they located two unconscious 18-year-old males outside of the home, both of whom were 'showing obvious signs of a suspected overdose.'

"At that point, officers quickly administered naloxone to both males. Police say that one of the males received a single dose of the drug before regaining consciousness while the other needed to be given a second dose before he regained consciousness. Both were transferred to hospital via ambulance....

"The outcome of these two overdoses is a direct result of a witness immediately calling 911, and the rapid administration of naloxone by our officers,' Halton police said in a press release issued late Wednesday night. 'Our front-line officers carry naloxone and we want to assist...'

"The drug is administered via a nasal spray that is carried by all front-line officers with the Halton Regional Police Service."

Speaker, I do not want to think what would have happened had the two police officers that responded to the scene yesterday not been trained in recognizing the signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose and trained in successfully administering naloxone. I think I speak on behalf of all members of this assembly when I say thank you for their swift and heroic actions.

Speaker, this bill was inspired by looking at all the evidence and from listening to people that have lost loved ones to opioids such as fentanyl, which continues to be a major driver of Canada's opioid crisis. In listening to people's stories of how they have lost family or friends to addiction, the overwhelming message has been that more needs to be done to ensure all first responders not only carry naloxone kits but know how to use them.

These kinds of stories highlight why we need to raise awareness around this public health issue. These kinds of stories exemplify why it's important that we train as many people as possible in administering Narcan, which is the nasal spray form of naloxone.

This is why I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Adept Pharma for having organized an opioid awareness day last month here at Queen's Park. With the help of paramedic services from the city of Hamilton, those who attended—many of my colleagues here were present—learned how to administer naloxone and received a kit. I remember coming back to my office that day and telling my staff that I was going to train them because I really believe that we should practise what we preach and we should walk the talk.

As a front-line nurse who continues to work in emergency rooms, I regularly have to treat patients who suffer from overdosing on opioids. This is why I strongly believe

in educating the public on recognizing the symptoms of an overdose and teaching how to respond quickly, because every minute, every second, makes a difference in saving someone's life. This is why my team and I will be hosting two training sessions on administering naloxone here at Queen's Park, one at the end of this month and another at the beginning of June. In offering this training, I'd like to welcome all members and their staff to attend. As part of our initiative to save lives, we'll be distributing naloxone kits for MPPs to take back home to their constituency offices, so that if anyone should ever collapse from an overdose in front of their office, they'll have the skills and medication needed to prevent a death.

Our constituents need to know they can depend on us to be ready to respond should the worst come to happen. Ontarians need to know and be able to trust that our first responders—all of them; not just nurses, paramedics and firefighters, but police officers, too—have the knowledge and the tools to prevent someone from dying of an overdose.

As I said, this is a non-partisan issue. It crosses all political divides and affects everyone. That is why I was pleased to hear yesterday's announcement from the federal Minister of Health. Minister Petipras Taylor underlined, "The opioid crisis continues to be one of the most serious public health issues in Canada's recent history." She announced 33 new initiatives to develop educational resources for health practitioners on safer opioid use and effective treatments.

Mr. Speaker, Canada and Ontario have a bilateral agreement on shared health priorities and will invest approximately \$1.9 billion in targeted federal funding over five years as part of the commitment to expand home and community care access, as well as mental health and addictions services. Ontario is doing its part by matching the federal government's \$1.9 billion and developing a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy for our province.

Our joint mission is to combat the opioid crisis, which is a battle that must be fought on all possible fronts. We at the government of Ontario are doing our part, and Bill 105 is a crucial step towards fighting this battle. The goal is to save lives and give opioid overdose victims a second chance, a chance to get treatment and recover and to ultimately become contributing members of our society.

I think that the experience of Dr. Gebien shows us that opioid addiction can affect anyone, even the most educated of us. His story offers a different perspective from the kind that many of us used to hear when we think of opioid addictions. Dr. Gebien wasn't living on the street or unemployed; he worked in emergency rooms and just happened to suffer a sports injury that put him on painkillers. In struggling with his pain, he eventually turned to fentanyl. This could happen to anyone, including those with a legal prescription. I'm happy to say that Dr. Gebien was able to recover and now devotes much of his time to helping others. His experience is a reminder that we are all vulnerable, and at one point or another we all have our weak moments.

Canada's opioid crisis affects us all. It does not discriminate. According to data from a report published last year by the Canadian Mental Health Association, in Ontario, someone dies of an opioid overdose every 10 hours. Let that sink in for a moment: Within the next 10 hours, someone in Ontario is going to die because of an opioid overdose.

Last year, in London, over the course of seven months, police officers administered naloxone to 59 people. Out of those 59, they saved the lives of 57. They saved 97% of the people they tried to rescue, and I would like to commend them for their vigilance, bravery and hard work.

Monsieur le Président, ma circonscription est Mississauga-Centre. C'est mon domicile. C'est là où j'habite, et je me soucie beaucoup de mes électeurs. Je suis infirmière, et je le suis devenue parce que je tiens tout autant à la santé et au bien-être de mes patients, parce que je veux pouvoir aider les gens. Je veux sauver des vies. C'est ma passion, et c'est ce qui m'a inspiré pour présenter ce projet de loi. En tant qu'infirmière, résidente de Mississauga et députée, la tendance croissante à la surdose d'opioïdes dans notre province et dans ma circonscription me préoccupe gravement.

Speaker, in having spoken and listened to our stakeholders, my constituents and the people of Ontario, I've heard only support for saving lives, and I hope that this bill receives the same kind of support from all members, because one opioid-related death in Ontario is one too many.

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

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I'm very happy and proud to rise in support of my colleague from Mississauga Centre, MPP Natalia Kusendova, on this very important piece of legislation. I just want to take an opportunity to thank her for all of the hard work that she has done in bringing this together and putting this forward in the Legislature.

I know that before she was an elected member she was, and currently still is, a nurse, so she has really had the opportunity to see first-hand the effects of the opioid crisis and to see what has come from this crisis that we have seen. She has been on the front lines. I'm sure she has been in ER rooms and in emergency situations where she has had to administer naloxone and see our first responders as well, which is what this piece of legislation focuses on: making sure that they have mandatory training.

The rising trend of opioid overdoses is a public health issue and one that affects our communities, even my community in Brampton and across this province, and it demands action to put public safety first.

Bill 105 would mandate that naloxone training be a part of the mandatory training for all police services across Ontario.

The dangers of the opioid crisis are widely known. Ontario has some of the highest opioid overdoses in the country. The Public Health Agency of Canada states that more than 10,000 Canadians lost their lives as a result of

an opioid-related overdose between January 2016 and September 2018. During the first nine months of 2018, 3,000 Canadians lost their lives to apparent opioid-related overdoses.

