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Mercredi
8 juillet 2020

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 8 July 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 8 juillet 2020

The House met at 0900.

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

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 74(b), the member for Timmins has notified the Clerk of his intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 195, An Act to enact the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020. The order for second reading of Bill 195 may therefore not be called today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO HOME
AND COMMUNITY CARE ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020

POUR CONNECTER LA POPULATION
AUX SERVICES DE SOINS À DOMICILE
ET EN MILIEU COMMUNAUTAIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 7, 2020, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 175, An Act to amend and repeal various Acts respecting home care and community services / *Projet de loi 175, Loi modifiant et abrogeant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les services de soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When Bill 175 was last debated, I understand the member for Davenport had the floor. She can continue her speech. Member?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. I hope everybody slept well—or better than I did. My air conditioning is on the blitz, so you have to feel for me today.

Just to review what I was talking about yesterday in regard to Bill 175, we talked about the need for overhaul of the home and community care system, that being unquestioned by all sides of this House—the fact that many of the issues we’re dealing with today emanate from the introduction of competitive bidding around home care back in the days of the Mike Harris Conservative government.

We talked quite a lot about the 15 years of Liberal government, where there was, I think we all could agree—except perhaps the independents here—the failure of the

previous government to address some of those issues and those inequities in home care and community care. I think we’ve all said that.

I have to say, I listened very intently to my colleagues from both sides of the House talking about the issues, which again, I think we can, to some extent, really agree on, but we absolutely disagree on the approach that should be taken.

I think it’s fair to say that we, on this side, also believe that the continuation of debate around this bill at this time is not only taking us in the wrong direction but it’s missing an opportunity. That’s what I keep hearing from my constituents who have written to me about this legislation: that it is not only that we may have issues with the bill itself but also that in this moment, when we are facing really historic challenges, when we’ve gone through a pandemic with COVID-19, like nothing we’ve ever really seen before, we wouldn’t use this opportunity to actually reconsider, perhaps, some of the direction that the government was going to be taking.

I really don’t understand why the government would want to push ahead. I’ve heard, “Oh, the urgency,” “We have to fix the issue,” and, “It’s been like this for so long.” But the failure to, for example, have more than, I think it was, three days of committee hearings; the failure to actually really consider and provide opportunity for more fulsome debate and consideration of the concerns that stakeholders, experts, front-line workers, the very people that we call and that this government calls the “heroes”—I think somebody yesterday referred to the PSWs as “angels,” and no disagreement here. But why can’t we then be listening to those very people who are telling us that this legislation does not address the fundamental issues, particularly with regard to those front-line workers, the conditions of work, their ability to care for the people who are the most vulnerable in our society and their need for respect and dignity?

I want to read to you a letter I received from a constituent of mine. I’ll just say that Randall is his name. He wrote to me and he said, “Bill 175 does not outline a standard basket of services or standards for care, meaning that home and community care services could differ across the province. This would undoubtedly lead to inconsistency, fragmentation and inequity of services and standards, and could open the door to increased privatization.

“Resuming the consideration of Bill 175 during the pandemic and conducting public consultations with little notice, for only three days, and at a time when many stakeholders, including the health sector and advocacy groups, are occupied with COVID-19, is not the way to carry out meaningful consultations or create good policy and laws....

“Bill 175 does not address any of the longstanding issues with home and community care, such as access to care, standards of care, quality of care, or staffing problems. As it was written before COVID-19”—and let’s just remember that: This was written before COVID-19. My goodness, if COVID-19 has taught us anything, it’s that we have work to do, people, but we need to learn from the lessons and challenges that have been presented.

Then Randall concludes by saying, “It also ignores the experiences of the past four months and fails to address concerns highlighted by the pandemic.” I think that’s really well said. I really appreciate that.

I also want to read just a couple of lines from another constituent of mine, Julie, who actually cc’d me on a letter to the Premier. I know the Premier has received many, many letters from my constituents and from others. This is what she says. “Premier Ford, I want you to make caring for seniors the priority—not corporate profit. We must learn from past mistakes. You know that more privatization means less care. We can afford to treat our seniors”—and she’s speaking specifically about seniors here—“better.”

I wanted to share that because, really, I have a whole pile of papers of letters I’ve received from people who either have themselves been receiving home care, or who have family members in community care, who have very strong opinions about this, because when you’re caught in the moment—and I have to say, too, that when you’re in that moment, it’s often that you’re dealing with a lot of challenges. It’s not really the easiest time to voice your concerns. So I really respect everybody and thank them for writing to me.

We’ve talked about all of these things. I mentioned yesterday my concern about the development of this legislation, how it was developed in backrooms with no public consultation. There was lots of consultation with big corporate lobbyists, we know—the member from Ottawa Centre took us through that yesterday—but it was really railroaded through, at really breakneck speed, before the 750,000 people who will be impacted by it even knew it was happening.

Then COVID hits and then the government uses their emergency powers, and we know that there’s new legislation before us that will even extend their ability to continue to use those emergency powers, which I think we have a whole bunch of questions about in terms of democracy and the power and importance of this House and our roles. But using those powers, continuing to move forward and ramming it through with just three days of consultation and hearings is really inadequate, especially when you’re talking about legislation that is ultimately going to dismantle all remaining public governance and control of home care.

0910

We talked as well yesterday—my colleagues have talked about the fact that this is poor policy because it benefits private interests who, at the end of the day, are seeking to increase their market share, make profits. That’s what they do. That’s what it exists for. They’re for-

profit. But that does not serve the public good in every instance, we know, based on the research, based on expert opinion, when it comes to health care and home care in particular.

As I conclude, I want to remind the government of some of the NDP amendments that my colleagues on the committee brought forward that I really appreciated. I won’t go through all of them. There were 19 of them, and they were really well considered. But they were all voted down, which is really astonishing. When I go back to my constituents and they say, “What are you doing to fight against the privatization of home care?”, I can say, “We are trying.” We’ve got a majority government who has decided what they want to do without listening to anybody, without really considering the impact on those folks who are going to be most impacted, and particularly those health care heroes we all talk about. It is devastating, I think, for folks to understand how our system works right now. So a big plug there for democratic reform; that would help.

We had three amendments that we put forward to just simply take for-profit out of this legislation, and the Liberals abstained from those votes. I asked the member for Ottawa South, I believe it was, yesterday why they chose to do that. I got a very disappointing answer, I think it’s fair to say. I would have expected more, but then why would I? They did nothing to change the system when they were in power, when they had an opportunity.

Anyway, with that, I want to thank everybody for their comments, for allowing me an opportunity to put forward some of the perspectives of my constituents. I hope that we will be—perhaps still maybe there’s the opportunity to reconsider the direction the government has decided to take to at least put in place things like standards of care. I think that would make an enormous difference.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for her comments this morning and yesterday. I heard you say that you were reflecting the views of a constituent: “Let’s call him Randall.” So let’s call him Randall. You said that he didn’t know what the services were because there was no core basket of services reflected in the legislation.

I was just going to ask if you had perhaps directed constituents to the fact that there was a regulatory posting for a 60-day period fully open for public comment and comment by members of the opposition as well on summaries of the regulations, which were posted, which included this: “Scope of” home and community care “services.... The ministry is proposing to maintain the ‘community services’ outlined in the” 1994 act and the “regulation 386/99.” And there’s a list of services here including—I don’t know—25 other services, and also ones we’re considering adding, like aphasia services, pain and symptom management—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Now back to the member from Davenport for your response.

Ms. Marit Stiles: What I meant to say earlier, and I want to correct this: When I said, “Let’s call him Randall,” it’s just because I don’t want to use his last name in here. I don’t have his last name with me; I just wrote it down as “Randall.” He’s a member, by the way, of the National Association of Federal Retirees. I’ll make sure we share a copy of his letter with you, to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence who seems to doubt his existence, which is bizarre to me.

But I do want to say: What Randall is saying is that Bill 175, the legislation, does not include that. So it exists in regulation? That’s our whole point here. You’re removing those important components from the legislation so that they can basically be made without any debate in this House at the whim of the cabinet. I think that is unacceptable. It’s unacceptable to me, it’s unacceptable to Randall and it’s unacceptable to many of my constituents.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I will quote from Lilian Rivet from Hanmer, who called me to complain about the bill. She says, “Why are you?”—she’s actually writing to the government—“pushing this legislation through so quickly, 10 days is much too quickly? I think you’re doing this to hide your intentions from the people.

“When it’s a good idea you take things very slowly and talk over and over again about an initiative. It always takes forever to make good changes.

“You hide it because it will cost the little people in my community more once everything is privatized. The government won’t be overseeing it and people will be paying more, not just in money but in tears.

“Why won’t you be honest about this bill and let people see it? I want to get out to protest but I only learned about this two days ago. I’m a senior with a crutch. I feel you’ve intentionally tried to keep my voice out.

“You know this is wrong.”

My question is: How many of the 800,000 people who receive home care were consulted to make sure this bill fits them?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I thank the member from Nickel Belt for that question. It very much reflects the concerns I’ve heard from my constituents in Davenport throughout, which is that this government made a conscious decision to continue to barrel through with this legislation at break-neck speed, railroading over 800,000 people who would be impacted, in the middle of a pandemic. I think your constituent from Nickel Belt is a good indication of that: folks who already feel like their voices are not heard. So I think it’s really tragic that the government has proceeded in this manner.

I know that many of the constituents of mine that I hear from feel that many aspects of the legislation actually also reduce their voice and their power, including, by the way, I should mention, the creation of the super-agency that essentially is going to meet in private, in secret.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions.

Mr. Vincent Ke: Thank you for the member from Davenport’s comments. Speaker, we all know, including the members of the opposition, that the current system is not working to provide sufficient quality care for Ontario’s senior citizens, and it is definitely not prepared to care for the growing aging population in the future.

My question is: By opposing this Bill 175, which modernizes the current system, how can the members of the opposition expect our senior citizens, who have contributed their whole lives to our great country, to wait for the most fundamental care they need and deserve?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I appreciate the member’s question. I have to say that I would be very proud to stand against this legislation. I’m sad to; I wish we were fixing the problems in home care and in community care. I honestly, in good conscience, could not support the direction the government is taking because my own experience and research and past job experience, actually, has shown me that everything that’s being proposed here will result in, I think, what will be a reduction in the quality of care and service, particularly for folks who rely on home care. Especially at this moment, when we’re celebrating all of those great PSWs and other front-line health care workers, I think what this legislation fails to do is to address their wages, their benefits and the quality of their work. It’s going to make it even harder to attract people into that line of work. I think that’s going to be bad for everyone. So I’m quite comfortable, and in good conscience could not support this legislation as it currently is.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: They say you should never read the comments, but I’m going to read some of the comments today in response to an article called “Ford Government Moving Ahead with Home Care Privatization Bill.” Pauline Hammond had said:

“Care and mercy over profit ...

“Show the people of this province you have seen the deplorable conditions in LTC” homes and “vow to never let this happen again!”

Bonnie Robinson says, “We need more standardization and accountability, not less. This piece of legislation will make home care, which is vital for people to stay in their homes and not take up placements in hospitals and long-term-care homes, with little or no government oversight. This is not the direction to go.”

And Sue Gammond says, “Home care is a disaster that is worse than the long-term-care home. Health care workers are undervalued and burned out and are actively leaving the sector. The leadership in the government has set such low standards of care that it is impossible for the caregivers to do their jobs.”

I’d ask the member for Davenport: Despite all of the comments from the government to the contrary, does this bill do anything for those workers so they can do their jobs and support seniors?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you very much to the member for those comments and for sharing the comments. I agree with you. I’m not always keen on reading the comments

on articles, but I really feel that those comments reflect what I have heard from my constituents and what I think all of us on this side heard. And I know that the members opposite have heard those because they've often been cc'd to us as well. So we know how people feel out there, and the concerns they have.

0920

To the member: I think the government is hoping, perhaps, that maybe this will fly a little bit under the radar for a lot of people, in this moment when people are struggling with so much under COVID-19. But I think this legislation does nothing. We know it does nothing to actually address those deplorable conditions that you mentioned. We know that the continuation and expansion of privatization of home care means that we will not see more standardization and more accountability, and certainly not better-quality jobs for those who we call our health care heroes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions? The member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you and good morning, Speaker. It's always interesting to hear the NDP members of this House. They always seem so enamoured with the previous PC government. But what they fail to mention, as always, is their own government, Speaker; the government of the NDP led by Bob Rae. They ran in an election in 1990 claiming to overhaul the long-term-care-home sector. In fact, in developing their own long-term-care reforms in 1991, the NDP released *Redirection of Long-Term Care and Support Services in Ontario: A Public Consultation Paper*, which took a whole long five months of consultation.

Just a little over a year into its mandate, however, they changed their tune. They showed none of its commitments, by reversing what they called the Liberals' dangerous policy. They claimed, "Long-term-care facilities will be an important part of the service system but not a growing segment. The number of long-term-care beds will not increase."

Five years into their mandate, just before not being re-elected, they finally passed legislation. My question is: Why don't you recognize we have a majority government to represent the people of Ontario, including our seniors, those who deserve and need our services—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Back to the member from Davenport for your response.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I appreciate the member's question. I think she misspoke when she say we were enamoured with the previous PC government. That was certainly not the case.

I will remind her that it was when Mr. Harris came into power that they introduced the competitive bidding system, which is the foundation, the root, of the destruction of home care and community care in this province.

I'm going to say it: I can't comment on how long—I can tell you, I would rather have good legislation right now than have this legislation that—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Further debate?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the situation we have experienced here in Ontario and right across the world. The situation caused by COVID-19 is unlike anything we've seen before. We've had to do the unthinkable: close our economy, ask people to stay home, close schools, and so much more. Over 112 days have passed since the Premier declared a state of emergency in the province, and the end is in sight. But this wouldn't be possible without the support of the over 14 million people who call this province home, and I thank you for that.

I'm pleased to see that the Legislature continues to sit and members are in this House to continue the work that is so important to the people and our communities.

During this time, we have all had to adapt. Businesses, government and other sectors have had to change the way things have been done, and we all know how difficult change is, especially in government. But that's what this bill, put forward by the Minister of Health, is all about. It's put forward for our health care workers, who want to deliver the best possible care to our patients. We've seen the dedication first-hand over the past few months, and as we have all said here in the Legislature and back home in our communities, we are extremely grateful.

When patients fall through the cracks in home and community care, it's not because of our health care workers but rather because of the antiquated system and frameworks in which they must operate. The current legislation respecting home and community care is the Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994. While the legislation and delivery models it supports may have been effective 26 years ago, they do not meet the needs of patient care today. Specifically, the act hasn't kept pace with the changing demographics and increasing client acuity; increasing opportunities for care at home; client preferences; innovation in technology and delivery; and changes in sector governance. It's time for legislation that keeps up with the changing times and enables the best possible care for our communities. Ontarians deserve nothing less.

One thing that has been brought up quite often in this House, and especially in many of my remarks, is this concept of silos in government and the broader public sector. For those who may not be familiar, or perhaps we have some folks watching at home, the silo I'm talking about is exactly what comes to mind: a structure that is narrow, rigid and top-down. Things don't flow from one silo to another, or if they do, it's a slow and tedious process.

I've seen it in health care, Speaker. I was vice-chair of the board of directors for Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga. "This budget can only be used for this." "That department can only do that." "This department won't talk to that department." That was nine to 15 years ago, but these kinds of issues still exist today.

But what baffled me most was when I saw it in government. Like many members who were elected to the Parliament for the first time, my first year, especially, was spent meeting with residents, businesses and stakeholders to hear their thoughts and ideas. Any time I met someone, I would ask, "Have you met with the previous government?" Of course, many of them had; no shock there. But

what was shocking was how many times some of these groups or people met with the government, and specifically with how many ministries: “I met with ministry Y, but they said it also involved ministry X, so I should meet with them.” “I met with ministry X, but they said it was actually more of ministry Y, so I had to arrange a meeting with them,” and so on and so forth. They wouldn’t talk to each other.

We have been working hard to change this in government, but the impacts aren’t nearly as severe as they can be in the health care system. Under the current system, patients must interact with home care separately from primary care and hospital care. This can lead to appointment after appointment, assessment after assessment, even just to get alternative care set up. Ontario health teams want to embed home care into other care settings so patients experience integrated home care and not a patch-work.

Care plans are currently rigid and restrictive. Any changes to care that patients seek must be authorized by a home care coordinator, and the care plans that will be approved have a set number of hours or visits, with service maximums that really can curtail service. What we seek, along with Ontario health teams, is flexible care planning that is based on patient outcomes and care coordination that is closer to the front lines and as responsive to patient needs as could be possible.

The last thing that someone in need of care should have to do is navigate bureaucracy and administration just to make a simple request. Luckily, we have a plan. Alongside regulation, the Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act, 2020, if passed, will allow us to:

- improve the patient experience;
- enable a flexible delivery model;
- maintain continuity of care;
- help personal support workers;
- empower health care professionals; and
- take a concrete step towards ending hallway health care.

Last year, more than 700,000 Ontarians received home care, and 600,000 used community support services. Care at home frees up capacity in our hospitals—and especially now, where patients really do prefer to be. This legislation will enable Ontario Health to fund home and community care services as an integrated health service through our Ontario health teams.

While the 1994 legislation doesn’t keep up with changing needs, it’s not necessarily broken. There are elements of the previous act that we will be retaining, including:

- the definition of home and community care services and their respective eligibility criteria;
- the requirement for an established complaints process;
- inclusion of home care in the jurisdiction of the Patient Ombudsman;
- the ability to fund Indigenous organizations through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act; and
- the right to appeal certain decisions to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board.

We are maintaining restrictions that limit the delivery of community services to non-profit corporations. And most importantly, we are preserving the existing approach with respect to client copayments, where only community services can have copayments, and if a patient is currently not making a copayment, they will not pay a copayment under the framework and legislation being proposed.

0930

Under the current system, health care workers often don’t have access to the information that they require to provide appropriate care to our patients with varying needs. With privacy and control over your personal health care, especially the data, at the top of mind, patients who want it will have access to virtual care and more electronic communications with providers, making it easier to stay in touch.

Care providers will be able to work as a team, enjoying better working conditions and providing better care. If the patient consents and the situation is clinically appropriate, home and community care services could be delivered virtually to support the monitoring of patients with chronic conditions, with a nurse checking in as needed. Nurses or therapists could also use video conferencing to work with personal support workers in the home to provide a more specialized care.

Speaking of PSWs, the shift of home and community care to local integrated models will help us better use the resources we have and create conditions that may attract more people to the field. Prior to the pandemic, I had the opportunity to shadow a PSW one morning and see first-hand the work that they do. It is challenging, and the system to support them isn’t what it needs to be. New models of care enabled by the legislation can improve working conditions for care providers, like personal support workers, by improving team-based decision-making closer to the patient. At the same time, our government is continuing to take steps to improve workforce capacity through improved scheduling practices and enhanced training opportunities.

The legislation will also allow Ontario health teams to deliver more innovative models of home and community care. Patients will benefit from primary care, hospitals, home and community care, and long-term care being able to work as a team to meet individuals’ care needs. Ontario health teams will work together to understand a patient’s full health care history and directly connect them to the different types of care that they need.

My office hears regularly from constituents who have problems with health, long-term care, and home and community care services, like I’m sure many in this House have. People are facing delays in getting care because of bureaucracy, administration or multiple assessments—which, over time, become inconsistent—or, alternatively, because the type of care that they have been receiving is no longer appropriate, and they haven’t been given steps or support as to how they can proceed. We want the OHTs to be a one-stop shop for patients and their families and be available 24/7 to support those in need of help.

Again, these instances aren’t people problems. My office has a very good relationship with organizations like

our local health integration network, or the LHIN, who work to resolve issues to the best of their ability once brought to their attention. The problem lies within the current system as it is designed.

We realize that these changes won't take place overnight, and we are absolutely committed to ensuring that home and community care services continue uninterrupted during the transitional period to Ontario health teams. Local health integration networks are being refocused into interim organizations called Home and Community Care Support Services, which will deliver home and community care and coordinate long-term-care-home placement. This is to ensure continuity of care and avoid the risk of service disruption that would result from changing employment relationships and service contracts with home care providers.

The wind-down of the LHINs is planned in a phased approach and will be done over time. During the transition, patients, their families and caregivers will continue to access home and community care services in the same way and use the same contacts.

To reiterate, the passage of this legislation and the implementation of the framework it supports will have several positive impacts. It will make it easier for people to access home and community care in hospitals, primary care and community settings. Hospitals, primary care settings and others will be able to arrange for home care directly for those patients instead of referring people to a separate home care organization. Doing so will reduce burdensome administration and delays for patients.

It will help people to connect to their care providers through secure video conferencing and remote telemetrical monitoring devices. People with chronic conditions will be monitored at home with a nurse checking in as needed. Nurses or therapists can use video conferencing to work with a personal support worker in the home to provide more specialized care when appropriate.

It will provide more choice for people with high-care needs to get care in new community settings. Patients will be discharged from hospital into a transitional care setting to gain strength and functionality to return home.

And it will keep people healthier at home by empowering care teams to work together. Enabling front-line care providers to make more decisions about care, integrating home care into primary care and acute care, and breaking barriers to access information to support this care will create teams that work together to support patients.

No doubt, the past few months have shone a light on Ontario's health care system. It's more important now than ever that we continue to work to ensure that our health care system—our publicly funded health care system, that is—is and will remain the best in the world. This means looking at the system holistically and implementing changes while looking at results on a system-wide basis.

Our government has already taken steps to increase capacity in our health care system, and this legislation would allow us to build on our progress while supporting individualized, effective, efficient and innovative alternative levels of care. We need to ensure that our system

keeps pace with the changing needs of Ontarians and takes advantage of new technology, data and information sharing. Better ways of organizing the system will allow us to more effectively deliver the high-quality and fully integrated care patients need and expect.

The work was extremely important before COVID-19 hit, and it's even more important now, as the virus gives us greater urgency to deliver better home and community care for Ontarians. While this work to transform the home and community care system continues, we will ensure that there is no interruption to services for those receiving them.

Health care has always been a priority for this government, and in 2018 the Premier launched the Premier's Council on Improving Health Care and Ending Hallway Medicine, chaired by Dr. Rueben Devlin, who sadly recently passed away. I offer my sincere condolences and sympathy to his family, especially during these already difficult times. Under his leadership, the council released two reports outlining strategic priorities and actions that will lead to improved health and wellness outcomes for Ontarians, high patient satisfaction, and more efficient use of government investment, using an effective delivery structure.

The most recent report, released last June, outlined 10 recommendations to the government. Among them:

- put patients at the centre of their health care, ensuring they are well supported and treated with dignity;
- improve patients' and providers' ability to navigate the health system;
- support patients and providers at every step of their health care journey;
- improve options for health care delivery, including increasing the availability and use of a variety of virtual care options; and
- provide better alternatives in the community for patients who require a flexible mix of health care and other supports, all of which the legislation before us today supports.

This bill allows us to take an important step forward in addressing the inadequacies of our health care system, and it's the first of many steps. On behalf of my community of Mississauga–Streetsville, I wish to thank the minister and the parliamentary assistant for their work and encourage everyone across this House to support this bill.

Speaker, I move that the question now be put.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Ms. Tangri has moved that the question be now put.

There has been in excess of six hours and 20 minutes of debate time and 12 speakers. Therefore, I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

Therefore, all those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion that the question be now put, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): No further business. Because of that, this House will stand recessed until 10:15 this morning.

The House recessed from 0940 to 1015.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: COVID-19 has exposed long-standing systemic problems in Ontario's long-term-care homes, including the deep reliance on family caregivers to meet residents' needs. The visitation restrictions have been incredibly difficult for anxious family members and often detrimental to the health of their loved ones.

The lifting of the restrictions, however, has raised other concerns among London West constituents. Ann Bigelow wrote that the requirement for a clean COVID test in the last two weeks "is just ridiculous. If I have no symptoms, the test won't say I have the virus, and I could just pick it up the next day."

Tammy Goddard told me that her parents were effectively imprisoned since mid-March in their room in a retirement home, but "we can now take them out, bring them back within 12 hours, and who knows where we may take them or if I or anyone that sees them wears their mask?"

Long-term-care home resident Nancy, who hasn't seen her family since March 7, said, "I feel that being 88 years old does not give me too much longer to enjoy my family. I'm afraid they will hold off on in-home visits until all the homes are out of quarantine, which seems very unfair. In this weather, I can't go outside because of a bad heart."

Speaker, family caregivers deserve visitation guidelines that keep their loved ones safe, but also recognize the essential contribution that caregivers make to resident health and well-being.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Throughout these unprecedented times, our government has stepped up and shown that it will always fight for and protect the people of Ontario.

Small businesses have been hit the hardest by the economic impacts of COVID-19. This is especially true in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park.

I recently had the pleasure of hosting a virtual round table with small business owners in Scarborough–Rouge Park alongside Minister of Finance Rod Phillips and a surprise appearance from Premier Ford. We discussed the challenges that small businesses are facing and what our government plans to do to help them.

I also had the opportunity to visit small businesses in Scarborough–Rouge Park. Our local business owners such as Rosa's Pasta, Highland Creek MedSpa, Amigos, Fratelli Village Pizzeria, Riviera Barbershop and many others are working hard to implement and follow necessary precautions to reopen safely. I want to thank the residents of Scarborough–Rouge Park for supporting the local businesses in our riding during this difficult time. Shop local; shop safe; shop confident.

MUNICIPAL FINANCES

Ms. Sara Singh: It's an honour to rise here today. On July 6, mayors and chairs from across Ontario represented by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario and the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario met to discuss the COVID-19 financial emergency. Municipalities across this province have been hit hard by the pandemic.

To protect municipal services, we need immediate provincial and federal support to cover lost revenue and the additional costs caused by COVID-19. This call for action by Ontario municipalities is part of a national effort led by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to secure at least \$10 billion in emergency relief for Canadian municipalities to be funded by the federal and provincial governments. But we have yet to hear from the federal government and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on whether he's going to deliver on this commitment.

Speaker, the time for a commitment is running out. Now halfway through the budget year, municipalities have no choice but to consider plans to balance their budget by raising property taxes, user fees and charges or by cutting services. Difficult conversations about cost savings and reductions are taking place at council meetings across this province. Supports to children, family supports, reducing or cancelling transit services, staffing adjustments: These are all cuts that are on the table.

This province needs to step up. When will this minister commit to providing the funding that municipalities are in dire need of?

1020

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Deepak Anand: Some moments leave a deep mark in our life. On Saturday, the night of June 20, I got a call from Mr. Imtiaz of Malton Masjid regarding 62-year-old Mr. Ejaz Choudry, who tragically died in a police-involved incident. We all can agree that any death in our community is a tragedy. These incidents have shaken the families and my community, and it is clear that more needs to be done.

Peel police, with CMHA, has mobile crisis rapid response teams. These teams respond to the emergency calls where mental health concerns are identified, and assist individuals in distress. A crisis worker with a specially trained police officer provides an on-site assessment to

individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. I call on the Peel Police Services Board to work collaboratively with the government to expand these types of proven, successful programs that will support those experiencing a mental health crisis, including the mobile crisis rapid response teams in Peel region.

I want to convey my heartfelt thanks to Malton Masjid for financially supporting the family, Jame Masjid for donating \$10,000, and to the whole community for coming together and donating over \$128,000 through GoFundMe to support the family. These recent tragedies remind us that more work needs to be done, and there is an urgent need for constructive dialogue.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Marit Stiles: Today it is a real pleasure to rise to pay tribute to the people, community organizations and small businesses in my riding of Davenport who have gone above and beyond to help us get through the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have had competing mutual aid groups and care pods spring up to organize help, street by street. Davenport Mutual Aid Network, Davenport Helps and the cluster at West Neighbourhood House have been connecting people with food supports, PPE and running errands—an incredible model that I know will be with us long after the virus. Sistering shifted location and their entire model to serve a population in desperate need.

Local businesses have stepped up, too. Nossio Talho on Bloor West has provided free groceries to seniors in isolation. Sugo in Bloordale delivered food to families in crisis. Itacate Mexican restaurant on St. Clair and Oakwood served hundreds of free meals, free of charge, to front-line workers and those who had lost their jobs. And when Casa dos Açores heard about six families in need through Working Women Community Centre, they quickly organized a food drive to help them out. Abrigo Centre had extra gloves. They donated them to the folks at the Oasis community centre.

