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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 10 December 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 10 décembre 2019

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER FOR PEOPLE,
SMARTER FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2019
LOI DE 2019 POUR MIEUX SERVIR
LA POPULATION ET FACILITER
LES AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 9, 2019, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking various Regulations / Projet de loi 132, Loi visant à alléger le fardeau administratif qui pèse sur la population et les entreprises en édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois et en abrogeant divers règlements.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When we last debated Bill 132 at third reading, the member for Oshawa had the floor. I recognize, again, the member for Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to be able to continue the thoughts that I had started yesterday, on behalf of the fine folks in Oshawa, but generally across the province. Here we are discussing Bill 132, the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, and as I mentioned yesterday and as we have heard, this government, ad nauseam, has been heralding this bill as something that is going to make the world easier for business and somehow better for folks, and interestingly, that isn't what came out at committee.

For the team that was there at committee—well, for everyone that was at committee; the government side as well—they heard over and over that people had real concerns about this, whether they be environmental, whether they be about penalties, and certainly I hope that this government has paid attention, as they have heard so loudly about the problems with the process, in this bill, of course, and with others. This has been very challenging.

I will read something from the regional municipality of Durham speaking to the process and how to even get information on the record to be able to be heard by this government and make the suggestions that they so desperately need when it comes to their legislation. This is what they've said: "As a general observation, a 30-day comment period is insufficient for a municipality to properly review a lengthy bill such as Bill 132, assess the effect on our operations, and provide a submission endorsed by regional council to the province."

They also said, "We were disappointed to see that changes proposed to the Aggregate Resources Act, posted for 30 days of public review and input on October 4, 2019, were already incorporated into a bill introduced on October 28, before the public consultation on the Aggregate Resources Act had even concluded."

Speaker, when I had the opportunity to be in this room last week and heard the remarks from my colleague from Waterloo and my colleague from London West, they very clearly were getting on the record the voices at committee—and not just the chastising that the government should have heard at committee, but also the suggestions and the expertise that this government seemingly just wasn't interested in having.

They made the commitment—"they" being the government—to have consultations. But "consultations" is more than a word and a tick box on your list of things that you have to do. Consultations are supposed to be about engagement and they're supposed to be about hearing from folks, whether it's criticism or whether it is reinforcement or encouragement for government ideas.

If I were the government and was putting forward such a massive omnibus piece of legislation, I would want to hear from the broader community the pieces that were good and strong and were going to hold water, and the pieces that maybe deserved a second look, or even a third look, or should be repealed altogether or challenged before it goes out into the world and causes harm. I've never understood that.

This government kind of frames itself as different—but they don't seem to be—from the last majority government that I stood across from. That last government had this sense of, "Well, we know what we're doing, so just trust us," and, "Well, we're just going to put this piece of legislation out and na-na-na-na-na, there's nothing you can say that's going to stop us in this." Then, of course, we would see the damage and the harm caused by rushed legislation or problematic legislation.

I'm going to read something from Hansard, actually, from my colleague from London West, because there's no point in reinventing the wheel; it was said so well. She was talking about process as well and said:

"Some serious concerns were raised about process. This is an omnibus bill—17 schedules, 80 acts, and citizens were given virtually no time. We, as legislators, as MPPs, were given very, very limited time to analyze the changes that are set out in this bill and to really thoroughly understand what the impact of those changes will be.

"When the Canadian Environmental Law Association appeared before the committee they started out right up-front and said, 'In particular, Bill 132 proposes to change

14 different environmental laws. However, only a 30-day public comment period has been provided under the Environment Bill of Rights for all of these significant legislative changes. CELA submits that this fast-track approach is both unacceptable and unwarranted, and that it is inappropriate to bury the proposed changes in a 100-page omnibus bill containing 17 different schedules.”

Speaker, just think about that. It’s a significant bill that makes a lot of changes, and to not do your due diligence is really disappointing, to say the least, and damaging in reality.

I’ve got a packet that I’m actually happy to share with the government if I thought that it would be helpful, except that we’re already at third reading, it has already been through committee, they’ve made the changes that they’re willing to make and stubbornly are refusing to make any changes that they should make.

This is a breakdown, by proposed changes to schedules, from the region of Durham about schedule 8. That is an amendment to change the energy and water reporting and benchmarking program to eliminate the rollout of a reporting requirement for smaller commercial, industrial and multi-residential buildings under 100,000 square feet. It’s very specific, but just an example, and not something that we’ve heard in this Legislature before:

“The region does not support this change. Exempting buildings under 100,000 square feet does not align with the Durham community energy plan or water conservation efforts.

“Benchmarking helps building owners understand how they compare to similar buildings in the marketplace and helps identify opportunities for water and energy efficiency and emissions reductions.

“From the perspective of Durham region and local area municipalities, good data on building energy performance is essential to be able to track the impact of local and regional climate policies and programs.”

Right, that makes sense. Here’s a proposed change, they gave their input, but so what, right? It is disappointing time and time again.

I’m not going through all of this, because I have limited time.

We’ve heard a lot about dogs on patios. Fine. We’ve had that conversation, but, again, there are a few suggestions here from the region:

“The province needs to clearly define low-risk foods and create a process for determining if food premises meet the definitions.”

They’re asking:

“—Will there be an application process for establishments to fit in this new category of low-risk food premises?

“—Will signage and separate entrance be required?

“—Number of dogs permitted per person....”

It goes on, but it’s specifics that they would like clarification on.

I wonder if the government has considered this as they are moving forward with regulation. I wouldn’t imagine that they’re considering anything because they’ve made their decisions, but I’m an optimist—I’m a New Democrat; I have to be.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It’s in your DNA.

0910

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is in my DNA.

Schedule 16: We’ve heard a lot about schedule 16 in this Legislature—significant amendments to the Aggregate Resources Act. It says here, “The region has significant concerns about several of the proposals in the schedule as they may affect:

—protection of sources of drinking water from contamination by aggregate operations;

—the ability of municipalities to negotiate haul routes and financial agreements with extraction companies;

—safety and upkeep of municipal roads that are used as aggregate haul routes;

—well-being of residents and businesses near extraction sites or along haul routes.” They outlined these concerns in a very detailed response to the ERO posting by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Maybe I should get some of that on the record in the two and a half minutes that I have left, Speaker. Time flies when you’re giving them heck, eh?

There’s so much, Speaker. And that’s the thing: There were so many groups that came to committee and gave huge presentations and made major submissions. It’s really frustrating to know that, as I said in that very first letter from Durham region, much was already incorporated into a bill before the public consultation on the Aggregate Resources Act had even concluded. That is not consultation in good faith; it really isn’t. “Hey, guys, we want to hear from you but the decision has already been made. Just sign your name here so we can tick this box and tell folks that we consulted and travelled this bill.” You can’t pat yourselves on the back if the job isn’t well done, and it’s not being well done—cursory at best.

This is from a letter that is in response to the proposed amendments to the Aggregate Resources Act: “Region of Durham staff appreciates the opportunity to comment....” This is about the province proposing changes related to below-water-table extraction applications and the regulatory system that governs aggregate licences and all of that. It’s pages and pages long, Speaker. It’s very concerning. They give a full breakdown of why this is so concerning, but as they said, “In 2017, 9.3 million tonnes of aggregate were extracted in Durham region, making it the third-largest aggregate-producing upper-tier municipality in the province.”

This matters to our community. This matters a lot. As we’ve heard so eloquently from our critic for the environment, the member from Kingston and the Islands, this matters to the whole province. We heard from the member from Sudbury yesterday what it is like growing up in a community that was so polluted that it took government initiatives—the government said “thou shalt” when it came to cleaning that up and taking proper green steps not just to clean up the air but to clean up everything, to create and grow, to literally plant and grow a healthful future for the children in that community. It took, basically, his generation—he talked about when he was a kid and what it looked like versus now when you go and visit Sudbury.

This is a government that has decided to go entirely in the opposite direction from that. Instead of saying, “How do we make things better?” it’s saying, “Ooh, what can we take advantage of, and how much damage can we do and how fast?” That is shocking and disappointing. You will wear this, but the rest of us have to breathe this and live this. Shame on you.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I’m pleased to say a few words on third reading of Bill 132.

While I appreciate the government’s efforts to reduce red tape, I have very, very serious concerns with schedules 9 and 16 and the impact that this is going to have on public health and our environment, especially as it relates to pesticides and the government’s loosening of rules, eliminating the advice that we’ve been getting for decades on things like pesticides.

So I want to caution the government that they’re moving backwards as far as things like land protection, source water protection, pesticides, and that’s going to have an impact on Ontarians—not tomorrow, but five or 10 years from now.

We heard from the Auditor General the other day that the government doesn’t have a valid plan for climate change, that the underpinnings of what they call a plan aren’t underpinnings at all, that they based their projections on numbers that don’t hold water, that don’t exist. This piece of legislation, with 17 schedules—two in it that are going to have serious impact on our natural environment—is a step backwards, and I won’t be supporting Bill 132.

I appreciate your time, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the opportunity to address Bill 132, Better for People, Smarter for Business Act. It’s an opportunity to address the plethora of rules and regulations, red tape, the unnecessary hoops that one has to jump through, the forms to fill out and the i’s to dot and the t’s to cross.

Many of these procedures, really, have built up over—well, going back to 1792 and the days of our first Lieutenant Governor, John Graves Simcoe. I’m one of his biggest fans. I would add that Simcoe was a leader who clearly got things done. He got things done as King George III’s representative and as our Lieutenant Governor. I feel, if he were around today, he would appreciate the effort the government is doing with Bill 132 to help this province get things done in an efficient way and in an effective way, creating jobs and prosperity—and, of course, much of the purpose of this legislation to cut red tape and the burdensome, unnecessary, duplicative regulations.

In keeping with John Graves Simcoe—getting things done and recognizing his loyalty to the crown—we see in this legislation a process to streamline the accession of a new sovereign. In order to facilitate that work, the proposed changes would allow government to continue the business of governing uninterrupted following the change of a sovereign. Under the current legislation, the change requires

administrative, formal procedures to be carried out. As we would know, a change of sovereign occurs when the King or Queen of Canada is succeeded by a new monarch.

Public officers in Ontario already swear or affirm to bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors, according to law, as do every one of us who are elected in this Legislature. We’ve got changes now that don’t change our loyalty to the crown but will increase the speed, the efficiency to continue business uninterrupted during the change of a sovereign. I think it’s appropriate. It’s going to be a few years yet—God save the Queen—before Her Majesty shifts responsibility to the Prince of Wales and the Earl of Chester, her son Charles.

Last Friday, Stats Canada released their monthly job numbers. Again, I see a connection with this type of pro-business legislation. Since taking office in June 2018, employment has increased by 271,600 jobs in Ontario. We’re leading the nation. That’s good news. With our Open for Business, Open for Jobs strategy—I like to think that John Graves Simcoe would approve. Our cutting of the reams of red tape, much of it left to us by the previous government, I feel is working. There’s still more to do. Bill 132 would just assist in that regard.

Our government has a plan to attract investment, encourage innovation, grow small business and create quality jobs. You don’t do that by gumming up business and entrepreneurs with red tape and duplicative regulations. The number of entrepreneurs who have chosen Ontario has also increased by 85,300 since the election. Again, in my view, this celebrates the confidence business has in this province. Most of the jobs we’re talking about are full-time jobs. They’re private sector jobs. Careers are being cultivated and people are being given something that was previously lacking before: People are being given a modicum of hope.

0920

Red tape is not a good thing. Bill 132 has the power to liberate us from that. It’s a good thing to wrap Christmas presents with, obviously, but in the kind of work that we do, we don’t necessarily need so many of these bureaucratic regulations.

I’d like to remind the chamber of where this term “red tape” originated. One popular belief: the Spanish administration of Charles V, King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor. Now, this is the early 16th century. He started to use red tape to modernize the administration. He was running quite an expansive empire. Red tape at the time was considered cutting edge as an administrative protocol. Essentially, red tape was used to literally secure and fasten those critical administrative files that needed immediate attention and to separate them from much of the mundane, ordinary business of government. The rest of it was wrapped up in string.

Other European monarchs copied Charles V and used red tape, believe it or not, to speed up administrative procedures. It’s kind of hard to fathom. But we now see, in the use of that term, exactly the opposite, something that really doesn’t belong in a progressive, prosperous, modern society.

Removing red tape makes Ontario increasingly attractive in a highly competitive world. We’re up against some

really big shooters, and we're doing the right thing taking a proactive approach, prioritizing the province's role in trade, ensuring markets—and certainly letting the world know we're open for investment.

Now, many on both sides of this chamber are animal lovers, as are so many of our constituents. People love their pets. My wife loves her little dog. Her little dog doesn't pay attention to me. It's her dog. She loves taking her dog for a walk. You can envision it: You're walking down the street, there's a patio in the city—there are so many patios and places set aside—and you can't stop in and enjoy what that patio has to offer with your dog. You're not allowed to bring it in unless it's a service animal, so business owners are missing out on potential customers. You're not allowed to bring a dog into a brewery where, for example, only beverages and, in that case, low-risk, prepackaged foods are on offer. It's frustrating, since dining rules in other parts of Canada, like British Columbia and New Brunswick, are more relaxed, not to mention cities like Tokyo, New York, London and Paris.

Further to this change in legislation, the Ministry of Health will be developing an awareness campaign for business owners and to make sure public health are aware of these changes. But it's going to mean more business for those who serve food and it will make it easier for dog owners to enjoy a meal with their furry little best friend. Again, I can't wait for the warm weather either. We're going into winter, and patio season is a few months down the road.

Businesses offering personal services, like barbershops and hairdressing salons, are required to have a dedicated sink for cleaning their tools. They are required to keep a record of the names and contact information for their customers. That might make sense in a tattoo parlour or a tanning salon, but for barbers that's a burden with very limited benefit to them and to their business—a very limited benefit to society overall. So we're making changes to make it easier for these people to do business and reduce the need for people to share their personal information for something as routine as getting a haircut.

Speaker, we are in a true land of plenty, a bountiful part of the world, and Bill 132 has a share in that and takes that into account.

With respect to community feeding organizations—food banks, faith-based charities—helping those who are less fortunate, the current legislation doesn't make a distinction between these organizations and, say, a fast-food restaurant. So various not-for-profit soup kitchens, after-school programs, new and innovative delivery organizations through schools, community centres, churches, mosques, temples and synagogues are left with a bit of a confusing, convoluted set of rules. They're forced to spend needless hours trying to understand how to follow these rules.

Ontario will be launching a consultation on additional exemptions for these organizations that serve low-risk foods—most baked goods, fruit, vegetables—at the same time, protecting our health and safety.

We're proposing to repeal the Line Fences Act, legislation that was created to help resolve fence disputes. We

feel that much of this can and does lie with municipal by-laws and standards. There's always the courts—not the best way to go. We're proposing to maintain provisions for fencing lands on former railway lines to protect farmers. I do talk to farmers and municipal councillors about how best to work this one out.

Just about everybody's home has a road in front of it. The greater Golden Horseshoe region is projected to grow by approximately four million people by 2041. There's a need for aggregate. There's a need for this kind of infrastructure. Half of my riding, Haldimand county, is under the economic moniker of the greater Golden Horseshoe region. We need aggregate. We have to support the development of homes, schools, roads and transit systems. We've developed a plan to not only protect the environment, but to address impacts on communities. This legislation takes a look at the Aggregate Resources Act and various municipal processes. It improves flexibility for accessing aggregate, enhances a process to better protect groundwater, and facilitates a streamlined approval process to better clarify the roles of the province, the municipalities and the operators themselves.

I've just come out of a stint as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. We consulted with the aggregate industry. We've also done a lot of work, obviously, with the forest industry. That's something that generates \$16 billion in revenue and 155,000 jobs across our province. Through this legislation, you see support for the forestry sector.

As it stands now, some non-forestry activities, like building infrastructure for northern communities, become mired in forestry permitting processes. This proposal would create a new permit to remove forest resources, which would streamline the authorization process for cutting trees on crown land for approved non-forestry activities like electricity transmission lines and roads to Far North communities.

Speaker, I know the member for Markham–Unionville is also addressing this bill and I've got to be cognizant of my time. I'll take a look at my seatmate to see if I'm—

Interjection.

Mr. Toby Barrett: It sounds like my time is up.

Interjection.

Mr. Toby Barrett: No? I can keep going. Is that okay, member?

This government understands that sustainable forestry management is critical to the long-term health of Ontario's forests. It also provides social, economic and environmental benefits for us all. Again, the law is there. Forest practices now are required to be acquired and processed sustainably.

Ontario divides its crown forests into management units and they all require a 10-year sustainable forest management plan. They're prepared by foresters with input from Indigenous, stakeholder and public groups. These plans take more than two years to be developed and approved. Bill 132 proposes changes that will streamline the approval process once a sustainable management plan is officially adopted.

0930

Further drilling down on Bill 132: It addresses the lack of clarity in the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act, something that is very important legislation. In my riding alone, Haldimand county, as far as the natural gas drilling, we have more holes punched into the ground than Saudi Arabia. But there's confusion, so we're looking at amendments to allay these concerns by placing new requirements on pre-existing activities, reducing ambiguity of what constitutes the definition of a well for geological testing. These changes would benefit businesses in the oil, gas and salt sectors, providing that clarity and potentially reducing the time, the costs and the uncertainty connected with doing that kind of business.

Wildlife: Again, I represent a heavily forested part of the province of Ontario. Many here have heard of CWD, chronic wasting disease. It's a progressive, fatal brain disease that affects mostly deer and elk. It was recently discovered in deer in Quebec and it has also been found in six nearby states within the Great Lakes region. A rapid response is critical in eradicating CWD, and I'm heartened this government has developed a plan so we can act quickly if CWD, heaven forbid, is detected in Ontario.

Another question, fish: Again, I'm a Port Dover lad. It's a commercial fishing town. It makes it easier for those in the business of catching fish. I think we've all had perch and pickerel in a restaurant, for example. So for those holding a commercial fishing licence, it provides greater clarity and more efficiency.

I just want to jump on a few other things. We're proposing to repeal the Fish Inspection Act. The timing of this repeal would coincide with implementation of a new regulation under the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001.

Down in my rural riding of Haldimand-Norfolk, off-road dirt bike and motorcycle activity are very popular and support tourism and our local economy. At this point in time, these vehicles are not allowed to cross the road, they're not allowed to ride on the road or along a municipal road, so we're expanding the authority of municipalities so they can decide to create bylaws to allow the use of off-road motorcycles on local roads to support Ontario's trail system.

I will wrap up there. There's an awful lot more I could talk about: the Fish Inspection Act, the Food Safety and Quality Act, the Milk Act and the Livestock and Livestock Products Act.

This is a very good piece of legislation because it covers so many different areas, and we know there are just so many different unnecessary rules and regulations that have to be dealt with.

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

Mr. Billy Pang: First of all, I would like to give my deepest thanks to all the members who have spoken to Bill 132. This is a bill which will affect all of our ridings, and especially those like mine which are increasingly reliant on businesses and entrepreneurs. The Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction and his team have done an incredible job with this bill, and being able to speak to it for its third reading is a personal pleasure.

I would like to explain what this bill really does and how it fits into our plan of making Ontario the best place to live, work and open a business.

Businesses are the most important part of our economy. They are the critical part of our communities, our cities and our province. They provide services that we need and create services that we didn't know we needed.

Much has been said so far about the benefits of business and small businesses. I'm sure all of us can think of goods and service businesses that we rely on every day. From your local coffee shop and dry cleaner to your favourite local stores, food places and online services, businesses make our lives easier, cheaper and better. And this government cares about businesses. This government cares about the young entrepreneurs and business owners. Our government cares about our innovators, our graduates and our investors. We care about making their lives easier. We care about doing what we should do to improve the business climate in our province.

Under the Liberals, more and more regulations were put on businesses. It has become more and more difficult and expensive to start and maintain a business over the last 15 years. And yet, Ontario has begun to move past this. Across Ontario, MPPs in their constituencies are being thanked for the efforts this government has done to make life easier for businesses. Barely a week goes by in my riding when a business or organization does not thank us for the work we are doing. It has been an absolute pleasure to tell them that things will only get better.

Earlier this year, the MaRS centre did a report on Markham and York region. They said, "The greater Toronto region is ready to break out as a leading global tech hub, outpacing established regions like Seattle and San Francisco's Bay Area in job creation, talent and workforce diversity." The position that York region finds itself in is a direct result of our government's initiatives.

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to see so many people in my community open the doors to new businesses all across Toronto and the GTA. I've travelled all around this region congratulating my constituents on finding a home for the start-ups, an investor for their incubator, finding the capital to open a noodle shop or celebrate a year of great profits. In fact, just this past weekend, the Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan Chinese Business Association expressed to me just how grateful they were for the support that our government has provided for businesses.

This bill was never about protecting the interests of certain individuals or corporations at the expense of others. This bill was not about setting up hurdles for those trying to enter the market. It was about making life easier. Our job as a Legislature is to make the lives of individuals better, but we forget that we are responsible for how businesses affect lives. As we affect businesses, we affect the outcomes of employees and their families.

Businesses and markets create prosperity. They create wealth. They create wealth locally, provincially, nationally and internationally. We are a top destination for trade, investment and employment on this continent. The tech companies in my riding, such as IBM, ATI and AMD, just

to name a few, have been enjoying tremendous success over the past year. As a result, the possibilities of growth and expansion are now on the table. I have had entrepreneurs from around the world discuss the possibility of doing business in Ontario and in my riding, and at each conversation, I have the honour of telling them about our accomplishments and our intentions.

0940

It has been said that Ontario is the best place to live, work and raise a family, but, Speaker, I am proud to say that the passage of this bill will make Ontario the best place to live, work and do business. Regulations have forced companies across the continent to move from their homes. Companies such as Amazon have been looking to Ontario to locate their campuses because we are a place where their rights are protected, where they are free to generate wealth, profit and prosperity for themselves and all of us. In fact, back in September, they announced their newest fulfillment centre will be located in Ontario. That will mean that seven out of the 12 Canadian centres will be located in this province.

But with this bill, we will accelerate growth, create more jobs, create savings, and pass these savings on to employees and consumers. By reducing unnecessary regulations, we are supporting businesses of all sizes to deliver services, innovate and create. And when our businesses do well, our communities do well. Communities all across rural and urban Ontario will benefit from being able to produce in their communities. Big businesses, small and local businesses, from beekeepers to industry giants, will be able to be more efficient in the way they operate without having to deal with the mountains of red tape the Liberals buried them under. We plan to take that red tape and sew it into beautiful red carpets that will bring jobs and investments to Ontario.

If this bill passes into law, it will be one more step in making this province the number one business destination in North America. But to be the best, a government should be working with businesses, not against them, because at a very real level, businesses and industry groups are engaged in strategic planning. Most often, these plans work to better the distribution of goods and services. Allowing businesses to plan with their partners ultimately benefits everyday Ontarians in the same way that the other self-regulated industries have helped us.

Earlier this fall, I had a chance to visit with Professional Engineers Ontario. Engineering in Ontario is a self-regulated industry because such a highly specialized field needs a highly specialized group of regulators to govern their practice. In the end, no one quite understands engineers like engineers. They have unique responsibilities, pressures and expectations that only their peers can truly understand. The governing principles of the PEO were created by engineers for engineers, and the results speak for themselves. By their mandate, every licensed engineer in Ontario will have learned the importance of respect, teamwork, integrity, professionalism and responsibility. These are the values which the PEO has held dearly for nearly 100 years—values that professional engineers will carry for the rest of their careers.