Naloxone is a fast-acting drug used to temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, and it can restore breathing within two to five minutes. Naloxone works by kicking opioids off the receptors in your brain and binding to those receptors instead. Naloxone is safe for all ages and only works if you have opioids in your system. You cannot use naloxone improperly, it does not create dependence, and, thankfully, naloxone does not affect non-opioids.

Last fall, our government made changes, under the current Solicitor General, to support our everyday heroes. Our government has amended regulation 267/10, a key regulation under the current Police Services Act.

Our government for the people is helping officers save lives by enabling them to carry and administer naloxone in response to opioid overdoses like other first responders, who do not have to worry about routinely being the subject of criminal investigations for doing their part. A great example of this was what was just mentioned earlier in the member's statement around the two police officers in Halton who administered naloxone and saved the lives of two 18-year-olds who were found unconscious. Had we not enacted these changes, those officers might have hesitated before administering that naloxone because they could have been under criminal investigation. Those are the types of changes our government is making.

I just once again want to commend the great work that the MPP from Mississauga Centre has done in bringing this forward.

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

Mr. Kevin Yarde: It's an honour to rise today in this House to speak to this very important bill. To start off with, let's acknowledge that there is an opioid crisis in our province. Let's call it what it is: It's a public health emergency.

We have to give credit to our first responders, our front-line workers, our public health officers and officials and our police officers, who are combatting this crisis every day and trying to do the most to save lives with what they are given. They are true heroes, and for all that they do we are very grateful and thankful.

I commend the member from Mississauga Centre on bringing forward this private member's bill that mandates police training in naloxone. The NDP, in the past, has advocated for availability of naloxone. In particular, the member from Waterloo has spoken to this issue in the House. Mandating proper training for all police officers in the administration of naloxone, in the case of an opioid overdose, is a great step to help combat the opioid crisis. This will arm the officers with the tools and training to save lives.

But why just stop at police officers? I spoke to the crisis in corrections last week. There is a problem with opioid and drug overdoses in our jails as well. Just over a week ago, Halton police reported an inmate death and five

others injured in suspected illegal drug overdoses at the Maplehurst Correctional Complex in Milton. This is not an isolated situation. This is happening at jails all around the province, and more frequently than ever before.

When you talk to correctional officers, they're telling us what they need. First of all, correctional officers just do not have quick access to the naloxone that they need. They have raised alarms about not having enough naloxone kits in correctional facilities.

Last spring, the Office of the Chief Coroner held a month-long inquest into the overdose deaths of eight men at the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre and made 62 recommendations, including the need for increased availability of naloxone kits. But correctional workers tell us that these kits are often housed centrally, and are few and far between. Bluntly speaking, Madam Speaker, this government just needs to do things better.

Secondly, correctional officers just have not been given ample training on administering naloxone.

I will read you an excerpt from the *Globe and Mail* published after the incident in Maplehurst. This is from Chris Jackel, the corrections division chair for the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. He said "There had been 'a little bit' of naloxone training to officers. 'All it really is, is like an e-learning training—you log onto a computer and you walk through a PowerPoint presentation ... and then that's the training.'"

Imagine the stress of seeing an overdose—all too frequent in our correctional facilities and jails—knowing that naloxone can stop it, but all you've received is a PowerPoint presentation on how to administer it.

Corrections is being left behind again. They need support, and the government is letting them down once again. If there is one death, there is one death too many, Madam Speaker. Our correctional officers are faced with tough situations daily and are not armed with the tools and training to help those in need. This is why our correctional workers also need to be included in mandatory training and naloxone administration.

This government needs to immediately implement better policies and practices, to diminish the harms of incarceration that are specific to people who use drugs. One way to do so is by arming the correctional workers with the training to save their lives.

Lastly, I want to talk a little bit about harm reduction and the actions of this government. While this is a great step to avoid overdose deaths at the hand of opioids, other actions of the government are doing far more harm. This is a public health emergency, and instead of providing support to public health units, this government is making cuts and downloading costs onto municipalities.

The government recently took away funding from safe injection sites in Toronto. Those sites played a big role in saving lives and helping those in need. Now that responsibility will shift to police officers, firefighters and other first responders. Madam Speaker, that is not the right approach on how to deal with this public health emergency.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today and to speak to my colleague from Mississauga Centre's private member's bill. It's called An Act with respect to the training required of police officers and others.

We're hearing a lot of concern about the crisis going on right now, the opioid overdose crisis. Ontario has the highest rate of overdoses in the country. I really want to thank my colleague. I guess you could still call her a rookie, even though it hasn't quite been a year. She was an emergency room nurse, and I can just imagine how lucky the patients were when they showed up at the hospital and she was there to take care of them, because she really has a lot of expertise and passion for saving lives, as she's demonstrating today.

1500

This is actually Police Week across Ontario. We're recognizing the fantastic work that our police do—all our first responders, in fact. I just want to say that Police Week focuses on raising awareness and recognition of all the good work police officers do. Sometimes you have to feel bad that we're heaping more and more work on our doctors, our nurses and our first responders because, as new crises emerge and as new treatments emerge, they have more work to do and sometimes we have to look at that balance. Just as with taxation, we can't keep adding new projects on without rethinking some of the older projects, and funding is not limitless.

That's why I'm very happy to report that naloxone, which is available in a spray or in needle form—it's called Narcan in the spray form. I actually have it on my desk, but it's a prop and I can't show props, Madam Speaker, as I'm aware and you're aware. It's basically the size of a lipstick or a little compact kit that you might have in your purse. I'm going to be keeping it in my purse. It temporarily counteracts opiates in the system, if somebody overdoses. It is free at most drugstores. I hope people are going to go out and get the training from their drugstore, as well as the naloxone or the Narcan nasal spray. I'm going to carry the nasal spray in my purse whenever possible. I just want to remind people at home that it has to be stored at room temperature; it can't be frozen. It needs to be protected from light, and it can only go up to maybe 40 degrees for short periods.

We heard on the news just this morning that yesterday two teens thought they were taking cannabis in a backyard, spotted by a neighbour at 2 p.m. in the afternoon when most people aren't home to see what's going on in their neighbours' backyards. Well, they fell unconscious, and the neighbour called the police. The police came with naloxone and administered naloxone to both the teens. They had to administer it twice to one of the teens, and the teens were transported to hospital. I hope they're doing well. I feel for their families. We all know that teenagers sometimes don't make the wisest decisions, but adults also sometimes make mistakes in life.

We know there are certain pockets of the province where we're seeing more overdoses than others. Whenever somebody has their life saved, I hope in my heart that

they spread awareness in their neighbourhood about what happened to them, that people aren't shy. We all know there are great advocates, people who aren't shy to say they made a mistake.