Speaker, these are just a few of the many inspiring stories of compassion and solidarity that have helped us get through this difficult time. I am so proud of my community. To all of Davenport's pandemic heroes, from the front-line health care and essential workers to the neighbours who banged a pot or lent a hand, thank you.

MÉDAILLES ET DISTINCTIONS HONORIFIQUES DE LA GOUVERNEURE GÉNÉRALE

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S MEDALS AND HONOURS

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Chez nous à Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, on ne manque jamais de choses à célébrer, et ce n'est certainement pas la pandémie qui va changer ça.

Le 1^{er} juillet dernier, 123 Canadiens ont reçu des médailles et des honneurs de notre gouverneure générale,

et je suis fière de dire qu'encore une fois, bon nombre de mes résidents figurent sur cette liste distinguée.

Le capitaine Jacques Gagné de Rockland a reçu la Médaille du souverain pour les bénévoles pour son soutien aux familles militaires. Yves Berthiaume de Hawkesbury a reçu la Médaille du service méritoire pour son travail avec Optimist International. Jonathan Pitre d'Embrun a reçu la Croix du service méritoire, à titre posthume, et sa maman, Tina Boileau, a reçu la Médaille du service méritoire, tous deux pour avoir sensibilisé la population à l'épidermolyse bulleuse.

Je suis tellement fière de nos gens, monsieur le Président. Nos communautés sont bien connues comme étant parmi les meilleures places où vivre au Canada, et ça, c'est grâce à nos gens—au bon monde comme Jacques, Yves, Jonathan et Tina.

And for Jonathan and Tina, I need to add something. They say you die twice: The first time, physically, and the second time, when your name is no longer remembered. I want Tina to know that Jonathan Pitre will never be forgotten. Thank you, Tina, for giving us this precious gift that has touched us all in a very special way—our butterfly child.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Lorne Coe: Over the next 12 years, Whitby is set to be one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Durham region. As a result, we need to ensure that supports are in place for everyone in the community to thrive. With the planned expansion of the Oshawa Clinic Group to Whitby in 2024, Whitby residents will have better access to the right care, at the right time and in the right place. This new facility will be a one-stop convenience for the majority of non-acute health care needs, and open 364 days of the year. As the member of provincial Parliament for Whitby, I'm proud that this clinic is the largest group practice in Canada, which will connect both specialists and family physicians.

Speaker, I'd like to thank the transportation minister, Caroline Mulroney, and the associate minister for the GTA, Kinga Surma, for helping to release the land for the clinic—thank you, Ministers—and Minister Elliott for her leadership on the Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act and the difference it will make in the lives of patients and families in the town of Whitby.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, there's huge anxiety and growing anger amongst Ontario's parents, particularly women, that school and child care will not be there for them and their children come this fall. Through the height of the pandemic, I was calling into my riding; I would talk to families where either both parents were essential workers, both were working at home, or a mixture. They were looking after their children at home and they were stressed to the max.

Speaker, on top of all of those stresses, they didn't know if child care or school would be there for them and their families when they were called back to work. Right now, it looks like it's not there. Child care centres can't figure out how to make the finances work if they have to have fewer children in the centre for health reasons.

With less than two months to go before schools reopen, we don't have a solid plan, and one of the substantial options on the table is a hybrid where children go to school half the time. Without child care, without full-time schooling, parents can't return to work, and Speaker, what that will mean most of the time is that women will not be returning to work. That's a disaster for them personally and for this society.

We're not in the 1950s. Women are not expendable. Fund child care so that they are viable. Take the necessary steps in staffing and space to make sure that students can go back to school full-time. Don't abandon parents.

TOWN OF INNISFIL

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: It is my privilege to serve the people of Barrie–Innisfil in this Legislature, and I am really proud to serve. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the town of Innisfil. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the town of Innisfil is older than the Dominion of Canada. In 1820, the first European settlers to Innisfil were the Hewson family, who came by way of the Holland River and beautiful Lake Simcoe to settle in what is now Big Bay Point, the famous location of Davidson's restaurant—and I know that our deputy mayor, Dan Davidson, really wishes he could celebrate this coming year.

Soon after that, though, Mr. Speaker, John and George Warnica and John Clayton, through their work, led to the creation of not only Highway 11 but also what is now known as Yonge Street. Their pioneering spirit demonstrated awe-inspiring accomplishments. While the land that they settled was fertile, these families had to overcome many unforgiving challenges to survive day to day. When I think of everything these settlers lived through and the everyday conveniences which we enjoy today that they lived without, I'm inspired by their tenacity and their ability to overcome challenges.

On this day we celebrate the 200th birthday of Innisfil, so from me to all of the Innisfil residents: Have a happy birthday, remember our great history, those that came before us and, of course, the presence of our Indigenous peoples in Innisfil. Happy birthday, Innisfil.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Our government recently gave business owners and workers another tool to increase their confidence so that they can get back to work safely. Like I said during the many consultations I held in my riding of Cambridge, employers and workers know their workplaces best. I also heard that a guidance document would be helpful in preparation for reopening, which is why we introduced the first-ever Ontario general workplace guidance document. This guide will help employers

protect their employees and others from the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The guide comes with a template that they can fill in to develop a unique COVID-19 safety plan that caters to the needs of their workplace. Our materials help them identify risks, determine a safety plan and communicate the actions being taken to others in the workplace.

1030

In addition to our workplace safety guide, we have released over 130 sector-specific guidance documents to help support employers and workers.

Mr. Speaker, the health and safety of workers and others is our highest priority. Our government is committed to protecting the people of Ontario and supporting businesses during these unprecedented times. Our workplace safety guide will help Ontario move forward from this crisis and safely reopen.

SPECIAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a report from the Office of the Auditor General entitled Special Report on Ontario's Costs for Services Provided to Irregular Border Crossers.

The member for London West has informed me that she has a point of order.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I seek unanimous consent for the official opposition to stand down our leads until the Premier arrives.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London West is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to stand down the lead questions of the official opposition. Agreed? I heard a no.

QUESTION PERIOD

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Good morning, Speaker. My first question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier expressed shock that many of Ontario's long-term-care homes keep residents in rooms without air conditioning and acted as though he was completely unaware that his government gives licences to long-term-care homes without any requirement that they provide air conditioning. It's all the more amazing because the Premier has been told that this is the case by families who have been pleading with this government to take action, and he heard it directly here in the Legislature over two years ago from MPPs who were doing their jobs, telling the Premier what was happening in long-term care.

Every time there are public reports of appalling conditions in long-term care, the Premier feigns shock. Is the Premier truly unaware of what's happening in long-term care?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Long-Term Care to reply.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the opposition for the question. Let me reiterate: The health, well-being and safety of our long-term-care residents and staff is a priority for our government. It is a commitment of our government. Operators of our long-term-care homes have a clearly stated responsibility to provide a safe environment for residents. It is an obligation for homes, and this is non-negotiable. There is no change made by our government during this pandemic that has detracted from that requirement.

But the lack of air conditioning speaks to the neglect that this sector has had over 15 years, and as a family physician for almost 30 years, I can tell you that this problem dates back many, many years.

Our government created a new ministry in the summer of 2019 to address the issues in long-term care. This is one of them that we will address, and you've heard the Premier say that he is committed to addressing this issue of heat-related problems in our long-term-care homes.

Really, if you look at the design standards, the design manual in 2015 requires homes to have an air cooling system. Some of the issues surrounding COVID-19 have limited fan use. We're looking at this. Our Premier is committed, our government is committed, and we will address this.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Unfortunately, this government has been all talk and no action. The Premier knew over two years ago that there was no air conditioning in many of the homes. So for him to stand at a podium yesterday and suggest that he had no idea and had all the sympathy in the world for those poor residents who are sweltering in long-term care just defies probability, Speaker.

The most important issue here is making sure that no more of our seniors are left to swelter in their rooms in long-term care. The Premier promised yesterday, as the minister just repeated, to take action. We want to see the action desperately, Speaker, as do families with loved ones in long-term care.

On this side of the House, we're ready to pass legislation today that will ensure that air conditioning in every room is a requirement of long-term-care homes. The government is putting a bill forward today. Will it have this provision inside of it?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thanks, again, for the question. Under our regulations, every long-term-care home in Ontario must ensure that there is a written plan dealing with preventing and managing hot-weather-related illness in the home. It must meet the needs of residents—and we respond immediately to any reports of serious harm, concern or risk to a resident.

But I want to mention that since becoming the leader of the NDP in 2009—so that means for over nine years—the leader of the official opposition has not once raised the issue and has never asked the question. Instead, she was content to prop up the Liberal government as they neglected Ontario's long-term-care sector. I ask: Did you just learn about this, too? I ask—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: You know, written plans do nothing for seniors who are sweltering in long-term care. The bottom line is, people are sick and tired of watching the Premier yell about this crisis in long-term care for the cameras, only to the turn around and do nothing at all about it.

A month ago, the CBC reported “sweltering” temperatures in residents' rooms at Vista Care in Woodbridge due to a lack of proper air conditioning. Another Vista Care resident without air conditioning was found dehydrated from the heat. Yesterday, we received this letter from Jeanette—I'll ask a page to send it over to the minister—whose mother, Rosa Mary Abrahams, lives at Midland Gardens:

“There is no air conditioning at this place and my mom and I dare say other residents are left to swelter. I cry every day. I just bought a fan and a mini AC that uses ice cubes, I can only hope and pray that those will be allowed in for her.”

We are ready to make this a law today, Speaker. Is the Premier prepared to act today and back up his words of yesterday?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you once again. I will say it again: Our government is committed to addressing the shortcomings of long-term care left behind by the previous Liberal government and the now opposition who supported that government. That is a sad statement, that it has taken so long for a government to come to power like our government, like our Premier to address these long-standing issues.

There is no question that there are shortcomings. I look at members sitting across, one of them a parliamentary assistant during the McGuinty era for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. What was done during that time? I ask: Where were you for the last 15 years?

Our government and our Premier are committed to addressing these issues, and we will do exactly that.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier—but I would remind the minister that it was her government that actually cut funding to long-term care and rolled back resident quality inspections. So they're taking us backwards, Speaker: making things worse instead of better.

But look, this question to the Premier is about the economic recovery. It's really clear that without a concrete plan to reopen schools, there will be no economic recovery. Without a concrete plan to make sure child care spaces are affordable and available to all who need them—it's what parents, teachers, workers, employers, New Democrats and everyone else in between have been saying since this pandemic began.

Tonight, trustees at the Toronto District School Board will be debating an emergency resolution calling on this

province to craft a school year that works better for families and looks at innovative solutions to get students back into classrooms full-time. Will the Premier work with them?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, contrary to the pessimism of the member opposite, we do have a plan. We have a plan to get students in class each and every day in September.

Our commitment, Speaker, has been from the beginning to ensure that safety is the guiding prerequisite. I don't think that should be an issue of debate in this House. We must ensure that our youngest learners, the most vulnerable within our families and our communities, remain safe. And it's likewise for our staff.

This is an issue that I think, yes, the government has been seized with for months. It is why, as a lesson learned from this COVID experience, we have made a determination to be prepared for each circumstance—yes, an in-class, day-to-day delivery with health and safety protocols; yes, an online option should, God forbid, that be required; and a blended option if public health requires us to have a quantum of no more than 15 children. It is a prudent way forward.

On investment, Speaker: Every single student in this province has been funded \$250 more. Per-pupil funding is up: in the Toronto District School Board, \$55 million more in September to ensure there's a safe and positive restart to September.

1040

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, parents have already been struggling during this pandemic to balance home-schooling their kids while trying to work at home at the same time, and the Premier's plan to have no plan is not working for parents. As one business owner told the Aurora Banner, "I think the whole part-time plan, it's going to turn people's lives upside down, including teachers' lives. I would like to actually reopen our office, but it all depends on schools being back."

Now, without a clear plan for the return to school, a plan that supports child care, parents will not be able to balance going back to their offices and job sites when our economy fully reopens again. Does the Premier just expect some parents to stay home forever, Speaker?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, it is this government that understands fully the relationship between child care and schooling, and the importance of getting people back to work. It's why, over the past weeks, we've unveiled a plan for child care that does two things: (1) It creates a backstop to ensure that operators in every hamlet and village and town in our province remain sustainable and viable for the coming months and years ahead, but (2)

in addition provides additional ancillary funding for operating costs to let these operators continue to operate in the province.

What it also does is that it protects consumers. It ensures that fees cannot go up and spaces cannot be given away as a condition for the province's funding. We're leveraging federal support. We're working with all levels of government to do this. We're seeing child care operators reopen province-wide each and every day. It's our commitment to support a recovery that ensures parents are able to get back to work in the province of Ontario.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, if schools remain closed part-time and child care remains unavailable or unaffordable, it is unfortunately women who are going to be hurt the most. But whether it's firing teachers, nurses and health care workers, rolling back the wages of the lowest-paid workers, or whether it's refusing to step up with direct financial supports and rent relief to the millions of women who lost their jobs because of the pandemic, women get the message that this government just doesn't care about them.

Is the Premier prepared to explore increased investments and innovative solutions to ensure that every available space that can be used is being put to use and that more teachers, more early childhood educators and more education workers can be hired so we can fully reopen in September?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We obviously agree that we need to have a strong child care sector in order to enable parents—particularly women, as noted—to get them back to work. We agree. We absolutely agree with that premise. It's why, working in conjunction with the Minister of Finance, the minister of children and youth and many others, we are building a plan to ensure that child care operations are stable.

When it comes to schooling and funding: \$730 million more this September as a decision point by this government to ensure the safe restart is successful; \$250 more per child. Every single board in the province of Ontario is receiving more funding—more funding for cleaning, more funding for technology, \$15 million more to procure upwards of 37,000 tablets and computers, \$10 million more for mental health—in addition to the historic doubling by the Premier of mental health funding in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, these are real investments. They're going to make a difference. They're going to keep kids safe in September.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. For decades, governments of all stripes have recognized that any plans for emergency management require broad political support, for an obvious reason: In a democracy, we need to balance the need to respond quickly and effectively with the need for transparency and to protect democratic rights.

Yesterday, in an unprecedented move, the government tabled unnecessary legislation to dramatically change emergency management law in this province. Does the Premier really think that less transparency is a responsible way to handle such fundamental issues during such a critical time?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Solicitor General.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. The member opposite and I can agree on one thing, and that is that the health and safety of all Ontario residents is our foremost and number one concern.

What we are doing with tabling the legislation yesterday is that, if supported by the Legislature, we will be transitioning—we will be bridging the gap, if you may—from taking Ontario away from a declaration of emergency into very targeted areas where we need to continue to protect the residents of Ontario, and those, frankly, include our most vulnerable: our seniors, our young people.

So the legislation does have the protections in place, and frankly, the accountability in place. There is a proposal within the legislation that says that every 30 days, the Premier or the minister-designate must appear in front of a select committee. We have question period in July. When was the last time we had question period three days a week in this Legislature? That is accountability. That is what Premier Ford is doing, and that is what our government is doing.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The minister is talking about bridging the gap behind closed doors—bridging a gap behind closed doors, completely out of sight of any scrutiny or accountability to the people of Ontario. That is a very dangerous thing to do, Speaker.

The Premier promised to work collaboratively—does anybody remember that?—collaboratively and transparently to combat the pandemic. But over its course, we have seen this Premier repeatedly refuse to share basic information about what this government is doing. He literally refuses to tell the public who's making the decisions at the COVID-19 command table. Even to this day, he hasn't given that information out. Now he wants new legislation that grants the government considerable new powers and makes them less accountable to the people of this province.

Why does the Premier believe he needs the power to make decisions behind closed doors, without scrutiny and without debate?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Accountability. Question period in July. Unprecedented. Every single day, the Premier stands in front of a podium and answers questions from the media—every single day since the pandemic began. What we are trying to do—and I wish that the member opposite would understand and listen—is that we are transitioning away from a declaration of emergency to very targeted protections that need to be in place to ensure the safety of

Ontario residents. I'm happy to stand with the Premier and ensure that that continues.

What is the member opposite suggesting—that we should stop everything and we should go back? You only have to look to certain jurisdictions to the south to understand what happens when you move too quickly: You end up re-closing things down. There is no one in the province of Ontario who wants to do that because, frankly, 13 million people have worked very hard to get us this far.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Ontario's economic recovery is a key priority for the government in the weeks and months ahead. The investments we make today are key to ensuring a prosperous future for Ontario families.

Our government's efforts to streamline highway construction and accelerate the delivery of major transit projects are critical. Our proposed changes will stimulate the economy and build up Ontario's infrastructure to ensure the quick and seamless movement of goods and people. Speaker, can the minister tell us about the announcement she made earlier this week?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you to the member from Whitby for the question. Our government has been clear in our commitment to invest in transportation infrastructure. We're not only building faster, we're also building better. I'd like to acknowledge my colleague the Associate Minister of Transportation for advancing the transit-oriented communities program.

Our plan for developing transit-oriented communities will allow us to develop complete communities focused on connecting people to transit and housing that is safe and affordable. We're engaging closely with our stakeholders and we will continue to move forward with this plan in close partnership with municipal and local input.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. Transit-oriented communities are a key part of our government's plan to build a modern, integrated transit system for the greater Toronto area.

I understand that this legislation also touches on highway construction. You'll know, Speaker, that highways are critical to keeping people connected and goods moving across the province. As the Minister of Transportation is working hard to speed up public transit projects, I also understand that she's looking to accelerate highway construction. Can the minister tell us about how she intends to do that?

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Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you again to the member for the question. Transportation-related construction is vital to Ontario's recovery as a major driver of economic activity and a significant source of job creation. As the member from Whitby stated, our government is looking to speed up the construction of major highway projects. Construction on these projects will drive job

creation and it will build the critical infrastructure that Ontario needs to keep people and goods moving.

Our plan aims to shorten the time frames related to land assembly. We will always treat people fairly and appropriately compensate owners, tenants and others impacted by these projects. This will never change. Delivering these critical projects sooner will spur economic growth and create countless Ontario jobs. This is what Ontario needs as we pull together during these unprecedented times.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to wish the Associate Minister of Transportation a very happy birthday.

HEALTH CARE

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. Loretta lives in my riding and has needed surgery since before this pandemic started. Now she is in severe distress and has visited the emergency room three times in the past week alone due to unbearable pain. Her doctor is very sympathetic but wasn't able to get the operating room that he needed to schedule her eight-hour surgery. Loretta is suffering and has had to fight hard for the health care that she needs.

Speaker, when will hospitals be able to help constituents like Loretta get the surgeries they need in order for them to go on living their lives?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you for the question. I cannot stress enough, Mr. Speaker, that nothing is more important than protecting the health and well-being of Ontarians. To ensure that the province was prepared to respond to a number of outbreak scenarios, we followed the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. We requested that hospitals take a careful, planned approach to ramping down elective surgeries and other non-emergent clinical activities.

As we emerge from this pandemic—and the pandemic is still evolving; we are still in a state of emergency in Ontario, and we must be vigilant. We must be aware of potential for second phases and second waves, and we follow the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. We were looking at the capacity of our hospitals before, including long-term care, and understanding that that plays a role. But we are moving forward with our planned reopening of the economy, and we've since provided guidance to hospitals to begin the process of resuming scheduled care.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: When Loretta reached out to my office, she was desperate for help. Each time she rushed herself to the emergency room, she was provided with medication to ease her pain, but they told her they could not provide the operation that she needs and they sent her home. Over and over, she was told that she couldn't get the surgery needed.

Loretta had to advocate for herself for weeks to finally be able to book a surgery date. With some help from my office—and people shouldn't have to go to their MPPs to be able to get the emergency surgery they need—I'm pleased to say that she will finally be able to receive the care that she needs soon.

But my question is simple: Will the Premier tell us why patients in Ontario should have to fight and contact their MPPs to get the surgeries that they need?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you again for the question. Resuming scheduled, elective surgeries and hospital-based care for patients requires tremendous organization and many different pieces of the puzzle to understand how that can be coordinated and integrated. This was advice followed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. It is related to understanding hospital capacity. I'm very glad to hear that the individual you mentioned is able to get the care that she needs. People should be able to get the care they need when they need it.

These are extraordinary times that we're in. Certainly COVID has wreaked havoc for many people and caused hardship, but we are making progress in resuming elective surgeries, following the best expert and scientific advice, balancing the risks between capacity in the hospital and surge capacity that's necessary for a second wave. All of these must be balanced, and we are making progress. I'm glad to hear that the individual who you mentioned is receiving her care.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Later today, the federal government will be releasing their economic snapshot, which demonstrates the extent of their support for Canadians during the pandemic.

Speaker, the Premier seems to think that the federal government should foot the entire bill for moving our country and our province through this pandemic. The federal government has stepped up, but the Premier has not committed the province to doing its part.

Now that the pandemic is subsiding, it is time for Ontario to invest in its own economic recovery. But tens of billions of dollars of this government's spending is in the form of tax deferrals, which they plan to eventually collect from businesses.

In August, when the government intends to share its economic update, more small businesses will have closed and parents will be facing impossible choices and decisions about either their children's safety or their schooling. Speaker, will this minister release an economic update this month, as the federal government has already done, not in the dog days of summer?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member for her question. She will remember, no doubt, as all the members of the House will, that this government and this Legislature produced a document, and was the first government in Canada to produce a document, that responded to COVID—\$17 billion that this member supported, voted for. This member and the rest of the members of this

Legislature supported those early moves to make sure that this government and, in fact, this Legislature were supporting health, businesses and communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario government has been at the forefront of responding to COVID-19. That is why we've seen the results that we have. We have taken a safe and responsible approach. We do look forward to the federal government's update. I guess a fiscal update, not a full one-year report, which we provided. We look forward to that, we look forward to continuing to work with them and we look forward to working with the member opposite and to provide the supports that Ontarians need.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Minister, I too look forward to working with you to respond to the needs in a manner which is timely.

Speaker, I have heard from organizations in my riding that they are worried that when they are reopening, they will not be insurable. Tam Heather Curling and Tennis Club in Scarborough–Guildwood remains closed, in part due to the uncertainty regarding their insurance.

Voluntary associations and organizations that follow pandemic guidelines should be protected from litigation as a result of COVID-19, or else they may have no other option but to close forever because they are simply deemed uninsurable.

Minister, does the government have a plan to protect the public and also the countless cultural, sports and other organizations that are facing issues of insurability right now?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Again, I appreciate—and the member has raised an important question. Our government is looking comprehensively at what is required and, as I mentioned, has already made significant investments—in fact, historic investments—in terms of support: the largest funding for health care in history; the Minister of Education has touched on the historic investments we're making in this space in both child care and education. We are looking broadly and comprehensively at what is required for the economy to recover. That includes the issues that you've raised, and we will look forward to reporting back to the Legislature as those plans come forward.

I say again to the Legislature, we do look forward to Minister Morneau's update today. The federal government has been an important partner of the government of Ontario, and we look forward to that continued partnership.

CURRICULUM

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Good morning, Speaker, and thank you. My question is to the Minister of Education.

Parents in my riding have been frustrated for years with the decline in the quality of math in our schools. Their kids are struggling with basic concepts and have not yet been supported by a strong curriculum. They know, and our government knows, how important math is for students,

not just for their chosen post-secondary pathway but for everyday life. Can the minister please share some details of how our new elementary math curriculum is a substantial improvement on the previous curriculum?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you very much to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for her advocacy for financial literacy and an updated math curriculum in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, it has been 15 years since the last time the elementary math curriculum was updated. For a decade under the former government, we saw stagnation of scores. In fact, roughly half of students could not meet the provincial math standard.

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We have a challenge when it comes to numeracy in the province. It's why the government is fulfilling a commitment we made to the people of Ontario to go back to basics with a new, improved and modernized curriculum that actually, for the first time, builds understanding of the value of money by codifying financial literacy from grades 1 through 8.

Mr. Speaker, we're also for the first time teaching coding and computational skills to make sure that our young people, the next generation, are set up for the jobs of the future. We have a focus on fundamental math concepts, with a focus on learning and recalling numbers, such as automaticity. The aim, of course, is that young people know those fundamentals through life. We want them to succeed. It's why we have a four-year math strategy, \$200 million allocated to lift those math scores up, improve financial literacy and coding as well as numeracy in the province of Ontario for the next generation.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And the supplementary?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the minister for the answer. These changes were desperately needed. It's exciting that we finally see an updated and strengthened math curriculum after 15 years. Parents and students across my riding have shared overwhelmingly positive feedback on these changes.

Improving math is a critical component of our plan to equip students with the skills they need to succeed in the classroom, in post-secondary education and in the workplace. Going back to basics is key, but so is learning how to adapt to the jobs of today and tomorrow. Can the minister please describe how our new curriculum will help set our students up for success in a changing world?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you again to the member for the question. Speaker, what we've seen through the COVID-19 reality is great disruption to the economy and to sectors of the workforce. We know that in order to give our young people competitive advantage, in order to ensure that they have the skills they will need now more than ever in a very competitive global marketplace, we need to ensure our math curriculum—I would argue all curricula in the province—is aligned with labour market needs.

That disconnect is perhaps one of the significant impediments to their ability to get jobs. It is not a coincidence that we have twice the rate of youth unemployment in this

country, that we have a 200% ratio of income to debt for millennials. We've got to do better, and the time is now to do it. The Premier has been absolutely clear. We need financial literacy and coding and these types of life skills that they can apply for taxes, to understand debt and concepts that are fundamental in the future of their lives.

That's why we're doing that. It's why we're starting this September. It's why we've unveiled a \$200-million four-year math plan. It's why we're asking new educators to meet a grade 9 math standard. We are going to lift scores up and we're going to give hope to these young people to succeed in the marketplace.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS STRATEGY

Mr. Kevin Yarde: My question is to the Premier. People in Brampton and Mississauga are devastated by the deaths of D'Andre Campbell and Ejaz Choudry. They know that their deaths are part of a long-standing and unacceptable pattern of violence against Black, Indigenous and racialized Ontarians, and they are tired of governments wringing their hands, extending condolences and then doing nothing to address the deadly impacts of systemic racism in our communities.

This week, the mayors of Brampton and Mississauga made clear that they also want to see fundamental change in our policing. They are backed by communities and they are backed by us, the NDP, in calling for a full implementation of the Tulloch report on street checks and police oversight.

Will the Premier listen to the people of Brampton and Mississauga and commit to implementing these reports today?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Solicitor General.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I was actually pleased to see the opinion piece from Mayor Brown and Mayor Crombie, because the first recommendation they called for was that we pass the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, and we are doing that now. We are doing the due diligence. We are doing the consultation with police associations, with chiefs of police, to make sure we get this right.

I understand that there is a strong need to bring forward the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act and give it royal assent, but in all conscientiousness, I cannot do that without consulting first and making sure that the many regulatory pieces that are included with that COPS Act are embedded to ensure that we get it right.

We are doing that consultation. We've been doing it now for over a year. I have to say that the associations, the communities, the police services boards have been very, very helpful in those consultations, and the regulations are coming down shortly. We're getting the due diligence right—

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

Mr. Kevin Yarde: People in Brampton and Mississauga are calling for fundamental change to policing and

for government to meaningfully invest in our communities. They don't want armed police responding to mental health crises. They do not want what happened to D'Andre Campbell and Ejaz Choudry to ever happen again. The mayors of Brampton and Mississauga agree and so does the NDP. The mayors said, "These are the calls that should be handled by mental health professionals, trained in de-escalation techniques and counselling—not police." Returning to the status quo simply is not acceptable.

Will the Premier join us in advocating for a new response to mental health crises that will actually keep people in need of support safe?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Respectfully, a \$3.8-billion investment commitment that our government made when we came into office—we are a government that has said consistently mental health and addictions is an issue we intend to deal with in this term. We've done that with the very first minister responsible for mental health and addictions, appointed by Premier Ford. If that doesn't send a clear message that we are serious about dealing with mental health in all its forms—it's not just a Solicitor General issue. It's not just a Ministry of Health issue. We've made investments in education. We've made investments in health. We've made investments in policing and corrections. It is across government, across ministry.