These values that have been instilled have helped make Ontario one of the best places in the world to live, because self-regulated engineers are the ones building it. No government, no bureaucrat, will ever be able to produce so much quality so consistently or be able to manage and support those in this field like the PEO. For the PEO and its members, excellence is no longer unique. For Ontario engineers, excellence is the norm. In Ontario, we take elevators, cross bridges and fly great distances without fear. We have so much faith in their designs, inventions and projects that we don't give them a second thought. Ontarians can live their lives in full confidence that the world being built around them is one that is good and that is safe. In Ontario, a licence is not just permission to practise. It is a certificate of distinction, which can only be earned through great effort and commitment. I'm sure that the values instilled in all of them will be manifested in new innovations and inventions that will make York region and Ontario even better places to work and to live.

I know that many of us, myself included, are not experts on everything. In fact, there are things that I know almost nothing about, and in those things, I trust the experts, like engineers. The government is an amazing tool to better the lives of those it governs, but like any individual, a wise government knows when to leave things to the experts. The 2014 jobs and growth act was a piece of legislation that did the opposite. It made strategic planning harder for companies. In fact, the following year, the Fraser Institute published a landmark study about how Ontario, under the Liberals, lost its position as a North American powerhouse:

“The deteriorating competitiveness of Ontario's economy is reflected in how business investment in manufacturing and finance, its traditional bastions of industry, has been surpassed by utilities and transportation, both driven by government investment in infrastructure. The reluctance of the private sector to invest reflects a range of government policies that hurt business....

“The real problem in Ontario is the wide array of government policies that mistakenly signal that the public sector, not the private sector, is the engine of economic growth.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I apologize to the member for Markham–Unionville.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 7, 2019, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sarkaria has moved third reading of Bill 132, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking various Regulations. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no, no, no, no, no.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you. No further business.

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

The House recessed from 0948 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to draw members' attention to the fact that we have a former member of the Legislature with us today: Terence Young, who was a member of provincial Parliament in the 36th Parliament. Welcome, Terence. It's good to have you back.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I'd like to welcome the president of Lakehead University, Dr. Moira McPherson, and Heather Murchison, associate vice-provost, institutional analysis, to the House this morning. Today at 5 p.m., Lakehead University will be hosting a reception in the legislative dining room, and I encourage all members to come.

I'd like to welcome Northern Autism Families Matter and Alina Cameron from my riding. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce Paul Norris from the Ontario Waterpower Association. It's great to have you here today.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to do my daily welcome to autism families today. It's especially special; they've travelled very far from the north. With us, we have Lisa Devine, Elizabeth Wallis, Antonio Stravato, Amy Moledzki, Adrianna Atkins, Alina Cameron, Sean Staddon, Michau van Speyk, Silvana Cacciatore, Bruce McIntosh, Ed Arvelin and Cindy Mazan. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ross Romano: I'd like to introduce very special guests to the House today: the president of Lakehead University, Moira McPherson, seated in the gallery to my right, and Richard Longtin. I also want to let everyone know that there is a reception from 5 to 7 p.m. that I'd like to invite everyone to in the legislative dining room. Hopefully, everyone can join as well. Thank you very much.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to welcome to this House my constituency assistant Peter Gatti in the members' gallery over there, along with a George Brown placement student, Murtaza Ebrahim, who has been working in our office for many months now. It's wonderful to have you here. Thank you for being here today.

Also, we have in the gallery with us today the amazing students of Bloor Collegiate—the grade 10 students and teachers. Thank you for being here. Welcome to your House.

Later today, we'll be joined by the grade 5 students of Regal Road public school.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I would like to welcome Ms. Anita Stewart, the food laureate from the University of Guelph. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I, too, wish to welcome Anita Stewart, who is a constituent of mine. Welcome here today.

Introduction of visitors?

Hon. Rod Phillips: It's my pleasure to welcome a member of the Ajax community, a very important individual who works very hard for our community every day, Anthony Stokes. Anthony, welcome.

Mr. Jamie West: I want to welcome a member from Sudbury, a proud steelworker and a member of the Northern Ontario Autism Alliance, Brother Sean Staddon. Welcome to Queen's Park, Sean.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I want to take the opportunity to introduce Don Fusco from the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada, as well as Paul Norris from the Ontario Waterpower Association, as well as Frank McDonald, who is here from Brampton.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's my special honour today to welcome my new legislative assistant, Bria John, to Queen's Park. Welcome to the Legislature.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is for the Premier. This morning, students and parents across Ontario woke up wondering whether their schools will be open tomorrow and how they'll manage to make the day work if they aren't. It has already been a tough year for them, filled with disruption and classroom cuts.

After over a year of doing his utmost to pick a fight with teachers in the classroom, the Premier has fallen silent as parents and students face Ontario's first province-wide education strike in 22 years. Will the Premier break his silence today and say what he's willing to do to fix the classroom crisis that he has created?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The objective of this government is to keep kids in class. We are negotiating in good faith to achieve that objective, as we did with CUPE one month ago.

My message to OSSTF is to call off this needless strike. They have an opportunity to stay at the table, to invoke private mediation to work with all parties to keep students in class. That's what our focus should be.

The fact is, we've been told so clearly that if the government of Ontario does not give an additional \$750 million of your money—the taxpayers of this province—they will continue to strike. That is unacceptable. It's time we put students first in this province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's time this Premier takes responsibility for his leadership role here and deals with the crisis that they've created. High school teachers and education workers have been crystal clear about how this can be resolved: They want the government to back away from their reckless classroom cuts and reverse plans to increase class sizes and impose Alabama-style mandatory online learning.

If the Premier wants to de-escalate the situation and get back to the table, that's the simple solution: Get rid of those

cuts; get rid of that mandatory online e-learning. Will he actually do that?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: And also give a \$1.5-billion increase to the second-highest-paid teachers in the nation.

Ms. Catherine Fife: That is not true.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Education, please conclude your reply.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The OECD put out a report recently which demonstrates that Ontario educators are amongst the highest paid in the industrialized world.

The fact is, we're being reasonable with the taxpayers of this province. We're offering a \$750-million increase. We think that's fair. We also believe that students should not be in the middle of this discussion.

What they should do is call off the strike. What OSTFF should do is stay at the table and invoke private mediation without preconditions.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: With all due respect, the Premier needs to respond to the concerns of Ontarians in this regard. Teachers are not the only ones opposed to these cuts. Parents made it clear that they don't want their kids forced into online learning courses that won't work for them. Students marched out of schools across Ontario to protest larger class sizes and fewer course options.

The Premier has no mandate to make these cuts. No one in our schools has asked for them. Why is he so determined, then, to impose these cuts?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The Premier is determined to keep kids in class. That's why we have been negotiating in good faith. It's how we got a deal with CUPE just one month ago.

The government of Ontario is offering a \$750-million increase to educators in this province, whom we value. What we're told by OSSTF is that if we do not give them an additional 750 million more tax dollars, they will strike again. That is totally unacceptable to this government.

We are being reasonable. We're trying to put students at the centre of this discussion. It's why we're on track to spend an additional \$1.2 billion more this year than last year in the defence of public education.

My message to OSSTF is clear: Cancel this needless strike.

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier, but I can tell you, if the Premier is determined to solve this crisis, he knows very well what he needs to do: He needs to stand in his place today and let the people of Ontario know that he has a real, serious desire to fix the mess that he has created.

1040

Students and their parents have already dealt with a lot this year. They've seen courses vanish before their eyes.

They've seen classes growing in size. They've even learned that water in their schools might not be safe to drink. The Premier can't hide from this, Speaker, especially after doing so much to create the conflict that we're seeing today.

So I'd like to hear from the Premier directly: What steps is he willing to take to bring people to the table and solve this crisis?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The step we're asking OSSTF to accept without preconditions is private mediation, and every member of this Legislature should be encouraging them to do so. They should not have gone on strike last Wednesday, knowing that that tool remained in the tool kit.

Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada today put out a report. What it said is that salaries for Ontario public teachers with 10 years of experience are amongst the highest in the nation—\$10,000 more than the average Canadian. We have been reasonable, offering a \$750-million increase to teacher pay. The fact is, what we're hearing is that if we do not accept an additional 750 million in tax dollars, they will strike again. That is unacceptable, and it's time we put students first in this province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I'm going to attempt to go back to the Premier.

For weeks, the Ford government has focused on dodging blame and scoring points in the press when they should have been focused on kids in the classroom. Elementary teachers were forced just yesterday to correct the education minister when he claimed that he was "laser-focused" on bargaining, while they were actually waiting a week between bargaining dates.

Why is the government more interested in organizing press conferences and dodging blame than in actually finding a solution?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The focus of the government is to keep the children of this province in class. We've been negotiating in good faith. It's how we got a good deal with CUPE that ensured that students remain learning in positive learning environments. The priority of the government is to keep the focus on our students. It's why in the last economic statement we announced an additional \$200 million more in the defence of public education.

Mr. Speaker, let the facts be part of this discussion. Since 2003-04, there are 12% more educators in this province and less than 1% more students. We have invested in education. We are offering a \$750-million reasonable and fair increase to our educators, some of the best educators in the world. What we're told is, if we don't give another \$750 million more, they will strike. This is \$1.5 billion. We think that's unfair to the students of this province.

I'm urging OSSTF to work with us in good faith and cancel this strike.

Mr. Paul Miller: Wow. Wow.

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

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If the focus of the government is to keep kids in the class, their strategy has been nothing short of an abject failure. At the end of the day, Speaker, this comes straight down to leadership, and the buck stops with the Premier of this province. He can't sit silently and hope that this all goes away. Teachers have been clear that we can avoid a strike tomorrow if the Premier reverses his plans for classroom sizes to increase and reverses his plan for Alabama-style mandatory online courses.

Will the Premier actually show some leadership here, stand in his place today and say that he will do that?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The Leader of the Opposition left out another element of their top-three priority list: a \$1.5-billion request or demand of the taxpayers of this province. If we give them that, if we give an additional \$750 million more, paid by the taxpayers, then they will consider private mediation, not even get a deal. Mr. Speaker, that's unacceptable.

Parents are demanding every member of this Legislature to stand up against escalation. We believe that OSSTF should cancel this needless strike, should stay focused on our students, should remain focused on keeping them in class. That's what we're going to do every single day.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier, but I think the government needs to realize that nobody—nobody—trusts their numbers. They have not been very good with having trustworthy numbers.

The former Environmental Commissioner, the officer of the Legislature who used to provide independent research on the environment before the Premier fired her, has joined the Auditor General in slamming the Ford government's made-to-fail climate change plan. She describes the Premier's defence of the plan as complete nonsense. Does the Premier think that she should also wait until 2030 before offering her opinion?

Hon. Doug Ford: The House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question. What the Auditor General did say was that this government remains on track to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. That's actually really good news for the people of the province of Ontario. Obviously, we thank the Auditor General for her work.

She also did highlight that there need to be some improvements in the plan. The minister himself has said that this is a living, breathing plan that will change as circumstances change. Just last week, the Premier announced that Ontario, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan would partner up in SMR and expanding SMR technologies. That's also good news. That wasn't in the original plan, but it's good news. And we're talking about transit and transportation.

We're on track because the Premier has made this a priority. He has said we will meet our targets. He said that to our caucus and to our cabinet, Mr. Speaker. We will meet our priorities and we ask the opposition to help us do that.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I'm going back to the Premier on this question.

At a time when the world is coming together to confront the climate crisis and the stakes could not possibly be any higher, Ontario's Premier is not just defending a plan that is accurately described as "not based on sound evidence," but then telling people demanding urgent action that he won't listen to them until 2030.

I'm asking the Premier directly: Why is he dragging Ontario backwards exactly when the rest of the world is moving towards action on climate change?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, this government and previous Ontario governments have always been leaders when it comes to the environment. We're leading the nation in terms of our GHG emissions reduction. We're at 22.5%, and the Premier has said very clearly we will meet our targets.

But let's look at what the NDP have to offer. They said that they want to offer a new green deal, but not until 2022. We're making progress right now. We've got our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, Mr. Speaker. What else do the NDP have on the table? They say that we have to take urgent action on floods, but what do they have on the table? Nothing. We have put it on the table. We've focused on the conservation authorities. They said they wanted to talk about species at risk of extinction, but what did they put on the table? Nothing.

On every single point, they're telling the people of Ontario to wait until 2022—probably why they've only won one election since Confederation, Mr. Speaker.

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Billy Pang: My question is to the Premier.

Premier, we have spoken before about the need to unite this country economically. You have said previously that what is good for Ontario is good for Canada, and vice versa. You even put these words into action recently in your leadership role at the Council of the Federation meeting, demonstrating how our provinces should be working together against the world and not competing against each other. Even the governor of the Bank of Canada, Stephen Poloz, was recently quoted in the *Globe and Mail* saying, "There are so many fronts on which federal/provincial collaboration could be better."

Premier, can you speak more to the Legislature about the importance of ending interprovincial trade barriers and the positive impacts that it will have for all Canadians?

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take their seats. Order. The clock is ticking. Order. Stop the clock. Order.

Restart the clock. Premier to reply.

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the opposition for the standing ovation. I know we've been doing a great job. Thank you. I also want to thank our great, all-star MPP from Markham–Unionville.

I want to give a special shout-out to Bloor Collegiate. I met the students downstairs. They have a bright future under our government. They don't have to worry. They can go home and tell their parents they don't have to worry about the high taxes they've seen over the last 15 years. They don't have to worry about the 300,000 jobs the previous government and the NDP ran out of this province, because our province is booming. People are—

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

1050

Mr. Billy Pang: My question is back to the Premier.

Premier, those are very powerful comments by Governor Poloz, who is one of many respected economic voices in this country on this issue.

But Canada and Ontario do not work in isolation, and we are impacted by the global economic community and their impressions. Premier, you were recently in Washington and experienced first-hand the important role and impact that international financial markets have on Ontario's and Canada's trade regulations.

Premier, can you elaborate on what the international economic community has said regarding the impact that inter-provincial trade is having on Ontario and even Canada?

Hon. Doug Ford: I thank our great MPP for that question.

Yes, we had a great meeting of the Premiers—by the way, making sure that we have a nation that is united, not divided, like we saw after the last election. Every single Premier left here feeling positive, having a little bit of certainty that they can bring home to their province. We discussed interprovincial trade; that's \$50 billion sitting on the table—to make sure that each province can trade freely amongst the country. Mr. Speaker, it's easier to trade with the United States than it is amongst the provinces, but we're going to fix that.

We had a great meeting in Washington, met Governor Hogan—and for the first time, US governors are coming to Toronto. Our province is thriving. We're the envy of North America right now. He couldn't believe that we were doing \$390 billion a year in two-way trade with the United States, Mr. Speaker. Again, prosperity is here in Ontario.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Sara Singh: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

Yesterday, we learned that this government is appealing a ruling that overturned their attack on post-secondary students, universities and college campuses across the province. The courts were clear: This government's terrible policies were struck down as a huge overstep by the government.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier abandon his unnecessary appeal and stop wasting taxpayer dollars with yet another losing lawsuit?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Ross Romano: Our government is committed to ensuring that tuition is affordable for all students in Ontario. We've spoken about this for a very long time, back to the

time of our election. We wanted to make sure that people had more money in their pockets.

We wanted to make sure that education was affordable for all students. That is why we took the measures we took, Mr. Speaker—measures to reduce people's costs for tuition; measures like the Student Choice Initiative, which were geared towards making sure that students have a choice with respect to what they spend their money on. That was all it is about.

As the process is presently under an appeal, it would be inappropriate to comment on the details of the matter at this time, Mr. Speaker. But again, we reiterate the importance of ensuring that our students have access to affordable education. That's what we want to ensure.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: I think students and the courts were pretty clear about this government's decision, and the damage has already been done. We've seen campus food banks closed, and spaces for LGBTQ students, racialized students and women closed. Campus life has been disrupted. This government's attacks and cuts on education are hurting students both in the elementary school sector and in the post-secondary education as well.

Instead of going to court and trying to tear universities and colleges down, we should be investing in them, Speaker, in the world-class education that students and families in this province deserve.

Instead of taking our students to court again, will the Premier stop his attacks and restore the funding for the campus programs he has forced to close?

Hon. Ross Romano: Thank you for the question. I'm happy to stand up and speak about the great things our government is doing to ensure that students have access to affordable education, and I am proud of the system that we have in Ontario.

When students from around the world want to come to Ontario to get an education, that is an incredible testament to how outstanding our universities and our colleges are in Ontario. Our brand is recognized worldwide.

We want to ensure, though, that our students can access that education and that it is affordable for them. That is our goal. That is why we made the initiatives we made towards OSAP, ensuring that it was sustainable for future generations. It was clear—listen to the Auditor General—that the system was falling apart. It was unsustainable. We are making sure that it's sustainable for future generations. We've provided a 10% reduction in tuition. We've done a number of things and we will continue to do things to make school affordable for our students.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Premier.

Yesterday's FAO report showed that over the next five years, this government plans to spend 10% less on programs and services—that's \$1,070 less per person.

Mr. Speaker, since this government took office, we have seen a rise in homelessness, poverty and reliance on food

banks. Ontarians are increasingly dependent on precarious work—we know that many young people are working in the gig economy—and that stagnation of wages is hurting, which has left many people feeling hopeless and helpless.

How can this government justify cuts that deprive Ontarians of the programs and services that they need and that their lives depend on? Why are you cutting to create efficiencies that are harming people?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member for the question, and I thank the FAO for his incisive review of the situation in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, because of the previous Liberal government, we found ourselves in a very, very challenging financial situation. That's exactly what the FAO pointed out. That's why we've been balancing three priorities. The priority of investing in critical services—we're spending more on health care, \$1.9 billion more, and more on education, \$1.2 billion more. We're putting money back into the pockets of Ontarians, \$3 billion more, by getting rid of the cap-and-trade carbon tax and adding the other advantages we've had for individuals and families. We're also making sure that we are on track to balance the budget by 2023. Those are three priorities that the previous government ignored—the priorities of Ontarians, the priorities we were elected on.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: This government's priorities are out of whack.

Across this province, there are children going to school hungry, and people are living in substandard homes and can't afford heat.

I recently heard from a young person who grew up in rural Ontario that when he was in high school, a friend of his did not always go to school, as his parents were scared that children's aid would take their son if he went to school unfed.

Mr. Speaker, 'tis the season of giving, but instead this government has taken away services. This holiday season, many Ontarians will be deprived of food, of shelter, of warmth because of this government's reckless cuts—not just cuts to services, but now the FAO has pointed out that they are planning to cut revenues, which will further starve program expenses.

Will you tell this House which programs you plan to cut to keep your promise of cutting—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Minister to reply.

Hon. Rod Phillips: As I said before—increases in health care, \$1.9 billion; increases in education, \$1.2 billion.

We put in place one of the most progressive tax reductions—the low-income tax credit. It's going to help 1.1 million Ontarians. Some 580,000 people working for minimum wage are going to be taken off the tax roll. But the member from Scarborough–Guildwood and the members of the opposition voted against that. They voted against a child care tax credit that's going to be putting money into the pockets of the very people she purports to be supporting.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's time for the opposition and, frankly, for the members of the independent caucus to think

seriously about what needs to be done to help low-income families, to help all Ontarians—not just create over 250,000 jobs, but support them in the way that this government is supporting them, to make sure that affordability is at the top of the agenda for this government.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Speaker, my question is for the Attorney General.

I hear from constituents all the time who have had to deal with the legal system and who ask why their experience could not have been easier, faster and more affordable. They wonder why they need to hire someone to manage matters that seem simple, only to find out just how complex and outdated the court system is.

The Auditor General's report outlined the same concerns about the slow and antiquated nature of our justice system.

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Speaker, can the Attorney General tell us what our government is doing to improve and modernize the way our justice system works to make it simpler, faster and more affordable for people to access justice?

Hon. Doug Downey: Thank you to the fantastic member for the question.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that we inherited a badly neglected and overly complicated justice system—neglected by the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP. We agree with the Auditor General, and we've heard loud and clear from people across Ontario that the justice system has grown too complex and outdated. It needs better support. We need to support the growth of safer communities. We need to stand up for victims of crime. We need to stand up for law-abiding citizens.

That's why I was proud to table the Smarter and Stronger Justice Act yesterday, a bill that proposes over 20 smart and sensible reforms that will make Ontario's justice system work better every day for law-abiding citizens, consumers and businesses. It will make our communities safer while getting tough on crime to ensure that criminals aren't profiting from their own illegal activity.

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

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Speaker, I think we can all agree that crime should not pay. When the Civil Remedies Act was first created in 2001 by the Progressive Conservative government, it was an innovative crime-fighting piece of legislation intended to deter, and successful in deterring, unlawful activity. This act allows police to seize property and funds used in or gained from illegal and criminal activity and redirect them into the hands of victims and police programs that fight crime.

Unfortunately, while Ontario was once at the forefront of civil forfeiture rules, our province now lags far behind other jurisdictions that have updated their forfeiture laws. Criminals have taken notice.

Can the Attorney General tell this House what he is doing to address this growing problem?

Hon. Doug Downey: Thank you to the insightful member from Oakville North. The member is absolutely right: Our province's civil forfeiture laws, along with our province's entire justice system, were left neglected under 15 years of Liberal government. Their focus was elsewhere—I don't know where—and they weren't ensuring that the justice system kept up with criminal activity.

Mr. Speaker, we are the first government to take on the important work of modernizing our laws around civil forfeiture so that Ontario can support victims and front-line police officers by making it harder for criminals to hold on to the proceeds of their own illegal activity. Yesterday, I introduced the Smarter and Stronger Justice Act into this Legislature. In the act are reforms that, if passed, will simplify the process to seize those proceeds of crime, allowing funds to be redirected faster and more efficiently to victims and support programs that fight crime.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Gurratan Singh: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, this Conservative government confirmed that the 30% cut to Legal Aid Ontario will be made permanent—a cut that threw the legal community into chaos, undermined access to justice for the lowest-income Ontarians and put in jeopardy specialty clinics like the ones that serve injured workers.

Why is this Premier plowing ahead with cuts that will hurt Ontarians, clog our court systems and cost more taxpayer dollars in the end?

Hon. Doug Ford: Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: After years of Liberal mismanagement supported by the NDP, legal aid was left on an unaccountable, unsustainable path that jeopardized the needs of the most vulnerable clients where and when they needed it the most.

Our government took immediate steps to consult widely across the province with those who are providing the service, those who are receiving the service, clinics, private-pay lawyers, duty counsel, judiciary, lawyers across the system, stakeholders and vulnerable victims' groups. Mr. Speaker, we consulted with everybody. We came up with a plan that will modernize legal aid for the first time since 1998, when it was brought in—1998 was the year that Google was incorporated. It was before the first BlackBerry. It had not been touched for that long.

We have modernized legal aid. I'm so proud to stand behind it. We've put it on a path to sustainability and accountability and to serve the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Only this government would have the gall to celebrate not cutting legal aid by a further \$31 million at the same time as announcing that the \$133 million that they already have cut will be made permanent.

Yesterday the government tabled omnibus legislation that is yet another attack on Legal Aid Ontario. The bill tears away the words "access to justice" and "low income" from anything to do with legal aid services. But, Mr.

Speaker, that is exactly what legal aid is supposed to do: provide access to justice to low-income Ontarians.