We want to empower our police. Basically, what this bill is doing is training them and making it mandatory that they have the training and they have naloxone or Narcan with them in order to provide that ability to save lives. I'm really pleased to support it. I hope that we're going to see support around the House today, and I'm looking forward to hearing what my constituents have to say about this private member's bill.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: As the official opposition critic for mental health and addictions, I'm happy to speak to the member from Mississauga Centre's private member's bill, An Act with respect to the training required of police officers and others.

Any and all measures we can take to save someone from dying from a preventable overdose is worth investing, it's worth supporting. I just wish—I still call on the government to do more. We are, after all, in the middle of a public health emergency. The overdose crisis is already claiming the lives of 11 Canadians every day. For months, I've been raising this issue in the House, calling on the Minister of Health to declare a public health emergency and to fund overdose prevention sites.

As we learned just this morning, Toronto paramedics saw twice as many people die of a suspected opioid overdose in the first four months of 2019 than the same time last year. So why isn't the government declaring a public health emergency? What have they done so far on the overdose prevention sites? They've cut funding.

Given the fact that we're in a public health emergency, we should have naloxone kits everywhere. Kits are free, easy to use. Toronto Fire Services and paramedics are already equipped. The Toronto District School Board has approved a plan to put naloxone in high schools and alternative schools. Even bars and restaurants are training employees. I myself got trained about two years ago at Likely General, a small business on Roncesvalles. My staff are trained and my constituency office has naloxone on-site.

Requiring police officers to be trained and to carry naloxone is absolutely important, but it's a small piece in addressing the overall overdose crisis. So while I'm happy to support this bill, I do want to reiterate that there is so much more that needs to be done.

Reversing an overdose isn't actually addressing the root cause of the overdose crisis. We are not going to solve the crisis by expanding naloxone availability and training alone. We're certainly not going to solve this crisis by rebranding overdose prevention sites, as we've seen this government do, to consumption and treatment sites. Naloxone saves lives—yes, it does—but it does not address the root problem.

I want to be clear that I don't want to diminish the importance of making naloxone available, or the training

available, or even the hard work of our harm reduction workers and people who use drugs, who have pushed for naloxone to be publicly distributed. Still, it's a temporary measure. Overdoses will continue to happen and people will continue to die if we don't address the issues at the core.

What are the core problems? I can tell you, people are not the problem. The problem is the way that governments have gone about addressing drug use. The problem is criminalization.

Our current way of dealing with people who use drugs is to criminalize them. When we criminalize people, we make them afraid to seek help. We create a poisonous drug supply. We give organized crime and gangs a currency that they can profit from. When laws criminalize a person, society is preventing them from fully participating in their community and living their best possible life.

Criminalization prevents people from seeking treatment and from accessing medical services and social services. The pervasive stigma as a result of drug use being a criminal activity, particularly opioid or intravenous drug use, results in people who use drugs being discriminated against when seeking employment, housing, and accessing health care and social supports. As long as we continue to criminalize people who use drugs, people will be afraid of jail time; people will be afraid of the children's aid society. They will be reluctant to use services, to get their drugs tested, and to seek treatments or other supports.

I want to ask all members of this House if they know why we criminalize people who use drugs. Some of the reasons that people think of are to reduce harms to the individual, to stop organized crime or to take drugs away from youth. Yet all of these drug policies have failed to accomplish the above. In fact, statistics show that criminalization has made everything worse.

If our current drug laws aren't working, why do we continue to criminalize? Why do we spend billions of dollars of public money enforcing a failed system?

Criminalizing people who use drugs continues to be a tool that governments use to control and oppress people—Black and Indigenous people, people of colour, people living in poverty, people dealing with mental health issues. We know that drug prohibition in Canada started with the Indian Act in 1876, which consolidated earlier legislation around prohibition of alcohol sales and consumption that would specifically target “status Indians.” These laws had served as another mechanism to control Indigenous peoples. We know the Opium Act that came soon after was again targeted at Chinese migrants who were building the railroads. This type of race-based legislation was brought forward at a time—was targeted to oppress certain groups of people in our society.

So if the overdose crisis is caused and fuelled by bad drug policy, how do we address the problem at the core? There are many approaches to take to solving this problem. I myself always take the public health approach. I take the “prevention is better than cure” approach.

When it comes to addressing drug use, the public health approach that has gained a lot of support internationally

from respected local legal, health and law enforcement professionals, as in the case we've seen in Portugal—people are realizing and seeing that there is an alternative to criminalization.

I don't have too much time. I just want to talk very quickly about how prevention works in this case. Prevention is investing in drug education, in healthy living programs in our public schools and community centres. Prevention is investing in mental health care. It's investing in treating trauma. Prevention is accessing affordable and safe housing; having a strong public education system and affordable post-secondary system; having affordable public child care; and low-barrier, supervised consumption sites. If we invest in these programs and policies, we can prevent overdoses from occurring in the first place.

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We need to really re-examine our drug policy. We need to focus on prevention, and we need a sensible drug policy in place instead.

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

Mr. Mike Harris: I'm happy to rise today and speak to the Mandatory Police Training Act, Bill 105, introduced by my outstanding colleague the member for Mississauga Centre.

This is such an important piece of legislation because it is dealing with one of the most pressing public health issues of our time. The opioid crisis is one which affects all regions of this province and hits dangerously close to home on a daily basis.

Public health Canada's numbers indicated that opioid-related deaths in Canada totalled more than 10,300 between January 2016 and September 2018. The complications that this crisis poses for the interests of public safety cannot be overstated. What is so dangerous about this drug, Madam Speaker—and, of course, we're talking about fentanyl here—is that it's hard to trace and so widespread.

Public health consequences of illicit drug use have long been an issue for our province. With the widespread distribution of fentanyl into the system, the severity of this problem has only increased. Data from Stats Canada tells us that the daily deaths from illegal drug use rose to an average of 10 a day in the two years leading up to March 2018.

Traffickers are pushing a wide variety of drugs now laced with fentanyl onto our streets. It's not just making life more dangerous for those people who are consuming them but also for everyone around them. Traces of it are being found in everything from cocaine to heroin to methamphetamine. Worse still, you don't even have to directly consume fentanyl to fall victim to its negative effects. It is a huge problem for our men and women in blue, who are putting their lives at risk day in and day out, fighting drug trafficking. It's not always clear to our officers or members of the general public when they are going to come in contact with it. Earlier this morning, I heard the story of a boy whose life was put at risk from simply touching a video game controller. Unbeknownst to

him, it had carfentanil dust on it, Madam Speaker. Consider this: Regular fentanyl alone is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine, and carfentanil is exponentially stronger than regular fentanyl. Innocent lives are being put at risk.