If the member opposite has other ideas that he would like to share, bring them on, because the one thing that we are passionate about and we believe in strongly is that mental health is not just when you call 911. However, I will say, when the people of Ontario dial 911, they expect help, and we will ensure that our police have the services that they need to make that help be provided.

SERVICES D'OPTOMÉTRIE OPTOMETRY SERVICES

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: My question is to the Minister of Health. Au cours des deux dernières semaines, j'ai eu la chance de rencontrer plusieurs optométristes de ma région, qui sont non seulement des fournisseurs de soins de santé importants pour nos communautés, mais sont également des propriétaires de petites entreprises avec des défis énormes à surmonter, présentement empirés par les pressions de la pandémie actuelle.

J'ai été surprise d'apprendre qu'aucun ajustement aux frais couverts par l'assurance-santé n'a été fait depuis 2009, donc depuis 11 ans, et que jusqu'à présent, aucune négociation à cet effet a eu lieu avec le gouvernement.

Est-ce que la ministre de la Santé peut confirmer si son gouvernement négocie actuellement, ou prévoit négocier, avec les optométristes de l'Ontario pour rectifier cette situation problématique de couverture inadéquate par l'assurance-santé?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you very much for the question. Merci pour la question. Our government is actively working to make sure that any negotiations that

need to be done are being done. I cannot comment specifically on the optometry situation, but I can tell you that COVID has certainly put a dent in some of our activities. But all the efforts will be ongoing to make sure whatever needs to be done in these processes is completed and carried on.

I know that the Minister of Health has been working very hard with a number of groups to address their concerns and proceed with the negotiations that are current. I know that, in the Ministry of Long-Term Care, it's very much the same situation. COVID has taken a little bit of steam out of us, but we are back on track now and making sure that the measures that we need to take care of are being addressed. So I appreciate your concern about that, and I can raise that with the Minister of Health.

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

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Encore à la ministre de la Santé. En plus du défi des frais couverts par l'assurance-santé, la goutte qui fera déborder le verre pour ces professionnels et propriétaires : la pandémie actuelle. La COVID-19 a pris un système déjà précaire et l'a rendu encore plus fragile. Les optométristes ont dû diminuer significativement leur charge de patients pour s'assurer de respecter les règles imposées et assurer la santé de leurs patients. Ils ont dépensé des milliers de dollars en fournitures non prévus dans leurs budgets, et ils le font à leurs propres frais. Le tout, en plus d'absorber les coûts des pertes liées aux couvertures inadéquates de l'assurance-santé. Ce statu quo ne peut plus continuer.

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Monsieur le Président, quand le gouvernement commencera-t-il à négocier avec les optométristes pour assurer une révision et une mise à jour des frais couverts par l'assurance-santé, et rectifier cette situation le plus tôt possible?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Merci pour la question. I know that the Minister of Health values the role of optometrists. The work that they do for Ontarians is very much appreciated. We have to gradually reopen the economy, and we have asked regulatory colleges to develop guidance to ensure the high quality and safe clinical care of patients before services begin, and this guidance includes personal protective equipment information and guidance, physical distancing and staffing issues.

Our government relies on health regulatory colleges to govern their respective professions in the public interest and ensure its members provide health care services in a professional, safe and ethical manner.

In recent years, the cost of OHIP-insured optometry services has risen in line with utilization. I know that the Ministry of Health will continue to work with the Ontario Association of Optometrists to understand their concerns, and I will relay your question to her.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Now more than ever, it's crucial that we make the right investments as Ontario recovers from

COVID-19. Our government has always had a clear mandate to build better public transit, and we are keeping that promise. We have made more progress on public transit infrastructure in two years than the last 15 years combined under the previous Liberal government.

The Building Transit Faster Act is a key piece of legislation to ensure we get shovels in the ground quickly for our four priority projects. With the passage of this bill, we are in good shape to finally deliver the integrated and modern transit network the GTA needs. Can the minister please tell us what the passing of the Building Transit Faster Act means for us moving forward?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for the question. COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on all of our lives, and Ontarians have all done their part to stop the spread. Despite the challenges that the pandemic has brought, it is critical that we remain focused on long-term transit planning. That's why our government is committed to ending the culture of delays and getting shovels in the ground to build a better, brighter future in the GTA.

The opposition agrees that the GTA needs a more robust transit network, but they have no plan to get this done. The Building Transit Faster Act will eliminate the barriers that have held up projects in the past. It's a shame that the NDP voted against this critical bill, but I have good news for them. You still have an opportunity to work constructively with us, and I look forward to sharing more in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the minister for her response. The debate on this bill in this Legislature has shed light on our shared objective of building better public transit. The opposition agrees that the GTA is in dire need of a modern, integrated transit network. They agree that investing in transit is the smart thing to do, yet in voting against the Building Transit Faster Act, the NDP have contributed to this political gridlock that has prevented big projects from getting built. Can the minister tell us what our next steps are following this bill's passage?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you to the member for the question. Our government is focused on smart transportation planning. This is about connecting more people to more opportunities in ways that improve the overall quality of life of Ontarians. The Building Transit Faster Act is the means to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of public transit should not be partisan. Ontarians expect and deserve all levels of government to work collaboratively to get this done. Ontario and Toronto need our four priority projects. We continue to call on the federal government to come to the table and fund at least 40% of these critical projects. So I urge the members opposite to get off the sidelines and join us in calling on the federal government to fund their fair share.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier. This government has praised front-line workers for being

heroes. However, we know that actions don't always match their words.

Family-funded PSWs have been excluded from the pandemic pay. One of my constituents, Nancy Riley from Blind River, has been raising this issue and has written to the Premier hoping to get an answer as to why she couldn't and is not receiving the top-up.

Family-funded PSWs have to spend out of pocket to get the PPE they need on top of having to travel from house to house, risking exposure to themselves and their patients. Why has this government excluded family-funded PSWs from pandemic pay?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you for the question. First, I want to emphasize the important role that personal support workers play all across Ontario for our most vulnerable people, not only in long-term care but in hospitals and other settings, and in family settings as well. They are truly front-line heroes.

I know that the Ministry of Health has been working very hard, along with the Treasury Board, to make sure that the pandemic pay is flowed. Certainly, we're looking at a wide range of front-line workers to be covered by that.

The reality is that that pandemic pay is coming. It is in the process of being channelled. Not everyone has been part of that program. We know that personal support workers are often underpaid, and we've seen that in long-term care. We understand and acknowledge the need to address that issue, particularly in long-term care.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And the supplementary.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Premier: Front-line workers have been putting their lives at risk for the well-being of others. If someone believes that they have been exposed to COVID-19, Public Health Ontario recommends that they self-isolate. However, in a dispute between the Ontario Nurses' Association and several long-term-care-home operators, an arbitrator ruled that long-term-care workers voluntarily isolating aren't eligible to receive the paid leave.

When someone believes that they have been exposed to COVID-19, they need to self-isolate. They cannot put their colleagues or their patients at risk. Will this government ensure that all workers, and most particularly health care and long-term-care workers, be guaranteed 10 paid sick days a year?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you for the question. In terms of the pandemic pay, over 375,000 of Ontario's front-line and support workers across several sectors will receive pandemic pay. It is the largest of its kind in the country and is unprecedented in the province's history.

I'll say it again: Our government values the commitment that our front-line workers showed day in and day out. They were there for patients in hospital, there for residents in long-term care—absolutely critical—and we acknowledge their significance and important role.

We authorized a temporary \$4-an-hour pandemic premium for the next four months—our long-term-care personal support workers supported in that regard. It will be

provided retroactively for work performed from April 24, 2020, to August 13, 2020. Employees working over 100 hours per month will receive lump-sum payments of \$250 per month for each of the next four months.

We value our front-line workers. Thank you for the question.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Mr. Deepak Anand: My question is for the Minister of Education. Monday morning, I woke up to a front-page story in the Toronto Star about how our government is tackling the systemic racism in Ontario's education system.

I'd like to thank the Minister of Education for his commitment to fixing these serious problems. Through you, Mr. Speaker: Can the minister please tell this House why it is so important to stamp out racism and what action the government is taking to help eradicate racism from our schools?

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Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for his leadership in the area of combating racism in schools in Peel and across the province.

Speaker, when 47% of Black students are enrolled in applied courses yet less than 20% of non-Black students are enrolled in those courses; when they're four and a half times more likely not to graduate; when only one third seeks post-secondary education; and, in the context of suspensions, when Black kids are more than twice the rate suspended than non-Black kids, according to Toronto District School Board data that has been released, it is so obvious we have a problem in this province. Systemic racism is real, and it must take all of us to be courageous and to confront it.

That's why we will be bringing forth a plan that challenges the status quo, that gives hope and opportunity to these children who for too long have felt isolated and ignored by government. They expect better.

As the minister, the parliamentary assistant and I have been conducting round tables. We've heard of a need for action in suspensions, a need for action to deal with streaming in grade 9, and better training of our educators, of our trustees and of our staff. We endeavour to do that, Speaker, in this province.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to the minister for the answer. The data speaks volumes. I'm thrilled to hear that our government is taking decisive action to stamp out systemic racism in our schools. I know that more needs to be done.

Over the past few years, various incidents have shown that at the highest echelon of the school system, racism is still apparent and pervasive. I have been dismayed by the instances at the Peel District School Board, and it is sad to see the actions of a trustee at the Ottawa Catholic School Board as well. I know that my Ottawa-area colleague, like

the MPP from Carleton, has been following this affair at the board closely.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: Can the minister please share our government's response to these types of incidents and what further action we are taking to make sure that all—and I mean all—students are respected?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I, too, am disturbed by the comments of that trustee in question. I've spoken very closely to the member from Nepean, the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. Like her, I share deep concern related to the comments and the impact that those comments and words have on this young man's life.

I've spoken to the father of this young man, and it is so obvious that they expect better, and accountability and justice for this type of bad judgment demonstrated by trustee Blackburn. As stated by members of the community, it was shameful, it was racist and it was abuse of her privilege. It is clear that this trustee must do the right thing and step down.

Our government is committed to eliminating all forms of racism within our school, improving behaviour and ultimately codifying the element of respect within our schools. In the coming days, we will announce our plan to implement real change within our system and to give hope and opportunity to these children—accountability, justice and economic opportunity that they deserve for the coming years, Speaker.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr. Joel Harden: My question is for the Premier. Speaker, students with disabilities and their families are wondering when this government will announce something—anything—to make sure that their learning needs are going to be supported this fall. COVID-19 has hit people with disabilities particularly hard in many ways, including the move to distanced learning. Online platforms are not always accessible for all students, and in-class resources are more difficult or even impossible to access from home.

Without new supports, Speaker, there's a real risk that students who were already struggling before COVID and during COVID will continue to struggle this fall when schools reopen, in whatever form the government decides they can. Premier, will you release a plan to ensure that all learners, particularly those with disabilities, will be supported?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. We do agree that these particular children will need continued support and heightened levels of support, given the challenges that they would have faced over the past months while being at home.

What I've directed school boards to do for this summer is to continue to provide a continuity of access to special education and mental health supports that normally would end at the end of school in June. We've asked them to continue funding those to create continuity. We've asked

them, for September, for their IEPs and IPRCs to continue unimpeded. We've asked for a check-in of every parent by the school board to ensure that they've got the tools they will need to succeed. We've added additional funding in special education this year in the GSN—the highest contribution ever made. We've also added an additional \$10 million to hire more psychologists and more psychotherapists, as well as other important social workers to assist these students.

We know that there is more to do in this respect. We've added additional funding in the Support for Students Fund. There's more support specifically tailored for special educators because we know they're going to be important to the restart and to the success of these young people in September.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: I heard earlier the minister talking about a four-year math plan. I have a simple proposition to the government: Given this phone that the people of Ontario have given to me—they pay for it—why not a four-minute phone plan, Minister? Why not pick up the phone and call David Lepofsky from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance, which has given your government a brief to which they've heard no response yet about how they can help students with disabilities this fall? They've made appeals to this government, Speaker; their appeals have not been answered. Their brief is supported by 10 disability rights organizations and a major teachers' union.

Speaker, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. All this government and all this minister needs to do is answer the voice mails, answer the multiple emails, answer the appeals.

In all sincerity, Speaker, after the break of question period, I'm happy to sanitize my phone, walk across the aisle, and give the minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I overlooked it the first time, but you can't use props during question period or in the House.

Response?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: You know, Speaker, I actually speak to Mr. Lepofsky quite often. I spoke to him just two weeks ago in advance of our reopening plan. I've spoken to the AODA Alliance, and likewise I've spoken to the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education on a biweekly basis throughout this pandemic. So you don't need to share your phone; I am in contact with him, and I care deeply about it.

In fact, it was his opinion and his recommendation to me that there be a check-in of every student by the school boards before September. We adopted that recommendation; I thought that was prudent.

Speaker, in addition, what he has also called for is additional access to support and funding. What we've done is increased the GSN, the largest investment in special education, because we recognize, most especially with those families, that they face challenges. We're going to continue to invest in them.

We're going to continue to provide mandatory professional development for all educators in the area of mental health, and we're going to continue to ensure that there is staffing in place to help these kids succeed in September.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Billy Pang: Speaker, my question this morning is for the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Minister, COVID-19 has affected so many Ontarians across the province in many different ways. Our government knows that these unprecedented times have been especially hard on Ontarians, including on their mental health.

Across Ontario, we have seen an increase in those experiencing stress, anxiety and other mental health challenges as people and families have been supporting our shared goal of stopping the spread of COVID-19 and moving forward with the reopening of our province.

Constituents in my riding know that our government is committed to ensuring Ontarians are able to access services and supports when and where they need them. Minister, could you please explain to the members of this Legislature what our government has done to address mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the member from Markham—Unionville for that question. Mr. Speaker, our province—in fact, our whole world—has been affected by an outbreak almost unprecedented in our province's and our country's history.

We know that when people are experiencing something new and unfamiliar to them, that can cause many people to experience stress and anxiety, among other mental health challenges. That's why I was proud to stand with Premier Ford to announce our \$12-million investment commitment to mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak here in Ontario. This commitment will soon be expanded.

At ontario.ca/coronavirus, Ontarians and their families can now easily find information about the many available mental health care options to help meet their unique needs, including online therapy options, among other services and supports. Mr. Speaker, we are here as a government to support and help all the people of Ontario when and where they need mental health supports.

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

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you, Minister, for that excellent answer. I know that my constituents will be pleased to hear that our government has taken immediate action to address the mental health challenges of all Ontarians during this difficult time.

Minister, I know that you have been meeting with mental health and addictions service providers and many other organizations over the past few months to hear directly from them about the challenges they have been facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are several organizations in my riding that have been affected in some way by the COVID-19 outbreak in Ontario.

1130

Minister, could you please explain to the members of this House how our government has responded to the various challenges affecting mental health and addictions service providers during this COVID-19 outbreak in Ontario?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: As part of our commitment to addressing the mental health of all Ontarians, our government established a Mental Health and Addictions COVID-19 Response Table, chaired by the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence within Ontario Health. Members of this response table represent organizations from across the sector and, since day one, have been focused on ensuring that available services and supports are maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every week since this table was first established, I've been hearing from every member present at the table about the challenges being faced by service providers across the province. Each member of this table has been connecting with provincial and regional COVID-19 tables to ensure any issues impacting our mental health and addictions system are quickly resolved.

This government's overriding priority has always been to ensure that every Ontarian has access to high-quality services and supports when and where they need them. We'll continue listening—

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. It was reported last week that as we careened into COVID-19, the Minister of Long-Term Care went to the Treasury Board for support and funds to address the problems they already knew about in long-term-care homes, but was refused.

Folks in Pickering now know the awful history of complaints and non-compliance at Orchard Villa, and that those complaints were well known to the government, as CBC reported. So what happened, exactly? Did the Minister of Long-Term Care ask for support and get denied by the President of the Treasury Board, the MPP for Pickering—Pickering, where Orchard Villa has been known to be a home at risk for years and 78 people have died?

This government won't allow an inquiry. They haven't pulled the licence for Orchard Villa. They want to give private, for-profit homes indemnity. Bill 161, now law, will restrict class action lawsuits like the families of Orchard Villa are pursuing. Their former PC staff and party brass are suiting up as lobbyists in the private senior care sector.

Over 1,800 deaths have been in long-term care, and the government is doubling down on profit protection and playing politics. Speaker, I'm not playing. I stand with families and seniors and ask: When will this self-serving government start serving seniors and their loved ones?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I appreciate that question. I want to make it really clear and correct some misinformation that was mentioned earlier. Our government is spending more than any previous government on long-term care. There have been no cuts to long-term care, despite the narrative. In fact, the Treasury Board has provided \$1.75 billion to address capacity issues, and our government has made long-term care a priority.

We invested \$23 million for a minor capital fund. In last year's budget, we committed \$72 million more to long-term care than the year before. In the economic update this spring, we invested an additional \$80 million to improve and maintain quality of care and overall resident experience. On top of that, we provided \$243 million in emergency funding for surge capacity, infection control and more staffing.

Our government has not only demonstrated concern for long-term care but it has put money behind it. That is more than any other previous government. So please—

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

DEFERRED VOTES

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 POUR CONNECTER LA POPULATION AUX SERVICES DE SOINS À DOMICILE ET EN MILIEU COMMUNAUTAIRE

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 175, An Act to amend and repeal various Acts respecting home care and community services / Projet de loi 175, Loi modifiant et abrogeant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les services de soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on a motion for closure on the motion for third reading of Bill 175.

On July 7, 2020, Ms. Elliott moved third reading of Bill 175, An Act to amend and repeal various Acts respecting home care and community services. Mrs. Tangri has moved that the question be now put.

The bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes on Mrs. Tangri's motion that the question be now put. I will ask the Clerks to prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1136 to 1206.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 64; the nays are 24.

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

Ms. Elliott has moved third reading of Bill 175, An Act to amend and repeal various Acts respecting home care and community services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjections: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Same vote? Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 64; the nays are 24.

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): This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1207 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 VISANT À FAVORISER LA REPRISE ÉCONOMIQUE FACE À LA COVID-19

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 197, An Act to amend various statutes in response to COVID-19 and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Projet de loi 197, Loi modifiant diverses lois pour faire face à la COVID-19 et édictant, modifiant et abrogeant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

Those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, I'm going to ask the Clerks to prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1301 to 1331.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 59; the nays are 22.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to give a brief explanation of his bill.

Hon. Steve Clark: I'll defer my comments, Speaker, to ministerial statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Hon. Steve Clark: I rise in the House today to speak to our proposed COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act. This

legislation is key to our province's economic restart and recovery, to help us as we get back on track after the COVID-19 outbreak.

We are emerging from one of the most challenging periods this province and this country have ever seen. COVID-19 has impacted everyone in our province: our friends, our neighbours and our families. In its wake, it has created personal and financial hardship greater than we could ever have imagined.

But while this pandemic has kept us physically apart, Ontarians have shown us and shown the world, our Ontario spirit. Businesses across our province have donated essential PPE and quickly changed their business operations to make sanitizer and face shields. Ontarians have delivered groceries to those who couldn't leave their homes, stood on their balconies and their doorsteps to cheer for our essential workers, and kept their distance from the ones they love the most just to keep us all safe.

This brings me to our essential workers and front-line health care workers. Thanks to their heroic efforts, we were able to flatten the curve and save countless lives. Our hospitals increased capacity and, as part of a robust action plan, deployed specialized teams, including public health and home care staff, to protect residents and staff in long-term-care homes. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of our health care heroes and our essential workers from the bottom of my heart. We owe each and every one of them a great deal of gratitude.

I'd also like to thank all Ontarians who did their part and are continuing to do their part by following public health advice, such as physical distancing, wearing masks and regularly washing hands. It is because of every single Ontarian that we have been able to avoid the worst-case projections and instead chart a path to reopening and to recovery.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government took immediate action to protect the people of Ontario, declaring an emergency and making the difficult but necessary decision to close much of the province's non-essential businesses, because nothing—nothing—is more important to our government than the health and safety of Ontarians.

Through every phase of the crisis and recovery, we have listened to the best advice of our health care experts.

Mr. Speaker, we took swift and decisive action in the face of the crisis, which included a \$17-billion package in relief for families, supports for businesses and funding for health care. We took action to support our health care workers, deliver relief to all essential workers and their families, and help businesses weather the crisis. Thanks to those actions, we are safely reopening our province.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation I introduced earlier today is part of our government's plan to get Ontario back on track while ensuring that we remain ready for any scenario. To create jobs and get our economic engine going again, we need to get key infrastructure projects built faster, attract new jobs and investment, and adjust regulations to help businesses adapt to this new environment. To

help communities bounce back, we must ensure municipalities have the tools and resources they need to deliver the services to Ontarians as effectively as possible while addressing their most pressing challenges. And to help Ontarians recover their livelihoods, we must protect consumers. We must modernize services, improve our education system, and ensure that all young people in Ontario have the opportunity to succeed. No region and no community can be left behind if Ontario is going to get back on track to growth and prosperity once again.

Speaker, the first priority of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act is to restart jobs and development. We will get Ontario working again. Thousands of Ontarians were put out of work in the past few months because of the pandemic. As we gradually and safely reopen the province, businesses are reopening and welcoming employees back. We are making strategic investments to strengthen local economies and to create new jobs. We are welcoming the world to invest in Ontario, with the creation of a new investment-attraction agency, providing a one-stop shop for strategic investors and job creators that moves at the speed of business.

Invest Ontario will play a pivotal role in our economic recovery, supporting our strategic domestic firms and attracting businesses from around the world who want to take advantage of our strengths and business-friendly environment so that they can create good jobs right here.

Our government will also continue to invest in local infrastructure projects, to not only create good-quality jobs, but to improve our quality of life. Whether it's highways, transit or bridges, we will build these projects faster to boost Ontario's economic recovery. We will create thousands of jobs, opportunities for businesses and ensure that every community enjoys a higher standard of living. In 2020-21, we have committed, Speaker, over \$2.6 billion to repair and expand provincial highways and bridges. That means reducing congestion and making roads safer for drivers. To get shovels in the ground faster and get people to work quicker, we are making it easier to build this critical infrastructure with our highway construction accelerator. It will reduce delays and it will save money.

1340

We are proposing changes that would allow Ontario to enter into new commercial agreements with potential partners to build transit-oriented communities. This would allow for the development of more housing around transit and will put job opportunities within the reach of more people—truly planning for the last mile.

We are also proposing to make it easier to make changes to the Building Code Act when we're responding to urgent public safety issues, and to achieve the cross-country harmonization and timely adoption of construction codes as committed to under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. Harmonizing our building code with model national codes will make Ontario more competitive.

Building on our enhancements over the past year, we are also proposing changes to the Environmental Assessment Act that will ensure stronger environmental oversight and will focus our resources on projects that have the

highest impact on the environment while also helping key infrastructure projects get going without unnecessary red tape. We want to support projects that will create jobs now while making Ontario safer and stronger in the years to come. We will not only get Ontarians back to work but back on their feet and able to build their communities up again.

Mr. Speaker, the second priority of our COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act is to strengthen communities across the province. We are supporting our municipal partners to adapt to the new environment. Throughout the pandemic, we've worked side by side with them to provide them with the tools they need to serve their residents. However, there's still much more work to do to help our communities respond and to help them recover. We know that municipalities are a key part of Ontario's economic recovery. Their success is Ontario's success. That's why our government wants to make sure they have the flexibility, the tools and the support they need.

At the outset of COVID-19, we acted quickly to give municipalities and their local boards the ability to hold meetings electronically, allowing municipalities to continue to function while protecting public health. Municipalities need the flexibility to make those local decisions quickly and effectively, and we have seen how critical that has been over the last several months.

Municipalities have told us that these temporary provisions have been working well and have led to greater public participation from local residents. That's why we're proposing changes to give municipalities the option to meet electronically at any time, not only during emergencies. This would also allow them to conduct business and practise physical distancing not only as we emerge from COVID-19, but at any point in the future when in-person meetings cannot take place.

We're also proposing to give municipal councils the ability to allow their members to vote by proxy in certain limited circumstances. This will also help support municipalities and some of the councillors who may be ill. There may be situations where they couldn't, for a short period of time, represent their constituents' interests while following public health recommendations and ensuring that municipalities can continue to do their important work. We want to help ensure that our municipal partners have more flexibility so they can continue to provide the services that people and businesses across this province rely on every day.

They also need our help to boost their local economies. Our government has been clear that we're committed to doing just that by helping to create jobs, build housing and attract business investments. That's why we're proposing to enhance the existing minister's zoning order authority so that we can work with our partners to reduce approval delays on critical projects that local communities need, like those that support our economic recovery, deliver more housing options and leverage our transit investments.

I want to be clear: This tool cannot be used within the greenbelt. Our commitment to protecting it remains unchanged.

This enhancement would help us create more affordable housing because it would allow us to require affordable housing units in new developments through inclusionary zoning.

We are moving forward with proposed changes that would provide more certainty to the upfront costs of building new housing and revenues collected by municipalities. Through development charges, municipalities would be able to recover 100% of the cost to build more critical community services—services like long-term care, child care, public health facilities, playgrounds, libraries and affordable housing.

And a new community benefits charge would help fund the things growing communities need. This would make municipal revenues and costs for builders clearer from the start. We also know that it's essential for everyone in growing communities to have open space and outdoor recreation, so we're keeping the ways municipalities already get parkland—even if they choose not to use the new community benefits charge.

We've consulted extensively, and we know that the modified development charges and the new community benefits charge will work together. They'll give municipalities the tools to help them pay for infrastructure and services needed in growing, complete communities.

The new actions for municipalities that I've highlighted today would build on the steps we've already taken to help them manage and recover from the outbreak. But we recognize that municipalities are still facing significant revenue shortfalls because of the outbreak. This isn't unique to Ontario. Cities and towns across Canada are facing the same shortfalls. The need is urgent. That's why the Ontario government will continue to be a champion for communities with the federal government and call on them to provide funding supports to help every community chart a path to a strong economic recovery. Municipalities are on the front lines, supporting our communities and delivering local services to residents, day in and day out.

And we're proposing to give communities more say on a number of items, including the location of new landfills.

We're going to keep working hand in hand with our municipal partners so that they can emerge stronger and be better able to meet the needs of local residents.

We're working with other sectors, as well. We're going to be working with the agriculture sector, Speaker, which I know you're very interested in, to reduce the regulatory burden while maintaining standards to protect the environment. Our proposed changes would also help reduce costs for farmers, rural landowners and municipalities.

Speaker, in the time I have left, I want to talk about the third priority of this act, which is to create opportunity for the people of Ontario. We must ensure that our economic recovery gives all Ontarians the opportunity to succeed. COVID-19 forced us to quickly adapt, to modernize, to leverage technology, to continue to provide services virtually and more efficiently.

While the pandemic disrupted many services, we have worked with our justice partners to move services online whenever possible. We've also established innovative

ways to operate our justice system, such as allowing remote proceedings. This ensures that the resolution of legal matters can continue.

We want to continue to help people and businesses resume their daily lives with convenient access to essential services. Simple things, like extending marriage licences for 24 months, would help make life easier for couples who have been impacted and have put their plans and their lives on hold.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that our government will always stand for consumer protection. That's why we're introducing new rules to provide relief for payday loan borrowers who are in financial distress.

As we look ahead to building a stronger future, we must think of Ontario's children and young people in our communities. That's why equality of opportunity is the driving force behind our actions on equity and education. We will ensure that all of our students have access to an education that equips them with the skills needed to succeed in the modern economy. Because of systemic racism and bias in the education system, we know that certain students—including Black, Indigenous and racialized students, and students living in low-income households—experience barriers to their full and successful achievement in school. They are disproportionately represented among students who are suspended and expelled. Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. Early intervention is critical. That's why the Minister of Education began building this plan to combat racism in all its forms immediately upon being appointed as minister. What became clear is that too many citizens felt ignored. It's time for action. Suspensions have consistent, adverse educational impacts on students, especially on those in the early grades. That's why this legislation would reform suspensions for students in kindergarten through grade 3, to make sure all students get the support they need to be successful in school.