Why is this Premier setting up low-income people to fail in our justice system?

Hon. Doug Downey: I can tell you what our government has done. We have gone out and talked to the people who operate in the system. We have heard the people in the system who are receiving the service. Each year we increase the eligibility by 6%. We're expanding eligibility year over year over year.

We want to make sure that these programs are available for those who need them the most, in the form that they need them, whether it be duty counsel within the courts, whether it be private-pay lawyers through certificate programs, making sure it's working better. We want to make sure the clinics are sustainable. They're the foundation and part of the three pillars of legal aid, Mr. Speaker; we recognize that. We want to put them on a path of success to provide services where and when they need them the most.

Now, the challenge I have is when we get into facts. When we get into facts, it's very difficult to have a conversation with those who are not fully aware of the facts. Yesterday, after the press conference, the member from Brampton East stood up and said that our moves have closed clinics. I challenge the member from Brampton East to mention one clinic that has closed under our watch.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the hard-working, caring and compassionate Minister of Health. Across Ontario, we're fortunate to have some of the finest health care professionals dedicated to delivering the highest-quality care. But we all know our health care system is facing capacity pressures and patients and families are getting lost in the health care system. They're falling through the cracks, waiting too long to get the care they need. That's why our government made a commitment to fix Ontario's public health care system.

The minister has been very busy over the last two weeks announcing the next step in making our commitment a reality. Can the minister please tell this House more about what she's been focused on over the last two weeks?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you to the member from Chatham-Kent-Leamington for the question and the great work he's doing in his community.

Speaker, our government made a commitment to the people of Ontario to build a sustainable and connected public health care system and to end hallway health care. As a key component of our plan, we've announced the first series of Ontario health teams. These 24 teams will better support patients and families by connecting care providers to work as a single team. In doing so, Ontario health teams will create a seamless experience and better transitions for patients through our health care system.

Each individual team will create a local health care system that provides coordinated care for patients, reduces wait times and leads to better health outcomes for patients. This model provides an opportunity for front-line health

care professionals to do the work they do best: delivering excellent-quality patient service.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you, Minister, for delivering on our government's commitment. It's so great to finally see this much-needed change become reality within our health care system right here in Ontario.

As we finally break down the long-standing barriers that have prevented care providers from working directly with each other to support patients throughout their health care journey, the patient experience will be greatly improved, and navigating the health care system will be easier and more convenient. I know the people in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Leamington are thrilled to have an Ontario health team and are excited to enjoy the benefits that having one will provide them.

Speaker, as part of our commitment, being focused on ending hallway health care—can the minister expand on how Ontario health teams will help bring an end to hallway health care?

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Hon. Christine Elliott: Once fully operational, Ontario health teams will contribute to ending hallway health care by making it easier for Ontarians to move through the health care system. This will help ensure that those patients who are ready to leave hospital can do so, hopefully at home with the supports and services they need. And by better connecting hospitals and primary care providers with community-based supports, they will help to ensure that people receive the right care in the right place.

Speaker, I would like to thank all of our health care partners for their enthusiasm, partnership and dedication to working together to provide Ontario patients and families with the best-quality connected health care. There is still a lot of work to be done, but we are confident that all of us working together will be able to provide all Ontarians with the excellent-quality care that they expect and deserve.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday we learned that this government's reckless cuts are leaving a \$5-billion hole when it comes to health care and education in order to pay for a tax cut for the highest income earners in the province. To be perfectly clear, the Premier is setting aside money to pay for a tax cut for the rich. Everyday families will get just \$18—\$18—while wealthy people will get well over \$1,000 a year.

My question is simple: Why does the Premier want to give away thousands of dollars to his wealthy friends while gutting services for everyone else?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Finance.

Interjections.

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

The question has been referred to the Minister of Finance.

Interjections.

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

Minister of Finance?

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

Mr. Speaker, as I've said before today in this Legislature, we are investing in critical services. We're investing \$1.9 billion more in health care and \$1.2 billion more in education.

I've also talked about balancing those three priorities. Yes, we'll invest in critical services. Yes, we'll balance the budget. But we think that one of the best things that we can do for working Ontarians is put money back in their pockets.

We are not afraid to debate in this House and stand in this House and talk about the \$3 billion that we have put back into the pockets of Ontarians through the low-income tax credit, through the child care tax credit, through getting rid of the cap-and-trade carbon tax. These are all things that we believe are supporting the affordability issue—and we can balance all three. We're not a single-issue party; we can do three things at once. How about you?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The supplementary question?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: While I appreciate the minister's snark this morning, what I have here is a very serious question.

Back to the Premier: On top of blowing a hole in our budget, reckless cuts will mean fewer services, fewer front-line workers like teachers, and more kids in crumbling schools. It will mean even longer waits to see nurses and doctors, and it does nothing—absolutely nothing—to fix hallway health care. In fact, it will make it worse.

Everyday families are going to get further and further behind while this government continues to take things from bad to worse.

Do you really think that everyday families should foot the bill to pay for a tax break for the wealthiest among us?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, \$27 billion for improvements in health care infrastructure—\$27 billion that the NDP voted against; \$1.9 billion more for front-line health care just this year: Again—and I'm hoping that on third reading, perhaps the NDP will vote for, but until now they've voted against.

We are putting more money into the vital services they're concerned about, but we're also dedicated to balancing the budget because that's important. And we're also dedicated to putting more money back into the pockets of Ontarians. We won't apologize for it. It's good for Ontario. It's good for our province. It's good for our economy. We'll keep it up.

FOOD SAFETY

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. As a member of a riding with a large agricultural community, I always hear from my local farmers about how hard they work to ensure they are maintaining safe practices at work. Our province relies on our farmers to be able to provide us with some of

the safest food in the world on a daily basis. Yet I have unfortunately heard stories about how farmers can sometimes feel that they are not safe when on the farm due to people trespassing onto their properties, particularly over the last year.

Farmers in my riding and across the province are eager to have a government that supports them and their industry and is willing to listen to their concerns.

Speaker, could the minister please inform the House about how our government is acting on the concerns of our farmers?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the member from Brantford–Brant for the great question.

Last week I was proud to introduce the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, and I'm glad that second reading of the bill will begin later today. No one in Ontario should ever feel unsafe in their homes and at work. For the vast majority of our farmers, their home and their place of work are no different.

If passed, Bill 156 would keep Ontario farmers, their families, agri-food workers and farm animals safe by reducing the likelihood of trespassing on farms and processing facilities. If our farmers are to provide us with some of the best and safest food in the world, it is important that we support them and make sure that they have the tools to maintain a high level of biosecurity. If it is passed, that is what Bill 156 will do.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you to the minister for his response.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the minister mentioned biosecurity, because I think all of us in the Legislature support the idea of having practices in place that keep our farm animals safe and healthy—whether you work on a farm, you're a veterinarian or a livestock transporter.

I was glad to be part of an announcement back in September where Soil Solutions Plus, a small business out in St. George in Brantford–Brant, was receiving a grant of over \$15,000 to install equipment to power-wash their vehicles to reduce the risk of spreading disease when driving between farms. This is just another example of how our farmers and workers in the agricultural sector make sure that our farm animals are safe.

Animal safety and welfare is a top priority for our government, and I appreciate the work being done to maintain animal welfare and health at the highest standards. Could the minister explain in further detail how Bill 156 will do this?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I thank the member for the supplementary question.

Our government has always been deeply committed to animal welfare. Trespassers may not realize how their actions could lead to the introduction of disease among livestock and provide them with undue stress in the process.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make this point very clear: Anyone who suspects animal abuse should immediately call the authorities and report it. Animal cruelty is a serious issue,

and I'm proud that our government has a zero-tolerance approach to animal abuse.

If passed, our legislation would strike the right balance and ensure protection for farmers as well as their animals and the integrity of Ontario's food supply. In addition, it would, along with the recently passed PAWS Act, mean that Ontario would have some of the strongest animal welfare laws in Canada.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Last June, the Premier proudly unveiled that he would be appointing experts, including the former PC Party president and a lacrosse-playing friend of Dean French's son, as agents general, earning big bucks—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Pardon me, Speaker. I would very much like my question to be directed to and answered by the Premier.

Speaker, the Premier had to quickly fire two of the agents general days after they received their appointments, yet the other two are still collecting pay. Can the Premier update us on the work that they're doing on location in Dallas and Chicago?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I'm very pleased to update this House on their progress, Speaker.

We have 15 international trade and investment offices around the world that raise the commercial profile of Ontario. I can tell you, in my direct experience with these men and women across India, across Korea and across Japan, that we had tremendous success.

These are people who have huge expertise, who helped us put the deal together with VVDN Technologies, for instance, which is hiring 200-plus engineers in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. That was an exciting announcement that came after months of engagement by our staff throughout the world. This was one of the results.

As I said in the Legislature yesterday, we had another tremendous result with the Korea Importers Association: 8,000-plus members and \$535 billion worth of trade. Through our new members, we now have access to those markets.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: As much as I appreciate hearing about India, Japan and Korea, I asked about Dallas and Chicago in North America, if the minister is not aware of where these jurisdictions are.

Since June 20 of this year, former PC Party president Jag Badwal has been collecting \$165,000 a year as Ontario's agent general in Dallas. Yet on November 26, he was here in Toronto, joining the Ford cabinet at an event celebrating PC women in politics, and last October, Conservative Party activists were proudly taking photos with

the Dallas agent general as he campaigned with them in Brampton.

Can the Premier explain why the party insider to whom he's paying \$165,000 to represent Ontario in Dallas seems to spend so much time campaigning for the Conservatives here in the GTA?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We're committed to ensuring that Ontario is open for business, open for jobs and open for trade—and quite frankly, open for trade with the US. It's one of our essential economies. There's no stronger trading partner to Ontario than the United States. In 2018, two-way trade between our jurisdictions was valued at \$390 billion. We're the top trading partner with 19 states and number two with nine other states.

The Premier has been leading this in a great way. With ongoing trade uncertainty, we need trade representatives; we need extensive experience. I can tell you, Speaker, that we have been doing a remarkable job with our trade in the United States.

When you think about \$390 billion that Ohio, one of the number one trading partners we have—we do more business with Ohio than we do with several other countries combined.

AMATEUR SPORT

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is to the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. Most of us know the minister's passion for sport. We've heard her champion the Ottawa Redblacks and the Ottawa 67's right here in the Legislature, but some may not be aware of her support for amateur sport. While sport is an important division of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, she still finds time to coach a local hockey team in Nepean.

Supporting amateur athletics is important to me as well. In my riding of Peterborough–Kawartha, we recently celebrated the 17-time national lacrosse champion Peterborough Lakers.

Can the minister tell us how our government has helped not only lacrosse players but all amateur athletes across Ontario?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I want to, obviously, say thank you to the member from Peterborough–Kawartha for being a steadfast advocate for his constituency and for the Peterborough Lakers. I would be remiss not to say thank you on behalf of this entire House to our three-peat Mann Cup champions, the Peterborough Lakers. We all congratulate them for the national win that they brought to this assembly.

The Ontario Lacrosse Association received over \$200,000 in annual funding last year as a designated provincial sport organization. That contributes to 170 teams and 22,000 lacrosse players across the province of Ontario. The Ontario Lacrosse Association is also a recipient of the Quest for Gold.

All members of this assembly should be aware that we have an Ontario athlete assistance program which supports 18 top-ranked provincial athletes with direct financial assistance to cover training and living costs. In 2018-19, these athletes received over \$4,100.

Given some changes to the Mann Cup as a national designated trophy, it is now eligible in the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries for sport hosting events.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to thank the minister for her support of amateur sport across the province.

Every day in my riding, I see how amateur sport unites communities, creates lifelong friendships and helps develop our youth. As a supporter of amateur sport myself, specifically hockey, I founded the Under the Lock Hockey Tournament, served as the president of the Peterborough Community Church Hockey League, organized Hockey Day in Canada in Peterborough and chaired the Special Hockey International event.

I know that the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries is well versed in the benefits of amateur sports and what they offer for the development of our future community leaders. Can the minister tell us how the ministry's investment in amateur sport pays dividends for all of us?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: That's an important question, and I want to say thank you to him for stepping up to the plate and being a volunteer with the hockey association. I spent the entire weekend this past weekend coaching, myself, and enjoyed that, obviously.

Ontario has invested over \$27 million directly to support athletes and provincial sport organizations across the province. When we hear names like Bianca Andreescu, Penny Oleksiak and Andre De Grasse, we know that we have invested directly into them through not only the PSOs, but also through the Canadian Sport Institute of Ontario in Scarborough, where we recently just invested \$8.1 million—and to the Coaches Association of Ontario, in which we invested \$1.1 million.

Mr. Speaker, in Ontario we are not only providing a great deal of recreational support, but we are also making sure that our athletes right here in Ontario are topping podiums, not just in Canada but around the world.

In Ontario we're open for business, we're open for jobs, and we're open for athletes.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is for the Premier. We are losing autism services in the north. Diagnostic capacity is decreasing. Children and their families have waited long enough. And thanks to this government's cuts, service providers are laying off staff and discontinuing services—something this government knew would happen, but did it anyway. Meanwhile, this government says they won't do anything to help until maybe next April.

Northern families cannot wait. Adrianna Atkins from Manitouwadge, who is here today, must travel with her son 400 kilometres to Thunder Bay for the services he needs. Adrianna needs our help now and not next year.

When is this government going to fix the problems it created for northern families?

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

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks very much to the member opposite for the question, and thanks to the families, actually, who have travelled down from northern Ontario to be with us here today.

Mr. Speaker, we're taking this issue very seriously. I can tell you that for the last 30 years, governments of all stripes in this Legislature have not gotten the autism file right. That's why we've taken the time over the summer to ensure that—first of all, I went out and met with a lot of the families who are here, in the north: in Kenora, in Thunder Bay, in Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and also in North Bay, just a few of the stops over the summer.

But while I was doing that, in conjunction with that tour and meeting with families face to face, Mr. Speaker, our Ontario autism panel was meeting throughout the summer. They've made well over 100 recommendations. We're working extremely hard to implement all of the recommendations that that panel has made so that we can have an autism program to be proud of—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Supplementary question? The member for Sudbury.

Mr. Jamie West: Back to the Premier: The north is in crisis. The government's cuts have been devastating for families of children with autism in the north. Service capacity that took decades to build has been decimated in less than a year under this government. Providers like Child and Community Resources in Sudbury have had to let go of staff and discontinue services. This was the only provider for French-speaking children in Sudbury and in the riding of Nickel Belt. Children and families are now left waiting because there's nowhere to spend the money they receive for treatment—and those are the lucky ones that receive any support at all. The north cannot wait until April 2020. We need a needs-based system now.

Premier, how much longer will families be forced to wait to get help for their kids?

Hon. Todd Smith: Merci au député opposé pour la question aujourd'hui.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the families that are here—and I know they're meeting with some of my staff a little bit later on today to talk about the rollout of the Ontario Autism Program and how that's going to be occurring over the coming weeks and months.

I just want to let them know that we fully understand the situation in the north and we have been in constant communication with those service providers, those agencies that are actually going to be helping their children get the services that they need.

I can tell you that my staff have been working extremely hard in the ministry and in the department, Mr. Speaker, to take those over 100 recommendations and then figure out how we're going to implement those so that, first of all, we do have a truly needs-based program, one that's there for the families when they need it, and one that's bigger than it's ever been. A \$600-million budget: that's twice the amount that was invested by the previous government. It's going to be a great—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. The member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

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CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Michael Parsa: My question is for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Last week, the minister introduced our government's plan to strengthen consumer protection for the people of Ontario at home, online and in our communities. A key component of this plan is to introduce changes to new home warranties in the province.

I know that many of my constituents and Ontarians across the province are eager to hear more about our government's plan to take action on reforming Tarion. Would the minister please tell this House and homebuyers across Ontario what they can expect from the legislation she introduced last week?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you to the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill for this important question.

I am pleased to tell the people of Ontario that after years and years of inaction by the former Liberal government, we actually are finally going to have a new home warranty program here in Ontario. We listened, we have taken action, and the wait is over.

I think that the member from Humber River–Black Creek put it quite well a few days ago when he said that the Liberals failed new homebuyers in this province by taking no meaningful action on Tarion reform. We're not just reforming Tarion; we're absolutely overhauling it. We are going to be pulling together and working with our stakeholders to deliver a new home warranty program. We're going to be following the findings of the Auditor General as well as Justice Cunningham, and we are taking into consideration the priorities that we heard in the consultations—

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

Mr. Michael Parsa: I want to thank the minister for her answer and her leadership and for bringing change to this province that, quite frankly, was long overdue.

I'd also like to acknowledge the fact that this legislation comes just over one month after the Auditor General announced her recommendations to reform new home warranties in Ontario. The minister has shown the people of Ontario that our government is a champion of new homebuyers who have been wronged by bad actors.

Would the minister please explain to this House and to the people of Ontario what actions our government is taking in the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act, which will improve the new home warranty system in Ontario?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: The member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill is absolutely right, because we are absolutely a champion. We're standing with new homeowners, because we are overhauling the governance structure and we're increasing government oversight once and for all. We're also going to improve the warranty claim process so that it's fair for consumers and timely.

Our plan also includes increased oversight of the home building process so that Ontarians can move into their new homes without worrying about defects.

Buying a home is the largest investment an Ontarian can make in their lifetime, and that's why our government found that it was important to bring in swift changes that will ensure effective oversight of new home warranty programs and curb the influence of builders. Because Ontarians can confidently move forward with our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford and our entire caucus, because the investment in a new home is so, so important, and—

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

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Suze Morrison: My question is to the Premier. Recently, tenants at 25 Montgomery Avenue in Eglinton–Lawrence were faced with a drastic rent increase of between 10% and 15%. This building is owned by Rockport Group, the same developer that tried to hike up rents by 25% at 22 John Street. These tenants, like many across the province, are in new buildings that are no longer protected by rent control because of the rent control loophole created by this government.

How can the Premier turn a blind eye to all of these tenants who are being gouged with double-digit rent increases because of a rent control loophole that you created?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Steve Clark: Thank you for the question.

Yesterday, we had, downstairs, an advocacy day at Queen's Park by rental housing providers from all across this province. I appreciate the fact that members from all parties attended that advocacy day, including the opposition House leader. I actually agree with some of his comments. He talked about the need for landlords to be able to make a fair return on their investment, so I appreciate the comments of the opposition House leader.

I also appreciate the question from the member opposite. And I do appreciate the fact—we know better than anyone, as a government, that we need to have a fair system and create a fair system for both landlords and tenants. That's why we kept our promise to maintain rent control for existing tenants but we also made a commitment, as a government, to create more housing supply.

I'll have more—

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: Respectfully to the minister, what you've effectively created is two classes of tenants in Ontario: those with rent control and those without. Rents across this province are out of control and everyday working people simply cannot afford the cost of a one-bedroom apartment in cities like Toronto.

Last week, I introduced legislation that would restore rent control to all rental units in Ontario, closing the rent control loophole that this Premier created. Will the Premier finally see the damage that he has caused and support

my bill that would restore protections for tenants that this government has cut?

Hon. Steve Clark: Quite frankly, since our announcement last November to exempt new units from rent control, we've seen exactly what our government promised, and that's more purpose-built rentals being built in this province.

Speaker, we decided as a government that we were going to tackle the housing supply. That's why we tabled our More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan. But don't take it from me. Take it from the gentleman who was here yesterday that all parties met with in terms of advocacy for rental housing providers. I'm going to quote Tony Irwin, president and CEO of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario. Here is his quote: "This NDP-proposed policy change, what would be the third change in three years, serves as a disincentive to boosting investor confidence and bringing the desperately needed supply to the market. We are now at the highest level of GTA rental starts in almost three decades." We—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. That concludes our question period for this morning.

DEFERRED VOTES

PLAN TO BUILD ONTARIO TOGETHER ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LE PLAN POUR BÂTIR L'ONTARIO ENSEMBLE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 138, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Projet de loi 138, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1137 to 1142.

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

On December 9, 2019, Mr. Phillips moved third reading of Bill 138, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Baber, Roman | Harris, Mike | Phillips, Rod |
| Babikian, Aris | Hogarth, Christine | Piccini, David |
| Bailey, Robert | Kanapathi, Logan | Rasheed, Kaleed |
| Barrett, Toby | Karahalios, Belinda C. | Rickford, Greg |
| Bethlenfalvy, Peter | Ke, Vincent | Roberts, Jeremy |
| Bouma, Will | Khanjin, Andrea | Romano, Doss |
| Calandra, Paul | Kusendova, Natalia | Sabawy, Sheref |
| Cho, Raymond Sung Joon | Lecce, Stephen | Sandhu, Amarjot |
| Cho, Stan | MacLeod, Lisa | Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh |
| Clark, Steve | Martin, Robin | Skelly, Donna |
| Coe, Lorne | Martow, Gila | Smith, Dave |
| Crawford, Stephen | McKenna, Jane | Smith, Todd |
| Cuzzetto, Rudy | McNaughton, Monte | Surma, Kinga |

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Downey, Doug | Miller, Norman | Tangri, Nina |
| Dunlop, Jill | Mitas, Christina Maria | Thanigasalam, Vijay |
| Elliott, Christine | Mulroney, Caroline | Thompson, Lisa M. |
| Fedeli, Victor | Nicholls, Rick | Tibollo, Michael A. |
| Ford, Doug | Oosterhoff, Sam | Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. |
| Fullerton, Merrilee | Pang, Billy | Wai, Daisy |
| Ghamari, Goldie | Park, Lindsey | Walker, Bill |
| Gill, Parm | Parsa, Michael | Yakabuski, John |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Pettapiece, Randy | |

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

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | Harden, Joel | Schreiner, Mike |
| Arthur, Ian | Hassan, Faisal | Shaw, Sandy |
| Begum, Doly | Hatfield, Percy | Simard, Amanda |
| Bell, Jessica | Horwath, Andrea | Singh, Gurratan |
| Berns-McGown, Rima | Hunter, Mitzi | Singh, Sara |
| Bisson, Gilles | Kernaghan, Terence | Stiles, Marit |
| Bourgouin, Guy | Mamakwa, Sol | Tabuns, Peter |
| Burch, Jeff | Miller, Paul | Taylor, Monique |
| Fife, Catherine | Monteith-Farrell, Judith | Vanthof, John |
| Fraser, John | Morrison, Suze | West, Jamie |
| French, Jennifer K. | Natyshak, Taras | Wynne, Kathleen O. |
| Gates, Wayne | Rakocevic, Tom | Yarde, Kevin |
| Gélinas, France | Sattler, Peggy | |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 65; the nays are 38.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

BETTER FOR PEOPLE,
SMARTER FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2019
LOI DE 2019 POUR MIEUX SERVIR
LA POPULATION ET FACILITER
LES AFFAIRES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking various Regulations / Projet de loi 132, Loi visant à alléger le fardeau administratif qui pèse sur la population et les entreprises en édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois et en abrogeant divers règlements.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This is another five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1146 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On December 5, 2019, Mr. Sarkaria moved third reading of Bill 132, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking various Regulations.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | Harden, Joel | Schreiner, Mike |
| Arthur, Ian | Hassan, Faisal | Shaw, Sandy |
| Begum, Doly | Hatfield, Percy | Simard, Amanda |
| Bell, Jessica | Horwath, Andrea | Singh, Gurratan |
| Berns-McGown, Rima | Hunter, Mitzi | Singh, Sara |
| Bisson, Gilles | Kernaghan, Terence | Stiles, Marit |
| Bourgouin, Guy | Mamakwa, Sol | Tabuns, Peter |
| Burch, Jeff | Miller, Paul | Taylor, Monique |
| Fife, Catherine | Monteith-Farrell, Judith | Vanthof, John |
| Fraser, John | Morrison, Suze | West, Jamie |
| French, Jennifer K. | Natyshak, Taras | Wynne, Kathleen O. |
| Gates, Wayne | Rakocevic, Tom | Yarde, Kevin |
| Gélinas, France | Sattler, Peggy | |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 65; the nays are 38.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our business for this morning. This House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1150 to 1500.