We need to be more creative and adaptive in dealing with this issue, a complex problem that often requires thoughtful solutions. We need to make sure that we are fully equipping our officers with the tools they need in order to fight trafficking and save lives. Strong legislation on this front, such as the COPS Act introduced by the Solicitor General, has already passed through this chamber. The COPS Act empowers our police officers to be proactive by ensuring that they will not be automatically subjected to SIU investigations after trying to save a life through the administration of naloxone.

I would be remiss if I did not recount the great work that the Minister of Finance did on this file while a member of the opposition back in 2015 in passing Bill 33, the Safeguarding Our Communities Act, through this House. Bill 33 established a patch-for-patch program whereby people with fentanyl prescriptions could only be given new patches upon returning their old ones.

We need to limit the spread of fentanyl and the use of it on our streets wherever possible. When our officers confront fentanyl use on our streets, we need to ensure that they can do so in a safe and productive manner.

Bill 105 complements the good work that the members of our caucus have done to address the opioid crisis by empowering police officers to be better equipped in confronting drug-related incidents on our streets through instituting mandatory naloxone training. This is a bill about protecting the public and our officers. That is why I'll be voting in favour of this bill later this afternoon. I'm looking forward to the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Mississauga Centre has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleagues from Brampton South, Thornhill and Kitchener–Conestoga, as well as from Brampton North and Parkdale–High Park, for their solidarity and support in speaking to this bill.

To the member from Thornhill, I also keep my free naloxone kit in my purse and in my car and also in my office.

As I said, the opioid crisis is not a partisan issue; it is a human issue. It is a public health problem that does not discriminate. It affects all of Canada, and it falls upon all levels of government to help those in need. That is why I am so thrilled that we are partnering on this issue with our federal partners.

On the issue of corrections, I worked as a correctional nurse at the Vanier Centre for Women in Milton, and I wish I could unsee some of what I have seen there under the previous administration. That is why I am so proud of the work that the Solicitor General is doing in improving our correctional facilities. She has recently announced \$18.3 million in new funding in supports to those affected by mental health and addictions in the justice sector, which

includes our correctional staff. We are also supporting our inmates who are transferring into our communities, so inmates from provincial correctional facilities are trained on how to use nasal spray naloxone and are given kits when they are released from custody.

In conclusion, we are partnering and investing in our police services to ensure we equip them with the right skills, knowledge and tools they need to save lives. We're consulting with our police officers, and what we've heard is that there is value in having a consistent training approach applied throughout all Ontario police services, because that's what it is all about: empowering our first responders and keeping people safe.

Thank you to all the members who have contributed to this debate, and thank you for your supportive words.

TAMIL GENOCIDE EDUCATION WEEK ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA SEMAINE DE SENSIBILISATION AU GÉNOCIDE DES TAMOULS

Mr. Thanigasalam moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 104, An Act to proclaim Tamil Genocide Education Week / Projet de loi 104, Loi proclamant la Semaine de sensibilisation au génocide des Tamouls.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

There are memories that are etched deep into our hearts. They change us, shape us and haunt us all our lives. We think that not speaking about them can erase their existence, but the reality is, they become a part of us. This memory is one of such.

When I was a young boy of about five years old, there was a young girl who lived on our street who I fondly called Akka, a term of respect reserved for an elder sister. I remember she used to braid her hair into two pigtails and wore a pottu every day, a black dot between her eyebrows, to ward off evil and protect her. This Akka came to my house every day to collect fragrant jasmine flowers for offering at the temple.

I still remember the day vividly when artillery shelling had increased in our town and we took cover in underground bunkers. I was with my mother at the time in a bunker and we heard a loud noise. This noise startled me, and I tightly grasped my mother's hand. After the shelling stopped, everyone in the neighbourhood came together to discuss what happened. At that time, I remember seeing that Akka's mother was running around in despair.

In a little while, I saw a sight I have unsuccessfully tried to forget: Pieces of human flesh were being taken on a small truck. My mother quickly covered my eyes and hurried me home. A few days later, I noticed that this Akka no longer came to pick flowers. I later heard, among

hushed whispers, that this Akka was among those who perished in the artillery shelling that day. Even the pottu could not protect her, and the fragrance has left my memory of jasmine flowers. Sadly, stories of such are not an anomaly.

Madam Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to speak to my private member's bill, the Tamil Genocide Education Week. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the horrors of Mullivaikal.

In May 2009, dubbed the May Massacre, the Sri Lankan government engaged in a heightened program of genocide marked by indiscriminate shelling towards civilian targets such as government-declared no-fire zones and hospitals, cluster bombings, chemical bombings, abductions, rape, murders and denial of food and medicine to Tamils in Mullivaikal.

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The population of Vanni was 429,059 persons in October 2008. The total number of people who were admitted into Sri Lankan government control after the May Massacre was 282,380, according to the UN update as of July 10, 2009. This means that 146,679 people were not accounted for. To put that into context, that is more than the total number of students that attend York University and all three campuses of the University of Toronto. This number is in accordance with local estimates of the death toll of the May Massacre. Many others were also displaced, injured and physically assaulted.

Genocide is defined by the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Sadly, each of these acts in the definition of genocide were carried out against Tamils by the Sri Lankan government:

Tamils were killed to the tune of 145,000 in Mullivaikal in 2009.

They were seriously injured and they live with the mental trauma of their living nightmare.

Conditions of starvation were inflicted upon them to bring about their physical destruction. According to the UN office of the resident and humanitarian coordinator, at least 5,000 metric tonnes of food are needed to feed 300,000 people for a month; however, the Sri Lankan government only allowed 3% of food into the government-declared safe zone to feed the population of 300,000 people.

Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group are part of a program of genocide and are conducted in order to decrease the growth of the group. In 2013, health workers forced surgically implanted birth control to Tamil women in the Northern Province, or they faced denial of treatment at selected hospitals.

Tamil children have also been taken from their native homes and structurally resettled into Sinhalese-speaking areas.

These are all conditions that meet the criteria for genocide.

However, a program of structural genocide had been occurring for decades prior. Prior to independence, there were three kingdoms on the island. Tamils and Sinhalese

had lived separately under their own governance. The three kingdoms were merged for administrative convenience by the British. Ceylon was granted its independence in 1948 by Great Britain. Following independence, the government of Ceylon, mainly made up of Sinhala people, enacted multiple laws and policies that disenfranchised Tamils in order to gain a two-thirds parliamentary majority, and proclaimed Sinhala as the official language of Ceylon.