Our COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act would allow us to work with our partners as we transform the mandates of TVO and TFO to support the development and the implementation of the province's vision for online learning.
1350

Speaker, it's a tough road ahead. We have to be thankful for so much. As Ontario residents, we have everything we need to succeed. Ontario is the greatest place to work, to start a business and to raise a family. In the years ahead, we will rebuild what we lost this year, and we will build a stronger Ontario, with more prosperity and greater opportunity for everyone.

As we continue on the road to recovery, this legislation outlines the path forward, the path to a stronger Ontario, where people can work hard, where they can get ahead and give their children unparalleled opportunities, where we work together to protect the most vulnerable among us, where businesses can thrive and create jobs, and where government works for everyone. Through decisive government action and the hard work of the people of Ontario, I know our economy will not only thrive, but it's going to come roaring back.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise, as the acting House leader of the official opposition, to respond to the minister's remarks on the introduction of this omnibus bill.

Speaker, yesterday we saw this government table a bill to allow the extension of emergency orders in this province for as long as two years. This morning, they tabled a motion to extend the declaration of emergency to July 24.

This government is very well aware that we are in the midst of a state of emergency in this province, and yet this afternoon we, for the very first time, see arrive on our desks a very comprehensive omnibus bill that we had no warning of, no consultation on, and no opportunity to discuss in advance what might be in this bill other than what we may have read in the media.

Speaker, it is so disrespectful to the democratic process to see a government, frankly, abuse the extraordinary power that is conferred on it under a declaration of emergency. There should have been an effort to reach across the aisle, to engage the official opposition, and to give us a heads-up about the next steps they were planning for in terms of their legislative agenda.

While I am deeply disappointed, Speaker, that they did not do that, I am actually not that surprised, because this is the pattern that we have seen since almost the beginning of this state of emergency, when the Premier came in and talked about, "We're all one team. There's no blue team, no orange team, no red team, no green team." But that has not been the way that this government has acted. They have been very much, "My way or the highway." They are disrespecting our ability as MPPs to do the work that we are entrusted with by the people who elected us.

I will call the government's attention to standing order 1(b): "The purpose of these standing orders is to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a manner that respects the democratic rights of members ... to debate, speak to, and vote on motions, resolutions and bills; to hold the government accountable for its policies...."

We can't do that work, the way that this government House leader is behaving. We aren't given a heads-up about the legislation that's going to be brought forward for debate. We find out when the orders are called what bills are going to be debated in this Legislature. It is showing disrespect to the democratic process for the government to act that way, especially in a state of emergency. That would be the expectation in any moment in this democracy, but it is especially critical when we are in a state of emergency and when the government has the powers that are granted by the declaration of emergency.

Speaker, we have some questions about this bill, and we will be bringing those questions to the floor of this chamber as this bill moves forward into second reading debate. One of the questions we have was about an issue that was raised by the leader this morning: What does this bill do to support the economic recovery that we need to see in this province? We know that women have borne the brunt of this pandemic. Women who work in hospitality and retail were among the first workers in this province to lose their jobs when the economy shut down. Women who worked as PSWs and nurses were the workers who were

most at risk throughout the economy. And it is women who are going to be unable to regain an economic footing in this economy if they don't have access to child care. There's nothing in this bill that speaks to the issues that women need support with if women are to be part of the economic recovery that is addressed by this bill.

Speaker, with that, I will conclude my remarks, but certainly you will hear a lot more from us as this bill moves forward.

Mr. John Fraser: It has been a long time since I've seen a phone book. It would have been good had the government at least given an indication of those things that were priorities for them. They didn't have to show us the legislation—but talk about the things that are priorities. As I perused the brief at the beginning here, the explanatory note, I can see some things that are reasonable, that are necessary, that are important. But there are other pieces in it, like the Justices of the Peace Act—I'm not sure that's COVID-19-related. And I'm concerned about transportation and expropriations and the provisions around the environmental assessments.

You've thrown this all together in a little telephone book here, and what I'm really concerned about is that we're not going to give those things in here that need the time to be debated the time that they need. I understand the government's need to take action. But if we're really under that much pressure right now, why are we sitting three days a week? Why aren't we sitting Thursdays? Why do we have all these special changes that we've made to sit during this emergency when it has gone back to business as usual?

Look, we want to work with you. We want to ensure that Ontarians succeed and thrive after we've come through this, but you have stuff in here that has absolutely nothing to do with that. It makes it hard for people to have confidence when you call it an economic recovery act when everything is not about economic recovery.

We'll take the time to go through this. Hopefully, we can take the time to debate. I'm sure the government will be interested in doing that thoroughly and not rushing this through. As I said, there are some things in here that are important and are necessary that I can support, and there are other things that we have concern over. Just ducking them into this bill under the cover of summer is not the right thing to do.

Again, I appreciate the need to take action. It would be good if we could at least function in a way where you said, "Here are the 10 things we're going to do." Even just tell us what you're going to do. Even actually give us a title. It just makes it easier to work together. Yes, we're going to oppose some things. We haven't opposed everything on this side of the House—the NDP or ourselves or the independents or the Greens.

I picked up the bill off my desk; that's when I got the bill.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: No, I didn't get an advance copy. No, I'm not on that list. I did try to sneak it out of the box before you all got here, but they wouldn't let me do that.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: Okay, there we go.

1400

Actually, I like the section that you wrote here. That was exactly, word for word, what I suggested.

Just to confirm: I did not get an advance copy of this bill, even though the government House leader is trying to convince you otherwise.

Let's just make sure that the things we're doing here in the middle of a state of emergency—which we're still in, which we're going to vote on next week—are really related to those things that are necessary. We just debated a few bills and—Bill 175 is going to do nothing to address the challenges in home care right now, which is a thing we should be focusing on. When we look at the Justices of the Peace Act or the Expropriations Act or the Development Charges Act—I don't know why the government isn't looking at eliminating development charges for health care facilities. If you're interested in people's health, if you're interested in infrastructure, why wouldn't you be doing that? Why would that not be included there? That's why we need to take the time to think about things and not be in a rush.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

"Whereas temperatures that are too hot can cause emotional and physical distress that may contribute to a decline in a frail senior's health;

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

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

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

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

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

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Mrs. Nina Tangri: This is a petition entitled "Framework for Reopening the Economy.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians have been working relentlessly to adhere to physical distancing guidelines, limiting themselves to necessary travel and protecting their loved ones; and

“Whereas our health care professionals are working long hours in our long-term-care homes, doctors’ offices, community care, and hospitals; and

“Whereas other essential workers such as grocery store clerks, farmers, meat and produce processors and transport workers keep our shelves stocked and food on the table; and

“Whereas the province has made significant progress in the fight against COVID-19 with decreasing infection and hospitalization rates, domestic production of personal protective equipment, and crucial financial investments in health and social services;

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

“That the government continues its methodical, cautious approach to reopen the economy so that people can get back to work, businesses can recover and people can regain a hopeful optimism for the future of this great province.”

I sign my name to this and I will hand it over to the ushers for the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I’m glad to present this petition that comes from all over Ontario. We started presenting them last year, but I think it’s good to read a few more into the record.

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

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

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

I support this petition on this hot day. I will affix my name to it and send it to the table.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Deepak Anand: My petition is for broadband access for all Ontarians.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas now more than ever, people across Ontario need reliable broadband to work, learn and connect with friends and family; and

“Whereas too many people in our province lack reliable Internet or cellular access—or don’t have any connectivity at all;”—my office is one of them, Mr. Speaker—“and

“Whereas the digital divide has been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically for rural and northern Ontarians, as we’ve heard about their frustration as they work and study from home; and

“Whereas northern and rural” Ontario “businesses continue to face inequitable challenges to” the transition “to touchless payment options, which represents a serious disadvantage when following the advice of health officials”—

Interruption.

Interjection: The phone. Take the phone.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. It’s petitions.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

“Whereas, by investing in reliable broadband and cellular services, we are helping to create greater opportunity for our families, farmers and small business owners in rural and remote areas of this great province...;

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

“Urge the federal Minister of Infrastructure in addition to the Minister of Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development to do the right thing and set up and help the province of Ontario expand connectivity to everyone across the province so that:

“(1) All Ontarians can have access to the opportunity to join the economy of the 21st century;

“(2) Our rural and northern communities are provided the same opportunities as urban Ontario.”

I absolutely agree with this petition, and I’ll sign it and give it to the table, Mr. Speaker.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Michael Mantha: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I completely agree with this petition. I affix my signature and send it down to the Clerk’s table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly called “Support Bill 153, the Till Death Do Us Part act.” It reads:

“Whereas there are 35,000 people on the wait-list for long-term care; and

“Whereas the median wait time for a long-term-care bed has risen from 99 days in 2011-12 to 152 days in 2018-19; and

“Whereas according to Home Care Ontario, the cost of a hospital bed is \$842 a day, while the cost of a long-term-care bed is \$126 a day; and

“Whereas couples should have the right to live together as they age; and

“Whereas Ontario seniors have worked hard to build this province and deserve dignity in care; and

“Whereas Bill 153 amends the Residents’ Bill of Rights in the Long-Term Care Homes Act to provide the resident with the right upon admission to continue to live with their spouse or partner;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Long-Term Care to pass Bill 153 and provide seniors with the right to live together as they age.”

I couldn’t agree more with this petition. I affix my name and will send it to the table.

1410

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, on December 29, 2019, five people were maliciously killed at the home of an ultra-Orthodox rabbi during Hanukkah celebrations in Monsey, New York;

“Whereas the horrendous events that took place on December 29, 2019, in Monsey, New York, coincide with an upward trend of instances of egregious acts of anti-Semitic behaviour, including within the province of Ontario;

“Whereas anti-Semitism can manifest in various different ways and cannot be adequately countered if it cannot be properly identified; moreover, anti-Semitism is a multi-faceted problem that requires a multi-faceted solution;

“Whereas the province of Ontario prides itself on being a safe and welcoming place free from religious-based hate;

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

“Proceed as effectively as possible to ensure that all Ontarians are protected from discrimination and hate

amounting to anti-Semitism by immediately passing Bill 168, the Combating Antisemitism Act, 2019, so that the government of Ontario be guided by the working definition of anti-Semitism and the list of illustrative examples of it, adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance plenary on May 26, 2016, when it interprets acts, regulations and policies designed to protect Ontarians from discrimination and hate amounting to anti-Semitism.”

I agree with this petition and affix my signature to it.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Ms. Jill Andrew: This petition is called “The Petition for the Creation and Implementation of the Regis Report.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas on May 27, 2020, Regis Korchinski-Paquet’s mother called 911 for police assistance during a family dispute. Within minutes of the police arriving, Regis ended up deceased on the ground 24 floors below. A call for assistance, ended in death;

“Whereas other calls for assistance that ended in death include April 6, DeAndre Campbell-Kelly, shot to death by police in Peel; May 8, Caleb Njoko in London, fell 15 floors from his balcony while police were present; and June 20, Ejaz Choudry, shot to death by police in Malton;

“Whereas the provincial government has a responsibility to ensure all residents are safe and will not be subject to differential treatment by law enforcement based on race, religion or mental state;

“Whereas a report by the Ontario Human Rights Commission ... titled Under Suspicion: Concerns About Racial Profiling by Police, found that case law recognizes that racial profiling is a systemic problem in policing;

“Whereas in an interim report, A Collective Impact, the OHRC found that Black people are grossly overrepresented in cases involving police use of force that results in serious injury or death. Despite making up only 8.8% of Toronto’s population, Black people were over-represented in use of force cases (28.8%), shootings (36%), deadly encounters (61.5%) and fatal shootings (70%), and 20 times more likely to be shot by police;

“Whereas Toronto city council, acknowledging the existence of anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism and its connection to police brutality, passed a motion on July 1, 2020, calling on the provincial government to address police violence and systemic racism;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a human-rights-based provincial strategy named the Regis report that includes the following:

“(1) The immediate implementation and expansion of the existing crisis intervention teams to be available 24 hours a day to accompany police officers to all calls for mental health and wellness checks, to de-escalate crises and prevent unnecessary use of force by police officers;

“(2) The reinstatement of the Safer Ontario Act, 2018, along with the recommendations made by Justice

Tulloch's police oversight review that would apply to the SIU and other police oversight agencies;

"(3) The release of the names of police officers present at any incident investigated by the SIU should any member of the public request it;

"(4) A thorough review of the equipment and use of force regulation, R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 926, so as to emphasize de-escalation and address the use of deadly force;

(5) The immediate divestment of the associated budget lines towards equitable community-centred and harm-reduction focused first responders and towards community empowerment support programs;

(6) A commitment to ensure COVID-19 recovery efforts include measures to end anti-Black, anti-Indigenous racism and address the mental health challenges exacerbated by COVID-19 for many Ontarians."

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't be more proud to support this petition, and I will affix my signature to this and hand it to the usher.

LCBO

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier M. Émile Prudhomme, de Val-Thérèse dans mon comté, for this petition. It reads as follows.

"Whereas the LCBO in 2017-18 transferred dividends of \$2.12 billion to the Ontario government, which were invested in the public services like health care, highways and colleges that the people of Ontario depend on; and

"Whereas the LCBO is a socially responsible retailer that ensured the safety of our communities in 2017-18 by challenging 13.9 million transactions over concerns of intoxication, underage purchase or second-party purchase; and

"Whereas the LCBO raised \$11 million in charitable donations in 2017-18 for MADD Canada, children's hospitals, the United Way and local charities;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To direct government to keep alcohol sales in public hands in order to protect our young people and communities and to ensure the profits are invested in our public services."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with the nice usher wearing a mask.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Jill Andrew: This is on behalf of our wonderful community in St. Paul's.

"Petition to Protect Tenants from Illegal Air Conditioning Fees.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas air conditioners are important for health and safety of members of our community, especially seniors;

"Whereas air conditioning fees are being charged by landlords without justification and in contravention to the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006;

"Whereas landlords charging these fees illegally rarely face any punishment for their actions;

"Whereas tenants are often paying these fees that landlords are not entitled to out of fear;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on the Rental Housing Enforcement Unit to proactively engage with the community to determine where landlords are charging such fees, and take corrective action against any landlord found to be in violation of the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006."

Man, do I ever support this petition. I'm going to sign it and hand it to the usher.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

REBUILDING CONSUMER CONFIDENCE ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 VISANT À RÉTABLIR LA CONFIANCE CHEZ LES CONSOMMATEURS

Ms. Thompson moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 159, An Act to amend various statutes in respect of consumer protection / Projet de loi 159, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la protection du consommateur.

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

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I would like to share with everyone in the House today that I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, Bob Bailey, the amazing member from Sarnia-Lambton.

Today, we are continuing our debate. We're continuing our conversation with regard to Bill 159, the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act, 2020. We first brought this bill to the House back in December 2019, and since then, a lot has changed. We now have to concern ourselves with things that we never thought we would, like wearing masks to grocery stores. As we all adapt now to life with COVID-19, I think it's important that Ontarians know that here at Queen's Park, we also take our responsibility for carrying on our legislative agenda very seriously.

We do this because we know Ontarians are looking to their government for reassurance and for action. They also want to know that as government, we have their back, and more importantly, that we're caring for the things that matter. People need to know this now more than ever. Ontarians are not only counting on us as a government to ensure the province is committed to their health and safety during COVID-19, but they're also expecting the government to continue our work to strengthen consumer protection and to further enhance business practices.

1420

As you all may be aware, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services really is a diverse ministry, and we are responsible for a significant part of numerous technical sectors, including electrical safety and technical standards. We also do a number of things behind the scenes so that all ministries can get their work done, like

procurement, pay, benefits, IT and real estate management. All of these examples are important and important to the work of the Ontario government, and I'm very pleased to be a part of all of it.

Speaker, when I talk about pride, I have to share with you that I'm particularly proud to continue this debate on rebuilding consumer confidence. Bill 159, if it should pass, will strengthen protection for all the people of Ontario at home, online and also in their communities. This is why we're changing outdated rules: to deliver stronger protections that are responsive to the needs of consumers while fostering the continued growth of a thriving economy for this province—and we've been busy.

In the past year or so, we have taken a number of critical steps to strengthen consumer protection, all the while thoughtfully reducing burden on businesses. I'll give you some examples of what we've been doing. For instance, we passed Bill 145, the Trust in Real Estate Services Act, 2020, to modernize rules for registered real estate brokerages, brokers and salespersons. We are working diligently on consulting with people on the regulations to bring that act into force. While our consultations were delayed due to COVID-19, this work is still very important, and I'm looking forward to getting it done and crossing that finish line.

As a brief aside, Speaker, I think it's really important that we recognize that we don't always agree in this House, but Bill 145, TRESA, passed third reading by a vote of 91 to 0. I really, sincerely want to thank all the members again for making this bill a reality.

Changes were also made to the rules under the Vintners Quality Alliance Act, 1999, that reduced red tape and provided more flexibility to wineries across the province, expanding wine choices for consumers in Ontario.

As we progress on our work, I would like to assure everyone in the House today and everyone listening that our government continues to place a priority on listening. We are listening to the needs and concerns of consumers across the province to help better protect them. Our government consulted with the public and stakeholders on three main pillars that will help us work faster, smarter and more efficiently as we move forward on all of our work. The first pillar is protecting the privacy of Ontarians, the second pillar is enabling businesses to compete digitally, and the third pillar is enabling better, smarter and more efficient government to help inform the creation of Ontario's digital and data action plan. Feedback from these particular consultations will help the government develop an efficient and effective action plan, again, keeping in mind the importance of protecting consumers in this province.

Further, we are also reviewing the Consumer Protection Act. This is the first comprehensive review in almost 15 years to provide people with an opportunity to share their ideas about how the act can keep pace with today's marketplace and further strengthen consumer protection.

I also want to take a moment to thank all of the people who have been instrumental in getting Bill 159 to this point today. There were many, many people in my ministry and my office who put in countless hours to get

this bill into the House, and then even more to get us to this point. You know who you are.

After the first reading, the bill was referred immediately to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, who made the important decision to visit different communities across Ontario. It's not the typical road map for a bill, but I was really, really impressed because it helped us get a more rounded perspective outside of the GTHA.

I also want to take a moment to acknowledge the work of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. Those hearings in Brampton, Windsor and Ottawa heard from 27 individuals and organizations. And further to those hearings, the bill was also referred to the Standing Committee on General Government, and I'm very pleased to say that my colleagues have worked really, really hard and the bill now reflects the work of all of the members in the committee.

Importantly, it also reflects the input from people and organizations throughout Ontario who took part in the public hearings. I'd like to acknowledge everyone who took the time to provide their input during the committee's public hearings just recently, in June. I know that during these extraordinary times, there were additional logistical difficulties in getting your work together and also in speaking before the committee. So, for those of you who made the effort, I thank you. I think the bill is better because of all of your work and your dedication.

Now, with that in mind, Speaker, I'd like to reiterate some of the specifics in Bill 159. The Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act, 2020, would, if passed, amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and the New Home Construction Licensing Act, 2017. The need for change in this area has been very evident, and it's urgent. For instance, deposit protection, cracked foundations, delayed closings, water penetration, mould—these are just some of the issues where homebuyers need assurances, as well as protections.

Buying a home is the largest purchase most of us will ever make in our lifetime. This bill is so much more than just about the purchase. I've said this in the House before, and I'd like to remind everyone that it's important to note that real estate is just not about the square footage or great floor plans. It's about having a place to call your own. I've said this many times. It's about that kitchen table or your comfy room where you host your family gatherings, and your backyard, Speaker, like we were talking about earlier today. It's all about that amazing, safe place where you can spend quality time together with your loved ones.

We did hear from Ontario families, and there are families across this province that are buying new homes that have serious defects, putting their health and safety at risk. Consumers are frustrated and fed up with the slow and complicated warranty and protection claims process that, quite frankly, feels stacked against them. We've heard them loud and clear that they want to be confident that they are hiring a reputable company to build their home and they expect strong warranties and protections that they can depend upon.

We also heard that they want strong oversight and enforcement of clear rules for all builders. Quite simply, the system has not been working for many years. Our

government recognizes that Tarion is a major part of this system, and we also recognize that through the years it had not done nearly enough to fulfill its responsibilities to protect buyers of new homes.

This is why we are rebuilding the Ontario new home warranty and protection program from the ground up, focusing on consumer protections, transparency, as well as access to information and good governance. Through this bill, our government will absolutely restore consumer confidence—and we've taken good strides already. We're implementing 29 of 32 recommendations in response to the Auditor General's report on Tarion.

We also are taking steps to make significant improvements that would make the new home warranty and protection program more responsive to the needs of consumers. Further, in relation to new home warranties, our changes proposed in this bill will, firstly, overhaul the Ontario new home warranty and protection program, making it more consumer-focused by enhancing the single-administrator model for warranty and protection delivery. Secondly, it would support new consumer protection priorities that the government committed to last spring as part of the overhauled program. This also includes enhancing the dispute resolution process and delivering new measures to promote better-built new homes.

1430

With regard to the dispute resolution process, this bill includes proposed changes to the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act that, if passed, would enhance the dispute resolution process by:

- establishing a mandate for Tarion to promote the resolution of claims as soon as reasonably possible;
- providing Tarion with the ability to use a range of processes to resolve disputes between homeowners and builders or vendors; and
- enabling the government to level the playing field in dispute resolution, and consider alternatives to resolving disputes between homeowners and Tarion other than the Licence Appeal Tribunal.

Further, if the Legislature passes the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act, my ministry plans to publicly consult on the subsequent proposed regulatory changes that would be required to bring some changes into effect. Specifically, this would include further measures to enhance dispute resolution.

Speaker, we know how important it is to have an effective, consumer-focused new home warranty and protection program in this province. That's why, last spring, the government conducted focused consultations with key stakeholders. This list includes the insurance industry, consumers, new home builders and vendors, other professionals and subject matter experts, other Canadian jurisdictions and, of course, Tarion.

Based on research and consultations, the government has decided to move forward with an enhanced single-administrator model rather than moving to a multi-provider insurance model. We believe that enhancements to the single-administrator model for the delivery of new

home warranties and protections are in the best interest of the people of Ontario.

It is also important to note that in the Auditor General's 2019 audit of Tarion, she identified several risks with the multi-provider insurance model and found that "the advantages of moving toward the competitive, multi-provider insurance model is ... still unclear."

By implementing an enhanced single-administrator model, the government would be able to more effectively respond to the issues that consumers raised during recent consultations, such as improving the claims process. Speaker, the people have spoken and we have listened, and now it is time to take action.

I would like to note that there is a wide range of other issues that we are addressing in Bill 159, as well, in addition to those that we are proposing for the new home warranty and protection program. For example, we are proposing changes that would help strengthen the framework for most administrative authorities under the government's oversight.

For the benefit of this House, Speaker, I'd just like to take a moment to explain the role of administrative authorities. Administrative authorities are independent, not-for-profit corporations that operate under accountability agreements with the province and are delegated certain responsibilities by the government. They regulate or provide services for specific sectors and industries. The model has been in use for over two decades, and there are now 12 administrative authorities that work in the province of Ontario. Many of the administrative authorities enforce a number of Ontario's laws, including consumer protection and public safety laws, and they also investigate alleged violations and handle complaints.

Generally, the model provides an efficient way to regulate industries in a cost-effective manner while promoting consumer protection as well as public safety. Some of these administrative authorities are responsible for helping ensure that certain professionals Ontarians receive services from are qualified and competent people. Some of these professionals are involved with equipment that we use in our daily lives, such as elevators. These people are dedicated to what they do. These are people who make sure the equipment is properly maintained and that consumers are being educated about their rights when making purchases. They do all this without receiving ongoing funding from the government. The administrative authorities are financially self-sufficient and raise their revenues through the fees they charge to the sectors they are responsible for.

Many of you may be familiar with administrative authorities such as the Travel Industry Council of Ontario and the Real Estate Council of Ontario. You might know them best by their acronyms—TICO and Reco. And some of you in the House might recall the legislation that MPP Bailey brought forward that resulted in Ontario One Call and "call before you dig." That was very, very important when it came to safely moving forward development.

In addition to working with these administrative authorities, the government retains its law-making and oversight

roles while giving the administrative authorities the responsibility, if you will, for the daily operations of how to best carry out their mandates. This includes things such as licensing and enforcement, among other matters.

I would like to reiterate an important point here: Bill 159, if it should be passed, would better harmonize some of the key accountability, governance and transparency requirements for most administrative authorities that the government oversees. The changes would increase the range of tools that the government would have to address issues that arise with respect to the authorities' governance as well as performance.

These changes, if passed, would affect the following administrative authorities: TSSA, the Technical Standards and Safety Authority; the Electrical Safety Authority; the Bereavement Authority of Ontario; the Real Estate Council of Ontario; the Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council; the Travel Industry Council of Ontario; the Condominium Authority of Ontario; the Condominium Management Regulatory Authority of Ontario; the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority; and the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority. Further, these administrative authorities are each accountable to one of three different ministers: myself, as the Minister of Government and Consumer Services; the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; and the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

Speaker, these authorities currently operate under a patchwork of legislation, and the laws that govern them vary. Some authorities are subject to stronger accountability, governance and transparency requirements than others. This means that the current models may not provide the government with the tools it needs to quickly and effectively address governance or performance issues that may arise. But I can tell you: We believe that it's important to have consistent rules across administrative authorities, and our bill reflects that. And I have to say, I appreciate so much the administrative authorities' willingness to work with us in that regard as well.

Right now, there are some important differences in the way people get information or services from these authorities that result in inconsistencies, but we're moving forward and we're making changes. We're making these requirements consistent. This will help ensure that the public gets the same baseline information as well as services.

The passing of Bill 159 will lead to greater public confidence in the authorities that are responsible for providing important functions and services that affect us every day, creating more consistency regarding the ability for the Auditor General to conduct value-for-money audits of most administrative authorities.

As mentioned above, administrative authorities should be subject to consistent standards and requirements to provide information as well as services. At the same time, it's important to note that the government needs a consistent range of tools to address issues relating to the governance or performance outcomes of these authorities.

Thus, the bill would establish more consistency regarding the minister's powers to support good governance.

Moreover, in most cases this would include giving the minister the authority to appoint a chair from among the directors of the administrative authority's board; increase or decrease the number of directors on the authority's board; and give the minister the ability to limit representation of specified persons or classes of persons on the authority's board of directors and to set competency criteria for directors of a board. Also, the minister could require certain administrative authorities to establish one or more advisory councils and include certain representatives, such as public representatives, or require these authorities to undertake an advisory process.

Lastly, the minister would be able to establish rules about the nomination of board members, their appointment or election process, the length of the terms, and whether they may be reappointed or re-elected.

1440

Additionally, if passed, Speaker, this bill would not only establish more consistency regarding the transparency requirements for most administrative authorities, but it would also give the minister the power to require administrative authorities to publish compensation information on their website about board members, officers and employees. It would also put in place requirements for administrative authorities to make their bylaws and annual reports available on their websites, and it would require administrative authorities to publish on their websites their fees, costs, other charges and payments, and the process and criteria under which they were set.

Speaker, the government remains committed to the administrative authority model—I want to emphasize that point—but I do think it is reasonable for the government to have these powers to ensure that we can continue to safeguard the public interest through unforeseen circumstances.

As mentioned above, I think our administrative authorities do good work, but there could be conceivable scenarios where the government might have to take additional, more extraordinary steps if certain conditions are in place, to protect the public interest. Hence, the bill would establish more consistency regarding the minister's ability to appoint an administrator to an administrative authority. For example, an administrator, if appointed, would have the right to exercise all the powers and duties of directors, officers and members of the administrative authority for a temporary period of time. This bill would also allow the minister to issue policy directions to an authority and require changes to an authority's objects or purposes, and to unilaterally amend the authority's administrative agreement. Again, these powers would only be exercised under specific and limited circumstances.

Conditions where this power could be exercised, for example, are in cases where the power is necessary to prevent serious harm to public safety or to the interests of the public or consumers; an event of force majeure has occurred; the administrative authority in question is facing a risk of insolvency; or the board does not carry a quorum.

Speaker, so far I've talked about a number of important areas for consumers and businesses. Our proposed legislation makes changes to the new home warranty protection program and the rules for administrative authorities.