ROYAL ASSENT
SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I invite the members to introduce their guests, I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking various Regulations / Loi visant à alléger le fardeau administratif qui pèse sur la population et les entreprises en édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois et en abrogeant divers règlements.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have the great pleasure of introducing the love of my life, one of our granddaughters, Elissa Wakeford, who is over here visiting. She's from Timmins and she's down visiting her sister, who's at Bloorview right now, in rehab, and she's with two of my staffers, Sylvie and Courtney, who are sitting with her. Please welcome her to the House.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I would like to welcome Ms. Anita Stewart again, the Food Laureate from the University of Guelph, and my legislative assistant, Heena Kapoor. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature the leadership of the Tibetan community of Ontario. They are as follows: Tsering Wangyal, president of the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre; Sonam Chokey, national director, Students for a Free Tibet Canada; Sherap Therchin, executive director, Canada Tibet Committee; Sonam Tsering, vice-president, Regional Tibetan Youth Congress; Chemi Lhamo, SFT board member and president of the University of Toronto Scarborough's student union; Lama Tenzin from Kagyu Gompa; Kunsang Tanzin, former president of the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre; Tsering Dhondup, former vice-president of the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre; Sonam Dorjee, former vice-president of the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre; Anthony Lama; Thupten Wangyal, former president of the Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario; Rinchen Dolma, creator and founder of Made in Exile; Dorjee Wangchuk; Dolma Tso, Tibetan Youth Congress executive; Sonam Yangzom, Milky Way gardener; Sonam Lankar, former president of the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre; Tenzin Khedup, former executive member of the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre and Chushi Gangdruk; Gelek Gyalthong, former president of the Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario; Jigme Lhamo, former Ontario Parliamentary Friends of Tibet student and SFT Canada member; Tenzin Norzin, former OPFT student and the Central Tibetan Administration's youth ambassador; and Karma Gala, also of Kagyu Gompa.

I'd like to add that they are here to mark International Human Rights Day. Welcome.

Hon. Todd Smith: I have a special introduction of a guest: the brother of the deputy chief of staff to the Premier, Mark Lawson—my former chief of staff—Scott Lawson is visiting us here this afternoon. Scott is an OHL

official. He has been an OHL official in the Ontario Hockey League for seven years. Should you fall ill or anything, Mr. Speaker, he could probably step in. He's used to stepping in.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): What are you doing tomorrow? Thank you.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I would like to introduce my intern here today, Meaghan Irons. Thank you for being here.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I rise today to speak on the urgent crisis of rent control. Tenants in my riding of York South—Weston are facing rent notices of double-digit increases. Making new units exempt from rent control was a mistake and should be reversed immediately. Renters in my community are worried. More and more tenants are sounding the alarm. They are being crushed by these double-digit rent increases.

Things are getting so bad that the city of Toronto passed a motion to formally ask this government to reinstate rent control. Last week, my colleague from Toronto Centre put forward a bill calling on the provincial government to reverse their rent control changes.

Things are going from bad to worse. Doug Ford, rather than keeping his promise to make housing more affordable, is lining the pockets of corporate landlords by allowing them to charge tenants as much as they want. It is high time that we in this House stand up for the rights of tenants and that this government reverse provincial legislation that lifted rent control on new buildings.

Landlords are evicting tenants to reclaim the property for personal use. Because of this, the number of evictions has increased drastically. What this province needs is a tenant bill of rights that includes new provincial rules that place rent control at the centre, limiting the incentives for landlords to evict, and a strong commitment to provide more funding for legal clinics and the creation of a provincial eviction prevention program.

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

I'm going to remind all the members that decorum is enhanced when we refer to each other by our ministerial title, if applicable, or our riding name.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Recently, I joined the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility and his parliamentary assistant, the member from Richmond Hill, to announce that our government is investing over \$155,000 to help seniors stay active and socially connected in Mississauga—Lakeshore.

This includes Seniors Active Living Centres grants to the Clarkson Community Centre and the Mississauga Seniors' Centre of over \$52,000 each; and it includes two Seniors Community Grants—the maximum of \$25,000 for

each—for Clarkson Seniors Tours and Entertainment at Wawel Villa, and the MAY at Heart program, to encourage physical activities through visual arts and dance, like the tai chi class that the minister and I joined in.

My own mother lived a long and healthy life until she was over 90 years old because she was so closely connected with her community in Port Credit. However, we know that over 30% of our seniors in Ontario are at risk of social isolation, which can cause serious mental and physical problems. That's why it is so important that we continue to work together to help our seniors stay physically active and engaged within our community in Mississauga–Lakeshore and across Ontario.

CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, only 15 days until Christmas and I've been busy drafting my personal wish list:

The present I want for Christmas is a move to the opposition front row.

I'm high up now, but I want to go low.

That's where the action seems to be:

The give and take—or so it seems to me.

That's the legislative shop floor, Mr. Speaker,

Between you and the front door.

That's where they cut and thrust and give and take,

Where the passion is real and never seems fake.

I watch it all from up here in the balcony,

Applauding with partisan neutrality.

But I wonder what it's really like to be down there,

Up front and personal, just a few feet from the Premier's chair.

Wait a minute—what am I saying? I must have been dreaming.

Speaker, I can't be doing all of this seasonal scheming.

That's more naughty than nice.

I don't think I want to pay that leadership price.

There's less pressure up here in the bleachers.

Give all my presents to the kids, the parents, the education workers and the teachers.

That's my new, burning wish: No e-learning, just labour peace.

Classroom sizes should go down and never, ever increase.

1510

SARNIA SHOEBOX PROJECT

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's hard to follow that.

I rise today to recognize the amazing work of two outstanding constituents in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton: Ms. Annabelle Rayson and her mother, Stephanie Lobsinger.

Annabelle, a former Queen's Park legislative page and a current student at St. Patrick's Catholic High School, and her mother, Stephanie, are coordinating the Sarnia Shoebox Project in Sarnia–Lambton for the second year in a row.

During her time at Queen's Park, Annabelle was inspired to return to Sarnia and participate in the Shoebox Project—which aims to collect small care packages for women and mothers affected by homelessness—after learning about the charity from the Honourable Caroline Mulroney, one of the project's founders.

However, when Annabelle returned home and started to make inquiries about how to get involved, she learned that there was no local coordinator. Undeterred, Annabelle enlisted the help of her mother, Stephanie, and together they started the Sarnia Shoebox Project themselves. In their first year, Annabelle and Stephanie collected 287 shoeboxes of gifts for women in Sarnia–Lambton. This year, they hope for another generous outpouring of support. All of these donations will go directly to women at risk in Sarnia–Lambton.

I want to commend the selflessness of Annabelle and Stephanie, and all who donate to this worthwhile program. Anyone interested in more information on the Sarnia Shoebox Project can contact my constituency office or email sarnia@shoeboxproject.com.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I rise in the House today, as a proud Tibetan Canadian, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama. This honour was bestowed to His Holiness on December 10, International Human Rights Day, for “the struggle for the liberation of Tibet, and the efforts for a peaceful resolution” instead of using violence.

Tibetans continue to seek freedom and human rights through non-violence. However, the situation in Tibet is worsening, and there are ongoing human rights abuses by the Chinese government.

A-Nya Sengdra, an environmental activist, was recently sentenced to seven years. Tashi Wangchuk was imprisoned simply for advocating for the rights of Tibetans to learn their own language.

Since 2009, there have been over 150 self-immolations protesting China's illegal occupation of Tibet.

The Chinese government's human rights violations are not only in Tibet, but also in East Turkestan and in Hong Kong. Leaked documents confirm what the Uighur people have been saying for years about the mass detentions of Uighurs in camps for indoctrination and forced labour.

The movement for democracy in Hong Kong is in its seventh month, and despite the Chinese government's attempt to shut it down through mass arrests and violence, people are continuing to take to the streets.

As His Holiness said when he accepted the Nobel Prize, “All of us human beings want freedom and the right to determine our own destiny as individuals and as peoples.”

As Canadians, we must stand in solidarity and join Tibetans, Uighurs and Hong Kongers in their call for freedom and human rights. We who enjoy and have freedom have a responsibility to support the fight for the freedom of others.

BOB RUMBALL CANADIAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE DEAF

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: Tomorrow evening in Don Valley West, I will host Derek Rumball as the third speaker in my community speaker series.

Derek is the president of the Bob Rumball centre of excellence for the deaf. I know that many MPPs and many, many Ontarians have had the opportunity to visit the centre on Bayview Avenue, where families, seniors and children can take part in programs for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, where sign-language courses are available year-round and where mental health and developmental services are available for hard-of-hearing children and adults with intellectual disabilities. It's a remarkable place, supported by brilliant, innovative staff and volunteers.

Derek will tell the story of the Rumball centre that has served so many since 1979. It's the vision of Reverend Bob Rumball, Derek's father, that is at the heart of the centre. In 1956, Bob realized the extent of the challenges facing the deaf community when he became the minister for the Evangelical Church of the Deaf. He fought for services and funding for the deaf community his whole adult life, opening the Bob Rumball camp in 1960 and eventually opening the Bob Rumball long-term-care home for the deaf in 2007.

Bob was a bit of a renaissance man. He played with the CFL. He consulted Pierre Trudeau on the drafting of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and was named to the Orders of Ontario and Canada.

There are family businesses, Mr. Speaker, and then there are family callings. Derek Rumball is as fierce a defender of the rights of the deaf community as his father.

I feel privileged to have been connected to the Bob Rumball centre as the local MPP, but in truth, the centre belongs to the community all across Ontario.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the work of this fine family and their team.

THOMAS CAVANAGH

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: It's with a heavy heart that I rise today, Mr. Speaker.

On December 5, 2019, Thomas James Cavanagh came to the end of his road, paved with passion and generosity. He passed peacefully and beautifully, surrounded by his closest loved ones, including his beloved wife, Kay.

According to his obituary, Tom loved NASCAR and country music, and for fun, he worked. Starting with a single dump truck in 1953, he grew his company—Thomas Cavanagh Construction—to over 800 employees, whom he considered his extended family. Tom was proud of the many people and their families that made their livelihoods with Cavanagh construction.

But Tom was more than just the founder of Cavanagh construction; he was actively involved in his community, donating time, resources and money to various community associations, local initiatives and charity fundraisers.

I would always see him attending every community event with his lovely wife, Kay. From church suppers to the Ashton Victoria Day fireworks to the annual Christmas dinner at the Ashton Brew Pub, Tom always made sure to attend, promote and support. His commitment to giving back to his community has made a lasting positive impact that will be felt for generations to come.

Tom spoke fast, drove fast and lived fast. He was generous to a fault. Tom gave freely and without hesitation whenever he saw a need. To honour his legacy and ensure that his gift of giving is everlasting, a foundation is being established in his memory. The Thomas Cavanagh Foundation will continue his commitment to community giving.

My thoughts and prayers are with Kay as well as Tom's family, friends and colleagues.

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I want to recognize that we have northern families at Queen's Park today who are here to talk about the broken autism system in our region and how they deserve equal access to services. Last week, my bill, Bill 144, passed second reading. Now I call on the government to pass my bill into law to help them.

I also want to mention another important piece of legislation that this government unfortunately voted down: the Making Northern Ontario Highways Safer Act.

Dr. Sarah Giles wrote to me about Highways 11 and 17:

"The defeat of the bill to improve the highway that goes across northwestern Ontario was devastating for those who work and live here.

"As an ER doctor, I've seen the injuries and deaths resulting from driving on this highway first-hand.

"We are putting the lives of patients, first responders and health care professionals at risk each time they get into an ambulance to move a patient or get in a car to drive home.

"It is not acceptable to treat the lives of northerners as any less valuable than those who work in southern Ontario.

"Queen's Park needs to recognize the inherent disadvantages that northerners face and level the playing field."

I agree with Dr. Giles. We must level the playing field for northern Ontario. It is time that we do something in this House to ensure that northerners have access to autism services, that our highways are safe to drive on in the winter, and that the Northern Health Travel Grant is improved.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Ms. Lindsey Park: I rise to update this House on the work that our government is doing to expand palliative care services for patients and families in Durham region.

Can you believe that Durham region has no residential hospice—zero, none? That’s the legacy in Durham region of 15 years of Liberal reign. That’s why, last month, on November 8, I joined the Minister of Health and the parliamentary assistant to the minister to announce not only that the first hospice in Durham region will be in Port Perry but also an expanded plan for this first hospice in Durham region.

This is an example of smart investment. Before construction, we announced an additional \$600,000 in one-time capital funding on top of the \$1 million announced last September to support the construction of three additional beds at Oak Ridges Hospice in Port Perry, expanding it from a plan of five beds to an eight-bed hospice. By expanding the plan before construction, this will be a lower cost to taxpayers than paying for construction costs of an expansion later.

Once open, our government will also support the hospice by providing \$840,000 annually in operational funding to support end-of-life care for 123 patients per year in Durham region.

1520

TIBET

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Today I rise in recognition of the Tibetan Canadian community as they mark a special anniversary. Thirty years ago today, His Holiness the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in advocating for the independence of Tibet from China in a non-violent manner.

The Dalai Lama has worked tirelessly for the restoration of peace and human rights in Tibet. When the Nobel Prize committee chose the Dalai Lama, it emphasized that he based his Buddhist peace philosophy on reverence for all living things and the idea of a universal responsibility that embraces both man and nature.

The Tibetan Canadian community is a strong and vibrant community, and I’m honoured that my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore is home to the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre, one of the largest in Canada. I always look forward to attending events at the centre so I can see first-hand the work they do of keeping the Tibetan culture alive in Ontario and Canada. I would strongly urge all members to take the time to meet with Tibetan Canadians and listen to their suggestions on what we can do to help restore peace and human rights in Tibet.

I would also like to congratulate the member for Parkdale–High Park, one of the first persons of Tibetan descent ever elected to public office in North America, for the work she is doing to raise the profile of the Tibetan community here at Queen’s Park.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended

appointments dated December 10, 2019, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Aris Babikian: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

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

Bill 116, An Act to enact the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence Act, 2019 and the Opioid Damages and Health Costs Recovery Act, 2019 / Projet de loi 116, Loi édictant la Loi de 2019 sur le Centre d’excellence pour la santé mentale et la lutte contre les dépendances et la Loi de 2019 sur le recouvrement des dommages-intérêts et du coût des soins de santé imputables aux opioïdes.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 28, 2019, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FOOD DAY ONTARIO (FOOD DAY CANADA IN ONTARIO) ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA JOURNÉE DES TERROIRS DU CANADA EN ONTARIO

Mr. Ke moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 163, An Act to proclaim Food Day Ontario (Food Day Canada in Ontario) / Projet de loi 163, Loi proclamant la Journée des terroirs du Canada en Ontario (Journée des terroirs du Canada en Ontario).

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will invite the member for Don Valley North to explain his bill, if he cares to do so.

Mr. Vincent Ke: This bill is to proclaim the Saturday immediately before the civic holiday in each year as Food Day Ontario (Food Day Canada in Ontario).

By showcasing Ontario-grown food, it will encourage Ontarians, from chefs and home cooks to restaurant owners, to buy locally grown food next time they are shopping. This would benefit Ontario’s economy and help

create jobs, as our government is committed to being open for business and open for jobs.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PERSONS
IN SUPPORTIVE LIVING
ACCOMMODATION ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES PERSONNES VULNÉRABLES
DANS LES LOGEMENTS SUPERVISÉS

Mr. Burch moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 164, An Act to establish a framework for the licensing of supportive living accommodation / Projet de loi 164, Loi établissant un cadre pour la délivrance de permis d'exploitation de logements supervisés.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the member for Niagara Centre, if he wishes, to explain his bill.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Supportive living homes provide low-rent accommodation to vulnerable tenants who are considered high need. These shared rental accommodations traditionally include any combination of room, room and board, or room and board with additional levels of support. In many cases, they serve as a response to affordable housing shortages across the province while catering to high-needs adults who may not necessarily qualify for long-term care, as well as those with mental health and addictions issues.

The lack of regulation and oversight of these services for our most vulnerable citizens has in some cases exposed tenants to substandard living conditions, resulting in physical harm and, tragically, even death.

This bill requires these homes to be licensed and creates a framework for inspection and complaints protocols to protect some of our most vulnerable citizens.

MOTIONS

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks, Speaker. I beg your indulgence for the next couple of minutes. I'm seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the adjournment proceedings scheduled for December 10, 2019.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Smith is seeking unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice regarding the adjournment proceedings established for December 10, 2019. Agreed? Agreed.

Once again, I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that the adjournment debate scheduled for Tuesday, December 10, 2019, filed by the member for Kingston and the Islands, be answered by the Minister of Health or her parliamentary assistant.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has moved that the adjournment debate scheduled for Tuesday, December 10, 2019, filed by the member for Kingston and the Islands, be answered by the Minister of Health or her parliamentary assistant. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Todd Smith: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services is seeking unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. Agreed? Agreed.

Once again, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills be authorized to meet from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 123, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has moved that the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills be authorized to meet from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 123, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting electric vehicle charging stations.

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

Motion agreed to.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 6

Hon. Todd Smith: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 6, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario in memory of Gord Downie.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 6, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario in memory of Gord Downie. Agreed? Agreed.

Once again, I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

1530

Hon. Todd Smith: Speaker, I move that when the order for third reading of Bill 6, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario in memory of Gord Downie, is called,

one hour shall be allotted to the debate, with 25 minutes for the government, 25 minutes for the official opposition and 10 minutes for the independents, at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has moved that when the order for third reading of Bill 6, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario in memory of Gord Downie, is called, one hour shall be allotted to the debate, with 25 minutes for the government, 25 minutes for the official opposition and 10 minutes for the independents, at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

AUTISM TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I wish to thank Sean Staddon, who made the trip all the way from Sudbury with the Northern Ontario Autism Alliance, for these petitions. They read as follows:

“Whereas every autistic child in Ontario deserves access to evidence-based therapy so that they can meet their potential;

“Whereas the capped funding system is based on age and not the clinical needs of the child;

“Whereas the program does not ensure access to services for rural and francophone children;

“Whereas the new Ontario Autism Program does not provide additional funding for travel costs;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: “to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to ensure access to an” adequate, “equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them.”

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

GREAT LAKES PROTECTION

Mr. Toby Barrett: A petition “To develop a collaborative action plan and framework for the protection and promotion of North America’s Great Lakes

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas North America’s Great Lakes represent an enormous opportunity for increased tourism, recreational activity and sustainable economic growth for all surrounding jurisdictions; and

“Whereas North America’s Great Lakes warrant the protection of their pristine character, ecological diversity and scenic, cultural and historical beauty; and

“Whereas there exists little structure to unite interested Great Lakes jurisdictions, communities and governments in a collaborative initiative to better promote and protect the Great Lakes; and

“Whereas Toby Barrett MPP has drafted a framework proposal to develop a collaborative action plan and framework for the protection and promotion of North America’s Great Lakes;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to consider the implementation of MPP Barrett’s framework for the protection and promotion of North America’s Great Lakes.”

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I understand the member from Nickel Belt has a point of order.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I didn’t call the page by his name—his name is Visakan. I’m sorry about that. I just wanted to correct my record.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): It is always legitimate to correct your record.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Jill Andrew: I put forth this petition on behalf of our proud community members of Toronto–St. Paul’s, “Petition for Real Protections from Above-Guideline Rent Increases:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas housing is a human right;

“Whereas rental rates in Toronto–St. Paul’s and across Ontario are increasingly unaffordable;

“Whereas we need to protect our affordable housing stock in Ontario;

“Whereas paying to maintain a building should be the responsibility of the landlord;

“Whereas above-guideline rent increases can increase rent well over what people can afford;

“Whereas inaction on this issue will mean thousands of Ontarians will be forced from their homes;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately review above-the-guideline increase rules and regulations, and ensure that rental housing remains affordable in Ontario.”

As a renter, I am so thrilled to sign this petition and hand it over to Isabella.

REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY

Mr. Dave Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas given the changes to the real estate industry, technology and regulatory practices over the last two

decades, it is essential that the rules for real estate brokerages and professionals reflect contemporary business practices;

“Whereas consumer protection, increased professionalism, efficient and effective regulation, strong business environment and reducing red tape and regulatory burden on businesses are key to the well-being of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas for years Ontario realtors have advocated for higher professional standards, stronger consumer protections and better enforcement of the rules governing real estate practices;

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

“Proceed as effectively as possible to increase consumer confidence, enhance standards for real estate professionals and brokerages and provide additional flexibility to keep pace with a modern marketplace by immediately passing Bill 145, An Act to amend the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002....”

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My petition is about affordable housing.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I completely agree, will be affixing my signature it and giving it to Laura to take to the Clerk.

COMMUNITY HUB

Mr. Toby Barrett: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Norfolk county will be asking the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for monies to the ALL Norfolk community hub project;

“Whereas many residents and businesses of Norfolk county located west of Simcoe will be adversely affected by the ALL Norfolk community hub to be located on the east side of Simcoe; and

“Whereas the county of Norfolk has publicly stated that the location of the ALL Norfolk county hub will be centralized within the county and yet is not centralized either geographically or by population within Norfolk county; and

“Whereas the location of the ALL Norfolk community hub will result in additional travel costs for those residents west of Simcoe wishing to use the facility and will result in reduced usage of the facility by the same residents; and

“Whereas much of the community feels if funds are allocated to our county, distributing the funds for smaller, multiple projects would be beneficial;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to carefully decide on funding allocations with regard to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, as part of the community, culture and recreation stream.”

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Jessica Bell: This petition is called “Stop Ford’s Education Cuts.”

“Whereas” the Ontario government’s Premier’s “new education scheme seeks to dramatically increase class sizes starting in grade 4;

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

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

“Whereas Ford’s changes will” take “\$1 billion out of” our “education system by the end of the government’s term; ...

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

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

I support this petition. I’ll be giving it to page Emily and affixing my signature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I’d like to take this occasion to remind members that when you’re reading a petition, you use a minister’s title or “Premier Ford” or “the Ford government,” not “Ford.” If you do that again, I’ll just shut you down and we’ll move on to somebody else. All right? Thank you very much.

Further petitions?

1540

GOVERNMENT’S AGENDA

Mr. Dave Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the previous government left the province not only with the largest subnational debt in the world, but also significant, daunting challenges, including hallway health care, transit and roads that are heavily congested, and government services inefficient and outdated;

“Whereas progress should be made to reduce the deficit while maintaining critical services like small and medium-sized hospitals, public health units, child care and programs to help our most vulnerable;

“Whereas life in Ontario should be more affordable for families and individuals in every corner of the province, by putting more money in people’s pockets;

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

“Proceed as effectively as possible to balance the budget by 2023-24 through prudent fiscal management by immediately passing Bill 138, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes, so that:

“(1) Amendments are made to the Co-operative Corporations Act to remove some restrictions;

“(2) Subsection 329(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, which sets out how certain property taxes are to be determined, is amended to include rules about recalculating property taxes when there is a change to the permitted uses of land;

“(3) Subsection 2(2) of the Gasoline Tax Act is re-enacted to set out the current tax rate, which is 6.7 cents per litre.”