Cultural strongholds were also targeted, an important part of structural genocide. In 1981, the Jaffna Public Library was burned down by the Sri Lankan state. Over 95,000 unique and irreplaceable Tamil palm leaves, manuscripts, parchments, books, magazines and newspapers were destroyed. Furthermore, anti-Tamil pogroms began to break out in Sinhala-majority areas. These resulted in the horrific killings of hundreds of Tamils and left many others without homes and businesses; 3,000 Tamils were killed and over 150,000 became refugees, many fleeing the country to India and the West, including to Canada, during the 1983 riots. War, violence and structural genocide continued for decades onwards. Despite attempts to resolve the conflict, including ceasefires, violence against Tamils was continued and heightened in May of 2009.

Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor and a Nobel laureate, famously said, "To forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time." The final stage of genocide is the destruction of memory, the denial of wrongdoing and the burial of evidence.

"Memoricide," a term coined by Mirko Grmek, is something regimes engage in in order to eliminate the dark periods of history and, so to speak, rewrite history. In order to facilitate this, memorials and remembrance ceremonies are disallowed and the history of what happened is erased or minimized.

The Sri Lankan state has denied responsibility for the genocide. This has left many Tamils unable to heal and move forward. The diaspora Tamils have strongly urged their respective governments to help acknowledge the pain and suffering that they have endured and that has been endured by their kin. Tamils in Ontario have lost their brothers, sisters and relatives. Many still don't know their whereabouts, and continue to pray for their safety.

This is a pain I truly understand. When I was about six years of age, my mother and I were walking home. Suddenly, Sri Lankan navy artillery shells started hitting our town. My brother was gone to the store at that time, and we feared for his safety. My mother and I both prayed with tears in our eyes that he would be brought home safely to us. Thankfully, he was. However, in those few hours, I understood the pain of not knowing whether a loved one was safe.

The Tamil community has lost a great deal and continues to be affected by these incidents. This is why this bill is even more necessary. Through this bill, the House would help in honouring the memory of and naming the atrocities faced by the Tamils in Sri Lanka as genocide. Furthermore, an education week provides an opportunity to reflect on and to educate the public about the enduring

lessons of the Tamil genocide and other crimes against humanity.

We must always try to create a world where the principles of human rights are upheld. Martin Luther King, Jr. famously said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

We have been entrusted with a great responsibility and belief by the citizens of Ontario to represent them. Through showing solidarity with communities that are healing collectively, we will be doing right by them.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Vanakkam. To understand the importance of recognizing the Tamil genocide, we must first understand the terrible human rights abuses the Tamil people have had to endure. For decades, the Tamil people have been subjected to an organized, state-sponsored campaign of genocide carried out by the Sri Lankan government, from the 1983 Black July genocide that took the lives of thousands of Tamils; to the bombing of orphanages, like that in Chenocolai, which killed dozens of children and staff; to campaigns of sexual violence, like the heinous rape of Krishanthi, a 19-year-old schoolgirl who was abducted and gang-raped by Sri Lankan soldiers. When her worried family went out to look for her, they too were murdered.

The story of Krishanthi’s family is just one of the tens of thousands of Tamils who were disappeared by the Sri Lankan government, abducted in the middle of the night in white vans, never to be seen again. As secretly as Tamils were abducted, so too were their bodies disposed of, with mass graves being found throughout Sri Lanka, with hundreds of bodies found within, like those in Chemmani. These disappearances even included journalists, like Taraki Sivaram, whose killers to this day remain free.

The violence that the Tamil people have had to face is more than just direct and physical. The Sri Lankan state has made attempts to wipe out the culture, language and ways of life of the Tamil people through cultural genocide, an attack that was apparent with the burning of the Jaffna Public Library, which resulted in the destruction of ancient Tamil manuscripts, books, historic documents and more.

All this violence culminated on May 18, 2009. It is why we recognize that day as Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day, when thousands of Tamils were murdered in one day by the Sri Lankan government. The trauma of these decades of violence continue to impact the Tamil community.

1530

Trauma is intergenerational. That means the next generation of Tamils will experience the pain of those before them. That is why it is so important to name the Tamil genocide, recognize it and continue to remember it, so the Tamil people can share their memories of those whose lives were lost to make sure their stories are told and to educate the community for generations to come, because we can only heal from trauma once we confront it.

And more, Tamil Genocide Education Week is important for all Ontarians, for all Canadians, even those

who are not Tamil, so that we can better understand the injustices that our Tamil neighbours have gone through and continue to go through. That’s why today it would be a real tribute to the community if we could pass this bill as soon as possible so that the Tamil people know that Ontario stands with them.

Remarks in Tamil.

We remember the Tamil genocide. Vanakkam.

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for his leadership in bringing forth this bill. I also want to thank him for inviting me to his riding a few months ago. We met with the Tamil youth council and other young leaders from Canada’s Tamil community—some of them are with us today—to express the solidarity that we have and the responsibility as a government and as parliamentarians to never forget the sacrifices and those who have lost their lives. The member has spoken so brilliantly about the need to remember, the need to never forget the great atrocities committed over the successive 30 years of the civil war.

Madam Speaker, I met a lady named Pamela, who is here in this chamber as we speak, and her father. She shared with me a story that is most moving. Having spoken to her young 10-year-old cousin—they just spoke, had a normal discussion with the family as we do every day with our family and friends, and hours later, the infamous white van, a tool used by the state to perpetuate acts of human rights abuses against Tamils, the minority community in Sri Lanka, abducted this young man and thereafter killed him.

These are the stories that far too often define the history of the Tamil genocide. It is incumbent on political leaders to name it and to shame it, to acknowledge the genocide that was committed, to acknowledge and recognize. As Benjamin Dix, the communications manager for the United Nations in Sri Lanka between 2004 and 2008, said, “It is very fair to say that the” Sri Lankan “army committed genocide. The atrocities in Sri Lanka were definitely towards ethnic cleansing.”

Speaking in 2009 after recent violence, the UN spokesperson in Colombo, Gordon Weiss, stated there was “large-scale killing of civilians, including more than 100 children.” Madam Speaker, there may be foreign governments and foreign agents who choose not to recognize this evil for what it is, but we know it to be genocide and we have a duty, a moral duty, to say so.

Madam Speaker, as a Progressive Conservative in this Legislature, I benefited greatly from speaking with many of the young leaders who were heroic and courageous in sharing their stories. But as a Conservative and as a former political adviser to the 22nd Prime Minister, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, I’m proud it was that government, the first government at the Commonwealth summit who said no to the regime in Colombo, who said, for the first time in the history of the Commonwealth, that we will boycott the Commonwealth summit because it is being hosted in a country that advances state persecution for minorities, including Tamils.