But when we think about consumers, most of us think immediately of shopping and other common transactions such as picking up items from curbside, making online purchases or taking a car in for repair. However, there are other day-to-day consumer issues that more often occupy our everyday conversations, and these are some of the issues that are covered under the Consumer Protection Act, which is one of my ministry's most relied upon and best known statutes. The act has served Ontarians well, but we know it must keep up with the changing times. This is the case in just about every sector, but in some of the hypercompetitive areas my ministry deals with, we can only be assured of two things: Changes are going to continue, and they're going to come faster.

That is why my ministry is working on an end-to-end review of the Consumer Protection Act, to make sure that it keeps up with the realities of our modern marketplace. The Consumer Protection Act, known as CPA, is a key piece of Ontario's consumer protection framework; however, it has not been reviewed since it came into force almost 15 years ago. The act and its regulations protect consumers in a number of ways, including:

- preventing businesses from using deceptive and misleading practices;
- setting out requirements for what you must receive from a business when you make purchases online, in your home, over the phone or for future delivery;
- establishing sector- or product-specific rules, for example, on motor vehicles, gift cards, cheque cashing and towing; and
- setting out what can be done when a business breaks these rules, either through civil action or through government enforcement.

By reviewing the act, we are putting consumers first and listening to their needs and concerns to help better protect them.

Further, the review includes an online survey that's open to everyone until July 17. Again, we're reviewing the Consumer Protection Act and we have an online survey that's available right now, and I invite anyone who is interested to complete that survey. They have until July 17 to get that done. This will help us gather information about consumers' awareness and understanding of the act, as well as their experiences and thoughts about problems they have had when engaging in consumer transactions.

But while we undertake this broad review of the CPA, there are things that we could do more quickly. For instance, the changes that we are proposing in this bill would not only improve protection for consumers, but will also help businesses in Ontario by helping to level the playing field. By ensuring that we have a range of effective enforcement tools, we can encourage compliance with laws and stop bad actors who continue to cause harm to consumers as well as to the reputations of honest businesspeople.

Further, the Consumer Protection Act needs a tool such as administrative monetary penalties. Note that this tool already exists under the Payday Loans Act and the Collection and Debt Settlement Services Act, as well as the Ticket Sales Act. As we have seen in other areas, this is an effective tool to encourage compliance, as administrative monetary penalties can be imposed to promote compliance in cases where prosecution may not be warranted. Having this power under the CPA would bring it in line with other Ontario consumer legislation as well as jurisdictions across Canada.

Regulations would be needed to establish which contraventions of the act could result in an administrative monetary penalty and to set the amounts of the penalties. At this time, my ministry is consulting on proposed regulations that would implement administrative monetary penalties under the CPA if Bill 159 is indeed passed. Consultations on proposed regulations will support the development of an effective and workable enforcement tool.

Last but not least, Speaker, the final portion of the bill I'd like to address is an amendment to the Ticket Sales Act, 2017. The Ticket Sales Act establishes requirements for selling tickets and protections for purchasers of tickets to Ontario events. If approved, this change would require that all prices in a ticket be listed in Canadian currency. Currently, ticket businesses are required to indicate when non-Canadian currencies are used in an offer. This has to be done in a clear, prominent and comprehensible manner. Despite this, consumers may not be aware that the price is a non-Canadian currency such as US dollars until late in the transaction. In some cases, they may not even realize this until it shows up on their credit card statement. Frankly, this is not acceptable.

If tickets are offered in non-Canadian currency, credit card companies may charge a foreign currency conversion fee, which adds to the cost for consumers. For a consumer, this could mean that a ticket they purchased in Ontario for an event in Ontario would have extra charges, given the exchange on a US dollar as well as credit card fees. This is ultimately a consumer's choice, but they should have access to the full details at the time of the purchase so they can make an informed decision. Thus, the new requirement would support consumers' ability to make an informed choice between ticket offers in Canadian currency. It would also increase fairness for consumers by ensuring that ticket prices for an event in Ontario are listed and charged in the currency that they expect. Consumers buying tickets online would know exactly how much the tickets are costing them.

In addition to these proposed changes to the Ticket Sales Act, we are currently consulting on regulations to improve protection, transparency and choice for consumers buying tickets to Ontario events.

I believe that what we are proposing here today is a fair and balanced bill that would give consumers protection in the marketplace while helping honest businesses compete on a level playing field.

At this time, I will now pass the debate over to my PA, MPP Bob Bailey.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the minister for giving me the opportunity to share the floor and speak to this bill. It was a pleasure to travel the bill on behalf of the minister and the ministry, and also the general government committee work that took place in Ontario, both online and—as the minister said, it was something new altogether getting used to Zoom committee meetings, but I think it worked. I think it worked very well, and I think we should consider continuing those kinds of meetings. I think it gives people opportunities across Ontario—from the north, from the south and from all over Ontario—to have input, to be able to speak to the bill and to question where they maybe wouldn't have the opportunity to travel to Queen's Park for maybe at the most a 10-, 15- or 20-minute presentation—maybe five. So I think we need to really consider that. I'll be speaking to people in our party about that, the House leader and others, and I really think it's a great way to continue to work.

1450

Anyway, I should get into my remarks now.

It is an honour to rise in the House today and join the Minister of Government and Consumer Services in the leadoff to the third reading debate of Bill 159, the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act. The minister and her team have done a lot of terrific work in the last few months on this bill.

Just two weeks ago, I was participating in the second round of committee hearings for Bill 159 with a number of colleagues from both the government and opposition benches, and it was a very informative exercise.

As a result, I think we have a very good piece of legislation coming before the House for this third reading debate. I hope that the members of this House recognize all the work and consultation that went into this piece of legislation. I'm optimistic that when this bill does come forward for its final vote, we will have unanimous support. I think that is what the people of Ontario want. They want their elected representatives working together to strengthen consumer protection laws in this province.

Speaker, the team at the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services really do a great job for the people of Ontario. They have such a broad scope and range of responsibilities to the government and the people of Ontario. I'm amazed at how well they stay on top of everything under their purview. Under this minister's leadership, the team at the ministry really seems to have their finger on the pulse of the province.

As I alluded to a moment ago, Bill 159 is a perfect example of our government consulting, listening and coming forward with an action plan for the people of Ontario. I'm very proud to be a part of that team that helped to get the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act to this stage of the legislative process.

Bill 159, if passed by this Legislature, would strengthen protection and enhance business practices for the people of Ontario at home, online and in our communities. To paraphrase the minister's comments from the introduction of the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act back in December, people need to feel confident that there are protections in place when they are making decisions about spending their hard-earned money. We all know how hard it is to earn a dollar. It's becoming even harder for many during this pandemic.

As a government, we're going to modernize protections that consumers have in our province to reflect the changes in the marketplace. That is why we are changing outdated rules and taking a digital-first approach to deliver stronger protections that are responsive to the needs of consumers today and into the future.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of important content to this bill that I would like to review with you. But first, I'm going to mention again the different path that we have taken with Bill 159 since it was first introduced in December. I brought this up during the second reading debate, and I think it's worth mentioning again. On this side of the House, we are always looking for new ways to do things and new ways to improve how our government delivers for the people. Bill 159 was one of the very first—if not the first—bills that as a government we sent straight to a special travelling committee after its introduction. At the time, I was very interested to see how that process would play out. I thought that this was a unique approach. I spoke about that earlier on in my introduction. I've always been a proponent, with my private member's bills, of getting them to committee and letting the committee do the work of improving them for the people of Ontario. I think this is a great approach to take with all government legislation as well.

I personally had the opportunity, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, to sit on the committee that travelled in the province with the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act. We travelled to Brampton, Windsor and Ottawa for hearings on Bill 159. It was very informative to get input from people about how the bill can strengthen business practices while protecting consumers and keeping Ontario open for business.

Speaker, I certainly learned a lot at these meetings. In total, we heard from over 27 individuals and organizations in those meetings. After the initial round of committee hearings, the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act came back to the Legislature for second reading debate before the move to the Standing Committee on General Government. Over the last two weeks of June, the standing committee held committee meetings, listened to dozens of presenters and reviewed many, many more submissions from the public and the stakeholders. Finally, we conducted the clause-by-clause review, with a focus on improving areas of the bill with the feedback that we received. Overall, it was a very extensive and thorough process. The feedback from stakeholders, the public and our colleagues in the opposition benches has helped us to improve this bill, and there is no doubt about that.

Now, the Ontario new home warranties plan, to speak a little bit about that: I'm going to spend some time and talk about some of the things we heard there. First, I believe that every member of this Legislature has been hearing from constituents asking for improvements to Ontario's new home warranty and protection program. Bill 159, if passed, will amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and the New Home Construction Licensing Act. The need for change in this area is as obvious as it is urgent, and it has been this way for many years.

This act itself, Tarion etc., goes back to about 1976, so over 46 years. There are a lot of changes in 45, 46 years. Buying a home has always been, and it is today, the largest investment many Ontarians will make in their lifetime. But the current program for the delivery of new home warranties and protections does not meet the needs of the consumers of today. As my colleague the Minister of Government and Consumer Services has mentioned many times before, we have heard that some Ontario families are buying new homes with serious defects, putting their health and their safety at risk. Consumers are frustrated and are fed up with the slow and complicated warranty and protection claims process that feels stacked against them.

Mr. Speaker, I've met with many of these people to discuss these ongoing concerns, many going back to when I was first elected. They really do feel that they are in a helpless place under this current system. What they're asking for seems very reasonable. As the minister herself said, individuals want to be confident that they are hiring a reputable company to build their home, and they expect strong warranties and protections that they can depend on. They want strong oversight and enforcement of clear rules for builders, but that has not happened up until now. Quite simply, the current warranty and protection system is broken. It has been this way for many years. The need for change is long overdue.

As the minister has stated, through this bill, our government proposes to fix that broken program and restore consumer trust by protecting what is likely the largest purchase investment that these consumers will ever make. We're also responding to recommendations made in the Auditor General's audit of the Tarion Warranty Corp. by taking steps to making significant improvements that would make the Ontario new home warranty and protection program more responsive to the needs of consumers. Our government made a commitment to look into Tarion and make changes that will help to better protect new home buyers in this province.

We are following through on that commitment with changes proposed in the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act. The changes proposed in this bill would overhaul the Ontario new home warranty and protection program to make it consumer-focused by enhancing the current single-administrator model for the administration of warranties and protections. A new and improved warranty and protection program is anticipated, if this bill passes, and to be launched in the fall of 2020. In addition, it would support new consumer protection priorities that the government committed to last spring as part of the

overhauled program. This includes enhancing the dispute resolution process and delivering new measures to promote better-built new homes.

With regard to the dispute resolution process, this bill also includes proposed changes to the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act. If passed, these changes would, in fact, establish a new mandate for Tarion to promote the resolution of claims as soon as reasonably possible. It would provide Tarion with the ability to use a range of processes to resolve disputes between homeowners and builders and vendors. It would restore balance for consumers, and this would happen by removing builders and vendors as parties at the Licence Appeal Tribunal in disputes between homeowners and Tarion over warranties and protections claims, unless the regulations specify otherwise. And it would enable the government to prescribe adjudicative bodies other than the Licence Appeal Tribunal to resolve disputes between homeowners and Tarion over warranties and protections claims.

1500

Further, Speaker, if the Legislature passes the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act, this Ministry of Government and Consumer Services will continue to publicly consult on the regulatory proposals that would be required to bring some of these changes into effect. This would include further measures to enhance dispute resolution.

Our government knows how important it is to have an effective and consumer-focused new home warranty program and protection program in Ontario. That is why, last spring, the government conducted focused consultations with key stakeholders, including the insurance industry, consumers, home builders and vendors, other professionals and subject matter experts, other Canadian jurisdictions and, of course, more importantly, Tarion.

Based on research and consultations, the government has decided to enhance the single-administrator model to make it consumer-focused and reduce the role of builders and vendors on this board. After our extensive consultations, we believe this is a better option for consumers than the multi-provider insurance model. Enhancements to the single-administrator model for the warranties and protections delivery model is in the best interest of the people of Ontario and is a recommendation made by the Auditor General.

Our government has already taken action to ensure that Tarion is more transparent and the protections for consumers are improved. The Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act will enable better dispute resolutions so that future disputes are resolved more quickly and more fairly.

Speaker, we are making changes that will lead to better-built new homes by providing the warranty administrator with greater ability to scrutinize builder applications and conduct more risk-based inspections before new home owners actually move in.

The new warranty claims process will be easier for consumers to navigate, including giving homeowners more flexible timelines to submit their claims.

Finally, Tarion will be now more accountable to the public, with new legally binding rules.

We believe that the enhancements to the single-administrator model for warranties and the delivery of protections are in the best interest of the people of Ontario.

I would now like to spend some time on the AAs, or administrative authorities, and speak about their accountability, governance and transparency. Speaker, there's no doubt about it: The changes we propose to make to reform Tarion and the new home warranty and protection program make up a huge portion of Bill 159. Many of the presenters to the Standing Committee on General Government focused on their problems with the new home warranty system that we inherited from past governments. However, the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act addresses many other issues too—issues that are no less significant to the people of Ontario.

In fact, many times, when people are interacting with the province of Ontario's government on issues, they are actually interacting with one of the many—I think, a dozen or more—administrative authorities that are enacted in this province. The list of administrative authorities that fall under the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services is very extensive, and there's no doubt that many constituency offices that the members of this House have back in their ridings have probably dealt with many of them on an ongoing basis—some more than others. These agencies include the Electrical Safety Authority, which is the ESA; the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, the TSSA; the Travel Industry Council of Ontario, TICO; RECO, the Real Estate Council of Ontario; OMVIC, the Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council; and the Condominium Authority of Ontario.

I could continue, Speaker, but I think you get the picture. I didn't mention—there's the Bereavement Authority of Ontario, and there's also Ontario One Call. As the minister mentioned, that was one of my private member's bills. We established that, and I'm very proud of that bill because it provides worker protection, homeowner protections, but also protection to industry and to municipalities, which have much infrastructure beneath the ground. We know a number of these lines—either pipelines, water lines or, in the day and age of today, telecommunications—can put a hospital or major businesses out of business, so it's very important. I always like to hear about that bill, Ontario One Call. Call before you dig, folks; always remember that.

These authorities, across all these different ministries, currently operate under a number of different pieces of legislation. Some authorities operate under strict requirements of accountability and transparency, but unfortunately, some do not. We believe that we can improve that. In this new act, we are proposing to have consistent rules across the administrative authorities that our government oversees.

Mr. Speaker, to briefly summarize, what we are proposing in the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act—we are proposing changes that would improve Ontario's trust in administrative authorities and their accountability by enhancing the government's expectations of these agencies, their boards and CEOs. The Rebuilding Consumer

Confidence Act will update, harmonize and strengthen key accountability, governance and transparency requirements for administrative authorities. The proposed amendments in this bill will increase the range of tools available to the government to address each and every one of these administrative authorities' governance and performance outcomes.

The key message here is that with Bill 159, we as a Legislature will be making sure that the minister has the power and ability to ensure that administrative authorities are operating to a standard of governance and performance that the Ontario government and electorate and the people of Ontario expect and deserve.

Another new authority is the Home Construction Regulatory Authority. Speaker, from the first two items that I've highlighted, you can tell that our government is serious about improving accountability, governance and transparency in the province. The next item I'm going to address gives further proof of that. Bill 159, if passed, will establish a separate regulator for new home builders and vendors. It's called HCRA, the Home Construction Regulatory Authority—another new acronym—listed under the amended New Home Construction Licensing Act.

This construction regulatory authority will hold Tarion to account and will also take on the responsibility to restructure the Ontario Builder Directory into a credible resource that consumers can have confidence in. We heard much, during the travelling of the committee and in committee hearings here in Toronto—many submissions, and I looked at that directory myself. There certainly were many shortcomings to it. I've spoken to the new people who are going to be in charge of this and I said that I expect to see many improvements, in this case, for consumers.

This regulatory authority will enhance consumer protection and foster confidence and trust in Ontario's homebuilding sector by fostering high professional standards for competence and the conduct of home builders. The home construction authority will set and enforce licensing requirements; provide a complaints process for homebuyers; carry out compliance, discipline, inspections, investigations, enforcement—including enforcing a code of ethics; and offer consumer education, including the Ontario Builder Directory, which I referred to earlier, to help homebuyers make one of the most significant purchases of their lives.

Speaker, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services listened to the concerns about Tarion doing such a poor job with the previous builder directory. I would not argue—it was a poor directory and was very poorly managed. That is why, in this new act, the confidence act, it takes the responsibility away from Tarion and gives this authority to the new Home Construction Regulatory Authority. They will be measured and held to account for that because they know the shortcomings of it before. The minister, myself and others are going to be keeping a close eye on this because we went out on a limb here with this. This new legislation is going to hold them—they know they're going to be measured and held to account, so I expect to see great things from this. This will be one of the

very first priorities of the Home Construction Regulatory Authority.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot in Bill 159 that has to do with more than just home building and buying. There's no doubt that purchasing a home is probably the biggest financial transaction of people's lives, but as government we acknowledge that there are a lot of other events and purchases in the average Ontario consumer's day-to-day life that could also benefit from improved consumer protection.

I'm speaking in this case, under Bill 159, of the Consumer Protection Act. Changes are obviously needed because consumer habits are changing. With advances in technology, many people have changed their shopping habits, especially under COVID-19. The Consumer Protection Act is in need of an update to reflect modern consumer behaviour, which I expect will continue on after COVID-19 because it was already under way before. We'll be conducting a review of the Consumer Protection Act—the first comprehensive review in almost 15 years. We are going to look at how the Consumer Protection Act can be updated to strengthen protections for consumers and adapt to changing technology and marketplace innovations. This consultation process will be a very big job. While the team at the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services is working on that, we can also make changes to areas where we know there are needed improvements already.

1510

Right now, a major frustration that I hear about in my constituency office from my staff and constituents, and I'm sure many of you do as well, is in regard to the Consumer Protection Act lacking enforcement tools. All too often, constituents will come to my office with what seems like a clear case of a business failing to live up to the spirit of the Consumer Protection Act. By ensuring that we have a range of effective enforcement tools, we can encourage compliance with the law and deter bad actors who continue to cause harm to consumers and to the reputation of honest business people.

The government needs more tools to respond to non-compliant businesses. The tool that we are proposing to address this under in the Consumer Protection Act is administrative monetary penalties. If the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act becomes law, it would allow the government to impose administrative monetary penalties against companies that are found not to have complied with the Consumer Protection Act. I think this is an improvement to the Consumer Protection Act, and consumers and honest business people will be very supportive of that.

Finally, Speaker, I'll touch on ticket sales. It's been found to be more convenient to purchase tickets to concerts, sporting events or theatre in Ontario—hopefully, as we come out of COVID-19, we all will have the opportunity to head back and support local activities and events in the near future in our communities and across this great province. Maybe it will be a trip to support your favourite hockey team or to see a show at one of the

outstanding venues across the province, like the renowned Victoria Playhouse in Petrolia—and the Imperial Theatre in Sarnia as well; I shouldn't leave that out.

Eventually, life will get back to normal and people will get back to purchasing tickets for many events. More than likely, people will research and buy tickets on their phone or on their computer at home or on their iPad. Everything today can be done with just a few clicks on your phone, and that's how consumers want to purchase tickets. They don't want to have to go to venues, line up and find out that the box office is closed when they get there and have to make another trip. We're going to make sure that our laws which protect consumers in these transactions are modernized to reflect the ongoing changing market.

Our government is focused on protecting the people who are buying tickets for all these events across Ontario. Unlike the previous government, we're going to focus on making sure that these are enforceable rules and regulations that we put in place.

We are also not going to follow the opposition's call for caps on ticket prices. We saw with the previous government's legislation that any actions to try and cap ticket prices will simply drag people back into expanding black market sales, where the process isn't transparent and there is no accountability or safety. Instead, we're going to increase penalties to discourage black market ticket sales.

We're also going to ensure that ticket sellers provide clear and easy-to-understand information about ticket availability.

We're going to make sure that all amounts on ticket offers for events in Ontario would be listed and charged in Canadian currency, so that you know, when you go online and click that button to accept, the price you're actually going to get at the end of the day on your credit card.

We're also going to get rid of printed-at-home fees, where they charge you extra money to print the actual tickets in your home.

We're making business easier for legitimate ticket sellers.

And finally, we're going to consult and then we are going to take action to improve transparency and choice for consumers buying tickets to events in our great province.

As I start to wrap up here, I want to talk about—I didn't dwell a lot on OMVIC and the other one, the payday loans. I've got a lot of things I could say, but I only have four minutes left.

OMVIC—I've had numerous experiences. There's a lot of great car dealers out there, and I've dealt with many of them. I hope some of them are watching today. But there are some vendors—I've got an ongoing one I can think of, one where a single mother with a couple of children bought a van from a guy called Honest Ed or Honest whatever; I always thought anybody who had to put the name "Honest" in their business—it's actually in one of my opposition colleagues' municipalities. I'll talk to her off-line about it. But anyway, this woman bought this van. She has a child with disabilities. She's single, on her own, and she went and bought this van. Of course, she drove it

from London back to my municipality, and when she took it to get it safety-checked or have it looked at at the local Canadian Tire, the mechanic wouldn't let her leave there. He said, "It's not safe."

I couldn't believe, I never dreamt, how difficult it could be to try to make changes, and this is from the MPP's office. We called. I was very tempted—I'll be honest, Speaker—to go down there and confront this individual, but I was urged not to by my staff and others. But I said, "I'm not going to drop this." I talked to OMVIC about it, and I talked to another one of the agencies. I found out that it's very, very difficult to take a person's licence.

The mechanic who first safety-checked this for this lady, and then she took it to her own back home and it wasn't fit to be driven—if I can't make changes with the contacts that I have as the parliamentary assistant to the minister of consumer—I don't mind saying that I leaned through my office on this guy; I probably shouldn't say that, but I did. I said, "I'm not going to drop this." I told the individual that. She had to finally go to court and get some lawyer who took it on pro bono. I thought, "What a disgrace that this goes on in this province."

That's why, of all the things we did in here—we spent a lot of time on Tarion, and it needs fixing, but there are a lot of other things that I hope this bill is going to address. I shouldn't have got started on this OMVIC one, but it's a real sore point with me. I hope that guy is out there watching today back in London, because I haven't forgotten about him. The day we see this through in court—with these changes now, hopefully these bad actors—because there are a lot of good people out there, and I talk to many car dealers. When I told them what took place, they were very upset as well.

Other dealers have told me that someone would buy a vehicle from someone else, and they were a regular customer—they went out of town in an RV, and it broke down. This individual, because this guy was a customer of his—he didn't buy the RV from him, but he had him take it to a local dealer he knew somewhere up north. They fixed it and got him back home. Of course, he kept buying cars from him, too.

But anyway, Speaker, I think my time is pretty well done here. Bill 159 does cover a number of topics that I know are important to consumers. I'm confident that if this bill does pass, we will see a very strong consumer protection system in our province, moving forward, for many people in this province—Tarion, OMVIC, all the other ones where we have disputes—and I'm looking forward to driving this forward and calling on these bad actors personally.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: To the parliamentary assistant for MGCS: We both sat through two rounds of committee together. We heard from some of the presenters that, in fact, Tarion reform, new home warranty reform, was a ballot box issue. To say that they have lost their confidence in this government is a true understatement, and I'm saying it lightly.

What do you have to say to all of those consumer protection advocates who appeared and are unhappy with this bill, saying it just does not go far enough?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to the member from the committee, who very eloquently advocated in committee as well for a number of things.

I say let's give this new bill a chance. We know there are problems. We heard from folks—

Laughter.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Oh, well, the opposition is laughing, but I've got great confidence in this. Like I said, I've got some skin in this game as well, and so I intend to follow through.

We got rid of the old board. We got rid of the board. We retrofitted the board, I guess, is a better way of putting it. We reduced the builder and developer majority on there. There's a new CEO. I think there's a heck of a lot more—what would you say?—transfer. We're going to be able to see and hold them to account. I've got great confidence in this bill, going forward. We're going to have better outcomes.

1520

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Billy Pang: Good afternoon. Buying a new home is one of the most important investments for Ontarians that they can make in their lifetimes. Ontarians who are looking to buy a new home need to trust that there is a new home warranty program to protect them.

Could the member please tell us what our government is doing to enhance the home warranty program in Ontario?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Well, as I said, we've updated the board. We took it from 16 members down to 12, and reduced the builder influence in there. We've put a number of new improvements to the bill, under the Consumer Protection Act, of course.

One of the stats I did see: There were over 380,000 homes under warranty in 2018, and of those, 1,500 homes—0.39%—were not able to get their builder to resolve them. But a number of others were resolved. With the improvements we've made to the bill, we're going to hold these—if there are builders, and we know from the directory that they weren't listed, we'll make sure that those other builders are held to account.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Members of this government, even before they were elected in this session of Parliament, stated that Tarion was broken. They still say that, and yet this legislation is allowing Tarion to fix itself. Just look at the builder registry. It's still under their responsibility, and it's nowhere near updated. We put forth an amendment—the NDP opposition—calling for the immediate appointment of an administrator to take over Tarion and fix everything right now. Why don't you support this?

Mr. Robert Bailey: As I said in my remarks, that would be up to the new legislation under HCRA. The

Ontario Builder Directory—we gave the authority to the new regulator, the Home Construction Regulatory Authority. They, and we, will be holding HCRA to a higher standard and ensuring this is one of the first priorities it does—to fix this directory and make sure to have better information for homeowners or potential homeowners. Tarion is working collaboratively with this new authority, and they know and the new CEO knows—I've talked to him personally on the phone as well—that they're going to be held to account. I told him, "You guys know what the problem is. You'd better step up and make it right."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Buying a new home is one of the most important investments Ontarians can make in their lifetimes—I remember—especially if it is a first home and a brand new home. You go to a builder's place and they give you a shiny paper with a picture. You sign the document. You give all your savings. Maybe a year later, you look at the house and you look at the picture. Sometimes they don't even match. Then you go into the house, you do the inspection, and three days or four days later you see leaks and stuff. You kind of think, "What have I got into?"

To the PA and the member from Sarnia-Lambton, my question is: Ontarians who are looking to buy a new home need to trust that there is a new home warranty program to protect them. Could the member please tell us what our government is doing to enhance the home warranty program in Ontario?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you for that question. It gives us an opportunity to respond to this.

As I said, they're going to be held to account—this new agency. They're the ones that are going to have to maintain the builder directory because, as the member said, the directory didn't show bad builders in the past. Builders that had issues outstanding—and fines—were not on there. That's going to happen now. They know they're under the microscope. When I say "they"—the new agency, and Tarion doing the handoff to them. I expect better from them, and I know the ministry does. I know that I'll hear about it in this Legislature, in this chamber, if they don't meet up. They've got a big target on them.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: There's a lot that's going on within this bill. It is an omnibus bill, after all, like so much Tory legislation.

Something that we suggested in committee and something that we talked about is in fact one of your own ideas: It is to bring Ombudsman and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act oversight into all of the delegated authorities in Ontario. This is your idea. You guys have been in power for two years. Why does this government not support the ideas of its own members? Will you commit to doing this? It's a great idea. We support it. Why won't you do it?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you very much for that question.

The ombudsman, in the past—I didn't like the looks of it—actually reported to the former CEO of Tarion. That's been changed now. So we think that the new ombudsman that will be in this legislation responsible for Tarion and HR—he or she will be able to administer this. The other Ombudsman—we would have had to change too many other acts if we were to try to give them more work. It would change some other acts. We would have to include the Ombudsman's office as well, because they would have to be consulted before there were any changes made. So that's the reason the government moved in this direction.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I had the unique privilege of travelling with this bill with many members of this House. We heard from first-time homebuyers in Brampton, Ottawa and Windsor. We heard stories that were, at times, scary, like when you purchase a new home and you're ready to move in and you discover that there is mould in the house or that the windows were not built according to the building code. So that's why, now more than ever, it is important to strengthen consumer protections in Ontario and have an overhaul of the home warranty system. This bill couldn't be at a better time.

Can the member please explain how the government ensured that all voices were heard and all options were considered when putting forward this bill?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you very much for that question.