I sign my name to this petition and give it to page Visakan.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

Whereas the Premier is being socially and environmentally irresponsible “by ignoring our climate emergency and cutting funding” to address “the climate crisis;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the government of Ontario to implement the Green New Democratic Deal to:

“—achieve net zero emissions by 2050, starting by cutting emissions 50% by 2030;

“—create more than a million new jobs;

“—add billions of dollars to Ontario’s economy;

“—embark on the largest building retrofit program in the world by providing homeowners with rebates, interest-free loans and support to retrofit their homes to realize net zero emissions.”

I certainly support this petition, will be signing my name to it and giving it to page Emily.

HIGHWAY BYPASS

Mr. Toby Barrett: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled “Extend the Caledonia bypass.

“Whereas provincial Highway 6 north of Caledonia has been the site of numerous fatal collisions; and

“Whereas there are long-standing studies on the extension of Caledonia number 6 bypass north to Hamilton airport; and

“Whereas the province already owns the land for the extension of the bypass;

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

“To extend the Caledonia Highway 6 bypass north to Hamilton airport.”

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition here and I would like to thank Frank and also Brendan for gathering this for me. This petition is entitled “Stop Ford’s Education Cuts.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Excuse me. I’m sorry, I apologize for interrupting. We’ve already talked about this, calling the Premier “Ford” instead of “Premier Ford.” If you say it again, you’ll be shut down and we’ll move on to someone else. Thank you.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I appreciate it.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas” the Ford government’s “new education scheme seeks to drastically increase class sizes starting in grade 4;

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

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

“Whereas” the Ford government’s “changes will rip over \$1 billion out of Ontario’s education system by the end of the government’s term; and

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

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

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

I fully support this petition. I’ll be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Isabella to deliver to the table.

FOOD SAFETY

Mr. Lorne Coe: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas people who are on a farm without consent may not be aware that they can actually spread diseases and contaminants which can cause stress and harm to the animals;

“Whereas many farmers across Ontario are worried about trespassers putting their animals and the farmers’ families at risk. For many farmers their home and their work is the same place and everyone has a right to feel safe in their own home;

“Whereas despite the right of people to participate in legal protests, it does not include the right to trespass on private property, to make farmers feel unsafe in their homes or to risk introducing disease or contaminants to our animals or food supply;

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

“Proceed as effectively as possible to protect farmers, their animals, livestock transporters, and the integrity of Ontario’s food supply, while also ensuring that farmers feel safe in their homes and at the workplace by maintaining animal health and safety by immediately passing Bill 156, An Act to protect Ontario’s farms and farm animals from trespassers, so that:

“(1) Persons are prohibited from entering in or on the animal protection zones without the prior consent of the owner or occupier of the farm, facility or premises;

“(2) Persons are prohibited from interfering or interacting with farm animals in or on the animal protection zones or from carrying out prescribed activities in or on the animal protection zones without the prior consent of the owner or occupier of the farm, facility or premises;

“(3) Persons are prohibited from interfering with a motor vehicle that is transporting farm animals and from interfering or interacting with the farm animals in the motor vehicle without the prior consent of the driver of the motor vehicle.”

I agree with this particular petition. I’m going to affix my signature to it and provide it to page Daniel.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SECURITY FROM TRESPASS AND PROTECTING FOOD SAFETY ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA PROTECTION CONTRE L’ENTRÉE SANS AUTORISATION ET SUR LA PROTECTION DE LA SALUBRITÉ DES ALIMENTS

Mr. Hardeman moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 156, An Act to protect Ontario’s farms and farm animals from trespassers and other forms of interference and to prevent contamination of Ontario’s food supply /
Projet de loi 156, Loi visant à protéger les fermes et les animaux d’élevage en Ontario contre les entrées sans autorisation et d’autres actes susceptibles de les déranger et à prévenir la contamination de l’approvisionnement alimentaire en Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I return now to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I’m pleased to rise today in the House to speak to the proposed Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act. I will be splitting my time with my parliamentary assistants, the members from Perth–Wellington and Haldimand–Norfolk. I want to thank them both for their help throughout the entire consultation process and their support in the introduction of this proposed bill last week.

I’m pleased to have introduced legislation designed to help ensure that Ontario farmers are safe in their homes and at their place of work. This proposed legislation aims

to safeguard the very integrity of our province’s food system and to protect the welfare of animals. The proposed bill balances the security of farmers, their families and food supply while protecting the right of people to participate in legal protests. These are serious and complex matters, and ones I take very seriously as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Ontario’s farmers and food businesses work hard to protect and care for their animals and to protect the quality and safety of the food they produce. They do so by following a series of procedures called biosecurity. This is a scientific term that refers to the procedures followed to prevent the introduction and spread of disease and pests on agricultural premises. Biosecurity is a key pillar of our agriculture sector.

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Biosecurity procedures are followed where livestock are present to help keep animals healthy and to make sure our food supply is safe. For instance, people entering barns with livestock wear boots and coveralls, and they change into dedicated boots and coveralls when entering different barns. Farmers may quarantine animals that are sick, to protect the health of their existing herd. Farmers also closely monitor the feed and water they provide to their animals, to ensure they are free of contaminants and infectious agents.

People who work in food processing facilities also take extraordinary measures to protect the safety of our food supply. Staff go to great lengths to minimize the entry of equipment into the facilities, and take appropriate precautions, such as routinely disinfecting the facilities. Staff use different foot baths for different rooms, and those are routinely cleaned and replaced. Processing facility staff wear disposable boot coverings and coveralls, to mitigate the risk of contaminating the food supply.

Individuals who enter a farm, processing facilities or other prescribed premises where farm animals are located, without authorization, are unlikely to be aware of the safety protocols and may unknowingly introduce risk to:

- the safety of farmers, employees and their families;
- animal welfare, through stress or trauma;
- public health, by inadvertently spreading disease that can be transmitted to humans by animals;
- animals, by unknowingly transmitting disease to them; and
- our food supply, by introducing contaminants in food processing plants or by interacting with animals.

Biosecurity is an important part of protecting our food supply and lowering the risk of spreading disease. As African swine fever spreads across parts of the globe, we have worked hard to implement effective biosecurity and disease control practices here in Ontario, to ensure we do everything possible to mitigate the risk.

As you probably know, Mr. Speaker, we don’t have African swine fever here in North America, and we’re continuing in our joint efforts with industry and stakeholders to keep it that way.

But that’s not to say that the risk isn’t there. Trespassers who enter farms without following proper biosecurity and

health protocols can inadvertently bring the disease into the farm, and can harm the very animals they think they're helping. As we've seen in Asia, all it takes is one case of African swine fever entering a farm, and then it spreads like wildfire. It puts our entire pork industry in jeopardy.

So we've taken steps to minimize that risk, and we're going to continue making every effort possible to lower that risk, because it's the right thing to do for our farmers and our livestock.

That's why I was proud to attend the Tri-National Agricultural Accord last month in Winnipeg, and to work with our partners in the US and Mexico. While there, I co-chaired a session between the three countries on African swine fever and proper biosecurity protocols, to help lower the chance that this disease enters Canada and spreads.

As the joint statement says, "In recognizing the risk of African swine fever and the need for immediate action, the delegates also emphasized the importance of joint efforts between the three countries in implementing biosecurity plans to mitigate the risk of the disease entry and spread."

Our efforts and plans will only work if effective biosecurity and health protocols are strictly adhered to, and that's impossible to follow if people are trespassing on farms.

Mr. Speaker, we introduced this legislation because we have seen, around the world, what happens when biosecurity protocols are not followed.

For example, in 2014, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency reported on the spread of avian influenza at 11 commercial farms in British Columbia over the course of three weeks. The CFIA investigator determined that two of those farms became infected by spreading the disease from one to another, due to not following biosecurity processes.

As Rob Dougans from the Ontario chicken farmers recently said, "Ontario chicken farmers follow high standards of animal care. Those standards of care include biosecurity protocols designed to protect animals from disease. Anyone entering barns or farms, handling animals or moving between barns without following proper biosecurity protocols puts the health of animals, the safety of food and the livelihood of farmers at risk."

Perhaps one of the most infamous cases of disease rapidly spreading between farms came from the UK in 2001. Most everyone here is familiar with foot-and-mouth disease. This terrible outbreak wiped out livestock at 2,000 different farms in Great Britain and resulted in the culling of over six million sheep, cattle and hogs. Six million, Mr. Speaker.

We can't let these types of terrible tragedies happen in Ontario, and they can be avoided if everyone follows the strict biosecurity protocols that are in place. Biosecurity isn't a political practice. We developed these health and safety protocols based on the best knowledge and science we have, and they only work when everyone adheres to them. For the sake of our farm animals and our food supply, we must follow them.

Mr. Speaker, for much of 2019, we consulted with a broad range of key stakeholders on their experiences with

trespass to better understand the need for more protection. The consultations included commodity groups, accredited farm organizations, enforcement bodies, municipalities, processors, livestock transporters, Indigenous groups and animal rights groups.

Keith Currie from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture talked about our process and said, "I'm really encouraged by the process that brought this entire bill into place. The farm community has been working together collectively for a better part of this year and alongside us has been the government of Ontario."

Our government also received more than 900 stakeholder letters, and more than 60 municipalities have passed or supported council resolutions calling for increased protections. All our consultation meetings and round tables pointed to the fact that Ontario farmers have been facing increasing incidents of trespass on farms, including those that have resulted in theft and the release of livestock. Farmers told us they simply did not feel safe in their homes anymore. They told us that people entering their farms under false pretenses was becoming increasingly problematic. Nobody in this province, whether you're in the city or the country, would accept being lied to or pressured by others in order to gain entry to their homes. That's not an acceptable practice anywhere, and we're addressing that issue in this legislation.

Livestock transport operators have told us stories about how trespassers forcefully opened their cab doors. They take things from the truck or sometimes throw things into the truck. That's not acceptable here in Ontario, and those are not concerns I take lightly as minister.

Mr. Speaker, I've said it many times before and I'll say it again: Everyone in Ontario has the right to a safe workplace. This is especially true for farmers whose homes and work often are the same place. At the same time, everyone has a right to participate in legal protests, but that does not include trespassing on farms and agricultural businesses or interfering with livestock transport.

We believe this bill strikes the right balance. The Ontario government and the province's agriculture sector are committed to ensuring food safety and upholding a high standard of animal welfare. Ontario farmers comply with strict provincial and federal regulations to ensure they meet food safety and animal welfare standards. Our government applauds the province's farmers for their compliance with these regulations. As Bonnie den Haan from the Dairy Farmers of Ontario recently said, "These are our family businesses and our family homes, and the welfare of the animals under our care is something we take very seriously."

We recognize that the welfare of our farmed animals is a shared responsibility among industry, farmers and the provincial and federal governments. Our government feels strongly that there is no place in Ontario for the abuse or neglect of animals. I want to repeat that again, Mr. Speaker: We feel strongly that there is no place in Ontario for the abuse or neglect of any animals. We have systems in place that if anyone suspects neglect or abuse of any animal, they should call the authorities and report it

immediately. We are committed to a strong animal welfare system. That's why this bill, along with the Ontario Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, or PAWS for short, is part of this government's plan to ensure Ontario has the strongest animal protection and welfare laws in the country.

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We know that our province and our farmers care for our farm animals and always hold the highest standards of concern for farm livestock. That's why the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs supports the National Farm Animal Care Council's development of codes of practice. These codes of practice cover the care and handling of farm animals that are based on science.

As part of that commitment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs promotes animal welfare through a variety of ways. We do so through research, education, inspection and enforcement activities and by collaborating with industry partners. Our farmers take great care to produce high-quality foods that are safe to be enjoyed, not only here, but around the world. That respected reputation rests on the important industry standards that are in place to ensure that products are made according to food safety and biosecurity standards.

Our province has food safety laws and programs that are part of a broader system to help protect the health of the public. These are designed to identify and address potential food safety hazards before they occur. From food processors to retailers and from governments to consumers, we all have a role to play in keeping our food system safe.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's diverse agriculture sector is a significant economic driver in this province. Our agriculture sector supports more than 837,000 jobs in the province. In short, that means one in eight jobs in this province is tied to agriculture. Ontario's farmers employ people in rural and urban communities at every stage along the agri-food chain. It's important that we recognize the important role that agri-food businesses play in regional economic development, as they contribute to our broader economy. Ontario's agriculture sector contributes more than \$47 billion to our gross domestic product.

Behind these impressive statistics are real people, Mr. Speaker, thousands of hard-working Ontario farmers and their families. They live and work in every part of this province. They are dedicated business operators who are trying to make a living and do the best they can for their families, their employees and their communities. Their businesses and the jobs they provide help to bring Ontario's unique rural communities to life.

Ontario farmers and agri-food business operators employ thousands of people across rural and northern Ontario. Their economic contributions circle back to their local economies, keeping more money in the pockets of people who live and work in rural Ontario. Their businesses strengthen communities and they add to the overall quality of life across our province's beautiful rural areas.

In further support of our proposed legislation to better protect farm and agri-food businesses, John Taylor, president of the Ontario Mutual Insurance Association, said, "Ontario's farm mutuals have been insuring farms and farm families for over 160 years. As community-based insurers, we understand the value and importance of safety and risk management of our food supply and our farms. Farm incursions and trespass pose a significant risk of harm to livestock, food security, farmers and farm property. Bill 156, the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, provides basic protection against illegal activities, and we support this common-sense approach to enhancing farm safety and food security."

Mr. Speaker, we introduced the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act to further strengthen the laws around animal safety on farms. I said it earlier, but it bears repeating: These proposed changes are balanced and protect the security of farmers, their families and our food supply. They do not interfere with the right for people to participate in legal protests. That right existed before we introduced this legislation and it will continue to exist if this legislation is passed.

The goal of this proposed legislation is to be proactive in dealing with issues that we've seen around the world and to stand by our government's commitment to protect the health and safety of our agri-food sector, farm animal welfare and food safety.

With that, I want to thank you for allowing me this time to present a few words on this bill. Now I'd like to turn it over to my parliamentary assistant the member from Perth-Wellington.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The minister did say he would be sharing his time. I recognize the member from Perth-Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's a pleasure to stand up and speak to this bill. I want to thank Minister Hardeman for his leadership.

Ontario farmers and agricultural workers deserve to be able to carry out the important work they do without fear for their safety. Farm businesses have unique challenges that need to be recognized. Without recognizing these challenges, we would fail to understand the complex circumstances of farm security.

Unlike in urban locations, the isolation and large-scale areas of farm properties are important factors to consider for farm safety. Many farms are located miles away from their closest neighbours and towns. As such, many of the standard impediments to trespassing that are more readily available in more built-up, urban areas, such as high-traffic areas, lighting and security, cannot be applied in the same ways in rural areas to deter potential trespassers on farm business properties.

We heard this type of concern from Teresa Van Raay from Ontario Pork earlier this year. While I'm paraphrasing a bit, she said that the thought of being alone on her farm with just her grandchildren while trespassers are illegally entering her property sends chills down her spine.

Unfortunately, we are seeing more incidents of unlawful entry and obstruction on farms and at agri-food businesses in Ontario. These incidents are increasing in

frequency, and actions are becoming bolder and more intrusive.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to describe some of these incidents that have taken place in recent months, to provide some context for the situations Ontario farmers are dealing with.

For example, trespassers have entered farm properties with no regard for biosecurity protocols. There was a case in Kitchener–Conestoga where 15 trespassers entered a dairy farm undeterred. The farmer had asked them to stop. They ignored him and trespassed further into the dairy barn anyway. According to the farmer, the trespassers stayed on the property for about two hours. Their actions put those very animals at risk in many ways that the minister previously highlighted.

Some individuals have also committed other crimes, including harassment and theft of farm animals.

In addition, livestock transportation companies have reported individuals stepping out in front of moving trucks. Others have blocked the entrances to farms and processing facilities.

All of these kinds of illegal activities present significant safety concerns, not just to the animals, but to their own lives as well.

It also creates mental health strains on the truckers who are responsible for the safe transportation of livestock. I've driven transport trucks, and I know the challenges that come with operating a vehicle that size.

Susan Fitzgerald, the executive director of the Ontario Livestock Transporters' Alliance, said, "Our operators care very deeply for the well-being of the animals they transport, and are grateful for the Ontario government's efforts to improve the safety around transporting livestock, as well as other measures that will improve our working conditions."

Mr. Speaker, this proposed bill will go a long way in protecting those animals in transit, as well as the individuals who handle their safe transport.

Individuals may not be aware of or follow rules that are designed to ensure animal welfare and food safety. In the wake of these kinds of illegal incidents over the past months, stakeholders have sent MPPs across the province hundreds of letters. In these letters, individuals have expressed their concerns with the increased rate of trespass they are documenting. They have voiced concerns over the safety of their families, their properties and the livestock they care for. They also noted frustration that there haven't been any successful convictions to date.

Current legislation, the federal Criminal Code of Canada and the provincial Trespass to Property Act do not address the unique risks that trespassing in agricultural facilities presents. There are challenges in the current legislative framework. These challenges have made it difficult to prosecute these agri-food trespassing cases. For example, under the Criminal Code of Canada, it can be difficult to prove that an individual had the intention to commit an indictable offence when breaking and entering. And the Trespass to Property Act does not capture agri-food transportation. In some cases, crown counsel have

withdrawn charges because of a lack of a reasonable prospect of conviction. This act would address these challenges by requiring explicit consent for someone to enter an animal protection zone, which includes animal enclosures, such as a barn.

1610

It is important to note that the current Trespass to Property Act does not include escalating penalties or aggravating factors to deter repeat offenders from undertaking these illegal activities. At this time, trespassers on farm property may be charged with one or more offences in the Criminal Code or the provincial Trespass to Property Act.

The proposed legislation would address the unique risks associated with trespassing on farms and processing facilities, and obstructions to vehicles transporting farm animals.

The existing provisions under the Trespass to Property Act would continue to apply to all property other than an animal protection zone.

The proposed new provisions differ from the current protections under the Trespass to Property Act, as they would:

- consider animal welfare and biosecurity as a key component;
- cover transportation of farm animals;
- provide that consent cannot be implied;
- allow for consent to be voided if obtained under false pretenses;
- protect the owner or occupier from civil liability if a trespasser is harmed;
- provide stronger recovery mechanisms for harms caused by a trespasser; and
- require trespassers to identify themselves, to bring about charges.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed bill will also allow courts to order restitution in prescribed circumstances for owners, occupiers and drivers who have suffered damages, which could include items such as loss of livestock due to disease infection or loss of food due to contamination.

Our proposed legislation will strengthen the existing legislative framework for agri-food processing. It will strengthen the ability to provide proof required for convictions. And it also aims to deter trespass activity and provide more tools to effectively prosecute and convict offenders.

This legislation will also provide additional enforcement tools that recognize the unique risks I mentioned.

It would prohibit obstructing a motor vehicle transporting farm animals or interacting with farm animals in transport.

We feel that these legislative measures would present stronger deterrents to those who would carry out these illegal actions. For example, the proposed legislation would prohibit unauthorized entry into certain areas without the explicit prior consent of the property owner or occupier.

Many rural municipalities have also heard concerns directly from stakeholders who have been impacted by trespassing. As you may be aware, in June, the township

of Warwick in Lambton county called on our government to do more to protect the safety and security of Ontario farmers, their families, their employees and their livestock. In solidarity with this municipality, many other Ontario municipalities have followed suit by issuing resolutions of their own, including a number of townships in both Wellington and Oxford counties.

The township of Warwick's resolution noted that in recent months, there was a steady increase in the harassment of farmers and livestock transporters. These instances of harassment were by individuals opposed to animal agriculture. The township of Warwick also raised this issue with Minister Hardeman directly at the 2019 Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference in Ottawa. In response, Minister Hardeman stated at the time that it wasn't a case of finding out whether there's a problem, but that it was clear that there is one.

The minister also said that people have a right to be safe in their homes and feel protected. That goes back to the heart of our shared value that we have, that we ensure safe workplaces throughout our province.

The township of Warwick's resolution described trespassing incidents on private property. It described various individuals unlawfully entering buildings and removing animals. The resolution went on to describe that these illegal and risky activities were then promoted on social media.

As mentioned, Mr. Speaker, following the township of Warwick's example, to date, over 60 municipalities have passed or supported council resolutions that call for stronger protections for these targeted operations. We appreciate that these municipalities have spoken up to voice their concerns, because in doing so they have expressed strong support for our agriculture sector. They have stood up for Ontario farmers, as we are doing now with this proposed legislation.

Given the significant number and range of concerns raised by the agriculture sector and municipalities over trespassing, it was very important for us to take action. Minister Hardeman moved quickly to meet with stakeholders to talk about unlawful activities on farm business properties. We asked stakeholders directly about how they were being impacted by these activities, and we asked them to share their suggestions and solutions for how to address these matters for the safety of all involved.

Over the past months, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has undertaken a thorough process of consultation with stakeholders to hear their concerns. As Minister Hardeman stated earlier, we have held meetings and calls with farmers, commodity groups, animal advocacy groups, accredited farm organizations and livestock transporters.

Perhaps Keith Currie, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, summed it up best when he said, "We have been very vocal in our call for a swift, strong action against trespassers and activists who are jeopardizing the safety of our farms and food supply, and we are very pleased to support the new legislation introduced at Queen's Park.... We truly appreciate the consultation that

was done throughout the industry that's behind this new legislation. It's heartening to know the serious concerns of Ontario livestock and poultry farmers were heard. This is very important legislation that will play an important role to ensure the continued integrity of Ontario's agri-food system."

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is the largest general farm organization in Ontario, representing 38,000 farm families across the province. We are extremely pleased that the OFA appreciates this legislation and the appropriate and balanced approach it takes.

Alongside the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and its strong support for this legislation is the Rural Ontario Municipal Association. ROMA represents approximately 350 of Ontario's 444 municipalities, a very significant proportion of our province. At the announcement in the Legislature on December 2, ROMA chair Mayor Allan Thompson noted that the association appreciates the effort to provide new tools to help keep our communities safe. I want to thank Mayor Thompson for his leadership in representing rural Ontario on this issue. As the chair of ROMA, Mayor Thompson has been an excellent voice for rural Ontario during our consultations while also recognizing the importance of protecting our farm families. As he recently said, "Biosecurity is critical to the success of rural communities and the protection of Ontario's food supply. The Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) is concerned about trespass activities on private farm properties that pose a safety risk to the public, farm families and animals. We appreciate this effort to provide new tools to help keep our communities safe."

Further industry support for this legislation was expressed by the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, representing 1,300 family-run farms across the province. The Chicken Farmers of Ontario thank Minister Hardeman and the Ontario government for taking action to address trespassers on farms. As their chair recently said, "The proposed legislation is a fair and balanced approach, and we appreciate the extensive consultation undertaken by Minister Hardeman, OMAFRA and the Ontario government to find a path forward that is agreeable for everyone."