It was Prime Minister Mulroney, who is the father of our Attorney General, who during the worst of the civil war opened the doors in this country as a place of safe refuge for those who needed support and safekeeping in this country. And so, Madam Speaker, as a Conservative but most importantly as a Canadian, I am proud that we have legislation that is here to educate the next generation, but also here to remember the sacrifices and atrocities committed of the generation behind us.

I want to reaffirm my support for this bill and I want to express gratitude to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park, who has been a leader in this respect, and not just for Tamils but for Holocaust and genocide remembrance for all communities. He has spoken so passionately and bravely on this issue, and I just want to express my gratitude on behalf of all people, especially those younger Canadians and Ontarians who choose to learn from our history so we do not repeat it.

Madam Speaker, thank you, and thank you to the member.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Before we continue, just a reminder to all those in the galleries: We're very appreciative that you are here, but we would ask that you not participate in the debate by clapping.

I continue with: Further debate?

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: It's really important that we have genocide education, because it is often in the interest of states who perpetrate these acts to deny them, and trauma is very, very difficult to speak about.

I want to read into the record some of the stories that were told to me when I did the Mosaic Institute's *The Perception and Reality of "Imported Conflict"* in Canada. The first is by a Tamil woman who was 34 at the time I spoke to her and came to Canada at age 16:

"One night, Christmas Eve when I was 10, we were at my aunt's house and chitchatting when a bomb fell on the roof of our house.... The bomb hit one of the big beams and exploded outwards, so we were not killed, but the neighbour who had looked outside when she heard the planes was killed instantly. I have scars on my arm and legs from shrapnel and my aunt is still carrying shrapnel inside her. My cousin needed a skin graft and she still can't walk properly; she has poor circulation. For years I suffered from PTSD. When I cycled to school and heard thunder I thought it was explosions. At school I would scream and need to be cuddled. Even here—and we had no counsellors to provide us with emotional help."

The second is from a Tamil woman, 23, who came to Canada at age two:

"A lot of houses of people we knew were bombed. My cousins were tortured and captured by the Sri Lankan government and one of my cousins is still missing. These were my first cousins." At Mullivaikal, "we had family friends end up in the internment camps and survive the end. My immediate family managed to survive but all our property was taken. I refrain from reading ... the news because I deal with individual trauma on a daily basis."

From a woman who was 30 when she spoke to me and came to Canada at age 10:

"My dad went to [a] meeting and ... surrendered his weapons.... when the van he was in was ambushed. They torpedoed it and killed almost everyone who was in it.... There was one survivor who was in the bushes and they thought he was dead. But he saw what happened. One person was chopped up while he was still alive. In my father's case they poured acid on him to burn his body. We don't know if he was alive when they poured the acid on him. But that meant we had no body [to bury]."

The fourth:

"My parents ... dealt with war trauma but also the trauma of leaving their families and leaving everything.... My father—he was carrying war trauma but also the regrets for leaving his family behind. I notice that a lot of Tamil dads were emotionally and mentally absent; the trauma drove many to alcoholism and that was a real problem."

These are the stories that people live with, the stories that they continue to hold in their hearts, and it is why we need to continue to educate everybody as to what trauma exists and why it's there.

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: It is my honour to speak to Bill 104, An Act to proclaim Tamil Genocide Education Week, introduced by my friend and colleague the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park. Thank you for sharing your very moving and heartbreaking testimonial with us. I know that wasn't easy to do.

To grow up in Canada means to grow up in a country that embraces diversity and welcomes all cultures and ethnicities. We are lucky to call home a place where we can live freely, without fear of persecution, a place where the atrocities of genocide are quite simply unthinkable. Unfortunately, the deliberate killing of ethnic groups of people and the destruction of their culture continues to be a very real and very recent reality faced by thousands of Tamils in Sri Lanka. For nearly 30 years, the country was in the grips of a savage civil war that claimed the lives of thousands. While the world stood by, widespread shelling targeted Tamil civilians, merciless attacks were carried out against innocents and families were torn apart while hospitals were bombarded—all while humanitarian assistance was denied.

What I just described was the daily reality in Sri Lanka just 10 years ago, an island nation in the Indian Ocean that endured three decades of a brutal civil war that took more than 100,000 lives. It seems unimaginable that such a massacre could have been unfolding for so long just half-way across the world, yet this is exactly what happened.

There are few words, if any, that can really capture the kind of devastation and crimes against humanity that took place, but "genocide" is one of them, and of that there is no doubt. In the final months alone, the civil war in Sri Lanka claimed the lives of more than 50,000 people. This is only an estimate and but a fraction of the true number, which is believed to be closer to over 70,000 civilians

being killed in the final months of the devastating war. These attacks targeted Tamils for no other reason than that they were Tamil. It was discrimination of the worst kind, and we must never let ourselves forget what happened.

1540

This is why Bill 104 is so important. It will remind us of the tragic cost of war and of the precious lives lost. It will remind us that we must never stand by as a genocide unfolds. In declaring the week of May 18 to be Tamil Genocide Education Week, this bill will memorialize all of the innocent lives that were taken. It will make sure that current and future generations reflect on and educate the public about the enduring lessons of the Tamil genocide and other crimes against humanity.

Ontario is home to one of the world's largest Tamil diaspora communities, many of whom live in the city of Mississauga. I've heard from many of my Mississauga Centre constituents that they support the recognition of this historically significant event which has recently impacted an entire nation.

We must never allow the horrors of war and the failings of humanity to be forgotten with the passage of time. We must respect and honour the casualties of this atrocity by working together for a better future, a better Ontario, a better Canada and a better humanity.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: Thank you, Speaker. Vanakkam.

I'm humbled to rise in the House this afternoon to speak to this important bill. I first want to start by thanking the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park for introducing this bill and all of my colleagues who have spoken so eloquently to it today.

My community includes St. James Town and Regent Park, which are home to many Tamil constituents. In fact, these neighbourhoods, which are just a few blocks from this building, are the place where many Tamils settled when they first came to Canada. While many folks have come as refugees, an entire generation of children has grown up in Toronto Centre and calls our neighbourhoods home.

Jarvis Collegiate is a high school in my riding and has many Tamil teenagers go through its doors and through our public education system. Tamils' Information is a local community newspaper that is based in my riding and creates a wonderful publication available to the Tamil Canadian community across Ontario and beyond.

While I'm grateful that many Tamil Canadians are able to call Toronto Centre home, I know that the history of their move to Canada is painful and drowned in violence and blood. The people of Tamil Eelam have suffered, and the history of mass disappearances and killings in Sri Lanka paints a dark picture of neglect and violence. This May 18, just a few short days away, marks the 10th anniversary of the Mullivaikal massacre at the end of the decades-long civil war in Sri Lanka. Thousands of innocent Tamils—men, women and children—were killed during the war, and for many, violence and persecution has persisted in Sri Lanka.