Yes, consultation was quite wide, quite varied. We travelled the bill. There were written submissions. We also looked at—I think we implemented, from memory, 29 or 30 of Justice Cunningham's recommendations from his report—it took him two years to do that. We've implemented a good 29 to 30 of those. The Auditor General also had a number of recommendations. I think we're on track right now, with somewhere around 75% to 80% of those implemented already, moving towards getting them all implemented.

The improvement of the directory is one of the greatest things for consumers that we can do, so that consumers, when they do look to buy a new home and when they're looking for a builder, will know that the builder they're actually going to entrust their money to will do a good job for them. There will be listings on there if there's any money outstanding, any fines. We'll all be watching as a government, and I'm sure the opposition will as well, to make sure that they live up to their requirements.

ROYAL ASSENT
SANCTION ROYALE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): 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 enact the Legal Aid Services Act, 2020 and to make various amendments to other Acts dealing with the courts and other justice matters / Loi visant à édicter la Loi de 2020 sur les services d'aide juridique et apportant diverses modifications à des lois traitant des tribunaux et d'autres questions relatives à la justice.

An Act to enact the Building Transit Faster Act, 2020 and make related amendments to other Acts / Loi édictant la Loi de 2020 sur la construction plus rapide de transport en commun et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

An Act to amend and repeal various Acts respecting home care and community services / Loi modifiant et abrogeant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les services de soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire.

1530

REBUILDING CONSUMER
CONFIDENCE ACT, 2020
LOI DE 2020 VISANT À RÉTABLIR
LA CONFIANCE CHEZ
LES CONSOMMATEURS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Today, I rise, as official opposition critic for government services and consumer protection, and speak to Bill 159, the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act, 2020, a government omnibus bill, on the occasion of its third reading.

As stated in my lead during second reading, among other things, this bill opens up many acts in order to bring minor amendments to give the government more control over its delegated authorities. Again, I will point out that the marginal changes the government made to the acts opened up in this bill could have been much farther reaching. If the government really wants enhanced transparency and accountability for its delegated authorities, then make them subject to Ontario Ombudsman oversight and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act as well.

But the real meat and potatoes here are contained within schedules 4 and 5, which seek to amend the New Home Construction Licensing Act, 2017, and the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act. As such, this is what I will be discussing today.

Speaker, on May 11, 2016, long-time Tarion reform advocate Barbara Captijn wrote a memorial for the late Dr. Earl Shuman—may he rest in peace—a man whose generation-long battle with Ontario's builder-puppet home warranty program ended when Mr. Shuman took his own life. The memorial informs of a community brought together by a system of enduring consumer protection failure. I will read it to you now:

“Remembering Earl Shuman.

“The tragic circumstances surrounding the passing of Earl Shuman last week are one of the reasons I decided to write this piece.

“For those who didn't know him, he fought for 27 years to rectify injustices he saw in the Ontario government monopoly, Tarion Warranty Corp., and the abysmal access-to-justice problems faced by ordinary people trying to get their homes fixed under Tarion and the Licence Appeal Tribunal.

“Earl took on the legal establishment by challenging the lunacy of some Tarion case law and its heavy-handed use of the justice system. He explained one of the absurdities to me this way: If you buy a new home and install a 24-carat gold toilet in it, you're the builder of the home under law because you contributed more than a certain dollar amount to the home's overall value. So even if you're a dentist, you can be deemed a builder under Ontario law. He called this the Shuman Test ‘Fraud.’ Many cases have been decided since his own case years ago following this principle, which sounds like something out of George Orwell's Animal Farm.

“I met Earl Shuman and his wife at Queen's Park several years ago at one of the many meetings to try to bring transparency and accountability to Tarion. Real reforms have not been made to this government monopoly in over 40 years. Builders interests are the best understood by policy-makers; consumers are often labelled ‘unscrupulous,’ troublemakers, whiners, or malcontents who wouldn't be happy with the Taj Mahal. Builders, on the other hand, are politically well-connected, they have the loudest microphones, the deepest pockets, and lobbyists and lawyers to make their views well understood by policy-makers.

“Earl was engaged in a Sisyphean task up against these Goliaths, rolling a huge rock uphill only to have it come crashing back down on him each time. He didn't play by the rules, but he often tried to. Many of us who are accustomed to crusty, irritable, feisty figures learned with time how to read him. He was a rule-breaker, rubbed many people the wrong way, but he knew that nice, polite people seldom bring about real change.

“He attended a Tarion Review town hall meeting a few weeks ago. When he saw me come in, he motioned for me to sit down next to him. He brought a well-used copy of the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act which Tarion administers for the public on behalf of government. He read from it to the attendees, ministry lawyers and officials present. He pointed out the intent of the Legislature was not to have the law drift so far away from its consumer protection intent. Since Tarion makes its own regulations, with oversight as thin as a spider's web, he knew this was flawed, outdated legislation. He knew this was the 900-pound gorilla in the room.

“He drove from Cobourg the night before, suffering from a cold, paid for his own hotel room to attend the impossible weekday timing of the meeting from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. He tried to keep his years of anger and frustration at bay, tried to keep his cool. He did. Giving me a big hug

when he left, he thanked me for being there and contributing. I wrote him a short email afterward saying he'd done well under what we all knew were difficult circumstances.

"Earl wanted these injustices to be exposed by the media in a sustained and front-page way like the press covered the Ghomeshi, Ford, and Duffy scandals, and various messy society divorces. Journalists often told us they wanted 'sexy stories.' This was a decidedly un-sexy story, until you buy a new home and find out how flawed and outdated the policies are which govern this important financial decision in your life, buying a new home.

"Earl asked me last November to keep a file of all the documents relevant to his 27-year work, and correspondence with senior officials. A few times, he said—now eerily meaningful to me—that he wanted to make sure someone would take his work forward and all these years wouldn't go to waste. 'If something ever happens to me...', he said several times. I assured him that I have well-organized files, not as extensive as his pool table full of documents, but all his years of work wouldn't be lost.

"He would, from time to time, email me and ask what I thought of a letter he had sent to a top official, or what I thought of his Supreme Court of Canada application, for example. He'd say to me, 'See if you can spot the game-changer words in my document.' Anyone in our communication groups who have worked on Tarion/LAT issues could pick out these words.

"Earl knew every nook and cranny of the legislation, the Criminal Code, all the legalese, the double-speak and the political games. He used to commiserate with me how hard it is to write to politicians and journalists, how achingly long it takes to craft a persuasive, well-researched email and to wait endlessly for no answer. Many of us struggled with this without the benefit of PR people, legal advisers and researchers. All we have is our sense of right and wrong, and our kitchen tables.

"Over the years, Earl became an expert on clear, well-documented, persuasive writing. Though his style was lengthy, he mastered it. I suggested he write a book and use social media to his advantage. The press was obviously not covering these problems in depth and in a sustained way, as he knew they deserved.

"He looked forward to his retirement in a few months, and promised he would do more work when he finally had more free time. 'Then you will really see me fly,' he told me in February. A few months ago, he retired. He attended the Tarion town hall review meeting on April 5, his birthday. According to his wife, Krista, he descended after that into a black hole of frustration and despair.

"The news of his sudden death and the circumstances surrounding it described to me by his shaken wife caught me off guard and made me cry like a grade school kid. Earl's story is heartbreaking and complex. He worked on justice and consumer protection issues for almost 30 years. Many of the injustices he exposed are still festering, some getting much worse. Too many consumers continue to suffer under builder-biased policies administered by a monopoly claiming it's protecting consumers while protecting the builders it's supposed to regulate.

"Earl and Krista drew together a communication group of concerned, determined consumers to fight for reforms to Tarion, the LAT and justice. All of us will make sure his 27 years of work were not in vain.

"To the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing official who inquired several months ago why these issues were so urgent: 'Did anyone die?', she asked.

"Well, actually, yes, someone has."

Barbara still gets emotional when she talks about Earl. She has said that fighting Tarion is a life-changing experience. That experience ended Earl's life.

Speaker, Earl was right in saying that the life-ruining failures of new home warranties don't attract sustained front page headlines, but we do hear the stories from time to time. In fact, Earl's own story was covered by the late Christie Blatchford in the National Post on September 15, 2015. It turned out to be a prophetic story, published a mere eight months before his passing. Earl's story began with the hope of so many new homebuyers. She wrote of Earl:

"When he was a newly minted dentist busy establishing himself in eastern Ontario, he decided to buy a house—his first house and, as it turns out, his only one.

"Until that point, he'd lived in bachelor apartments and even a shed. He was intending to buy a resale house, but spotted a parcel of land, out in the country north of Cobourg, Ont., with expansive lovely views, and realized he'd have to find himself a builder."

Like so many of us who hear the frustrating stories of Ontario's new home warranty victims, Ms. Blatchford was left with many questions. She asked:

"Why did Tarion, which is supposed to police illegal builders, never prosecute the one who operated illegally for a decade and built, among others, Shuman's house? Why did a series of lawyers and judges sanction the now-disgraced 'Shuman Test,' which, against all common sense, deemed the dentist the builder? Why were there no court reporters for at least a couple of the court proceedings?"

But it is the end of her story that is most chilling: "His odyssey really has been Kafkaesque, particularly Kafka's short story called 'Before the Law,' about a man from the country who 'prays for admittance to the law.'

"Its gate stands open, but there's a doorkeeper, and he won't admit the man from the country, so he stays there, waiting for the okay, until he dies."

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Speaker, learning about new home warranties in Ontario has felt like being unplugged from The Matrix—we've seen that movie—and awakened to an ugly reality, the reality that we live in a province with only a veneer of new home warranty protection. And when problems arise, the system meant to protect can become the enemy itself.

Earl's story is so compelling that when this government's former MGCS minister declared Tarion to be broken in Port Hope, he did so with Earl's widow, Krista Shuman, at his side. But with the benefit of 44 years of hindsight, has this government finally fixed Tarion? Ms.

Shuman relayed her profound disappointment with this bill prior to second reading:

“My family was hopeful for long overdue change when the 2017 report by Justice Douglas Cunningham and, more recently, by the Ontario Auditor General, Bonnie Lysyk, only a few months ago were released.

“These reports clearly indicate the dysfunction of Tarion because of its monopoly and its preferential treatment of the home-building industry over Ontario homeowners, with thousands of legitimate claims ignored and dismissed.

“The impact of the Ontario government’s inaction and its lack of oversight has been devastating for many families. It is extremely disappointing one year after the former minister’s ... announcement of their promise to correct Ontario’s new home warranty program, and not enough has been done.

“Through Bill 159, the Ontario Conservative government had an opportunity and also a duty to protect Ontario families in the most important purchase that homeowners make.

“Our government has failed to protect us from building code violations and the impacts on the financial, physical, and mental health of Ontario families, including my own.”

But it wasn’t just Ms. Shuman who joined the government minister that day. He was joined by Mr. Angelo Zeppieri, another victim of Tarion. Mr. and Mrs. Zeppieri submitted the following joint statement to committee for consideration a couple of weeks ago. Here is an excerpt, and it is not flattering to this piece of legislation:

“I have been involved and been victim to Tarion’s shenanigans since 2009. I participated in Justice Cunningham’s review. I also have written hundreds of emails to Premier Dalton McGuinty, the former Premier, ministers and Tarion executives. There was also a scathing report by the Auditor General.”

My MPP “and the former PC minister were in my house and my subdivision in Port Hope for the announcement to fix the broken monopoly at Tarion. Myself and several neighbours also had several meetings with” our MPP, “and now we’re having more consultations? Can you please pass this along to the standing committee? We homeowners are tired of more shenanigans from our present government. Meanwhile, new homebuyers keep suffering. I will not be participating this time around and quite frankly I don’t give a damn, because governments never listen to the little people, but yet they will listen to the OHBA and people with money. Why are we wasting everyone’s time when nothing will change?” This was from Mr. Zeppieri and his wife.

It is so important to note that the two people this government chose to represent the voices of so many lives ruined by Tarion are now left with a palpable sense of disappointment and frustration, but unfortunately, they are not alone. Facing new home warranty issues is a little like parenthood: You have to experience it to truly understand it.

As I wrote and compiled this speech, the Hansard transcripts for the second round of hearings on June 22 to 23

had yet to be made available. I believe that the experiences and advice from the people who spoke should not be privileged information of those who joined me in committee only, but they should be heard by all. These experiences are eye-opening, and each of these presenters unwittingly have become experts over the course of their battle and beyond. To obtain their submissions, my office reached out to the presenters, who were kind enough to email their presentations. I have dedicated most of my time today as a conduit for their words, which I believe have been secondary to the interests of the building industry.

I begin with Mr. Sid Cohen, who relayed the story of a new home he purchased with his wife a few years ago. Mr. Cohen’s story was a cautionary tale that highlighted the blissful ignorance of the new home purchaser. “It was to be her dream of a fresh start,” he began, “as we began our retirement years.

“After driving down to the Niagara area numerous times, I realized that I had never heard of many of the builders. I was not overly concerned because I knew I would have the mandatory Tarion warranty, which in theory would protect us from unscrupulous builders. I knew that most problems, if any, would surface in the first year so it was not a huge issue.

“We finally found the house that suited our needs. A friend told me that Tarion tracked builder performance, so I contacted Tarion the next day to enquire. They confirmed where to find it and told me that their builder directory is ‘a very valuable tool when researching builders.’ I remember asking her how accurate it was and how often it was updated and was told it was updated quarterly so it would be current.

“I then did my due diligence and researched this particular builder using the Tarion directory and it showed they had a perfect record!

“A few days later I was comfortable, and we signed our purchase agreement. We closed our house in September 2014. Needless to say, I am here this morning because this new home experience was anything but a dream. It had become an emotional nightmare three years later.

“I followed all the Tarion guidelines, filling out all their necessary forms on time. I found the administrative part of Tarion ... worked quite well. On my year one warranty form, I documented about 150 legitimate defects”—Speaker, 150 legitimate defects.

Mr. Cohen described one such defect as an example of his frustrating experiences. This is one defect: “As we began the inspection, another issue was made very clear. It was obvious that she had no construction experience. As the inspection continued, it became apparent that she was only capable of ruling on aesthetic items. I had one defect where my roof leaked five different times, only when snow would melt! Without climbing a ladder to inspect it, and after telling me she was not allowed to climb, she immediately blamed it on ice damming, thus, an act of God; therefore, not warranted. The builder agreed. I tried to explain to her that an act of God is a rare event, not a repeated one where I can tell you the moment the leak will start and stop! Two months later I finally climbed a ladder

myself to inspect the area and found a gaping two-foot hole into the house where a piece of flashing was never installed....

“And there lies root cause number one: The Tarion reps and their first-level manager do not have any construction knowledge or experience, and according to an online Tarion job application, it is not a prerequisite, but dispute resolution is....

“If home inspectors in Ontario now need to be licensed, why would Tarion inspectors not also have to fall under these guidelines?”

“I have come to learn first-hand that the builder directory is a sham. After cashing numerous settlement cheques from Tarion for over \$10,000, some covering building code violations, the builder still shows a perfect record.”

Mr. Cohen ended his presentation with a reflection of his rude awakening throughout his still-ongoing process: “Tarion is supposed to be the entity to backstop the builders’ warranty in situations like this.

“I naively thought Tarion, with their construction experience, would advocate for me, but it appeared to be the reverse, which made me wonder if there was something more to this story.

“Unless any of you in this room has ever experienced Tarion first-hand and also have home construction experience, you cannot be expected to know how to fix it. I do!”

Mr. Jeffrey Ferland, another presenter at the June 22 committee meeting, experienced serious defects in the two homes he purchased, the first being in 2004 and the latter in 2012. Tarion reform was a ballot box issue for him in 2018, and this government has let him down: “I based my vote for the PC Party on their pre-election commitment to getting rid of the Tarion monopoly,” said Mr. Ferland, naming a number of sitting PC MPPs who made this commitment.

He pointed out that “Tarion pays out almost three times more for their own salaries and benefits than the claims they paid out in 2018. Why would they need to have over \$583 million in the bank when they are only paying out \$10 million in claims a year? Well, if Ontario’s new home warranty insurance was regulated in Ontario, then they would have to produce a claim incidence study to show what the liability of future claims might be.”

Mr. Ferland compared Tarion to Canada’s largest provider of property and casualty insurance which, he said, pays out 65% of the dollar value of the premiums they collect: “How do you think most Ontarians would feel if they knew only 18% of their new home insurance premiums are being paid out in claims?” he asked.

In committee, Ms. Gay Viecelli provided three practical improvements to the legislation before us today. She stated, “If the current government proceeds with Bill 159, there are many issues which need to be addressed. I will point out three such issues.

“The first is in the section entitled, ‘Administrative agreement—2.0.1.’ The wording ‘promoting the protection of the public interest, and consumers in particular’

should be replaced with ‘promoting strong consumer protection.’ The legislation should clearly state at the outset that this is consumer protection legislation and its main objective is to deliver strong home warranty protection to new home buyers.

“Conflicts of interest is the second issue. It is essential to avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.

“Therefore, builders and industry representatives should not be on the board.

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“Thirdly, it is extremely important that there be a mechanism for an independent dispute resolution. On the blog Consumers’ Reform Tarion, Professor Macfarlane of the University of Windsor’s faculty of law commented, ‘The history of Tarion has created enormous mistrust for homeowners. The lack of an independent dispute resolution option—and the failure to even recognize this issue—means that there is no credible impartial party for homeowners to appeal to for dispute resolution.’”

It should be noted that the opposition has been outspoken in stating that consumer priority must be the overriding principle of this reform. As well, I tabled an amendment in committee to prohibit conflicts of interest in board representation; however, this was voted down by government members.

Government members like to suggest they are following the advice of Justice Cunningham. However, this bill does not address his biggest suggestion; namely, to adopt a multi-warranty provider system here in Ontario. This was addressed in my private member’s Bill 169, which Mrs. Viecelli urged the government to consider later in her presentation. By the way, it also doesn’t address the independent dispute resolution option either.

Mrs. Viecelli’s third point was addressed in Justice Cunningham’s report, where not only did he call for the separation of regulator and warranty provider, but the creation of a third entity to ensure true independent dispute resolution, which, again, is not mentioned or addressed in this legislation.

Dr. Nancy Lee pulled no punches in her submission. Here is an excerpt of what she had to say:

“Let’s start off and just acknowledge that everyone in this room knows Bill 159 does not rebuild consumer confidence.

“In the big picture:

“(a) Monopoly model still continues for a new home warranty. Instead, the multi-model warranty recommended by Justice Cunningham in the 2016 Tarion review is not implemented. His recommendation of a multi-provider system provides competition, better management and deeper oversight. Oversight is available and already exists in other examples in Canada, e.g., in Alberta”—and also British Columbia.

“(b) Dispute resolution process continues with the LAT; quasi-judicial area. There is no independent ombudsman; the current Tarion ombudsman does not fulfill the criteria of a true ombudsman. This is just a glorified internal department within Tarion with a Tarion employee.” Think about that.

“(c) Tarion continues as an administrative authority. The DAA model doesn’t have oversight by the Ontario Ombudsman. Not subject to government laws, e.g., Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, disclosure of compensation information”—she lists a number of those. Also, we actually had an amendment to cap Tarion executive salaries, and government members voted against that.

“(d) The other DAA, called the Home Construction Regulatory Authority (HCR), with the same AA problems and even former Tarion board members.

“Today let’s consider amendments to Bill 159.

“Today we are here to determine the best treatment options for our patient”—she’s a doctor—“the homeowner who is afflicted with a cancer called Tarion. It has metastasized and threatens the host now as two, the HCRA and Tarion. Definitive treatment would be a course of action like proposed in the member from Humber River–Black Creek’s Bill 159”—it’s awkward to talk about myself here. “But in the restrictions of Bill 159, I propose a more modest but currently attainable change to amend the statutes.

“What is the problem of illegal building?

“First realize that there is an illegal building epidemic in Ontario, especially Toronto. The former Tarion CEO Bogach was aware of this. Due to act limitations, Tarion lacks the compliance tools to limit illegal building. Any tool currently available to Tarion is limited under the act and does not reflect the range of options available to modern regulators. A broader range of tools would be more proactive. Tarion has lacked leadership to advocate for this.

“Under the act, fines of up to \$100,000 can be imposed by Ontario courts. Sounds great but what does it look like in reality? Well, in 2014, Tarion paid out \$934,134 in claims on illegally built homes. That is 193 convictions in court and fines of about \$413,000 which included victim surcharge fees. Simple math shows an average of \$2,140 per conviction. This is obviously not a deterrence to avoiding a warranty on a new home.”

I mean, think about it: \$2,000? What do the builders make?

“As Justice Cunningham stated in his December 14, 2016, letter to the minister on the final Tarion review, it has been apparent that there is ‘room for considerable improvement including in the legislation itself.’”

Speaker, Dr. Lee is not buying Bill 159 as a considerable improvement in legislation.

The committee also heard from 19-year-old Catherine Chen, who said “that the injustices facing homeowners with regard to new home building has percolated to society’s youth.”

Her home builder blamed her family for a variety of the defects they discovered, some completely inexplicable, such as a lack of attic insulation or attic insulation not being to code. I mean, what did the homeowner do—go rip out all the attic insulation?

This prompted her to state, “It shocked me to realize that I have more protection buying an iPhone than a new

\$2-million house. Apple will warranty their product. But not the builder. Funny thing is, the Tarion new home warranty is actually a mandatory tax paid by homeowners’ fees.” It’s the homeowners who pay for this. “We fund a warranty that doesn’t work.”

She further went on to say, “The moral of this story is that we can’t let our pride keep us from speaking up when we all know the truth about ‘the elephant in the room.’ New home construction is a complicated issue that is broken in so many ways, ranging from construction defects, code violations, lack of proper inspection, a faulty warranty provider and builder regulator. Everyone knows about the problems. It’s time for politicians to work together. I ask the PC members to listen to their past position”—their past position—“advocating for Tarion reform when they were in opposition.” Wise words from a 19-year-old.

Mr. Dave Roberts, a former building official and Tarion inspector, returned to committee and believed “that the regulatory powers are not being separated.” He further stated that, “This duplication of power can be seen in part III, ‘Licensing,’ in the New Home Construction Licensing Act, and under ‘Registration of Vendors and Builders’ in the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act.”

Mr. Roberts also preferred the multiple warranty model, saying, “A third-party approach to the warranty aspects will bring about numerous opportunities for enhanced warranty protection.”

He ended with the words, “In closing, I ask that the ministry really stop, look and listen before proceeding with Bill 159.”

Mr. Dave Myatt shared his own personal experiences with Tarion. “I’m into my third year of my Tarion warranty claim. Most of the items claimed in the first 30 days of occupancy have been settled, but it took”—wait for it—“20 months, four inspections and over 130 pieces of correspondence. Other items claimed have yet to be addressed. Inspections for items claimed on my first- and second-year reports have yet to be scheduled. This government may call this a warranty and a consumer protection. I call it harassment and abuse. This demonstrates that Tarion delays, denies and devalues claims to get the homeowner to quit trying.”

He further went on to express his own disappointment with the government. “Tarion is forced on new homeowners but there’s no guarantee the homeowner will receive repairs, compensation or any form of protection from it. Tarion is a no-guarantee warranty. I have been failed by both this provincial government and Tarion. In a model with many private providers, builders with many claims would be penalized with higher premiums. This would give builders an incentive—to build homes well and to avoid homeowners making claims against them by repairing the defects. It would also help weed out the bad builders. Tarion is not only harming Ontario new homeowners but the entire Ontario building industry because it enables builders to build substandard homes with impunity. The current system between this government and Tarion is set to oppress homeowners, not protect them.

It is my understanding that no homeowner won against Tarion at the LAT in 2019.” When you look up the facts, the LAT will rule something like 10% to 15% in terms of consumer protection, and will side with the builder in almost every single case. “The law allows Tarion to get away with these things through loopholes and technicalities. The spirit of the law is homeowner protection, but Tarion weaves its way around the law to avoid it like a snake. Your critical role as lawmakers is to stop this—not dance around it.” Don’t dance around the snake, guys. “I hope you are listening this time. You can’t take the spots off the leopard after 43 years. Tarion needs to be dismantled. If you think Tarion will fix itself, you might as well ask an arsonist to put out a fire. The minimal oversight this government exercises over Tarion is a disgrace and is no more effective than the police policing itself.”

Committee also heard a detailed presentation from Ms. Kathy Mojsovski, where she outlined a number of concerns. Here is what she said about deadlines and Tarion’s apparent inability to resolve or even respond to claims in a timely manner.

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Ms. Mojsovski suggested that, “There should be deadlines in several areas of the Tarion process. For example, the inspectors’ reports should not take about four to eight weeks to get back to the homeowners. I drag the process on and on and it deletes the open ‘administration of justice.’

“For example, a homeowner who has lived in their home for three years should have their claims from the 30-day form and/or one year from already dealt with. Please consider the resources that builders have versus homeowners; there is an imbalance of power and resources. This is the reason consumers depend on Tarion for help. Tarion has a duty of care in a standard of care to the consumer.”

Opposition amendments were tabled that spoke directly to this. However, the government members again voted these down, claiming Tarion would address this itself and improvements could be made in the regulations.

Ms. Mojsovski also addressed the burden of proof as follows: “Tarion should consider all evidence submitted by the homeowner regarding their claims and not ignore and/or side with the builder. Again, please keep in mind the cost for expert reports in the imbalance of power when it comes to the builder versus the homeowner. It is a David and Goliath scenario.”

Her final thoughts included a plea to this government: “I implore the government to please make changes that will be effective; effective immediately to protect the consumer.”

Ms. Merg Kong, another consumer, reminded the committee of some of the lessons learned from BC’s leaky condo crisis, namely what happens when the interests of builders outstrip those of the consumer. Ms. Kong, like so many of our consumer advocates who had appeared at committee, repeated the call for consumer representation on the Tarion board. She told the committee, “As consumers, not much can be done unless you have a seat at the

table, or are on the board. If you’re not on the board, you’re not really going to have a voice.”

On multiple occasions, I have told the story of Julie and Marcel Bellefeuille here in this House. The Bellefeuilles purchased a newly built home at Cardinal Creek Village in Orléans, something they thought was a dream. The Bellefeuilles’ story has been well documented, and I want to acknowledge their bravery for going public with their story—and to all who have gone public with their stories fighting Tarion, something that many new homeowners facing similar situations are sometimes reluctant to do.

Because the committee session was held virtually, Ms. Bellefeuille delivered her deputation from inside of her basement. Rather than the beautiful finished basement that the Bellefeuille family should have been enjoying, members of the committee and anyone else who happened to be watching were able to see the bare concrete walls with no insulation. You could see the evidence of cracks in the concrete behind her, and cables were strung all along the wall. Even before she said a word, the committee could see the nightmare the Bellefeuille family has endured, and continues to endure nearly four years after they moved into their newly built home.

Ms. Bellefeuille told the committee: “During the purchasing process we were forced to pay for the Tarion warranty. We had no choice.

“Today, we are still living in a home that has code violations, structural defects, envelope issues, three years with no insulation in our walkout basement, and the list goes on. Unfortunately, the Tarion coverage limit of \$300,000 may not be enough for homeowners to mitigate defects and it leaves them with little options but has huge financial, emotional-psychological implications and impact on health and safety.

“Since my appearance before committee in January 2020 few of the changes that the Minister of Government and Consumer Services vowed to make have occurred. The major overhaul that was promised was a mere shuffling of the prominent development industry leaders. The creation of a friends of the industry regulatory authority HCRA that is supposed to monitor its own and regulate itself continues to be a reflection of 43 years of failure and lack of consumer protection.

“As long as the industry influence”—and of course, she is referring to the building industry—“continue on their boards and that legislation isn’t clearly focused on consumer protection, these problems will persist.

“We can all acknowledge that there are still serious questions and concerns regarding Tarion. That government’s intent in changing perception on transparency, accountability and rebuilding confidence has been met with strong arguments from those who have been failed by the system. Many consumers have not seen meaningful changes and do not feel confident that this bill will restore confidence and protect consumers.

“Before handing over one life’s savings, Ontarians should be able to make informed decisions through a builder’s performance record. The lack of critical information on the Builder Directory continues to put purchasers at risk.

"If Tarion is not putting accurate information, it is misleading and only protects the public interest of builders, not consumers.