1620

Discussions with Indigenous community representatives were also held during the legislation's development. I would like to emphasize now that the proposed legislation would not have any impact on Indigenous hunting and fishing rights. Our proposed bill specifically focuses on animal protection zones such as on-farm enclosures, food processing facilities, and animal transport vehicles. The proposed bill would not apply to individuals engaged in lawful hunting, fishing or trapping activities, since those activities would not occur within an animal protection zone. Likewise, it would not carry any other implications to population groups with special considerations under the law.

During the course of the legislation's development, OMAFRA reached out to the Ontario chiefs of police and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario to discuss the trespassing issues. Again, it was important for us to hear

and understand the range of perspectives from all individuals and organizations across the board. We needed to determine how we could best move forward to supply the needs and best interests of our agriculture sector while ensuring that we consider all applicable regulations and expectations around them.

We received many valuable insights and input from stakeholders to inform this legislation. These thorough consultations have helped us to develop legislation that is balanced and takes into account many perspectives. Our discussions, and the feedback they provided, shaped the legislation's purpose and scope.

For example, we heard from many farmers that they were pressured to allow trespassers onto their farms. The pressure often came in the form of intimidation, and that's not right. As the minister said in his remarks, everyone has the right to a safe workplace, free from harassment and intimidation. I'm glad our proposed bill addresses that concern of individual consent received under false pretenses or under duress.

Listening to stakeholders and learning directly about their concerns has been a hallmark of Minister Hardeman's leadership at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Since taking the helm at the ministry in June 2018, he has committed to working closely with farmers and organizations across Ontario to hear their concerns. We know that addressing farm security and safety is an ongoing commitment. We take the matter very seriously because we want the best for our Ontario farmers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce my colleague the member from Haldimand–Norfolk to continue with our presentation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): In his introduction, the minister did say he'd be sharing his time with the member from Perth–Wellington and the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. So now we turn to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: It's a pleasure to speak to this proposed Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act. I thank the member from Perth–Wellington for introducing me to do so.

Our province's ag sector is not alone in its recent experiences from trespassing incidents, and Ontario is certainly not the only jurisdiction taking steps to protect its farmers from individuals and organizations who illegally enter properties, block transportation routes and harass farmers online. These kinds of risks to animal welfare and food safety can happen anywhere in the world. That's why we're seeing other jurisdictions also introducing new legislation that's designed to protect farm workers, farm animals and the food system.

We have reviewed what other jurisdictions have proposed and passed and have struck the right balance between protecting our farmers, their families and their farm animals with the fundamental right for people to participate in legal protest. For instance, we have focused this proposed legislation on animal protection zones, we've made the requirement for explicit consent clearer,

and we've made it illegal to tamper with signage indicating an animal protection zone or what activities are permitted within that zone.

For our part, we're very proud that by bringing forward this legislation, Ontario is helping to lead the development of agri-food-specific trespass legislation in Canada. Other governments are taking steps to support their security as we are, here in Ontario.

Because it is unacceptable for anyone to feel harassed or threatened at their places of work, wherever they legally operate their businesses, we are heartened to see that other jurisdictions are also taking legislative action to protect their families, their farmers and their workers, as we are doing here.

It's important to understand why so many governments are taking these steps to better protect the biosecurity of their farms.

Trespassers can unknowingly introduce illnesses to these locations, as well as put farm animals at risk for disease. Likewise, unauthorized individuals entering processing facilities place great risk on the food system. Trespassers are unfamiliar with the premises, food safety and animal welfare protocols, and pose an increased risk of unknowingly introducing diseases to animals, or spreading disease within a farm or between farms. That's why the proposed legislation requires explicit consent. There is risk of introducing unknown substances into the food system, and it doesn't help that trespassers often misled farmers about their intentions in order to gain access to the farm. Speaker, lying to gain access to a farm is unacceptable, and I'm proud that our proposed legislation addresses that.

As well, interfering with trucks that transport animals can also compromise the integrity of our food system and animal welfare. Such interference can create unsafe situations for both the animals and the people who are responsible for their safe transport, because any impediments to transporting livestock can increase risk to the health of the animals in transit. This can include blocking the route of a truck transporting livestock from one location to another.

The livestock transportation sector has raised concerns about illegal activities affecting its operations. These concerns include people who physically stop trucks from gaining access to processing facilities, and people who dangerously step out in front of transport trucks, creating unsafe conditions for the person, the driver and the animals in transport.

Trespassing, or obstructing the transport of livestock, can also impact people's livelihoods. Trespassers can obstruct production, and can contaminate the food processing process.

Additionally, it's important to recognize that people who are unauthorized to enter a location may put themselves at risk of physical harm if they are unfamiliar with livestock and equipment on farms and in processing facilities.

Speaker, we are grateful that the Ontario Livestock Transporters' Alliance let us know the industry is very pleased that the Ontario government listened to its con-

cerns and is taking action to protect those who are employed and work in agriculture from harassment, trespass and other unlawful practices.

Because none of these activities I have described are appropriate, that's why our proposed legislation gives law enforcement additional tools to deal with them.

Speaker, there are strong rules to ensure animal welfare, no matter where those animals are located, including during transportation.

While the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is responsible for ensuring the welfare of animals during transport, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs assists the federal agency. The health and welfare of farm animals is a shared responsibility among farmers, industry leaders and service providers. The provincial and federal governments play important roles.

It's important that we continue to work together to help protect agriculture workers, the welfare of animals and the integrity of our food system.

Speaker, I will mention: Anyone who suspects animal abuse should immediately call the authorities. This proposed legislation not only seeks to protect these vital considerations; it would also improve protections and working conditions for the agri-food sector. While the minister mentioned this earlier, it's worth repeating: Everyone deserves a safe workplace that is able to operate securely and follows well-established practices and protocols.

1630

It's also important to note that municipal bylaw officers, emergency services personnel and any person appointed under an act relating to animal health or welfare would be exempt under the proposed legislation. Their work requires them to enter farm premises and, in their professional capacity doing so, they would not be undertaking an illegal activity. The bill also specifically exempts people enforcing animal health and welfare legislation. In their capacity doing so, their roles are very important in our system.

Speaker, I've been pleased to outline the thorough, extensive work and thoughtful consideration that has gone into developing this legislation. As I've described, this legislation has been developed in response to the real concerns of Ontario farmers and business operators. Given the urgency of the circumstances expressed by the agriculture sector and the necessary consultation required to assess the best way forward, we knew we needed to move swiftly and decisively in this matter. This effort is all part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' commitment to protect the health and safety of our agri-food sector. After all, the ministry prides itself on growing Ontario. We strive to achieve growth in Ontario's agri-food sector and rural communities. Our goal is always to help farmers achieve greater success. We all want Ontario's dynamic agriculture sector to operate at its full, uninterrupted capacity so the industry can maintain and create good jobs and contribute strongly to our economy and our rural communities.

These instances of trespassing are disruptive to regular business operations, and that impacts not only individuals

but our entire economy. People's lives, incomes and families depend on business operations to continue safely and uninterrupted so they can maintain their output and meet their commitments. As I've described today, Ontario's agriculture sector is simply too crucial to our economy to allow it to be impacted by these illegal activities.

Throughout our presentation, we've highlighted the strong support of farmers, industry organizations and municipalities behind this proposed bill. I want to emphasize again the range of support and the appreciation for it: from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, representing 38,000 farmers; the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, ROMA, representing 80% of Ontario municipalities; the Ontario Livestock Transporters' Alliance, representing 80% of commercial hog transport in Ontario; the Ontario Sheep Farmers, representing 3,000 members; the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, representing 1,300 farmers; the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, CFFO, representing more than 4,000 family farms; Ontario Pork, representing 1,200 farmers; the Beef Farmers of Ontario, representing more than 6,700 farmers; the Egg Farmers of Ontario, representing 423 farmers; the National Farmers Union—Ontario, representing 1,500 members; and the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, representing 3,500 farms. These diverse organizations have stood up for Ontario farmers; it's now up to all of us to do the same.

We need to make sure that agricultural workplaces are secure to operate safely, so farmers can keep doing the great work they do.

Speaker, I think we all know and appreciate that "good things grow in Ontario." We're all familiar with this familiar Foodland Ontario jingle, and I don't need to sing it to anyone here today. These good things have been referred to in our presentation this afternoon. They include grain, beef, soybeans, fruit, VQA wine and poultry. These good things are part of our landscape and part of our communities. We value the food we produce here in Ontario and we value those who bring it to our tables every day. To protect those good things, we need to bring forward a balanced approach, through this legislation, that puts safety, respect and security first.

This legislation was not taken lightly. It has come together after many months of deliberation and consideration of what we can do to set out some sensible boundaries around what we know we need to protect.

Ontario farmers and agricultural business operators are dedicated caretakers of the land and the animals in their care. They follow laws to ensure that their products are safe for consumption. Farmers deserve to be able to carry out their businesses free from the threat of harassment and disruptions.

Speaker, it's our shared responsibility to ensure that we protect the welfare of animals and protect processes undertaken on farms and in agricultural facilities to ensure food safety. These processes are in place for a good reason. The safety of our farm workers and farm animals and food supply is not something to be taken lightly.

We've described in our presentation today how important our agricultural sector is to our province. Farm security, animal welfare and the integrity of our food safety system are simply too serious and complex to leave to chance or to tamper with. That's why I ask all members to support this legislation and to support Ontario agriculture. This proposed legislation aims to safeguard the very integrity of our province's food system and to protect the welfare of our animals. This proposed bill balances the security of farmers, their families and our food supply, while protecting the right for people to participate in legal protests. These are serious and complex matters, and ones that are taken very seriously by our Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Ontario's farmers and food businesses work hard to protect and care for their animals and to protect the quality and the safety of the food they produce, and they do so by following a series of procedures for biosecurity, as we have heard this afternoon. Biosecurity is a scientific term that refers to the procedures followed to prevent the introduction and spread of disease and pests on agricultural premises. Biosecurity is a key pillar of our agriculture sector. Biosecurity procedures are followed where livestock are present to help keep animals healthy and to make sure our food system is safe. I think this bears repeating. For instance, people entering barns with livestock wear boots and coveralls, and they change their dedicated boots and coveralls when entering different barns. Farmers may quarantine animals that are sick to protect the health of their existing herd. Farmers also closely monitor the feed and water they provide to their animals to ensure that they are free from contaminants and infectious agents.

1640

People who work in food processing facilities also take extraordinary measures to protect the safety of our food supply. Staff go to great lengths to minimize entry of equipment into the facilities, and take appropriate precautions such as routinely disinfecting the facilities. Staff use different foot baths for different rooms, and those are routinely cleaned and replaced. Staff in processing facilities wear disposable boot coverings and coveralls to mitigate the risk of contaminating the food supply.

Individuals who enter a farm or enter a processing facility or other prescribed premises where farm animals are located without authorization are unlikely to be aware of safety protocols and may unknowingly introduce risk—and this bears repeating—to:

- the safety of farmers, employees and their families;
- animal welfare, through stress or trauma;
- public health, by inadvertently spreading diseases that can be transmitted to humans by animals;
- animals, by unknowingly transmitting diseases to them; and
- our food supply, by introducing contaminants in food processing plants or from interacting with animals.

Biosecurity is an important part of protecting our food supply and lowering the risk of spreading disease. I want to reiterate that as African swine fever spreads across parts of the globe, we have worked hard to implement effective

biosecurity and disease control practices here in Ontario to ensure we do everything possible to mitigate our risk. We don't have African swine fever here in North America, thankfully, and we're continuing joint efforts with industry stakeholders to keep it that way. But that's not to say the risk isn't there. Trespassers who enter farms without following proper biosecurity and health protocols can inadvertently bring the disease onto the farm and can harm the animals they think they are helping. As we've seen in Asia, all it takes is one case of African swine fever entering a farm, and it can spread like wildfire. It puts our entire pork sector in jeopardy.

So we've taken steps to minimize that risk, and we're going to continue making every effort possible to lower that risk, because it's the right thing to do for our farmers and for their livestock.

Our minister mentioned he attended the Tri-National Agricultural Accord last month in Winnipeg—I've attended this as well—again, to work with our partners in the US and Mexico. While there, he co-chaired a session between the three countries on African swine fever and proper biosecurity protocols to help lower the chance that this disease enters Canada and spreads. Again, our efforts, our plans, will only work if effective biosecurity and health protocols are strictly adhered to, and that's impossible to follow if people are trespassing on farms.

We've introduced this legislation because we have seen around the world what happens when biosecurity protocols are not followed. For example, in 2014, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency reported on the spread of avian influenza at 11 commercial farms in British Columbia over the course of three weeks. The CFIA investigation determined that two of those farms became infected from spreading the disease from one to the other due to not following biosecurity processes.

Perhaps one of the most infamous cases of disease rampantly spreading between farms comes from the UK in 2001. Most everyone here is familiar with foot-and-mouth disease. This horrific outbreak wiped out the livestock of 2,000 different farms in Great Britain, and resulted in the culling, as we heard this afternoon, of over six million sheep, cattle and hogs.

We can't let these types of terrible tragedies happen in Ontario. They can be avoided if everyone follows the strict biosecurity protocols that are in place.

Biosecurity isn't a political practice. We develop these health and safety protocols based on the best knowledge and based on the best science we have, and they only work when everyone adheres to them. For the sake of our farm animals and our food supply, we must follow them.

As we have heard, Speaker, for much of 2019, we consulted with a broad range of key stakeholders on their experiences with trespass, to better understand the need for more protection. The consultations included various commodity groups and accredited farming organizations—I presented a list—enforcement bodies, municipalities, processors, livestock transporters, Indigenous groups and animal rights groups. Our government also received more than 900 stakeholder letters. More than 60 municipalities

have passed or supported council resolutions calling for increased protections.

All of our consultations—the meetings, the round tables—pointed to the fact that Ontario farmers have been facing increasing incidents of trespass on farms, including those that have resulted in theft or the release of their livestock.

Farmers have told us that they simply did not feel safe in their homes anymore. They told us that people entering their farms under false pretenses was becoming increasingly problematic. Nobody in this province, whether they're in the city or the country, would accept being lied to or pressured by others in order to gain entry into their homes. That's not an acceptable practice anywhere, and we are addressing that issue in this proposed legislation.

We heard stories from livestock transport operators about how trespassers forcefully open their cab doors. They take things from the truck and sometimes throw things in there. That's not acceptable, here in Ontario.

Those are concerns that we do not take lightly. Everyone has the right to work in a safe workplace. This is especially true for farmers, whose homes and work are often the same place.

I thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to address this very important piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): It is now time for questions and comments. I recognize the member from Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to support Bill 156, the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act.

The proposed legislation, if passed, will better protect farmers, their animals, livestock transporters and the province's food supply. It would also require explicit prior consent to access an animal protection zone on a farm or food-processing facility.

Especially in my riding of Carleton, I've heard from farmers who no longer feel safe in their homes, and who have expressed concern with increasing on-farm trespassing, and for the safety of their families, employees and livestock. So I'm proud that our government is taking action to strengthen protections for agricultural workers and the integrity of our food system.

If passed, the proposed legislation would address the unique risks and challenges associated with trespass onto a farm or into a food-processing facility. These include the risks that trespassers pose to the safety of farmers, their families and employees; exposing farm animals to stress and disease; and introducing contaminants into our food supply. Ultimately, the health and safety of farmers and farm animals is at the heart of the proposed legislation.

1650

The Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2019, will also allow the courts to increase the cost of trespassing by escalating fines of up to \$15,000 for a first offence and \$25,000 for subsequent offences, compared to a maximum of \$10,000 under the current Trespass to Property Act. It would also prescribe aggravating factors that would allow the court to consider factors that might

justify an increased fine. It would also allow the court to order restitution for damage in prescribed circumstances, which could include damage to a farmer's livestock from theft.

Finally, the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act would also increase protection for farmers against civil liability from people who were hurt while trespassing or contravening the act. That is why, Mr. Speaker—

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

Mr. Dave Smith: During the speeches that we've heard today, there are a couple of resounding themes that came out of them. One of them is food security. I heard an interesting statistic earlier on from another gentleman from my riding, and that is that one in eight people work in Ontario in the agriculture industry; eight out of every eight people eat the food that comes from Ontario's agriculture industry.

We need to make sure that we have food security, then, for the residents of Ontario. This is a balanced approach that we're taking in what we're doing. We're making sure that those who want to protest still have the ability to protest, but recognizing that we can't sacrifice the safety of our food supply.

Biosecurity has been referred to a number of times in those speeches. I want to reiterate some of the comments that were made and some of the quotes that we had from them because I think that they are indicative of what we're talking about.

From Keith Currie, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture: "Farmers implement biosecurity measures to protect against unwanted diseases." Think about that. We don't want disease in our animals, because that is part of our food security.

Allan Thompson, the chair of ROMA: "Biosecurity is critical to the success of rural communities and the protection of Ontario's food supply." There it is again, talking about protecting Ontario's food supply.

Norman Beal, the CEO of Food and Beverage Ontario: "The integrity of our food system is paramount for people to have confidence in the Ontario-produced foods they consume." Once again, we're talking about the food that we consume and making sure that all Ontarians have food security.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It's an honour, as always, to speak in this great Legislature, and it was great hearing the previous members discuss this very important bill, Bill 156.

I'm from a suburban or urban riding. Obviously there are no farms in my riding. But this is a very, very important bill to the province of Ontario, because our food is what—the farmers, obviously, in the rural ridings are providing food for the cities and the urban areas. The importance of not only keeping the food safe but the farmers safe is of critical importance to this province. I think focusing,

number one, on the farmers, and secondly, animals, is of critical importance.

My only question, really, when this legislation came out was why it was never put in place in the first place. I am amazed that previous governments never thought about the safety of the animals on these farms—as well as the farmers.

Making it easier to prosecute trespassers is obviously something I would hope all parties would support. Requiring a person to have explicit prior consent before entering an animal protection zone? To me, that's common sense. I don't know how anybody could be opposed to that. Invalidating consent if it was obtained under false pretense or duress I think is common sense. And expanding the limitation period in which charges can be laid for trespassing to two years from six months I think absolutely makes sense.

I think the goal with this legislation, both protecting farmers as well as the animal security, makes sense for the province of Ontario, for all the people in the province.

Rob Dougans, the president and CEO of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, had this to say: "Ontario chicken farmers follow high standards of animal care. Those standards of care include biosecurity protocols designed to protect animals from disease. Anyone entering barns or farms, handling animals or moving between barns without proper biosecurity protocol puts the health of animals, the safety of food and the life of farmers at risk."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Questions and comments? The member for Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Speaker. A pleasure to see you in the Chair.

It's a pleasure to rise and comment in the few moments I have on Bill 156. I come from a basically rural-urban riding. Sarnia—which is 78,000 people—also supported this motion. Warwick, of course, is one of the rural townships in my area where this motion about animal welfare and the safety of farms originally came from. It's a pleasure to stand and support a bill that's going to look after animal welfare, the safety of the workers and the farm owners, the people who own the property who are concerned about their own welfare, and of course the people who transport these animals to the cities where they're processed, and back and forth.

There's also a risk to trespassers when they go on to these farms because there could be hazards that they're not aware of; they could hurt themselves. There's the issue of civil liability, which could come back on the farmer who didn't want them there in the first place. Those are always issues. It could also expose these animals to stress, and there's the sub-issue that many farms have biosecurity on there, so if you come in from outside you could bring something on the farm that could cause sickness or illness to those animals because they're under certain conditions. They feed them high-grade feed and they're kept secure, or you could take something off the farm and take it somewhere else, which we wouldn't want as well.

I think everyone should be safe in the workplace, whether they work in industry, whether they work in

agriculture or whether they work in the processing plants that process our food that we have to keep us safe and sound in the community.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We'll return now to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for a two-minute summation.

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the members from Carleton, Peterborough–Kawartha, Oakville and Sarnia–Lambton for their comments and their description of not only what's in the bill but to talk about the support that is out there for the bill and the need for the bill.

I want to start off by making a statement of why we have this bill. Our government feels strongly that there is no place in Ontario for abuse or neglect of animals. We have a plan, and this bill that we started debating today is the second half of the plan. Obviously all members of the House will know that earlier this week we passed the PAWS bill, which is the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, to make sure that any abuse is detected and we have provincial enforcement there to make sure we don't allow that to happen. There is no place in Ontario for that to happen.

This bill's discussion has been a lot about the trespassing on farms, but it's also important to recognize that it also includes the processing sector for our food safety. I think it's very important to remember that when people go into a food safety establishment when the plant is in operation and they don't have the proper biosecurity protocol and have their clothes covered and so forth, that factory must destroy all the product that's there because there is no guarantee that it hasn't been contaminated. Obviously that is not to anyone's benefit. No one may have intentionally done that, but I think it's very important to recognize that because they're in there without the proper protocol, this could happen. I think we have to do everything we can to stop that from happening.

Again, I thank everybody for their comments, and I do hope that everyone supports this bill.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in this House and debate legislation—today, Bill 156, An Act to protect Ontario's farms and farm animals from trespassers and other forms of interference and to prevent contamination of Ontario's food supply.

Before I start really getting into the details of the bill, I'd just like to make everyone aware that I was a dairy farmer for 32 years. I'm proud to have been a dairy farmer. The only reason I'm not a dairy farmer anymore is because my kids didn't want to take over the farm. So I have a vested interest. I support dairy farming.

1700

The reason I am here, the reason that I was elected is because we fought a big issue in my riding—I'm not going to go into details—and to beat that issue, I protested; I trespassed. We went onto a landfill property. We measured the water on that property every month for a year, and that was part of the proof that stopped that project. So I see things from both sides.

I've heard so much talk about biosecurity, which I understand, which I support. I'd like to talk about a little bit more personal, from a farm perspective—a lot of people don't understand what farmers actually do to protect their livestock and protect the food supply.

As a dairy farmer—and it has changed a little bit. I've been out of the business for, I believe, six years and so many days. When a calf was born on my farm, it was tagged with an identification tag, and that could be read by readers everywhere that calf went. That calf started its life at my farm, and I was responsible. When that calf left my farm—whether it went to a processing facility, whether it went to another farm—that calf, in the end, was my responsibility. So no one was more concerned about what happened to that calf than I was.

Also, when you produce milk, there is equipment on a dairy farm that measures the temperature of the milk all the time, the temperature of the hot water—actually, now with modern equipment, each time a cow is milked, it measures the temperature of the cow to see if it has a fever. There is a lot of thought and effort going into producing quality food.

Farmers are very, very concerned about biosecurity. When the minister was speaking, he brought up something that I remember. I remember when hoof-and-mouth disease was going through the United Kingdom. We had public meetings because, as farmers, we were extremely concerned that hoof-and-mouth disease would come to Canada, because it doesn't take much for that to get across. Why I remember that meeting distinctly—and I have a hard time speaking without saying something that livens up the place a little bit—is because my parents-in-law are Dutch, they live in Holland, and they were scheduled to come, and I was the only one saying, “Well, there are good and bad things. Hoof-and-mouth disease is bad. But maybe the mother-in-law has to stay at home.” It turned out that she didn't. But we had the biosecurity to stop that.

If you've ever flown to Europe—and they've changed it now; they've made it electronic—when you came back to Canada, there was a form you always had to fill out if you had been to a farm, if you had visited a farm, if you were going to a farm, if you were bringing meat or cheese. There's a reason why that is, and that reason is, we have a really good system—actually, if you think it through, it's amazing how safe our food supply is. Does it have problems once in a while? Yes. No system is perfect. But if you think it through, it's amazing how well our system works.