As a woman with mixed Indigenous and settler heritage, I can relate to the struggles for self-determination and the fight to have histories of genocide, assimilation and oppression recognized. I've seen the trauma that years of colonialism and cultural violence have brought to Indigenous communities and Indigenous peoples across this country. My own family has a history of adoption on both sides, and it's a testament to what happens when communities are shattered and when people are forced to leave their homes and their cultures behind.

Speaker, I know that our communities are strong and resilient and will not give up the fight for peace and justice. That's why I'm proud to stand in support of this motion to create an education week on the Tamil genocide. Of course, I wish there was room to also explicitly name May 18 as Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day.

Again, I'm so proud that our caucus and I support this motion. We will continue to support the Tamil Canadian community all across Toronto, across Ontario, across Canada and across the diaspora internationally. Thank you so much. Meegwetch.

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

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Today, I rise in this House to support a private member's bill brought forward by my friend and colleague from Scarborough–Rouge Park. I have received several emails and calls from members of the Tamil community asking to support Bill 104, the Tamil Genocide Education Week Act. Aena is one of the many people from the Tamil community who has reached out to me, and it is my honour that she is here among us this afternoon. Aena is a Tamil youth, born and raised in Ontario, from the Canadian Tamil Youth. She wrote to me and said, "As youth, our pain, trauma, and passion of seeking for justice, are what keep us united."

The Tamil community continues to have families in the northeast region of Sri Lanka suffering the atrocities of the Sri Lankan state and living the ongoing consequences of the 30-year-long conflict. Madam Speaker, as Ontario is home to the largest Tamil community, this bill is important for the future generations.

She later mentioned how "it will ensure that the stories that are currently only passed on verbally, are shared through formal educational avenues, to not only the Tamil community but all residents within Ontario."

Madam Speaker, the pain and trauma of such atrocities are intergenerational. This education process will also create an open space for other communities to come together to share their stories and struggles. The recognition of the Tamil genocide and further education about it will serve to be an enormous milestone in this healing process. Recognizing such atrocities can help strengthen the Tamil community.

This bill will provide Ontario with a space to encourage the sharing and understanding of others' struggles and bring forth a stronger sense of unity amongst us all. The goal and hope is that with education and awareness, such horrific patterns in history will finally—finally—stop repeating themselves.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for bringing this bill forward. I am honoured to stand today in support of this motion because this is such an important step to learn and understand and recognize the experience of the Tamil community, as well as the many other communities that have lived through atrocities around the world who now make up the very multicultural fabric of Ontario.

This motion is so important for my constituents in the Tamil community in Scarborough Southwest, whose stories I listen to. I was able to learn about the trauma many of them and their families had to live through.

Another reason why I support this motion is because I, as a Bangladeshi Canadian, understand the pain and the suffering of my family members and community who have suffered such horrific injustices. The people of Bangladesh experienced one of the most brutal genocides in history, where three million people were killed during its war of independence, a big majority of whom were unarmed civilian men, women and children. Hundreds of thousands of women were raped, many of whom were kept in makeshift prisons and raped for months. Thousands of these women were kept naked so that they wouldn't be able to use their clothes to commit suicide after being unable to bear the pain and suffering.

I want to share the story of a Tamil girl, Krishanthi Kumaraswamy, who I believe may have gone through something similar. A 19-year-old Tamil schoolgirl who was gang-raped and murdered on the 7th of August, 1996, by six Sri Lankan army soldiers, she went missing on her way home after writing her exams and was last seen alive at the Kaithady army checkpoint in Jaffna. When her worried parents and brother went in search of Krishanthi, they were also murdered.

In July 1998, Sri Lankan army Lance Corporal Somaratne Rajapakse was facing a death sentence for the rape and murder of the student and murder of her family. While on trial, he also made allegations about the existence of a mass grave in Jaffna containing the bodies of those who had disappeared in previous years. There were reports of up to 300 to 400 bodies being buried in mass graves near the village of Chemmani.

Speaker, these are the memories of our people, our families and our neighbours here. That is why I, as an individual—and we all—should carry a moral obligation and a sense of duty to stand against all kinds of mass killings, genocides and atrocities. We must unanimously and unequivocally denounce any and all acts of terrorism, atrocities and mass killings.

I'm glad that this motion will educate our—

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

1550

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: As the MPP for Scarborough–Guildwood, I rise today to speak to the bill that has been put forward by my neighbouring riding MPP from

Scarborough–Rouge Park, An Act to proclaim Tamil Genocide Education Week.

I'd like to recognize the 10th anniversary of the Mullivaikal Remembrance Day. This day marks the end of the 25-year-long civil war where thousands of innocent civilians were killed during the Tamil genocide in Sri Lanka. Although it has been a decade since the end of the war, the wounds are still fresh. There are thousands of people from Sri Lanka now living in Ontario and many living in our community in Scarborough—many here, in fact, listening to today's debate.

A few weeks ago, I had a chance to attend a tree planting. It was done and organized by MP Gary Anandasangaree as a symbol of the new life that now grows, coming out of this devastation. I had a chance to plant a white cedar to symbolize that new life and to talk about it with one of the local families. I spoke to many survivors who shared their experiences with me. They told me about the denial and how hurtful that was to them. They told me there was a denial of equitable education, that it wasn't a level playing field, and about the devastating killings that occurred.

Today, the rebuilding is still occurring in Sri Lanka. Families that have been torn apart and lives that were lost—we're still mourning that loss. We're still rebuilding physical infrastructure, social systems, political systems, education and the economy. There is still so much work to do.

But today, we remember. I want to acknowledge the tragedy and the suffering that flows from a civil war. For decades, from 1983 to 2009, thousands of people across Sri Lanka from all sides, and many civilians, lost their lives. On May 18, 2009, the civil war finally came to an end. The civil war in Sri Lanka caused the persecution of innocent people, displaced many and caused many to seek refuge elsewhere.

That was 10 years ago, yet the people and communities in Sri Lanka who lost their loved ones and their livelihoods still seek and deserve justice. So as we mark this weekend the 10 years since the ending of the war, we have to reflect on what this means because the wounds are still fresh, and people who have lived through that trauma are still experiencing that today.

It is important that we recognize the sensitivity around this issue, especially with those families who are directly impacted. I was very touched by your personal story.

The United Nations estimates that in May 2009 alone, 40,000 to 75,000 civilians were killed. This is an absolute tragedy. Some estimates put this at a much higher number. The perpetrators deserve to be held accountable for the terrible bloodshed that was experienced in Sri Lanka. The survivors of the civil war deserve that justice.