"Until every Ontario building code violation, defects and claims are listed in the directory there can be no consumer protection and the public cannot make an informed decision.

"Only through the appointment of an administrator, an objective public servant, can the directory be revamped, loopholes and exemptions eliminated to provide consumers with the information needed.

"Bill 159 only tinkers around the edges. It does not go far enough. It falls short on providing policies that will ensure that it protects consumers and that governance does not allow for conflict of interest. A home is likely the largest purchase that one will make in their lifetime.

"When a home is not built to meet the required minimum Ontario Building Code it puts people at risk. It's unlawful.

"Every Ontarian has the right to a safe and healthy home. I ask government again to seriously consider appointing an administrator who would be an objective senior public servant to immediately take responsibility and manage the operations of Tarion."

Julie's husband, Marcel, also appeared before the committee. In his deputation, Mr. Bellefeuille had three specific asks of the government. His first ask was for an amendment ensuring that consumer protection would be one of the core mandates of HCRA. Mr. Bellefeuille's second ask was for the new home construction regulator to ensure that the builder directory was directly administered by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. His third ask was to remove builders from the Tarion board.

He told the committee: "Governance 101—there should not be conflicts of interest or even perceived conflicts of interest.

"Remove builders from the board and give them an advisory council. That is what they have for consumers. It is supposed to be the a consumer protection act." Right now, Tarion works in reverse.

"The current proposed allotment of one third Ontario Home Builders' Association, one third industry professionals and one third consumers has not happened in the last 10 months. The current board does not even have one consumer member with extensive first-hand experience as a new homeowner dealing with Tarion's policies and procedures.

"Someone has obviously decided to forego the minister's recommendations!

"The building industry is a strong lobby. It will take strong leadership to put these control measures in place and keep Ontarians safe. But, if Tarion and builders can truly deliver on the services and products they state they can, there should be no pushback to these amendments."

During committee, I brought forward amendments that would have addressed every one of the items that the Bellefeuilles brought up during committee, but sadly, the government once again refused to listen to the voice of

consumers and chose to protect the interests of their builder friends.

Like the Bellefeuilles, Mr. Bill Hillier is also a Cardinal Creek homeowner, whose fight has been well documented. Here is an excerpt from his presentation:

"I, having been a new homeowner four times over the last 40 years, am living proof that revamping is not what needs to be done with Tarion. From experience, I have shown in my opinion that Tarion is there for the protection of the home builder and not the home buyer.

"What are the odds that a current new home buyer who purchases a new home will encounter many issues and will not have to fight all the way to the ends of the earth to obtain assistance? And at the end of the fight be advised, 'There is nothing wrong,' 'this is normal,' 'it is not covered under warranty' or 'the problem is between you and the home builder.' It is happening to me and several ... neighbours on my street alone. I do not have a number that shows the remaining list in the subdivision.

"The home warranty program came into effect in the 1970s, was revamped in the 1990s and still there are a magnitude of problems in 2020 as the government is once again revamping the program.

"Revamping it will not make the problems go away. The state of affairs requires replacing the old with the new, and with an administration that is outside the influence of the builder community."

Speaker, I began my presentation today with Ms. Barbara Captijn's evocative memorial of the late Dr. Earl Shuman. Here is her experienced opinion on the legislation we are debating today:

"Bill 159 has failed dramatically to fix the problems this government is well aware of, and has been painfully reminded of, during the last eight months of review of the Auditor General's report, and two separate legislative committees.

"When this government was in opposition, we as consumer advocates stood shoulder to shoulder with PC MPPs and their caucus in agreement that the Tarion review 37 recommendations should be followed, with the cornerstone being the competitive model for warranties."

Now in power for two years, this government seems to have forgotten its previous convictions, and done exactly what it criticized the Liberal government for doing in 2017. The following words of the former PC critic were recorded in Hansard on December 6, 2017, regarding the Liberals' weak Tarion bill. He stated:

"The" Liberal "government's proposals ... fall dramatically short of the reforms contemplated by Justice Cunningham and of consumers' expectations. Through the committee, we proposed a number of amendments to achieve what we believe to be the bare minimum of an acceptable solution to Tarion's shortcomings. The government defeated all of these amendments."

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That's exactly what the PC government has done in their weak Bill 159. Only the most modest steps have been taken, with major lane-switching and no explanation to the public, no transparency on why they decided to override

the judge's advice. This government has also rejected all reasonable amendments put forward by the opposition, consumers and advocates at two separate committee hearings. You say you've listened and learned from the agony consumers expressed about nightmares with Tarion, yet you've rejected every suggestion to fix this monopoly you agree is broken.

Leaving everything to regulations like the Liberals did in their 2017 bill, kicking the can further down the road, leaves consumers in dire circumstances today. A healthy construction and new home sales sector can't be achieved without trust in the government warranty agency and regulatory body.

Bill 159 is too weak, nowhere near the complete overhaul the government promised this year. Consumers are left with Tarion's secretive dispute resolution process and still too much discretion to Tarion to decide when or if they'll provide alternatives. We are still left with the monopoly model Premier Ford said he is against. We are left waiting for reforms through regulations, a delay-and-deflect tactic this government criticized the Liberals for in 2017. They criticized the Liberals for leaving things to regulations. We heard them defending that tactic yesterday, and of course they're going to defend it again today.

Many consumers see this as a betrayal of what PC MPPs championed while in opposition and an abdication of leadership, which is exactly the wording you used to describe your opponents in 2017. In the words of the former PC critic, recorded in Hansard on December 6, 2017, "This was an abdication of leadership by a government that has forgotten that when it comes to industrial self-regulation, the prerogative to lead, instruct and direct rests with the government"—your own member.

Consumers worked many long hours at their own expense with PC MPPs while they were in opposition. There was general agreement by both the PC and NDP parties that there must be sweeping change to fix Tarion's many failings. Thousands of taxpayer dollars have been spent; reviews, audits and consultations have been conducted, yet this majority PC government has left us exactly where we started a decade ago, with a broken system fraught with conflict and consumer distrust. Add to this what your Bill 159 has created: a growing distrust of politicians who promise they're protecting consumers and proceed to do the opposite.

Speaker, I will end my summary of the voice of consumers at committee with the words of Dr. Karen Somerville, the president of Canadians for Properly Built Homes, CPBH. CPBH has informed and advocated for thousands of new home purchasers for the last 16 years, all of this as a volunteer organization operating without government funding, all of this on their own dime. Many presenters throughout the two rounds of committee hearings spoke directly of the powerful impact CPBH had on showing them that they were not alone in their struggles. In many cases, homeowners have even attributed the intervention of CPBH as critical to the resolution of their warranty issues.

Tracy Wheeler is one such homeowner and has this to say about CPBH: "CPBH has helped my family navigate a broken home warranty process. Our newly built home had multiple OBC violations, mould and airborne mould. Our daughter had become asthmatic and required numerous medications to manage. Due to these serious OBC violations, we had racked up \$140,000 in debt with lawyers and engineers—and we were desperate. Then CPBH got involved—sat with us, listened, advocated to MPPs and directed us to various sources to push for movement and supported us through our new home crisis.

"Without CPBH I don't think our home would have been repaired, as CPBH helped every step" of the way, moving things forward.

But sadly, the expertise of CPBH has been truly underutilized by this government in the drafting of this legislation. Even worse, CPBH at times has been treated with what I believe to be—with a lack—sorry, I'm getting my words mixed up here. But truly, this government has not treated CPBH with respect. I saw that in committee, and I've seen that throughout this entire process.

Here is an excerpt of what she had to say—Karen Somerville—when questioned in committee on June 22, 2020. Her answers here address a lack of an explicit vision for consumer protection in this legislation:

"I have talked to a lot of people over the years, including Justice Cunningham, and what we've been told and what I have now come to believe is that there were certain principles that need to be established in the legislation itself, not left to regulation. So the first one that I will speak to, and a number of your presenters today had commented on this, is that the focus of this legislation itself needs to be focused on consumer protection.

"The current wording says 'promoting the protection of the public interest.' This is supposed to be about increasing consumer confidence and consumer protection. So I again, on behalf of our organization, really strongly request that it's focused on consumer protection."

She also raised the continuation of builder conflicts of interest in the future of Tarion. "You already heard a lot today, and previously, about the board composition. We echo that again; we think that needs to be very clear in the legislation. Conflict of interest is never acceptable on boards. I hold a designation on board governance, so I do have some knowledge of this, and to have builders on this board is clearly a conflict of interest."

With her years of experience, Dr. Somerville also pointed out the disproportionate level of access that the building industry has in shaping public policy. Here is what she had to say: "And we know that the development industry wields a lot of power. They have money for a big industry lobbyist, etc. etc. They're able to get access. I was asked earlier about the MGCS minister, and: Have we been able to get time with her? I saw the MGCS on Twitter a couple of weeks ago meeting with the OHBA. The builders in the industry have plenty of avenues to get to the people at Queen's Park. Consumers do not."

So there you have it, Speaker: the voices of consumer advocates overwhelmingly stating that they have been let

down by this legislation; that Bill 159 doesn't go far enough; that it is a missed opportunity for bold, necessary change.

The opposition listened to the experienced voices of consumer advocates and submitted two dozen amendments to improve this legislation. They included but were not limited to:

- explicit language to ensure consumer protection was within the core mandate of the new regulator, HCRA;

- provisions to eliminate conflict of interest on its board;

- a requirement that HCRA provide prescribed information about builder non-compliance to municipal building inspectors—let's help them do their jobs;

- new protections to ensure that no used or dirty HVAC systems are installed in new homes;

- the immediate appointment of a Tarion administrator to oversee reform rather than rely on Tarion to fix itself;

- a number of explicit changes to establish reasonable and fair timelines for warranty resolution and the elimination of arbitrary and restrictive deadlines; and

- a cap on Tarion executive compensation.

The government members on committee voted against each and every one and claimed that some might be addressed within regulations—something they criticized the Liberals for doing. When I asked them, “Why not simply address these consumer protection improvements in explicit language within the legislation?”, I don't believe I was given a reasonable answer. So it is patently clear that this government will simply allow Tarion to reform itself and leave many necessary changes to regulations, or the imagination, or both—overall, a continuance of status quo; no full wardrobe change but rather a trim off the top. “Let's wait and see,” told to consumers who have waited 44 years already.

Speaker, neither the consumer protection advocates nor I are satisfied that this government has ended builder control of either Tarion or the new regulator. You don't have to be a licensed builder to do the bidding of the building industry, and the lack of demonstrated consumer protection advocates on either board is telling. This crucial issue has been pointed out since Tarion's inception and, it appears, will still continue under this government. If you want consumer protection, then why not appoint people who have experienced Tarion on the receiving end? They know damn well how to fix it.

But let's be fair: Not everyone is disappointed by this legislation. For every unhappy consumer I've discussed today, there is a gratified builder out there. They are certainly breathing a sigh of relief as this time-allocated process winds down. In fact, while each and every consumer advocate tore their hair out in committee, the home builders' association appeared and spoke lovingly of the bill.

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Speaker, as my speech nears its end, I want to leave you a story of what the unchecked profit motive of the building industry can result in. It is the story of Canada's most

catastrophic failure of new construction, called the leaky condo crisis, and it is a cautionary tale for us all.

The crisis bankrupted BC's new home warranty program, which was, at that time, run by the builders and left countless consumers holding the bag. The aftermath of the leaky condo crisis led to the current multi-party new home warranty system that is in place in BC today. It is also that system that I drew heavily upon when formulating Bill 169, the private member's bill that I introduced this past winter.

So here it is: Back in 1986, Vancouver hosted the world's fair. The economic boom it had received from hosting Expo 86 helped to kick off a major building boom in BC's lower mainland and Vancouver Island. The demand to build residential condo units, in particular, meant that the demand for these construction projects was higher than the supply. At that time, there simply weren't enough qualified construction companies or workers to meet the demand. New builders and new construction projects began to pop up everywhere.

At the same time, designs that were more suitable to relatively hot and dry southern California than rainy British Columbia became the rage. This suited builders just fine, because with these new designs, builders were able to eliminate the need for an overhang, and if they used so-called rain screen technology, which had become popular in California at the time, they could get away with using thinner walls and could save lots of money on overall construction costs and therefore maximize profits.

This so-called rain screen technology, known as an exterior insulation finishing system, or EIFS, was designed to act as a barrier and keep the rain from seeping through. This system has one major flaw: that if moisture were to get in—and it could get in through improper installation or through cracks caused by geothermal expansion—the moisture then becomes trapped inside and can't get out. EIFS might have worked in places like southern California. However, BC's lower mainland and Vancouver Island experience a significantly larger amount of rainfall, even in July and August, and has a cooler climate.

Because of this, what ended up happening in BC was that moisture was getting into these units, resulting in toxic black mould and structural defects. This crisis mostly affected condominium units. Soon, condo owners discovered that whenever it rained—and in BC, it rains a lot—water would seep through, and their homes would essentially rot from the inside, causing tens of thousands of dollars worth of damage, all because the builder wanted to cut corners and save money.

When it was all said and done, more than 65,000 condos in BC were affected, and it is estimated that the leaky condo crisis cost the province's economy between \$2 billion and \$5 billion in the worst housing disaster in Canada's history.

In 1998, former BC Premier Dave Barrett was called in to conduct an inquiry to look into BC's leaky condo crisis. In 1998, Barrett wrote this in his report: “Of particular concern to this commission, is the impact on the attitudes

of people affected—not only the consumers, but also practitioners in the construction industry. Some consumers have become ashamed. They are afraid to talk about one of the most significant financial crises they will face. They are afraid of appearing foolish or devaluing their asset. Some members of the residential construction industry have become defensive and aggressive in attempting to deflect responsibility.”

The issues that Barrett described in his report are some of the very same issues we are dealing with here in Ontario when it comes to our new home warranty system. Many homeowners are afraid to speak up about problems they have in their newly built homes due to shoddy construction, afraid for the impact it may have on the value of their home, and builders try to avoid responsibility so they don't have to pay to fix their own errors. All too often, these builders use Tarion as a cover to protect them from having to pay out.

Up until 1998, new home warranties in British Columbia had been administered by the Canadian Home Builders' Association. But after the sheer volume of complaints from owners of leaky condos, the builder-administered new home warranty program went broke, leaving homeowners on their own to deal with sometimes upwards of tens of thousands of dollars' worth of repairs.

Barrett was called in again to commission a second report after BC's home warranty system collapsed. In the conclusion of both of his reports, Barrett made numerous recommendations, including the creation of a Homeowner Protection Office and changes to municipal zoning and building codes, in the hopes that such a disaster should never occur again. Barrett also recommended that all leaky condo owners be paid in full up to \$25,000 to repair damages.

John Grasty, a co-founder of the coalition of leaky condo owners—which, like so many of these other consumer advocacy groups, had been formed by owners of leaky condo units who had been burned by the building industry. John told me the story of one of the most difficult calls he ever had to make.

“Prior to co-founding the coalition of leaky condo owners in 1999 with Dr. Balderson, I was already receiving calls and emails from people in the hundreds, because I'd made myself available in the advocacy role I had assumed.

“From all of the crying and despair, I thought I had heard just about everything, but around 2001, I got home at about 9 one Friday night from visiting my grandkids, and had a voice message from a woman, asking me to call her back. I returned the call the next morning, and asked” who it was. “In a very soft voice I was told, ‘Yes, but you can call me Helen.’ Almost 20 years later and this call still haunts me and stirs my emotions.” Why?

“Helen told me she was 95 years old and lived alone at the Renaissance, on Minoru Boulevard, in Richmond. She then proceeded to tell me she had received a leaky condo assessment of \$50,000 and didn't know what to do because she only had a small pension and no family close by. Helen, in her twilight years, had just been served with

this massive leaky condo levy from her strata corporation, and it made me sick.

“While I had already spoken and corresponded to hundreds of leaky condo victims, many whose family homes had been plundered, Helen's cruel story touched me differently. I felt helpless and could only steer Helen to the Homeowner Protection Office and the means test for her to apply for an interest-free loan. This meant that the province would have a covenant put on Helen's title to recover the money from her modest estate upon her death.

“I knew many owners who passed away during the height of the disaster, like Dave Penman, a Canadian veteran who had served in WWII with the Seaforth Highlanders. Many others dealing with cancer and with compromised immune systems from chemotherapy and other illnesses were exposed to excessive mould and a diminished quality of life and premature death.

“When the province undertook the remediation of all the schools with leaky condo syndrome, there were strict regulations for the workers going to work in the mould and other conditions to wear personal protective equipment (PPE). The province didn't care that many of those same remediation workers were then going to their leaky condo homes to live and sleep in even worse conditions than some of their work sites.

“It is estimated that the indirect costs of the leaky condo syndrome, were far greater than the direct costs for remediation. At one time ... within just a four-block radius of the Town Centre area of Coquitlam, over \$33 million of remediation work was under way. All of the money to pay for repairs was coming out of the local consumer economy.”

The leaky condo crisis is a dramatic example of what happens when builder greed trumps builder quality. It is what happens when the builder profit motive is left unchecked. If we continue to treat consumer protection like it's red tape, then we could face this again, with disastrous consequences.

Listen to the end of what Mr. John Grasty had said earlier: “The local bankruptcy trustees and lawyers were having”—these were record-breaking levels of bankruptcy. “My GP told me that all the doctors in his clinic were prescribing more anti-depressants than they ever had. Many marriages and families were casualties, and one of my colleagues ... told me that she was aware of a former homeowner who had lost everything, and was living with the homeless on the downtown east side of Vancouver.”

Speaker, I will not end this speech with a bang, but rather with a fizzle. It is what this missed opportunity for bold change deserves. It is the feeling of all those consumer advocates who have eagerly followed this process with the hopes of true reform. Now their shoulders are slumped.

Speaker, it's a majority Conservative government, so this bill, of course, will pass. But does this bill deserve the support of Ontario's official opposition? Consumer advocates have overwhelmingly said no. Throughout this process, it has become increasingly transparent that it wasn't just consumers who were let down and even misled. Some sit in this House and will be expected to toe the line. But

the powers behind this government only truly serve one interest: big money and, above all, developers. What chance did consumer protection really ever have here?

I will leave you once again with the words of the former PC critic in response to the Liberal government's handling of Tarion:

"The government's proposals ... fall dramatically short of the reforms contemplated by Justice Cunningham and of consumers' expectations. Through the committee, we proposed a number of amendments to achieve what we believe to be the bare minimum of an acceptable solution to Tarion's shortcomings. The government defeated all of these amendments"—so ironic, so pertinent, so unfortunate.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. It's time for questions.

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Je remercie le député de Humber River–Black Creek pour son discours aujourd'hui et pour sa passion pour le sujet qu'on discute aujourd'hui. Mais je voudrais attirer son attention sur des nombreux changements que nous avons apportés pour répondre aux préoccupations liées à Tarion.

Nous avons commencé le processus de mise en place de l'organisme de réglementation en dehors de Tarion. Nous avons aussi demandé à Tarion d'afficher publiquement la rémunération des membres du conseil d'administration et des dirigeants. Nous avons introduit de nouvelles mesures pour les futurs projets de condominiums avant construction. Nous avons aussi adopté le projet de loi sur la confiance dans les services immobiliers, un projet de loi qui offrira plus de transparence dans le processus d'achat et de vente d'une maison—un projet que vous avez appuyé. Merci pour ça.

Alors, compte tenu de ces changements, comment le député d'en face peut-il dire que notre gouvernement n'a pas fait suffisamment pour protéger les consommateurs?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I want to thank the member opposite. She did sit with me in committee. She heard all of the things that I heard. The consumers, the people fighting for real reform, are unsatisfied.

You talked about what this government is doing in terms of reforming Tarion, but I'll tell you what this government is doing: It's letting Tarion reform itself, a process that it has been doing for 44 years.

I will quote Einstein, like I quoted him in committee. What is happening right now—and what does he say about the definition of insanity? It's to do the same thing over and over and over again and expect a different result. And so I ask this government to do the right thing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Ms. Sara Singh: I want to thank the member from Humber River–Black Creek for his passionate speech. I think he raised so many points.

It was a pleasure to be a part of the committee process with you. I think I can echo your concerns around being very disappointed. We heard from stakeholders, from consumer advocates and consumers themselves who are

really struggling with this government sort of tinkering around the edges around the reform of Tarion.

Could you maybe elaborate on what could have been done to truly reform Tarion and build the consumer confidence that people in this province are looking for?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I want to thank my NDP colleague, who also sat through the first round of committee hearings and heard the same things I heard. There's so much that could be done. This government, who spoke overwhelmingly—members who are here today who spoke overwhelmingly—in support in the past of a multi-warranty system have backed away from that.

Following this bill since I became critic of this file, there was a change. Something happened to bring them to where they are now. But I will just focus on Tarion itself, because they're dead-set against going to multi-warranty—surprising for Conservatives, actually. They could bring in an administrator right now to implement all of the recommendations that the Auditor General laid out. They could fix the building industry right now, but they're not. They're letting Tarion fix itself. That's the simplest thing they could do, and even that—part of my Bill 169 and part of one of my amendments—is something they just don't want to support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Vincent Ke: The honourable Auditor General, in her report, specifically noted that a multi-provider model may diminish the mandate of consumer protection. The surety model allows warranty costs to remain subject to government approval. It provides low and more stable costs of coverage, as well as a more consistent warranty decision and dispute process. Moreover, it enables our government to track bad conduct by builders and have this information disclosed publicly.

Speaker, my question is, why is for the member opposite still advocating a multi-provider model that will not provide the same benefits?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Justice Cunningham—this was his main recommendation. Members of this government were all onside. Your own Premier, your boss, said he was for this. Something changed. Do you know what I think changed? A flurry of phone calls from the building industry saying, "You know what we need? Status quo, because status quo works amazing for us. Who cares about consumer protection?"

If the builders don't want it, I think it's worth looking into.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Member for Humber River–Black Creek, thank you once again for expressing how deeply problematic Bill 159 is for homeowners. I really appreciate it.

I have a question here. I'm just wondering about Karen Somerville, who is the president of Canadians for Properly Built Homes. I understand that she has been in touch with the government many times, dating back even to last August, with a letter around the number of suicidal

thoughts and suicide attempts homebuyers have discussed with them in relation to the problems they're having with Tarion. I'm just wondering what your opinion is as to why the government hasn't taken these suicidal thoughts and attempts seriously.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I think it could be explained thus: Communication between consumers and this government is generally a one-sided affair. The affair is consumers will point out to this government, "These are the things we're facing; these are the problems." And I'm sure individual members might react and respond to their own constituents, but as a government, their interest is to continue to serve the interests of the development industry. Listening to things like that steers them off course.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Speaker, there are two kinds of people: good people and not good people. Our government recognizes that the vast majority of businesses in Ontario act in accordance with the law. They're good people and do everything they can to protect our consumers. However, we recognize that there are some bad actors. That is why Bill 159 includes administrative monetary penalties that will punish businesses that do not comply with the act or its regulations. Does the member opposite agree that this is an important tool in enforcing the Consumer Protection Act, or would they prefer to add more red tape and regulation to hamper good Ontario businesses?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: You know what my favourite thing about being an MPP is? It's to be here when governments introduce omnibus legislation with, like, a hundred things in it, and then they point out in their questions, "Notwithstanding that this other stuff is absolutely terrible, in subsection 5.37, we use the word 'the.' Do you support the word 'the'?"

Look, let's be honest, okay? This bill, for the most part, is about Tarion reform. You're not reforming Tarion. You're letting it fix itself. If you want to bring transparency and accountability to the DAAs in this province, listen to your own member. Bring ombudsmen and bring FIPPA regulations—bring them under that. Let's do transparency. We could all agree on this together, just like we did on TRESA.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions? I recognize the member from Brampton—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): You're good.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: North.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Brampton North. You were going to make me work, weren't you? You have about 20 seconds.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know there are a lot of members from Brampton on this side, so it gets a little bit confusing.

My question is to the member from Humber River—Black Creek. If we could talk a little bit about the composition of the board, why is it important with the Tarion

Board and the HCRA board to have different views instead of people who have been on that board from Tarion in the past?

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Mr. Tom Rakocevic: From the outset, since Tarion was first envisioned in 1976 under a different name, the first thing that was criticized about it was the builder control of it. That exists today. It needs real consumer protection on it. This government is not doing that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill 159, the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act. It is important that we take consumer protection seriously, and it is evident that our government is taking the necessary action to ensure that this is the case.

I want to thank our Minister of Government and Consumer Services for bringing this act forward. Our government made a commitment to look into Tarion and make changes that will help better protect new homebuyers in the province, and that's exactly what we have done.

In summary, Bill 159 is an enabling piece of legislation that, if passed, will establish a separate regulator for the new home builders and vendors, the Home Construction Regulatory Authority, HCRA, under the New Home Construction Licensing Act. As HCRA's doors open, Tarion will continue to be the sole warranty and protection administrator.

Regulations are being developed in phases, with related consultations, in order to implement a fresh new home warranty program. This has been a measured and swift overhaul, from the decision to separate the regulator from the warranty provider through the minister's order to disclose executive compensation, and now with Bill 159.

Having talked with constituents in my riding, people are often unsatisfied with the quality of construction of new homes, and subsequently must deal with warranties and protection systems that are complex, lengthy, confusing and, in many cases, fail to satisfy homeowners. They want to be confident they are hiring a reputable builder to build their home, and they expect strong warranties and protections that they can depend on, with strong oversight and enforcement of clear rules for builders, which currently is not the case.

Speaker, our bill proposes changes that will overhaul new home warranty in the province. Our reform will do the following:

- (1) enhance the claims and dispute resolution process;
- (2) introduce measures to enable better-built homes;
- (3) increase transparency and oversight of Tarion.

For years, the Liberals allowed the new home warranty system in the province to crumble, but now we are taking action. Buying a home, for most of the population, is the biggest investment of their lives. For the biggest investment of one's life, they require the strongest protections to have confidence in their purchase and life-changing decisions.

The changes would promote the construction of better-built homes by requiring Tarion to increase the scrutiny of applications to build or sell a new home to better prevent bad actors from operating. It would also establish a mandate for Tarion to promote the construction of properly built homes.

We want consumers to have better-built homes and ensure they have the best information to make decisions on their builders. We have a clear vision for Ontario's consumers: to rebuild consumer confidence by offering them the strongest protection at home, online and in their communities.

Our government has a continued plan to strengthen protection and promote trust and confidence for the people of Ontario, whether they are investing in one of the biggest purchases in their lifetime—a new home—travelling, using an elevator or making a purchase with their credit card. The Ontario government is strengthening protection for consumers by proposing more effective enforcement tools to address businesses that continue to cause harm to consumers.

Bill 159 is about updating outdated legislation and adopting additional practices to strengthen protection and promote trust and confidence for the people of Ontario. We are building the foundation for a modern and equitable system that truly puts people at the centre of everything, both now and for future generations.

Our government recognizes that the people of Ontario need stronger protection. We want you to feel confident that you are well-informed and have robust protections when you shop online or enter into a contract. We want to assure you that you have a voice in helping to create stronger rules to protect you and your families.

Our legislation includes a wholesale review of the Consumer Protection Act for the first time in 15 years. We need to make sure that every element of the legislation works for consumers and businesses in the province. The people of Ontario need stronger protection because our economy works best when people trust businesses, products and services that they spend their hard-earned money on.

The way people make purchases and how businesses work have changed, especially with the rise in e-commerce over the years. As a result, consumer protection laws need to be updated so they remain fair and give consumers confidence that their rights are protected. Updated laws should also improve Ontario's reputation as a place for businesses to grow and invest in. That's why we are setting a high priority on updating laws to respond to the needs of consumers while forecasting the continued growth of a thriving economy.

The review is being centred around holding consultations with stakeholders and consumers. These consultations will enable us to continue to implement stronger protection for the people of Ontario. As of June 15, 2020, Tarion has completed 11 of the Auditor General's recommendations—two more since the spring. Eight more will be done by the end of 2020 and six to be done in 2021. This means that by the end of 2020, 76% of the Auditor General's recommendations will be completed.

To the many new homeowners across our great province, our government wants you to know that your voice matters. We have heard loud and clear that real, meaningful change is needed. We recognize the importance of getting this right, and we will ensure that we do.