As a farmer, we milked about 70 cows, my wife and I. We have four kids, and they all worked on the farm.

We had lots of farm tours. Almost every kid at Englehart Public School toured our farm, and we wanted to show people how we farm. Our farm was never, uh—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Protested?

Mr. John Vanthof: Protested. But as a farmer, I know how invasive that would feel, because I'm doing all the things right; I'm doing everything to protect the livestock. When a veterinarian comes on your dairy farm, or the artificial insemination tech or anyone, it's amazing the

steps they go through to keep bacteria or anything from going from one farm to another. It's amazing, Speaker, the steps that they take. To have that jeopardized by someone who might not know what those steps are is very invasive to a farmer.

On the flip side, we fully support people's right to protest something which they believe in. That's a democratic right in a civil society. There has to be a line somewhere where that democratic right does not invade on private property, potentially damaging the food supply. I believe there were some people exercising that democratic right on the front lawn here?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes.

Mr. John Vanthof: Fully in support. That's how laws are changed, and if you want to get something changed, that's how you do it.

As far as some of the provisions, I'm going to go through this act, and I have a few minutes. I've got an hour, and I'm going to go through this act in some detail. There are parts that we could be supportive of. There are a few parts, I think, that need some work, and I'm going to go through that.

I'm going to back up for a second, though. I do this a lot because, as you know, I don't have a lot of this stuff written down. I was going to start with a shout-out to my own area. I'm very proud of this, so I'm going to digress, but it's an agricultural issue, Speaker. We have a cheese plant in our area, Thornloe Cheese, and Thornloe Cheese has just been bought out by Gay Lea, a farmers' co-operative. There was some trepidation about that, because about 10 years ago we almost lost Thornloe Cheese. A group of local farmers got together. The company Parmalat was going to close it down. Parmalat worked with us, the Dairy Farmers of Ontario worked with us, and we, with the help of an agricultural co-operative named Gencor, who weren't really in the cheese business, but it just so happened that the president of Gencor at that time was someone I'd like to give a shout-out to, Mr. Yves Gauthier—they took over Thornloe Cheese, and I need to give a shout-out to Yves Gauthier, because for the last 10 years he has shepherded that business.

When we took over Thornloe Cheese, Thornloe Cheese under Parmalat made one kind of cheese. I would describe it as orange cheddar. When you're trying to compete with the big companies, you're not going to last very long selling orange cheddar. What Yves Gauthier did is that he went and looked for the best cheesemaker that he could find to transform Thornloe Cheese, and that man was a fellow by the name of Martin Melendez. Martin was from El Salvador. Martin grew up in a monastery. He was an orphan, and he grew up in a monastery in El Salvador. At that monastery, they milked cows and they made cheese. I asked Martin why he ended up making cheese, and he said, “Because I didn't like milking cows.” Now Thornloe Cheese will be available through the whole Gay Lea infrastructure, their wholesales. My plug for my local area is to try out some of their cheeses. They are fantastic. It's a case of farmers getting together and fighting for something they believed in.

1710

But should farmers have to advocate for what they do? I don't have a problem with that. Farmers should and do advocate for the things they do, but should they have to worry if they're going to be protested in their own place of business? I don't agree that they should.

This bill lays out some issues. One of them is zones for agriculture. While we're discussing this bill—I'd like to back up again. I'm going to do a few backups here, Speaker. I don't want to run out the clock, but I don't want to run out of things to say either.

Hon. Todd Smith: That would never happen.

Mr. John Vanthof: Just keep heckling me, and it might.

The minister and I have spoken about this bill. We have spoken to many agricultural organizations. You will see, as I discuss this, that I don't agree with everything in this bill. I think that there are some things in this bill that should be changed. I'd like to put that on the record. After this bill passes second reading—because it will pass second reading—there are things that should be brought forward in the committee process to make this bill stronger.

I think the one thing this bill is missing—and, quite frankly, I tell this to the agriculture community. Going back to how great a job the agriculture sector does to produce its food, the processing sector, by and large, as well; the transportation sector—we've got a great system. There are parts in this bill that could be described as, "What have you got to hide?" I don't think agriculture has anything to hide, and in some of the wording in this bill, it kind of says that. I don't think anyone wants that.

On the trespassing side, the minister and other speakers have said several times, as have I, that it's about biosecurity. As a farmer, as ag critic for the NDP, I'm 100% on board that we need to protect biosecurity. That's how everything in this bill—we should look through the lens of biosecurity, recognizing that people have a right in a democratic society to make their views known, but that does not trump the biosecurity of the food supply. Let's make that really clear.

Creating an agricultural zone or livestock zone—I might have some of the wording wrong, but the livestock zone is specific. It has come up in discussions, as opposed to making all farms under this act or all farmland—that just wouldn't fly. There are a lot of reasons why that wouldn't fly. It was mentioned that there are reasons for First Nations people, for Indigenous people, but there are many reasons. I think, as far as the government went with making a livestock zone, an animal protection zone, whatever—I think we can live with that. It makes sense. I don't know if it's perfect. There are some things about how the signs have to work, and if there is no sign—we're going to have to look into that. But it does make sense to have a specific zone. It also makes sense to have protection available for transportation. It also makes sense that those zones would also include processing facilities. That makes sense.

I have been asked—quite often, actually—why, for instance—quite frankly, I forgot my glasses, so that's why I'm not reading a lot of articles.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Okay. Page, could you do me a favour?

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you. That's going to change the whole speech. This is perfect.

Again, I'm going to back up a little bit, because there's an article here in the Farmers Forum. I think this article describes this issue fairly accurately. I'm going to read most of the article. It's from April 9, 2019.

You don't want to look up with glasses, Speaker.

"Activists Storm Ontario Dairy Barn, Remove Dead Calf for Burial"—and it's written by Tom Collins.

"As animal activists continue to step up their brazen attempts to stop animal agriculture, a prominent Ontario agricultural lawyer says farmers should stop inviting the public into their barns.

"That reaction comes on the heels of 15 activists storming into a Wellington county dairy barn on March 9 and removing a dead calf.

"By following the activists on social media, the Dairy Farmers of Ontario knew the activists were planning to target three Ontario dairy barns within a 75-minute drive of Toronto on that day and sent word out to members to be on the lookout."

I was once on the board of Dairy Farmers of Ontario—so that you don't find that out later and think I'm some kind of plant.

"The stop at Webstone Holsteins seems to have been a spur-of-the-moment decision, as farm owner Lloyd Weber has plenty of calf hutches that are visible from the road.

"The theory is the activists saw the hutches while driving by and decided they might find something there.

"The activists broke into the barn despite Weber asking them to leave. They found a dead calf and removed it to reportedly give it what they called a proper burial.

"It took the police at least an hour to respond. Weber is not pressing charges, as his wife was expecting to give birth to the couple's seventh child the week after the break-in.

"Ottawa ag lawyer Kurtis Andrews opined that farms should stop inviting the public into their barns, especially in response to activists' demands to see how farming is done.

"These activists will never be satisfied and will only use the information to harm the industry through misrepresentation," Andrews wrote on his website kurtisandrews.ca. "You cannot appease the unappeasable. Trust and transparency will not go unpunished."

The article continues: "Not everyone agrees that farmers should stop inviting the public. Executive director of Farm and Food Care Ontario, Kelly Daynard, said there are plenty of groups who legitimately want to learn more about farming practices, and that about 70 per cent of Canadians want to learn more about where their food comes from.

“We’ve literally run hundreds of farm tours and events over the 14 years I’ve been with FFCO”—Farm and Food Care Ontario—“without a single problem or issue for the farmers who agreed to open their barn doors to our guests.... To not do tours like these would be a huge disservice to agriculture and would deprive people of some genuine learning opportunities.”

That’s a good example that there are two sides, both farm. Farmers want people to know how their food is produced. We do it in a better way than the vast majority of many other places. The reason that we don’t have the food scares, by and large, that many other places do is because we have a good system. As far as the livestock protection zones—it makes sense.

There was a case a few years ago where someone tried to feed, or did feed, water through a transport truck to some pigs on the way to a processing facility. Many people said to me, “What could be the harm in that?”

1720

Backing up a second, those pigs are also, like my calves—the owner of that livestock guarantees there is nothing in those animals that he or she can’t document. I am sure that lady was giving them water, but I can’t guarantee that. The farmer can no longer guarantee the product. The processor can’t guarantee what is actually going in his processing plant. You always have to look at everything from both sides, Speaker. What seems to some very innocent, to others isn’t.

I guess the biggest part of this issue is those who are totally against animal agriculture and those obviously who are totally into the production. There are many variations in between, but the two opposites are very polarized, and that is through our society. Polarization is a problem through our society. The people who are against animal agriculture—I respect their views. I don’t agree, but I respect there are ways to put forward your view. I respect. Where this bill needs some clarification—and it was in this article as well.

One of the issues, when you run into trespassing on a farm, is that often it takes the police a long time to respond because farmers aren’t on the front lawn here. My farm was, or still is—oh, I’d say, 25 or 30 minutes from the nearest police station, and a call from a farm likely isn’t that high on the list of things. A lot of people don’t understand this issue. In the case of this article, it was an hour before the police came. Under this act, section 9, “The owner or occupier of a farm, animal processing facility or prescribed premises, or any other person who carries on an arrest under section 7, may use only such force as is necessary and reasonable in the circumstances to carry out the arrest.”

Okay. I understand the purpose, but we’re going to have to work on—because somebody somewhere is going to end up in court. What is reasonable? As a farmer, if somebody shows up in my yard—I don’t know. Some of these are going to be heated. They’re going to be heated, and I think we have to have a bit of a discussion about what is reasonable in the circumstances to carry out the arrest, and it’s not just from the farmer side that things will be heated, because it could very well be from both sides—

Ms. Catherine Fife: It could escalate.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, it could escalate. Both sides are very passionate about their beliefs. Wars have been created about people who are passionate about their beliefs. We need to really think about what that is.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It’s a grey zone.

Mr. John Vanthof: It is. It is a grey zone. And I don’t want to have to prove that grey zone in court because it could very well be—and I’m not sure how many farmers are thinking about this, but it could very well be the farmer who ends up on the losing side of that argument, and that’s something we have to think about long, long beforehand.

Speaker, I’m picturing this for my own farm. If that happened to me, and my kids were working in the barn, and if someone—it could be a peaceful protest, but if it’s in my barn, in my yard—because, for the vast majority of farmers, the vast, vast majority, on our premises the barn is pretty well the same as the house. My wife and I and our kids spend as much time together in the barn as we do in the house. Is that the case on every farm? No. I can only speak for my farm. But at least I’m speaking for a farm.

Even a peaceful protest in that situation, an hour away from anywhere—I don’t know. I think in legislation, it’s probably hard to make it more prescriptive than that, but “reasonable” circumstances? What’s reasonable to you, Speaker, or to me or to someone else is very different. And I think that we have to look at and work on what is “reasonable,” because that very well might end up in trouble.

Do you know what? I want, we want, the official opposition wants to protect biosecurity. We also want to protect the people—all people. And I’m not saying the government doesn’t have the same—the government is looking to solve a problem; I understand that. What they perceive as a problem, what I’ve perceived as a problem too—and not everyone will agree with me. That’s fine. That’s why we live in a democratic society. What we are looking at is, we look at the legislation and see if there are any unintended consequences, because legislation usually isn’t—I don’t know how to word this nicely, but legislation isn’t for 95% or 99% of the people; legislation is for the 1% of the people who try to get around legislation. Right? So we need, somehow, for the protection of all sides, to understand “necessary and reasonable in the circumstances to carry out the arrest,” because that is basically a citizen’s arrest. That is untrained.

I’m a farmer. I am trained in how to raise agriculture—well, not school-trained, but I did it my whole life. I am not trained in how to arrest somebody.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Nor should you be.

Mr. John Vanthof: Nor should I be. But if we’re going to put in legislation—and again, I’m on board to try to solve this problem. Somehow, we’re going to have to figure out what is a reasonable arrest. The minister knows just as many farmers as I do, and not all of them have the same idea of “reasonable,” nor do some of the people who trespass on farms. That’s something that we’re going to have to nail down to make this work.

Something else that I think is a bit of a problem: When you go through the bill, for most of the parts of the bill,

you can make the biosecurity argument, that you need consent to go on a farm—because why? Because of biosecurity. It's through and through that you need consent. Again, all the speakers on the government side mentioned biosecurity—fully in favour.

1730

Parts of the bill, specifically consent under duress and false pretenses—there's parts of that where you can't make the biosecurity argument the same way. There's a part in the bill, "Limitation on proceedings"—you have up to two years after the evidence first came to the attention of a police officer. Well, two years after the fact, you can't make the biosecurity argument anymore, right? You can do a forensic investigation. But to directly make a biosecurity argument two years after—I'm not sure of that. Somehow, we're going to have to explain that better to me.

I've had the conversation, and the answer is that if someone works on a farm or in a food processing plant under false pretenses, and six months in, they take some pictures, and the pictures could misrepresent—I'm not saying that. Or there could be an issue. It's a big industry. Nothing is perfect in Queen's Park, and nothing is absolutely perfect in the food production industry either. They take those pictures, and then six months later, there's an exposé with those pictures. That's what this is trying to prevent.

I would feel much better if there was something in there—I haven't drafted the legislation, but that would make more sense if the person failed to alert the authorities. If you truly believe there's something going on, then we have the PAWS Act, right? Someone could enter into the facility under false pretenses, supposedly, true or not. Part of it, perhaps, would be that to defend themselves against this, they would have to alert the PAWS inspectors.

There is a flip side to this as well. If someone enters into a processing facility or a farm, and takes a picture and publishes that picture, and the owner of the facility accuses that person of getting in under false pretenses, the onus is on the person to prove that's not the case.

I understand that the bill is trying to limit the impact of people who are totally opposed to animal agriculture, but this also limits investigative reporting. Our system isn't perfect, and no system is perfect. There have been cases of investigative reporters going into a food processing facility, and things were revealed because of that investigative reporter, who went into that facility under false pretenses. Under this act, that investigative reporter would be charged, or could be. Why I don't like that is because in our system, we do a really good job. Why are we taking the risk for this to be challenged, or for our system dragged through the mud, for something that we don't need to do? That part, I really don't understand.

I've made my views known, and our views known, to many agricultural organizations. I don't think agricultural organizations really grasp that part, that this is giving the people who really, really oppose animal agriculture an opportunity to say, "What have you got to hide?" I don't think we have anything to hide. I think the minister would

agree with me that we don't have anything to hide, but this kind of gives you the feeling that you've got something to hide. That's one of the things that needs to be changed.

So far, I've focused on farms. I am not any type of expert on food processing in any way, shape or form, but this causes an issue on the food processing side. If I'm working in a food processing plant and I see something that I just can't live with and I go to the foreman or I go to the owner and I am told, "Oh, wait a second," or "You might be charged," well, that is basically—99% of food processors would never think of this, because they want to protect their industry, but legislation isn't meant for the 99%. It's meant for the 1%.

Under the PAWS Act, a corporation can have up to, I believe—the minister can correct me—half a million dollars for a first offence. If I am an employee and I see something that I don't like at a food processor, something I believe to be animal cruelty, and I go to the foreman and say that I'm going to call PAWS, the answer could be, "Oh, yeah? Well, you know what? You are here under false pretenses and we're going to try and charge you under the act." And you're making 15 bucks an hour; you've got a wife and two kids at home. You're going to think twice. Now, I'm not saying—99.99% of processors won't do that. I've toured lots of processing facilities, but the idea that this could happen sends a bit of a chill. It sends a chill. When you read those sections, it's the opposite of whistle-blower protection.

Now, we have inspectors; I am fully aware of that. Under PAWS, we're going to have more inspectors. That's why we fully supported that bill. That's why this bill is going to pass second reading and hopefully go to committee or travel, and I hope they do. The minister has said this is good news, and I'm willing to agree with him on that—on portions—but let's make sure that everyone understands the possible unintended consequences. I've heard several times from members that one in eight jobs in Ontario is from agriculture. I'm happy about that. I'm proud of my industry. Eight out of eight people in Ontario eat Ontario agriculture. I'm proud of that too. But you know, the one thing that you can't buy, Speaker, is trust. The one thing that you can't buy is trust. The biosecurity part? Not everybody is going to like it—I'm not saying that—but you can defend that part. But the other part, the way it's worded—I'm going to read straight from the bill.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You'll need your glasses.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, I'm going to need the glasses. They're not really my colour, but you can't have everything when you're begging glasses.

I'm going to read straight from the bill, but I'm going to take one clause from one page and I'm going to keep right on going to the other page.

"The owner or occupier of a farm, animal processing facility or prescribed premises, or any other person who carries out an arrest under section 7, may use only such force as is necessary and reasonable in the circumstances to carry out the arrest." So the arrest has been done.

1740

"Any person who uses duress or false pretences"—any person, not just an animal activist—"to obtain the consent

of the owner or occupier of a farm, animal processing facility or prescribed premises or the driver of a motor vehicle transporting farm animals, to do anything that would otherwise be prohibited under subsection 4(1), (2), (3) or (4) or 5(2) is guilty of an offence.”

Right there, going back to the person working in the processing side, he has just said that he's going to say something. He's going to call PAWS. Right there, he's got a problem if the processing plant isn't like 99.99% of them. If that's the one bad apple, he's going to have a problem because “the onus is on the person charged with the offence to prove on the balance of probabilities that he or she obtained the consent of the owner or occupier or the consent of the driver, as the case may be, before engaging in the conduct that he or she is accused of doing without consent.” The onus is on the person.

We have had several discussions here—and they weren't animal processing plants—about how there are bad actors who could use something like that. And this wouldn't be tolerated in many other sectors either. The way this is worded, it could possibly, if it's misinterpreted, send a chill.

I could be totally wrong. It wouldn't be the first time; it won't be the last time. That's why the official opposition is also getting legal opinions on this. But we need to be sure about the unintended consequences.

Again, I'm not a lawyer. I'm certainly not a judge. Some people are amazed that I'm an MPP—or frightened. But if this is taken to court and challenged in court, and loses, then you're not going to be able to buy the trust back that the farm community will have lost and the processing sector will have lost. That is a big issue, Speaker, because you can't buy trust. You can't.

All of the things that farmers do—I forgot to mention one: egg farmers. Egg farmers, I was told, and I fully believe this—the board of Egg Farmers of Ontario recommends to the owners of the farm that they get the employee to sign an understanding that if they believe there is any type of animal abuse, they report it immediately. They're doing the right thing. They do not want to have their reputation hurt in any way at all. They don't want it.

Honestly—I've put a call in to them—I don't know what they feel about this part. The minister is correct: Every farm organization in the province agrees with the first part. I'm not sure how many of them actually have thought about the second part.

The one thing I always tell my local community, local stakeholders—and I'm going to get a little bit political here, and I'm sincere about this—is that every government provides opportunity and risk. If you see an opportunity, work with the government to try to realize that opportunity, but beware of the risks. Some of the risk, I believe, of the current government is that sometimes, if you ask for something, they'll give you more than you need—more than you want—and you'll be left with the problem.

With this one, if this is challenged in court and if it loses—if you'll notice, every one of the speakers on the government side mentioned all the people who supported this bill. They could very well turn around and say, “Well,

everyone in agriculture was asking for it. We don't know it was going to lose in court.” I'm not saying it will, but you always have to look at what the unintended consequences are.

Should this bill pass second reading? Yes. Should we take a long, hard look to make sure that we have looked at every unintended consequence? Not only the consumers but, I'm sure, every retailer—everyone—is going to want to make sure that their reputation is not damaged in any way by any legislation.

In dairy, it's proAction; I don't know what it is for all of them. All the things that farmers do—on our farm, someone actually came to inspect, to make sure that the body condition of the cows was—that the cows were well fed. From a farmer's perspective, it doesn't make any sense not to feed your cows well, because they don't produce if you don't feed them. But they make sure, and they come to your farm and inspect, and that's a good thing.

We've had this discussion before. Sometimes, things go wrong on farms. Sometimes they do. More often than not, farming is a very stressful occupation, very mentally stressful. The minister has worked on mental health issues on farms.

When I was on the board of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, when something started going wrong on a farm, often there was a mental health issue. Things go wrong on farms. Things go wrong all over. But most organizations have the structure in place—it's not perfect—to try and help.

But I'm so afraid—and not all the farmers in Ontario are going to agree with me. A lot of farmers in Ontario didn't agree when I ran for the NDP. I'm so afraid that the wording of that part of this bill, the retroactive trespassing part of the bill, as well-intentioned as it may be, will be, in the long term, used against them. I'm very, very concerned about that.

In the polarization between the animal activists movement and the people involved in animal agriculture—that polarization has perhaps clouded their vision a little bit on this one.

I hope I'm wrong.

Ms. Catherine Fife: But it could backfire.

Mr. John Vanthof: It could. It could. That is the biggest issue to me. I could say this for the next 10 minutes, but I'm not going to.

You cannot buy trust; you can't. I think the retroactive trespassing part should be taken out. It has nothing to do with biosecurity. Charging somebody two years later, after a picture comes out, has nothing to do with biosecurity, because the horses have already left the barn, two years later.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Not figuratively—

Mr. John Vanthof: I know; literally and figuratively.

I'm not saying that it's in every case. But then put something in the legislation that specifically addresses what you're trying to address, because this could say that you are being punitive to people who are actually—this could be perceived as anti-whistleblower. I don't know if it is. That will have to be tested in court.

1750

Why would you subject yourself to that? Why would agriculture want to subject themselves to that when they are legitimately—from what I know, the vast majority of people in agriculture are trying to do everything right. Why would you put that in? Why wouldn't you just focus on the biosecurity part—completely on the biosecurity part, get that 100% right, and if there is something specific you have to address, address it, but not in the catch-all part.

Basically, if you change the wording and you say, “If an investigative reporter tries to get into a processing facility and works at that processing facility for two years, he or she can be charged.” No. For “any person who uses direct or false pretences,” put “investigative reporter.”

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: Who's going to work for two years, John?

Mr. John Vanthof: No? But put it there. Again, the people who are going to try are going to say, “Wait a second. What have you got to hide?” You can laugh at me here. I am trying to solve the problem. I don't want this to show up in court.

Ms. Donna Skelly: You want to support it.

Mr. John Vanthof: I have said—I haven't counted—eight times that this bill will pass second reading. I am not trying to hide that fact. I want farmers to be well served. I want the public to be well served and, most of all, I want animals to be properly treated. I want to make sure that this doesn't distract from that.

I have full belief in the minister when he said this government does not want to tolerate any animal abuse. I don't doubt it. If it said something about if a person contacted PAWS, then okay, but that's not in there. Again, the people who are working on farms, the people who are working in processing facilities: Most of them don't have access to—some of them do, but not all of them—legal opinions, so they don't have the ability that I have to raise that flag. Somebody needs to raise that flag for them, and we're doing that. And we're going to continue to do that.

I truly believe that the government is trying to address this issue, which is a serious issue in the agriculture community. I'm going to be up front with that: There is an issue that needs to be addressed. Many parts of this bill are addressing it. Some are a bit of an overreach, or they need to be worded better. The government has way more experts at their disposal than I do. As a farmer, looking at this legislation, I want this legislation to be bulletproof—I don't know if that's a good term, but rock solid. I do not want to take the risk this is going to be dragged into court a year from now—

Miss Monique Taylor: Or a farmer.