There is a large Sri Lankan community in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood and all around Scarborough. Some 300,000 Tamils now call Canada their home and many have come to put down roots in Toronto. I've been fortunate to be welcomed by these communities and have learned much. In fact, my first experience was as a student in university, where we actually created a program to have dialogue and exchange.

We must continue to recognize these tragedies. Peace is fragile. It must constantly be preserved. And I want to say here that we condemn violence in any form, and for the people of Sri Lanka and those in the diaspora living in Ontario, I wish for you an enduring and lasting peace. Education provides that pathway by which generations to follow will learn: Do not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour to speak to this bill.

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

Mr. Paul Calandra: I want to say how grateful I am to the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park for bringing forward this bill. Madam Speaker, whether it's the member for Parkdale–High Park, who brought to our attention the plight of the Tibetan people, or the member for Scarborough Southwest, who spoke very passionately, or the member for Scarborough–Agincourt, who last week brought forward a bill about the Armenian genocide—there are those who might ask why a provincial Legislature would be talking about this, but it is our responsibility as elected officials to always bring this type of injustice forward so that everybody understands the plight of peoples. It is our job to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

I'm grateful to the honourable member for bringing this forward and to all of the colleagues who have spoken to this and the colleagues who continue to fight in this Legislature.

My colleagues have done a good job of explaining why this is so important, but I want to just take a moment, Madam Speaker, if I can—and I hope the members and those in the galleries will forgive me. I want to talk with pride about being a member of Parliament who has so many Tamil Canadians in his community. When you look at what the Tamil people have endured when they came to this country, I think you would agree with me that they are one of the most successful immigrant communities that we have ever had in this country. Despite those challenges, they are at the head of business, they are at the head of communities, they are at the head of education. Despite the challenges that they have faced, they elected their first member of Parliament in 2011; they elected their first two members of provincial Parliament to this Legislature in this past election. That is very important. It's very important.

So I say, as we summarize this debate, again, I'm grateful to the member opposite for bringing this forward. Thank you to all of those who come from my community for everything that you have done to help build not only Markham–Stouffville, but a very strong and prosperous Ontario. Your efforts will not go unnoticed by the members of this Legislature.

Again, thank you to the member and thank you to all the members who spoke on this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Scarborough–Rouge Park has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank my colleagues for speaking on the Tamil Genocide Education Week bill. Thank you to the members from Brampton East, King–Vaughan, Beaches–East York, Mississauga Centre, Toronto Centre, Mississauga East–Cooksville, Scarborough Southwest, Scarborough–Guildwood and Markham–Stouffville. Thank you so much for speaking on supporting this bill.

I also want to thank everyone who supports the bill. We will be able to recognize, if we all support this bill, the Tamil genocide, and allow for a healing process to begin for the community.

Many of the members from the Tamil community are here in these galleries watching this historic moment unfold. I'm sure they're extremely thankful for the support from the members of this Legislature on this bill.

I would also like to extend my special thanks to all the people and organizations from across the province that have written or called me to voice their support for this bill. I have not only heard from within the Tamil community, but also from people across Ontario of all ages, backgrounds and religions.

I hope all my colleagues will support this bill and help the Tamil community come together and begin the healing process.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public businesses has expired.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND
SOCIAL SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT
(SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESEARCH
COMMISSION), 2019

LOI DE 2019 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LE MINISTÈRE DES SERVICES
SOCIAUX ET COMMUNAUTAIRES
(COMMISSION DE RECHERCHE
SUR L'AIDE SOCIALE)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 70, standing in the name of Mr. Miller, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Miller, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, has moved second reading of Bill 60, An Act to amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance Research Commission.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to order it to Legislative Assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Okay. Is the majority in favour of the bill being referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly? Agreed.

MANDATORY POLICE TRAINING
ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA FORMATION
OBLIGATOIRE DE LA POLICE

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Kusendova has moved second reading of Bill 105, An Act with respect to the training required of police officers and others.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I would like to refer this bill to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of the bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy? Agreed.

TAMIL GENOCIDE EDUCATION
WEEK ACT, 2019
LOI DE 2019 SUR LA SEMAINE
DE SENSIBILISATION AU GÉNOCIDE
DES TAMOULS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Thanigasalam has moved second reading of Bill 104, An Act to proclaim Tamil Genocide Education Week.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1601 to 1606.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Members, please take your seats.

Mr. Thanigasalam has moved second reading of Bill 104, An Act to proclaim Tamil Genocide Education Week.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harden, Joel	Roberts, Jeremy
Baber, Roman	Harris, Mike	Sabawy, Sheref
Babikian, Aris	Hassan, Faisal	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Shaw, Sandy
Barrett, Toby	Hogarth, Christine	Singh, Gurratan
Begum, Doly	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Sara
Bell, Jessica	Kanapathi, Logan	Skelly, Donna
Berns-McGown, Rima	Karpoche, Bhutula	Smith, Dave
Bisson, Gilles	Ke, Vincent	Stiles, Marit
Bouma, Will	Kusendova, Natalia	Surma, Kinga
Calandra, Paul	Lecce, Stephen	Tabuns, Peter
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Martow, Gila	Tangri, Nina
Cho, Stan	McDonell, Jim	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Coe, Lorne	Miller, Paul	Tibollo, Michael A.
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Morrison, Suze	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Downey, Doug	Mulroney, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Dunlop, Jill	Oosterhoff, Sam	Yakabuski, John

Fee, Amy
Glover, Chris

Pang, Billy
Rakocevic, Tom

Yarde, Kevin

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 59; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee, please?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of the bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills? Agreed.

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the deputy House leader.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I'm seeking unanimous consent to put forth a motion without notice regarding the authorization for the Standing Committees on the Legislative Assembly and Public Accounts to attend their respective conferences in August of 2019.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is there consent? Carried.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I move that the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to attend the 2019 annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures in Nashville, Tennessee, from August 4 to 8, 2019, and that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to attend the 2019 annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees in Niagara-on-the-Lake from August 18 to 20, 2019.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Lecce moves that the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to attend the 2019 annual meeting—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Okay. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day? I again recognize the deputy House leader.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I move we adjourn the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Lecce has moved adjournment of the House.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion carried, on division.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, May 27.
The House adjourned at 1612.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Downey, Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	
Dunlop, Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (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

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

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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 McDonnell, 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

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma
Will Bouma, Paul Calandra
Lorne Coe, Stephen Crawford
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Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
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Chair / Présidente: Nina Tangri
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Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
John Fraser, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
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