Many important changes will be addressed through Bill 159, and many more will be addressed through regulations as we continue our consultation and overhauling new home warranties in Ontario.

The Home Construction Regulatory Authority, HCRA, is designated by the government of Ontario as the province's new licensor and regulator of new home builders and vendors under the as-of-yet-unproclaimed New Home Construction Licensing Act, 2017—NHCLA. **1650**

The HCRA is intended to enhance consumer protection and foster confidence and trust in Ontario's home building sector by fostering high professional standards for competence and conduct of home builders.

At present, new home builders and vendors are licensed through Tarion, administrators of the Ontario New Home Warranty Program. Going forward, Tarion would continue to administer the warranty program, while HCRA would be responsible for licensing.

Bill 159 will allow our government to open up consultations with consumers and stakeholders across the province. This bill is an important one, and it's also unique with respect to its journey through this chamber, in that we moved right into public consultations before second reading of the bill. What that did was allow us to make full use of the winter adjournment to travel this bill around the province and hear from various stakeholders and individuals on how we can make it better.

Having had multiple consultations and round tables in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills, it is clear that stakeholders and individuals recognize that things are no longer working as intended, and we need to improve the system to ensure the safety and protection of our consumers in Ontario.

We are also proposing legislative and regulatory changes to condominium living. We have heard loud and clear from stakeholders that the people lack clear processes to navigate condo living because it's different than other types of housing. People also expect better, faster and cheaper digital services as well as the need for more transparency and accountability when buying and living in a condo.

Recent regulatory changes have been made to provide condo owners, corporations, purchasers and mortgagees with improved access to 17 forms made under the Condominium Act. They are now available through the Condominium Authority of Ontario website, where other information is available.

Owners and prospective owners now have a one-stop shop for all the information they require, rather than having to visit the ministry's website separately. Of course, the ministry retains responsibility for the forms and their content, but we will collaborate with condo authorities to make improvements.

The government is currently consulting on changes to develop a variety of proposed regulatory changes to provide condo corporations with clear processes and rules for the procurement of services and goods and the financial management of condo reserve funds, such as:

- increase the amount of interest that would be owed to the buyers by the developers on their deposits if their pre-construction condo project is cancelled, and in other circumstances;

- provide clearer processes for occupancy fees and chargebacks;

- develop a condo guide for buyers and require developers to provide it at the point of purchase.

This will better equip condo purchasers with information in an easy-to-understand format and clarify the processes for mediation or arbitration between condo corporations and owners.

Another issue we have been hearing from across Ontario is the Condominium Authority tribunal system and how long and extensive it can be for cases brought before the tribunal to be resolved. That's why we are expanding the scope of topics that the tribunal can mediate, such as nuisances and smells.

This will not only expedite the process by which the condo owners can reach a resolution in a dispute that they have with their neighbours but also provide an alternate level of dispute resolution instead of using up limited resources in the legal system. This is an example of our government's cross-ministry, rounded approach to address the issues and concerns that affect Ontarians.

While the changes that I have discussed so far have been about protection in housing, these are not the only changes being proposed in this bill. We are actually looking to amend the Consumer Protection Act itself. Legislative amendments introduced through this bill would enable the provincial government to issue administrative monetary penalties, or AMPs, against businesses that do not comply with the Consumer Protection Act. We have seen, in other areas, both municipally and provincially, that administrative monetary penalties are effective tools to encourage compliance with the law and discourage deceptive and predatory practices. Adding AMPs to the ministry's enforcement toolbox would bring our Consumer Protection Act in line with other provinces and be an additional way to enforce the act.

Part of the ministry's ongoing consultation would include determining which infractions would be subject to AMPs and determining what those penalty amounts would be for these offences.

We will also be conducting an overall review of the Consumer Protection Act. This would be the first comprehensive review of this act in 15 years. Since then, there have been massive changes in technology and marketplace innovation. To continue to be effective, the act needs to be updated to strengthen protection for consumers. The review will also rationalize and clarify requirements to improve consumer and business understanding and support compliance.

One of the important changes that this bill makes is in schedule 10, the Ticket Sales Act. Our government is focusing on protecting the people who are buying tickets for all events. While the NDP and Liberals play politics with ticket prices, we are focusing on making sure that there are enforceable rules and regulations in place. We took action in budget 2019 to provide better clarity for Ontarians and to ensure that they are not getting ripped off by black-market providers. The NDP and Liberals would rather introduce more red tape that is not effective or enforceable. We are focusing on supporting people buying tickets, not supporting the black market.

Some of the actions we have been taking include:

- increasing penalties to discourage black-market ticket sales;

- making ticket sellers provide clear and easy-to-understand information about ticket availability;

- getting rid of print-at-home fees; and

- making business easier for legitimate ticket sellers.

Consumers may not be aware that some tickets on the secondary market are being offered in a non-Canadian currency, such as US dollars, until a late stage in the transaction.

Mr. Speaker, our proposals under this bill don't stop there. In our proposed legislation, we made it clear to Tarion that they are required to annually post information about the compensation they pay to board members and specified officers of the corporation on its public website.

In addition, the minister took action last fall by issuing a minister's order for Tarion to change their bylaws to reflect that no one group can form a majority on the board, as well as reducing the board size from 16 to 12. The current Tarion board composition is one-third minister appointments, one-third Tarion appointments and one-third builder appointments from the OHBA. We currently have two members on the board who have relevant consumer protection backgrounds.

1700

There is more in this bill, Mr. Speaker. The minister is also proposing changes to strengthen enforcement and transparency measures to improve elevator safety and availability. We are proposing stronger enforcement tools to improve compliance with elevator safety laws and data collection with respect to elevator outages, to better inform policy development and publication of outage data online to educate and inform consumers.

I was a member of the general government standing committee, which held the hearings for Bill 159, and I was glad that government, NDP and Green representatives co-operated to get the amendments needed to make sure that this bill protects the interests of homeowners. I understand that there are some differences between our looks into the regulation part versus the legislation part, and we discussed that, but I think we looked into some of the regulations to make it flexible, to make sure that we can flexibly protect the homeowners as we go.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I appreciate the comments from the member opposite. I could tell when the member from

Humber River–Black Creek was speaking, as well, that people weren't listening very intently. I know this is a complicated issue.

But the member said we need to make sure that this legislation protects consumers. That's one of the guiding principles here, I suppose, but what really occurs to me is that this government, your government, has left out really critical elements—protections against, for example, conflict of interest on the board. As the member from Humber River–Black Creek said, you've essentially left Tarion in charge of reforming itself.

I wonder if the member would care to comment on why the government members were so quick to reject the excellent amendments that were put forward by the NDP, at the request of consumers who have been negatively impacted for many years by bad builders.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I think everyone in the committee, when we were discussing, realized that the structure of Tarion as it is—like, the board, the structure of the board—wasn't what we were looking for, what would effectively protect homeowners. There was no disagreement on that. I think we did move this forward by saying that no one group can have a majority in the board. We divided it one third, one third, one third, to make sure that each group of stakeholders had a balanced representation on the board. Builders cannot take over what the homeowners can do. I think we did approach it in a very balanced way, one third, one third, one third for each group.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions? Oh, look at them all stand. I recognize the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you to the member for Mississauga–Erin Mills for his input. For 15 years under the previous government, Tarion was able to operate with no accountability, and lacked transparency and support for consumers. Our government has committed to addressing the concerns from the Auditor General's report by instituting more government oversight on Tarion. Our government is doing this by committing to implementing 29 out of the Auditor General's 32 recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, can the member please update the House on the status of implementing 29 of the Auditor General recommendations?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: We did a review of the report, and as of June 15, 2020, Tarion has completed 11 of the Auditor General recommendations, two on top from since the spring. Eight more will be done by the end of 2020, and six are to be done in 2021. This means that by the end of 2020, 76% of the Auditor General's recommendations will be completed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Ms. Jill Andrew: I just have a question back to the government member with regard to the conflict-of-interest piece. The CPBH has maintained for more than a decade now that there should be no builders on the board of Tarion due to the conflict of interest. I understand that there's

been input to implement a builder advisory council and that the CPBH has said that this would be appropriate.

I'm just wondering why the member from Sarnia–Lambton would actually say to the CPBH that the conflict of interest had to be done because they had to give builders seats on the board to keep them happy, essentially. I'm just wondering why that sort of conflict of interest wouldn't have been flagged when the experts are flagging it, Tarion's flagging it—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Question, please?

Ms. Jill Andrew: That's the question. Why are you all propping up conflicts of interest?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I don't think that anybody will support any conflicts of interest. I'm not aware of the quote from the respected member from Sarnia, and I wouldn't quote that because I don't know about it. I have to go back and check it.

My opinion is that there were respected members who were part of that discussion in the committee. We were in some degree of agreement that having representatives from each group would enrich the process, enhance the process, make the process more fluent, because if we have no builders at all on the board, there would be homeowners talking and the enforcement, and then the builders could complain—the same complaints we are talking about now, the homeowners complaining, saying, "Well, we don't have any voice on the board, so we don't agree with what you're doing."

So by having a balanced approach with all the representatives, all the people sitting at the table and discussing whatever needs to be discussed—I think that was our approach—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Further questions?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: The Auditor General outlined that Tarion has been operating in the interests of builders, with minimal government oversight. Can you tell us what the government is doing to increase the oversight, please?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: This report, actually, doesn't really say anything bad about what we are doing. What we are doing is trying to solve or enhance or to execute based on that report. The report was clear that there is no compliance. There are many issues with Tarion as it is.

Again, I know that during the discussion in the committee, the annual report of 2017 came and some of the submissions were included in that report. And that's exactly what we're saying—this is not us. We are trying to fix this. We are trying to do all that we can to fix this. The minister already issued an order to try to make sure there is transparency with their compensation. They have to post that or publish that on their public site so that everybody has clear oversight about that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: As we're discussing Bill 159, the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act, I think the government has a long way to go to rebuild that consumer confidence, when we have a not appropriately amended

piece of legislation that missed the opportunity to actually protect consumers.

What we have, as we've heard: Tarion is being left to be in charge of reforming itself. The member had spoken just now about the board and needing to have builders on the board. I thought the whole point of Tarion was to hold those builders to account in order to address concerns of consumers. Again, the builders policing themselves is a problem. This was supposed to be the warranty backstop.

The member from Sarnia–Lambton said, “We made it clear to Tarion”—or you said that. Anyway, the point is: “We’re going to be watching them. We’re going to be watching them, and we’re sure that they’re going to do good things,” because, I don’t know, you play golf with them. This trust thing is not enough to ensure consumer protection. So my question is: Why on earth do you have so much faith in the “just trust them” approach?

1710

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: In my opinion, there are two reasons for that. One of them is that you can’t demolish everything and start from scratch and expect to get it right this time. We already have a model that has been running for 15 years. We’ve seen all the issues with that, and we are trying to fix it, to continue building on it, not to demolish everything and start from scratch with a model. God knows if it works, or if in 15 years we find ourselves in the same situation again.

A good thing I agree with is that—I’m very glad that the opposition sees that as an opportunity. Bill 159 is actually an opportunity, a good opportunity to regain back consumers’ trust, consumer confidence in what the government is doing. The ministry has a one-third bloc on the board. A new CEO and new members of the board have already been assigned so that everything will be cleaned up.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I appreciate the opportunity to speak today to Bill 159, the Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act. This particular bill, like many this government seems to present before us, is an omnibus bill that touches on a wide range of issues. Throughout 10 different schedules, this government is proposing changes to the Condominium Act, the Condominium Management Services Act, the Consumer Protection Act, the New Home Construction Licensing Act, the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, the Retirement Homes Act, the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act, the Technical Standards and Safety Act and, finally, the Ticket Sales Act.

Mr. Speaker, any one of these schedules is deserving of full and healthy debate and a very close examination. However, when so many schedules are bundled into a bill, it becomes a form of Trojan Horse. We are, quite frankly, unable to do these parts of the bill justice. Whether it is adequate public consultation or debate here in the Legislature, an omnibus bill does not do democratic process justice, but here we are. Here we are, during a pandemic

crisis, rushing through bills with an absence of forethought.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to touch on all aspects of this bill, but about 20 minutes simply doesn’t allow for that. I’m going to try to touch on some issues that might not get attention, that might not get mentioned.

My colleagues have spoken quite well of the Tarion mess. The Canadians for Properly Built Homes say the Bill 159 changes to Tarion “comprise more tinkering about the edges of a mandatory monopoly which is beyond repair.”

I don’t want to spend all my time on Tarion, but I would be remiss not to mention that on this side of the House, we have been talking about the need for reform to Tarion since our first reform bill was introduced by Rosario Marchese in 2010. He continued in 2011 and 2012 with bills on reform to Tarion. We have been pushing this House for a solution for years.

My fine colleague from Humber River–Black Creek, a great member, a strong local voice for Humber River–Black Creek, introduced Bill 169, the Home Warranties to Protect Families Act. This bill would have established a new agency that would replace Tarion—an agency that the government and the people of Ontario would have control over.

In 2015, Justice Cunningham, in his review and analysis of Tarion, suggested a new home warranty system with a multi-provider model. This model exists in other provinces in Canada. And it is an excellent model. My colleague had the model as part of his bill.

Mr. Speaker, when one of the only supporters of Bill 159 is the Ontario Home Builders’ Association, a well-funded political lobby group, that should give us pause to reflect.

My question is, why did this government not listen to the amendments proposed by the opposition and various consumer advocates? This is a decades-old problem with Tarion, and it seems that this government does not want to listen to anyone raising the red flags—anyone from homebuyers to the Auditor General.

Again, Tarion is so contentious, we could rightly spend days talking about it. But I want to move on to other aspects that are being slipped through in this omnibus bill.

Let us move into schedule 1, which deals with the Condominium Act. Mr. Speaker, I know that individuals and families who are residents of condos have been calling for reforms to the Condominium Act for decades. I earlier mentioned our former fantastic member for Trinity–Spadina, Rosario Marchese, and his foresight with bills to reform Tarion. Well, as far back as 2007, he tabled his first private member’s bill for condo reform. The need for reforms to the Condominium Act included calls for better protecting condo owners struggling with unexplained maintenance fee increases, abusive and unaccountable boards, and unethical developers who take advantage of consumers by burying unexpected surprises in the fine print of contracts.

I believe it’s important to know the history of the struggle for condo reform, which leads us to where we are

today, with the flawed reforms suggested in this bill, Bill 159. A review of the Condominium Act that we had been pushing for five years was finally established by the Liberal government in 2012. Finally, in 2015, Bill 106 established the condo authority, something we had wanted since 2007, whereby condo disputes could be settled cheaply and quickly. Unfortunately, years of delay and foot-dragging later, real change for condo owners is still lacking in resolving nearly all disputes.

So, Mr. Speaker, little has changed. This current bill, Bill 159, which amends various statutes governing administrative authorities, like the condominium authority and Tarion, only focuses on basic governance frameworks of these authorities and does nothing to improve specific consumer protection. A bill entitled “Rebuilding Consumer Confidence” should contain actual consumer protections in that bill.

I see that schedule 7 speaks to the Retirement Homes Act. Well, Mr. Speaker, if there is a sector that is in need of rebuilding consumer confidence, it is certainly retirement homes. In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed the tragic consequences of for-profit long-term care and retirement and other congregate care in our province. Retirement homes are a place where seniors, and in fact others who are no longer healthy enough or wanting to live at home, go to. Much of the population is not aware that unlike long-term-care homes, retirement homes do not have the oversight of the long-term-care ministry under the Ministry of Health’s umbrella. No, some of our most vulnerable in the province in retirement homes are regarded as tenants and governed by the Ministry of Housing. If this government is serious about consumer protection, then those seniors in retirement homes deserve protection.

Just down the highway, in Hamilton, news broke that a retirement home with a long history of scandals was faced with a serious and tragic major outbreak. The Rosslyn Retirement Home was evacuated one month after local board of health orders were deemed to have been complied with. Those orders were not in compliance.

1720

Where is the oversight, Mr. Speaker? Where are the protections for residents and staff when a facility where senior residents are deemed tenants—can be living in conditions where 64 residents and 22 staff members were infected with COVID-19? To date, 14 of those residents have died. When this bill is supposed to be about consumer protection, what is in it for the protection of seniors in retirement homes?

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is an authority that oversees retirement homes in Ontario that is known as the RHRA, or the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority. This bill speaks to that authority and only goes as far as to use the words “may” in establishing rules for who may serve on the board. As for the transparency about the board, it is unfortunately lacking, because schedule 7 of Bill 159 speaks to the minister requiring the authority to publish and disclose executive and board compensation of Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority members.

One might wonder, with all of the scandals and horror stories surrounding long-term care and retirement homes, who actually sits on the RHRA board. Well, Mr. Speaker, the retirement homes regulatory board is largely comprised of private, for-profit long-term-care operators. “Rebuilding consumer confidence,” this government shouts. Well, how about an industry like retirement homes being made to fall under the watch of the Ministry of Health? And how about a board of the oversight authority not having an inherent conflict of interest? This is exactly why we are calling for a judicial inquiry into long-term care, and that should include retirement and other congregate care.

At a time when we are dealing with a pandemic, and particularly in this sector, it is particularly disappointing that this government did not even attempt to make real changes that could improve the treatment of our elderly. We could have been talking about how those changes will take effect today, right here, right now, instead of this Tarion Trojan Horse bill.

Real consumer protection is something this side of the House could talk about all day, Mr. Speaker. We are in the middle of reopening our economy, and we need to do that in a careful and responsible manner, so that a major second wave does not take place and send us right back to the starting line of months ago. I have been hearing from businesses and individuals in my riding wanting access to PPE and worried about a really bad art of municipal rules that sometimes mandate and sometimes do not mandate masks in public.

Real consumer protection that will rebuild consumer confidence in having their health protected while opening the economy is what is needed, Mr. Speaker. If this government were serious about consumer protection and restoring confidence, they would not have rejected the idea of our federal leader, Jagmeet Singh, in having 10 days of paid sick leave. Instead, we have workers not being able to afford to stay home when they are sick and possibly jeopardizing the health of fellow public transit riders, their co-workers and the general public.

Like many things this government seems to reject or ignore outright, these measures actually help the economy by protecting people and ensuring we can get businesses moving forward in the safest manner.

Bill 159 is lacking in consumer protections in a number of ways. When the government wishes to use words like “rebuilding consumer confidence,” it is encouraging that in its name they seem to acknowledge that Ontarians do not have that confidence. In this, the government is correct. The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has exposed so many cracks and deficiencies in our society. People have found they cannot have blind faith in our institutions to act in their best interest. We can and need to do things in this province better.

So here we are, in July, talking about a bill that has little to do with the COVID-19 crisis. Instead, we are dealing with a bill that is basically only a piece of enabling legislation. The devil is in the details, and we don’t know all those details or have any say as the minister decides how they roll out those regulations and policies.

This bill is lacking many things, and I will touch on a few of those gaps and omissions now.

Earlier, I spoke to schedule 7 and how it offers nothing for seniors' protection. A local example is one where senior residents were evicted from their Rosedale retirement home in order to make way for a new condo building. Schedule 7 is not a response to our side's demand for review of the Retirement Homes Act.

Schedule 8 affects the governance of the travel industry of Ontario. During COVID-19, many people have had to cancel flights, hotel bookings and travel plans. In many cases, my office has been hearing about consumers being told that they are not going to be compensated, or at least given a reasonable settlement. This bill does nothing for those consumers.

The Canadian Association of Tour Operators were very critical of the government not providing protection for tourists whose travel company goes broke during their trip. Tour operators stated that, "The government has missed an opportunity to fully protect Ontario travellers against failures, and it has done so despite many submissions by CATO and other stakeholders urging changes to the funding model."

Schedule 9 speaks to the Technical Standards and Safety Act, under which elevator operations and maintenance are regulated, and does nothing to address concerns that condo owners and senior advocates have been demanding, such as elevator availability. Buildings allowed to drag their feet and delay maintenance on operations of elevators have resulted in seniors and the disabled being stranded in their apartments and unable to leave their floor for supplies, their mail, their friends and for their own basic dignity. This was an opportunity to protect those most vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, one of the more disturbing aspects of this bill deals with delegated administrative authorities. Delegated administrative authorities, known as DAAs, were apparently inspired in 1996 by the Tarion Warranty Corp. The Conservatives enacted the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act to delegate various administrative roles to designated private corporations—DAAs—basically putting public safety into private hands. By 2003, Ontario had eight DAAs. Under the Liberal government, that list of privately run authorities nearly doubled.

DAAs, as private corporations are not subject to the same governance and transparency rules that must apply to government agencies. They are not subject to the oversight of the Ontario Ombudsman, the sunshine list or access-to-information rules that apply to the public sector. They are not bound by lobbying or conflict-of-interest rules that apply to public servants.

Time and again, this bill has shown that in its contents there is little reason for citizens to be shown where they can have consumer confidence rebuilt. Confidence of the public comes from a place of having a government that is fully transparent and accountable, and where oversight of its own ministries and, more importantly, oversight of privatized administrative authorities exists and is seen to exist.

With Bill 159, rebuilding consumer confidence—this speaks to the law of inverse relevance: The less you intend to do about something, the more you have to keep talking about it.

1730

The Toronto Star reported on February 27 of this year: "Ontario's highest court has levelled an unusually harsh blast at the Tarion Warranty Corp., saying its compulsory addendum form which must be attached to every builder agreement is complex, difficult to follow and does not protect consumers.

"The court's comments were made in a decision involving Anthony Ingarra, who signed an agreement in 2016 to buy a house from Previn Homes. According to the Tarion addendum in the contract, the agreed firm closing date was January 11, 2018. On that date, the builder was unable to close since it did not have a municipal occupancy permit. It received the permit the following day.

"Ingarra also could not close since he was not in funds. His lender needed five more days to approve the loan, but when its appraiser inspected the home before closing, it was incomplete.

"The Tarion addendum prescribes a compulsory framework for extending closings. When a builder cannot close by the contract's firm closing date and fails to give notice of a delayed closing date, the Tarion addendum automatically sets a new delayed closing date 90 days later—unless the parties agree otherwise.

"The lawyers for both parties ignored the addendum and agreed to extend closing to January 15 and then January 17."

I don't have much time to continue on, but you can see the difficulties we have here. I'll end there, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: There is no doubt that the Tarion corporation was broken and not providing the service that consumers paid for or deserved. The opposition has frequently said that the government should be supporting a multi-provider insurance model. To the member opposite: If the government were to pursue such a model, how can you guarantee that insurance companies would be willing to provide coverage? Smaller builders would have difficult obtaining insurance. Would you be willing to have builders have no coverage, leaving consumers without any recourse whatsoever? What is your answer to that?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you to the member for the question. This bill says it's about building the confidence of consumers. What we see is an omnibus bill, and it doesn't really protect consumers. It's an opportunity for the government to even listen to our amendments and adopt them. You have rejected all of them.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Kevin Yarde: I want to thank the member from York South–Weston. My question to you: You did talk briefly about the Ombudsman and the importance of an ombudsman. With this bill in the way it is set up—Bill

159—do you find that it favours the consumer or it favours the builder?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you very much to the great member from Brampton North for the question. Definitely this bill is designed in such a way to put together so many acts, as I stated in my discussion, and it basically focuses on private profit mechanisms. It doesn't really protect consumers in this case. What we need is this government to listen to us and accept our amendments so that we can actually protect consumers.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions?

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you for the presentation, the member from York South–Weston. Our government has taken the recommendations of the Auditor General's report very seriously. We are working towards addressing 29 of the recommendations, and we can confidently say that we are working quickly to achieve this.

If the proposed legislation is passed, an improved warranty program would be launched this year. Why is the opposition trying to get in the way of legislation that will protect consumers and represents the most significant overhaul to date?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you for the question, to the member from the opposite side. I think what you are missing here is this bill is an omnibus bill. It does not protect the consumer. And now you want to simply bring a bill with so many acts together, but actually it doesn't protect the consumers.

We have seen the crisis of the last 15 years, which is from bad to worse. But now you have an opportunity to listen to us, and make the amendments we proposed. There's still some opportunity to accept those amendments that we have proposed to you so that we could have strong confidence for our consumers, and protect the consumers once and for all.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This legislation is really following the same theme that this government has had, which is: In the story of David and Goliath, they choose Goliath. And that's something that consumer advocates said clearly in committee. They've said it in letters they've sent to all of us, in all of the correspondences. In those same committees, all of the consumer advocates were completely against this.

The Ontario home builder industry spoke once and said, "Great legislation."

Do you find it concerning that for a government that names itself for the people, in every single instance of all the legislation they've put forth here, people don't seem to matter?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you to the member from the great riding of Humber River–Black Creek for the question. Definitely it shows that this government says that they are going to protect the consumers, but they don't.

What I will say is to listen to people, to listen to stakeholders, to listen to us and to your own constituents, and make sure that we protect consumers and we look at every

bill with the interest of the public at large. Unfortunately, they don't; and we hope that they learn. It is an opportunity to correct their record and make sure that we put people first and we have strong protection for consumers.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Lorne Coe: We've heard some discussion today, particularly from the opposition, about the multi-provider insurance model. We heard it in committee as well.

Speaker, to the question: The Auditor General, in her report, referenced the multi-provider insurance model. But when she referenced it, she talked about the shortfalls of pursuing this option. In fact, the benefits of the surety model allow warranty costs to remain subject to government approval, allow lower and more stable costs of coverage, a more consistent warranty decision and dispute process, and the ability for the government to track bad conduct by builders. We're heard that discussion too. We heard it in committee, and we have this information disclosed publicly.

Can the member opposite say that a multi-insurance model would have provided the same benefits?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you for the question, to the member on the opposite aisle. We have also asked this government to ensure the public safety, and it is at the forefront. When you talk about an omnibus bill that has so many acts and also has the title of consumer confidence, then it's just misleading.

What we need to do is to make sure that we aren't missing an opportunity here, that we are not—the last 15 years was very difficult for the people of this province. But now the last two years, it's worse, especially in a COVID-19 period where we need to protect our seniors. We need to protect our consumers—everyone here. But unfortunately this does not address that, and we need to make sure in every legislation in the future that we look at people and we consult.

1740

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Again to my great, hard-working friend from York South–Weston: Are you aware of the fact that there was a justice who put out a report that said that the single, number one recommendation was to move to a multi-provider model? Are you aware of the fact that the Auditor General—and, of course, they leave these questions not for the critic—getting into the issue of the multi-warranty provider model, actually said positives and negatives for all systems, actually presented it in a neutral way, and yet it's being characterized by a government whose many members supported this fact, supported it in the last election and made it a campaign issue. Their own boss, the Premier, said that it was a good idea. And then, all of a sudden, the phones light up from the builders and now they back away from it.

How do you feel about this government listening so strongly to the builder industry and ignoring consumers?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you for the question from the member from the great riding of Humber River–Black Creek.

I really feel bad. As you know, the Auditor General's recommendations said that the government ensuring public safety was at the forefront. Why did the government

vote down many motions to require the Home Construction Regulatory Authority to share with municipal building inspectors? It is encouraging to see. But their side is very clear: They're on the side of those folks who are builders rather than on the side of the people of Ontario.

Report continues in volume B.

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Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
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 (LIB)	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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

**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
Lorne Coe, Wayne Gates
Randy Hillier, Andrea Khanjin
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Michael Parsa, Randy Pettapiece
Kaleed Rasheed, Peter Tabuns
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

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, Stephen Blais
Stan Cho, Stephen Crawford
Catherine Fife, Randy Hillier
Mitzie Hunter, Andrea Khanjin
Laura Mae Lindo, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini
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 / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

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, Robin Martin
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard
Marit Stiles, Nina Tangri
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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
Lucille Collard, Parm Gill
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison
Lindsey Park, Gurratan Singh
Nina Tangri, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

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
Deepak Anand, Jill Andrew
Toby Barrett, Stan Cho
Stephen Crawford, Catherine Fife
John Fraser, France Gélinas
Christine Hogarth, Norman Miller
Michael Parsa
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
Stephen Blais, Will Bouma
Stephen Crawford, Laura Mae Lindo
Gila Martow, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Dave Smith
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

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: Christopher Tyrell