Mr. John Vanthof: Or the farmer is going to be dragged into court if an altercation happens, because one thing we do know—and people who are passionate about their views are going to take every step necessary to defend their views. So I don't think it's going to be a big stretch to say that if there's a hole, people are going to challenge it in court. We'd better make sure that we've taken every reasonable step to make sure it will meet that challenge, because if we don't and it's challenged and that

becomes a big media story, then it's not the government's trust that's going to be eroded. It's the agriculture sector; it's the processing sector.

And you know what? People in agriculture, in the transportation sector, in the processing sector, they work very, very hard to provide us all with quality food. If the food is related to animal agriculture, you have to treat your animals humanely, and they work very hard to do that. It would be a shame if they lost the trust of people because of badly worded legislation.

I urge the government, when this bill goes to committee, to take a serious look at that. I'm offering—we are offering—to work with the government. We have said that we want this bill to go to committee. It's going to pass second reading and we all want to get this right. We really do, for the sake of all of us, for the sake of animals, for the sake of everybody.

I don't know any successful farmer or anyone who has been in it a long time who doesn't respect animals, because there's no future for you if you don't respect—quite frankly, I have a hard time saying “love,” but a dairy farmer loves his animals, because you spend a lot of time with them. You want to make sure that other people respect what you do and that this legislation doesn't hurt the respect that the general population has for the agriculture sector.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. However, we do have three late shows this afternoon.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

WORKPLACE SAFETY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Niagara Falls has given notice of dissatisfaction to a question addressed to the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. The member will have five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant to the minister, the member for Burlington, will have up to five minutes to respond.

We turn now to the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm here today because on December 5, I presented the minister with a series of facts, asking a simple question. The facts I presented were from the Auditor General's report, which showed the price of this government turning its back on workers. The report showed that there were nearly 230 deaths from work-related illnesses in 2018, an increase from 2017. It showed that the number of workplace deaths has actually been on the rise since 2014, and that in 2018 there were over 62,000 lost-time injuries.

There has been a 21% increase in industrial injuries and a 29% increase in workplace injuries for those who work in health care, like long-term care or our hospitals—our doctors, our PSWs, our nurses. To make matters worse, only 1%—think about this, Mr. Speaker—of all workplaces in Ontario were inspected each year, and 40% of the fatalities occurred under companies that have never been inspected by the Ministry of Labour at all.

These are horrifying statistics that I presented to the minister. I wasn't talking about other jurisdictions, other provinces, other governments; I was talking about the province we were elected to represent. I was talking about workers in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what the minister did in his response? He asked me why I didn't join him in creating a day to celebrate health and safety in Ontario. He said nothing to the families of those workers killed on the job. To this day, he's done nothing to take on companies like Fiera Foods, where five workers have been killed on the job, a company where they didn't even have the decency to stop the machines while Mr. Miranda lay dying on the floor—dying on the floor.

1800

What about the teachers that are facing increasing violence in our schools, teachers that have been attacked in their workplace and suffered serious injuries? And now this government wants to increase class sizes and make their workplaces less safe.

What about the young man, 18 years old, who was electrocuted on the job and killed? He was forced to work as an unlicensed electrician—they left him alone, unsupervised—and robbed of his life at 18 years old.

Mr. Speaker, let me answer the minister's question: We won't support it because it does nothing to actually make workers safer. All it does is let you pat yourself on the back, even though those workplaces are getting more dangerous.

This bill is nothing more than a PR exercise for a government that has left no stone unturned when it comes to supporting big business and their profits—unfortunately, at the expense of working people in the province of Ontario.

We won't support your attempt to cover up your cuts to WSIB or slashes to health and safety regulations with this meaningless day.

Workers already have a day—Mr. Speaker, I know you've attended them—a day that we honour each year in our respective communities. This day comes just a few days before their proposed one. It's called the Day of Mourning. It's a day when we mourn the dead, when we recommit to fighting for the living.

I encourage you to go to a ceremony this year and actually listen to those families and the injured workers. They don't want a meaningless day. They want justice.

So, no, workers don't support your PR exercise designed to deflect your government's inaction when it comes to health and safety, and neither do we.

So there, I've answered your question, Minister. Maybe you should give me the same courtesy and answer mine.

In the last minute I have, I'm going to tell a story. I want all you PC people to listen to it. I see there are a lot here today.

When I was president of Local 199, I got a call at 6 o'clock in the morning. Joel Murray, a young man with two kids, a hockey coach—he coached his kid's hockey—was crushed in a machine. I'll never forget that day I got the call, as president of the local union. I went to the plant. His body was slumped over the machine for two hours before they took him out. I walked with him, with the EMS, out of the plant.

Here's what happens when somebody gets killed on the job. He didn't have the opportunity to say that he loved his wife in the morning. He didn't see his kids before they went to school. He didn't see his kids grow up. He didn't see his kid keep playing hockey. He never got the chance. He never got the chance to see his grandkids.

And you want to have a day that means absolutely nothing, that doesn't protect workers in the province of Ontario? Shame on you.

Go to the Day of Mourning, where everybody goes. I've been going to the Day of Mourning for years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The minister's parliamentary assistant will have up to five minutes to respond. I turn now to the member from Burlington.

Ms. Jane McKenna: I'm just sitting here, and I'm just listening to the member across from Niagara Falls. I'll tell you this: Our top priority, as a government, is to make sure that every single person goes to work and comes home safe every single day.

Here's what I'll say: It's heart-wrenching to hear about Joel Murray. What a terrible, terrible situation. Everybody deserves to go to work and come home.

But I'll tell you this, for the people who are watching here right now: I had a private member's bill on Occupational Safety and Health Day, and the member across and the rest of his party voted against it. What exactly does that say about what we're trying to do to make sure that people go and they're safe when they come back?

I just want to read a few things for you, Speaker.

The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development again thanks the Auditor General and her staff with respect to their diligence in auditing MLTSD's businesses processes and oversight of Ontario's occupational health and safety system performance.

We welcome feedback on how we are performing as a ministry and recommendations for change that strengthen our ability to continue as a world leader in workplace safety.

I do want to highlight a fact the Auditor General brought forward in her report. "Compared to other Canadian jurisdictions, Ontario's had the lowest lost-time injury rates of any province in Canada since 2009."

The ministry will continue to work closely with our health and safety organizations, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Ministry of Government and Consumer

Services to improve worker health and safety across the province.

The ministry is currently in the process of replacing outdated information technology applications and restructuring business systems to increase compliance, enhance evidence and risk-based decision-making, improve data collection, while enabling better customer service and transparency.

The ministry enforcement efforts: In 2018-19, the ministry's more than 400 health and safety inspectors have conducted over 89,100 field visit activities. They visited 41,176 workplaces and issued more than 129,000 orders/requirements. It's amazing.

The Ministry of Labour takes a preventive and proactive approach when it comes to worker health and safety. We emphasize safety first, and the prevention or correction of workplace hazards so that workers are protected.

The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development strategy to raise awareness of and increase compliance with Ontario's health and safety laws is called Safe at Work Ontario. Under the strategy, every year the ministry schedules workplace initiatives and develops compliance plans for initiatives that target hazards and issues specific to different sectors.

In 2019-20, the ministry is conducting 10 province-wide initiatives or enforcement blitzes.

Provincial initiatives have two phases. The first is education, outreach and awareness. The ministry works with health and safety associations to raise awareness and to educate, train and provide resources to workplaces on hazards the blitz is focused on. Workplaces then have the tools and knowledge to comply before the inspections start.

The second phase of the initiative is the inspections blitz. Inspectors conduct field visits to check that employers are complying with OHSA and its regulations, and to raise awareness about specific issues in those workplaces.

The Auditor General mentions that continued exposure to health and safety hazards resulting in occupational disease has a serious impact. The ministry recognizes the importance of addressing occupational diseases, which is why we are conducting an all-sector Healthy Workers in Healthy Workplaces blitz.

I just want to say before closing out that, again, it is our top priority to make sure that every single person goes to work and comes home safe every single day. Again, it's a very sad, sad situation, the member from Niagara Falls speaking about Joel Murray. One person dying is one too many. We are going to continue on this side, and hopefully on that side, to support making sure people go to work and come home safe.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Brampton East has given notice of dissatisfaction to a question he posed to the Premier, and so the member will have up to five minutes to state his case

and the parliamentary assistant to the Premier, the member for Brantford–Brant, will have up to five minutes to respond.

We turn now to the member for Brampton East.

Mr. Guratan Singh: Yesterday I asked the Premier a question regarding the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act. This is an act which prevents people from being able to hold the government accountable by preventing them from being able to take the government to court. It's a piece of legislation and an act that has been covered extensively in the media. It has been criticized extensively by members of the legal community.

Michael Bryant, who now heads the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, called this act "a draconian abuse of power."

Erika Chamberlain, the dean of the University of Western Ontario's faculty of law, described how this act is actually reversing a trend in which governments were exposing themselves to a higher degree of scrutiny that they could face, not decreasing it, and how she was worried that this act would set a precedent that other jurisdictions would follow.

Mr. Falconer, who is bringing a constitutional challenge to this act on behalf of his client, described this act as "a shameless exercise in public officials trying to duck accountability at every level."

1810

Despite all this coverage, despite this extensive criticism of this issue by the legal community, despite the fact that the Ontario government currently is using this act to suppress eight class action cases at this moment, when I asked the Premier about the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act, he didn't have a clue. Confusingly, he responded by talking about Minister Freeland and trade with America, trade with the USA. It was as if he had no idea about the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act. It was as if he had not heard of it or he just had no clue about this act.

What makes it more concerning, Speaker, is that the Conservative government is currently using this act. This is a live issue right now. When you look at these acts, they deal with a lot of concerning issues—when you look at the class actions that this act is trying to suppress.

One of the class actions involves an inmate who was held in solitary confinement for more than four and a half years. That is the kind of class action this Conservative government is trying to throw out with the use of this act.

Another class action involving Kirk Baert, who is the lawyer behind this and eight other class actions, describes how this act is really weakening and hurting people's ability to hold the government to account. He gave an example of another class action, which involves a father who he's representing on behalf of his daughter, involving the indeterminate waiting times for support services for disabled adults. After winning their case and after they actually were successful in their Charter of Rights and Freedoms challenge, the government is now using this act to retroactively get this case dismissed on appeal. It's wrong. It's unjust.

When describing this act, he said, “The province acts like this act is normal. I asked them to name a single democratic country which has done what they’ve done and they won’t be able to name one because there aren’t any.”

This act is setting a dangerous precedent. This act is sending democracy in the wrong direction. It’s taking Ontario’s democracy in the wrong direction. It weakens our democracy because it weakens our ability to hold government to account. No one is above the law, Speaker. Democracies are strong because we can hold governments to account. The Crown Liability and Proceedings Act will rig the system so that the Conservative government can’t be sued by Ontarians. This is wrong and this is unjust. It weakens our democracy and it weakens us, and Premier Ford owes Ontarians an explanation on why he’s putting himself above the law. Further, we need this kind of legislation to be repealed immediately. This is not the kind of legislation which furthers our democracy. It weakens us collectively and it weakens citizens’ ability to hold government to account, which is a cornerstone of strong democracies.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The Premier’s parliamentary assistant, the member for Brantford–Brant, will have up to five minutes to respond.

Mr. Will Bouma: I would like to thank the member for Brampton East for asking that we come into this chamber, where laws are debated and enacted, to discuss the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act, which was passed into law here earlier this year. But I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I entirely reject the premise of his argument. To put it in plain language: The courts have no business making decisions about the policy of this government.

I want to start by reading a quote that I think provides important context to this member’s question. Now, I’m not a lawyer, Mr. Speaker; I’m just a small-town optometrist, and so some of these words are a little bit above me. I actually had to ask the member from Eglinton–Lawrence about the pronunciation of some of these. Let me start: “There is general agreement in the common law world, that government policy decisions are not justiciable and cannot give rise to tort liability.” Who said that, Mr. Speaker? I didn’t know. Then-Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Beverley McLachlin, in a unanimous decision from that court in 2011, made that statement. This long-standing principle is what this place enshrined in the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act. Section 11(4) says, “No cause of action arises against the crown or an officer, employee or agent of the crown in respect of any negligence or failure to take reasonable care in the making of a decision in good faith respecting a policy matter.”

A problem we tried to remedy is that some lawyers tried to start negligence cases by alleging that the way the whole system was designed or funded was negligent. Such questions of whether governments have made proper policy decisions on funding or how they have designed programs are not questions of negligence to be answered by the courts. These are policy questions that should lead

to accountability in this place or accountability to the electorate at the ballot box.

Even though the principle that policy decisions do not give rise to negligence had long been settled in common law, the case law on what a policy decision is has become very murky. Courts themselves complain about this lack of clarity. By updating the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act, the Legislature has clarified this area to provide certainty as to this long-standing principle that policy and funding decisions are not subject to negligence law.

We have heard that our courts are clogged, thanks to the past 15 years of neglect by the previous government. The limited resources of our courts should go towards resolving meritorious cases—cases that have an evidentiary basis to proceed—not the many frivolous cases that this government and governments in the past have faced. Again, the proper place to hold the government to account on policy questions is the ballot box.

Finally, I want to address the incorrect assertion that the government is using the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act retroactively to dismiss cases that the government has already lost. None of the cases referred to yesterday have been finally decided. They are still before the courts.

It is important to emphasize that the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act doesn’t immunize the crown from liability at all—quite the opposite.

Section 8 of the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act is clear that the crown is liable for torts to which it would be liable if it were a person. Section 8(a) says the crown is liable in respect of a tort committed by an officer, employee or agent of the crown. Section 8(b) says the crown is liable in respect of a breach of duty attaching to the ownership, occupation, possession or control of property. Section 8(c) says the crown is liable in respect of a breach of an employment-related obligation owed to an officer or employee of the crown. Section 8(d) says the crown is liable under any act, or under any regulation or bylaw made or passed under any act.

The crown remains subject to charter challenges, human rights claims, judicial reviews and contract claims.

With this certainty, hopefully, courts and government lawyers can spend more time and effort focusing on cases that will help resolve the legal disputes that most deserve our courts’ focus.

HEALTH CARE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Kingston and the Islands had earlier expressed dissatisfaction to an answer that was put to the Minister of Long-Term Care. However, through unanimous agreement reached earlier this afternoon, unanimous consent was given that the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health would answer the question this afternoon.

First, we turn to the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Ian Arthur: It’s an honour to rise to bring attention to the issue of dialysis care in Trenton, Ontario.

I requested the debate tonight because the people of Trenton deserve an answer—an answer that was not forthcoming from the Minister of Long-Term Care yesterday morning.

One in 10 Canadians is affected by kidney disease in their lifetime, and there are approximately 100 people who live in Trenton who require dialysis. These patients do not have adequate access to care because there is no dialysis unit at Trenton Memorial Hospital. Under this current inadequate system, patients are expected to travel to places such as Belleville or my riding of Kingston to receive treatment—a journey that compromises patient safety. This cannot be ignored.

1820

Last week, the Auditor General devoted an entire chapter in her report to patient safety due to the shortcomings of our health care system. Considering this government's frequent talking points on patient-centred care, I should not have to be standing here telling the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health that, in Trenton, patient-centred care means funding a dialysis unit at the Trenton Memorial Hospital.

Sharon Urquhart, a resident in Trenton, said, “Missing appointments can shorten a person's life, so they need to go, regardless of weather and expense—in fact, they go to live and live to go.” Not only is it unsafe, though; it is unaffordable.

Sharon continues: “We know that some people have had to sell their homes in this area, to move closer (and) to save on travel time.” The out-of-pocket expenses for a person travelling from Brighton to Belleville for treatments are up to \$8,000 a year, and can be as high as \$25,000 if they have to come all the way to Kingston in my riding.

The residents of Trenton have a right to be able to access the care they need, care that was promised to them under the Liberal government half a decade ago, care that was promised yet again by the now Minister of Health during her own leadership campaign, and care that was promised by their very own MPP, the member from Quinte, who sits opposite me right now, who promised residents that the government was looking for funding.

By the way, Speaker, that same member supported the creation of a dialysis unit when he was in opposition fighting Liberal inaction, a mantle of deferment and delay that he is all too happy to now wear himself. It is devastating to these residents that this government has simply picked up where the Liberals have left off, overseeing a health care system that does not give people the patient-centred care they deserve.

The Minister of Health is two years in, Speaker. Perhaps instead of attending so many ribbon-cutting ceremonies for her new Ontario health teams, she could devote her time to delivering the health care that is needed for patients in Trenton. Things are only going to get worse. There is indication from the Financial Accountability Officer's recent report that our health system is facing an additional \$2.7 billion in cuts over the next two years. What hope can the residents of Trenton have when their

situation is being taken from Liberal bad to Conservative worse?

Through you, Speaker, to the member from Bay of Quinte and to the Minister of Health: You are both in cabinet. Listen to the over 4,000 letters of support you have been sent asking for the creation of a dialysis unit at Trenton Memorial. It is within your power to give these patients the patient-centred care they deserve. Follow through on your promises. Fund the creation of a dialysis unit at the Trenton Memorial Hospital.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): And the Minister of Health's parliamentary assistant, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, will have up to five minutes to respond.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'd like to thank the member for raising this important issue and giving us the opportunity to discuss how our government invests in projects that improve patient care, including essential renal services.

Our government is committed to the development and implementation of innovative solutions that address chronic kidney disease, and I know the member for Bay of Quinte is well aware of the capacity needs in Trenton and has raised them with the Minister of Health. In fact, earlier this year, the Minister of Health visited the area and engaged with OurTMH, the foundation which advocates for renal services in Trenton. Also, the community came and made a presentation at AMO to the minister and myself, along with the member for Bay of Quinte, so we're well aware of this issue.

This is a government that listens to the concerns of patients and families. Unfortunately, there have been long-standing issues with some communities receiving less timely health care and having to travel longer distances to reach care providers. Issues like this are partially the result of the neglect on the part of the previous government. For years, small, medium and multisite hospitals such as Trenton Memorial Hospital have been underresourced thanks to a funding formula that didn't consider the unique circumstances and pressures. Our government has already taken steps to correct the previous government's funding formula that put multi-site care providers, like Quinte Health Care, at a disadvantage. In fact, we invested \$68 million in stabilization and relief for small, medium and multi-site hospitals earlier this year. Our government provided \$2.3 million to Quinte Health Care as part of a 1.5% increase across the board. We also made an additional targeted funding investment of \$2.7 million. In total, our government dedicated \$5 million to ensure the financial stability of Quinte Health Care.

But we know that there's more to be done. With regard to renal services, we are looking at the needs of Trenton and surrounding communities. The Ontario Renal Network, now part of Ontario Health, uses a capacity planning tool to forecast patient volumes and demand for dialysis over a 10-year period. The forecasts are based on growth in the region, patient travel patterns and the projected home dialysis rate.

We know that there is interest in locating dialysis services in Trenton. We know that they are working with

the Ontario Renal Network to determine the next steps. When patients, many of whom are seniors, have to travel unreasonable distances to access treatment, they are not being well served by our health care system.

Our government has pledged to build a system that is focused on patients and families. I know that the minister looks forward to continuing her work to ensure that all patients who need renal services can access them.

We take our responsibility to ensure access to care for patients in Ontario very seriously. This year, we provided over \$660 million for renal services. Our investment supported the delivery of chronic kidney disease services, including pre-dialysis services, dialysis and patient support, as well as the development of various quality initiatives to provide specialized care.

We're also dedicated to promoting early detection and prevention of progression of chronic kidney disease. Our government invested \$3 million for quality-based procedures, in new funding, for chronic kidney disease services. We also listened to the concerns of patients and took action with respect to creating a new reimbursement program for out-of-country dialysis services.

Our government recognizes that there is still a great deal of work to be done. We accepted the Auditor General's report on chronic kidney disease. We appreciate the input of the Auditor General, and we will continue to examine how we can use her recommendations to improve patient care.

We have seen an increase in the number of patients being treated at home with dialysis over the last number of years. Ontario Health will continue to work to increase and sustain home dialysis as a way of making dialysis more convenient, and improving patient outcomes and reducing pressures on our health care providers.

Our government looks forward to working with Ontario Health and the Trillium Gift of Life Network to make full use of this and other recommendations from the Auditor General's report, to improve care provided to dialysis patients. We're already taking action on a number of her recommendations, and we continue to invest in renal services and continue to improve the service program.

We appreciate the member's important question on renal services in Trenton. We thank the member from Bay of Quinte for continuing to advocate relentlessly on this important matter.

Our government is investing in small, medium and multi-site hospitals. We're investing in renal services.

Mr. Speaker, our government is listening to patients and families in Trenton and across Ontario, and will continue to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you, colleagues, for your good behaviour this afternoon.

There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.
The House adjourned at 1829.

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| 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 |
| Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC) | Kanata—Carleton | Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée |
| 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 / Solliciteure générale |
| Kanapathi, Logan (PC) | Markham—Thornhill | |
| Karahalios, Belinda C. (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 | |
| Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC) | King—Vaughan | Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation |
| Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP) | Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre | |
| MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC) | Nepean | Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture |
| 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 Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences |
| 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 | Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports |
| 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 |
| Oosterhoff, Sam (PC) | Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest | Deputy Speaker / Vice-président |

| 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 Finance / Ministre des Finances |
| 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, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC) | Sault Ste. Marie | Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités |
| Sabawy, Sheref (PC) | Mississauga—Erin Mills | |
| Sandhu, Amarjot (PC) | Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest | |
| Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC) | Brampton South / Brampton-Sud | Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille |
| Sattler, Peggy (NDP) | London West / London-Ouest | Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle |
| Schreiner, Mike (GRN) | Guelph | |
| Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC) | Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock | Minister of Infrastructure |
| 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 Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP) | St. Catharines | |
| Stiles, Marit (NDP) | Davenport | |
| Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC) | Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre | Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille |
| 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 Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs |
| Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC) | Vaughan—Woodbridge | Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille |
| 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 | Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille |
| West, Jamie (NDP) | Sudbury | |
| Wilson, Jim (IND) | Simcoe—Grey | |
| Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB) | Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest | |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|---|---|
| Yakabuski, 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 the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs |
| Vacant | Orléans | |
| Vacant | Ottawa—Vanier | |

**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, Wayne Gates
Randy Hillier, Andrea Khanjin
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Michael Parsa
Randy Pettapiece, Peter Tabuns
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Amarjot Sandhu
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Kaleed Rasheed
Jeremy Roberts, Amarjot Sandhu
Sandy Shaw, Donna Skelly
Dave Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Présidente: Goldie Ghamari
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Daryl Kramp
Robert Bailey, Jessica Bell
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
Mike Harris, Daryl Kramp
Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe
Rudy Cuzzetto, Parm Gill
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Marit Stiles, Vijay Thanigasalam
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Roman Baber
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Roman Baber, Will Bouma
Lorne Coe, Parm Gill
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison
Gurratan Singh, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Rima Berns-McGown, Michael Coteau
Faisal Hassan, Logan Kanapathi
Jim McDonell, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Kaleed Rasheed
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly
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: France Gélinas
Jill Andrew, Toby Barrett
Stan Cho, Stephen Crawford
Catherine Fife, John Fraser
Goldie Ghamari, France Gélinas
Norman Miller, Michael Parsa
Nina Tangri
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Deepak Anand
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Will Bouma, Stephen Crawford
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Gila Martow, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Dave Smith
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Christine Hogarth, Belinda C. Karahalios
Terence Kernaghan, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie