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Mardi
21 juillet 2020

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 21 July 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 21 juillet 2020

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECTING TENANTS
AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY
HOUSING ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 VISANT LA PROTECTION
DES LOCATAIRES ET LE RENFORCEMENT
DU LOGEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 20, 2020, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 184, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the Housing Services Act, 2011 and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 and to enact the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Corporation Repeal Act, 2020 / Projet de loi 184, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment, la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation et édictant la Loi de 2020 abrogeant la Loi sur la Société ontarienne d'hypothèques et de logement.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I rise again on Bill 184, Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act. It's an act that complements many measures that our government has done to date because, first and foremost, we put the people of Ontario first. Gone are the days of Bay Street, and here come the days of Main Street. We're bringing more affordability to this province and really protecting what matters most.

It was this government, through our actions, that gave a record amount of funding to mental health, addictions and housing support. We created a housing strategy with More Homes, More Choice to bring more supply to the market so people who are looking to get into the housing market have access to housing, but also people who are looking to get into the rental market have that supply. We've lowered hydro rates. We were working to do that before COVID-19, and of course we've done it during COVID-19, reducing the cost of living. We expanded access to all kinds of emergency programming and services during COVID-19, but even before then the government was taking action in order to make life easier for all Ontarians because they work hard, they pay their taxes and they expect their

government to be there when they're in need. Of course, that's what we're doing.

In Barrie, locally, as I was mentioning yesterday, we've done a lot of things on the housing front. Not only are we striking the balance of creating more supply, whether it be in the rental or housing market, to fix that missing middle, if you will, but we're also protecting our environment and how that balance can be struck.

A government can actually provide affordable housing while protecting the environment. We can provide tenant protection; we can also provide landlord protection. We can strike a balance where bad landlords get punished but also bad tenants get punished. So that is what we're here to do as a government. We are striking the right balance to help all Ontarians on Main Street.

In Barrie, I mentioned a great example of things we've done to make life more affordable in terms of housing. The Minister of Municipal Affairs came to Barrie, where I worked on a life-lease guide to give choice, at every stage in life, on the kind of housing. That's a more affordable choice for housing. It's something that we both worked on.

Another thing we did with Minister Steve Clark in Barrie was, of course, we opened up Lucy's Place. It's a project we have throughout Simcoe county and Barrie where we're turning old motels into affordable housing, to get people the support they need and overcome any challenges—to have a hand up, because that's what we want to do here. We want to give people a hand up, not a handout, so they can be successful throughout their lives.

Again, our government is always standing up for all Ontarians. It's something we were elected to do, and again, when it comes to affordable housing, promise made, promise kept. We're going to keep going.

The opposition has an opportunity here. They really have an opportunity here. They supported protecting workers. They supported our fiscal update. Now they really can help support the next phase of affordable housing instead of going down the path of opposing everything, like they did with the budget that talked about affordable housing, that talked about social supports for people, that talked about strengthening our education system. I really urge them to go down this new path of coming up with solutions and joining this government to make Ontario better again.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that the question now be put.

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

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: Thank you, Speaker. No further business this morning.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:15 this morning.

The House recessed from 0906 to 1015.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Ms. Doly Begum: Workers from Cosmetica, a cosmetics manufacturing company—one that makes makeup, Mr. Speaker—were deemed essential by this government during the pandemic. This meant that workers had no choice but to work throughout the pandemic.

I have to tell you, a lot of these workers were very scared, and we were trying to help them throughout the pandemic, because they had family members who had an immune-compromised situation, and these workers were told that if they didn't go to work, they would lose their jobs.

Earlier this month, workers who had been working there since 2007 were given termination letters. That is 180 workers, Mr. Speaker, who have been terminated in the middle of a pandemic. Cosmetica has told workers that it was because of automation, and if workers criticized the company, they were told that they would lose their severance pay. We have also learned that Cosmetica has informed the government about their decision to fire 180 workers, and the government had no problem with that.

This government that claims to help workers to create jobs, that made these big, bold claims, where is this government right now when 180 workers—mainly racialized women who are in their 50s, losing their jobs, and they will have no place to go and CERB won't help them. Where is this government right now, Mr. Speaker?

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Parm Gill: Yesterday, there was a great news announcement by the Premier for Milton. This Friday, we will be moving into stage 3.

During this pandemic, I have been so proud of our community. We have seen the community come together like never before, Mr. Speaker—the creation of grassroots

organizations like #miltonstrong and Milton COVID Response, making donations of PPE, monetary donations, food hampers, delivering medication for seniors, and I can go on and on.

Throughout the pandemic, small businesses have been seen a significant hit to their bottom line, Mr. Speaker, especially restaurant owners. Restaurants around Milton have been able to adapt their businesses to increase takeout and delivery, but many do not have patios and have not been able to serve customers at their location. They have been busy putting precautions in place to ensure that customers and employees remain safe as they resume dine-in service.

Speaker, I know businesses around Milton are very much looking forward to moving into stage 3 as of Friday, and I want to thank our entire community for being there and supporting one another during some of the most difficult times.

COVID-19 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: From the outset of this pandemic, Ontario's NDP called for the collection of race-based and other demographic data to concentrate the necessary resources to fight the spread of COVID-19. Of course, people already struggling before a crisis will be the hardest hit. I'm talking about vulnerable seniors in long-term-care facilities. I'm talking about low-income essential workers packed like sardines in transit, unable to work from home, many living together and sharing small units because the cost of housing in Toronto is unlivable. I'm talking about overworked and underpaid front-line health workers. Let's stop just praising them and let's really start helping them.

Now we have the data, and it shows what so many of us have been saying—Black Creek Community Health Centre and other agencies and individuals; Toronto Public Health; Councillors Joe Cressy and Anthony Perruzza; our local Humber River Hospital; and many others—and that is that COVID-19 is hitting some neighbourhoods and some people harder than others, people in my community, people in the Premier's own community, many neighbourhoods in Toronto.

I want to thank Christian Centre Church in my community for making its space at 4545 Jane Street available for mobile COVID-19 testing. There will be testing again tomorrow, Wednesday, July 22, from 4 to 8 p.m. and on Friday, July 24, from 4 to 8 p.m.

There's more we need to do, and we need more testing dates. We also need to help those who need to self-quarantine when they test COVID-19-positive. We're all in this together. Let's keep up the hard work.

1020

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mrs. Gila Martow: I join my residents of Thornhill in accepting a bit of the new normal. People are wearing masks now, specifically indoors, and medical experts are advising us to wear the mask. York region, since July 17,

has mandated the wearing of masks. The order is in effect until November 30.

I want to remind people to wash their reusable masks. In fact, they can fold up a piece of paper towel and put it in the little pocket and keep changing that as the day goes on. That's also recommended.

I just wanted to mention that, during the campaign, I was asked what Premier Doug Ford—at the time, he was the leader of our party. What was Doug Ford like? I said, "He's actually like a camp director." I think this pandemic really shows that. He has shown great leadership through these unprecedented times. I want to personally thank Premier Doug Ford, and my riding wants to thank him as well. Jillian Rashkovan from Thornhill made a beautiful box; it's in the UPS store next to my office. People have already started putting thank-you cards to the Premier in the box.

I want to invite all my colleagues from all parties to join me in thanking the Premier—a big, huge thank you—to wish him well and to ask him to please take some time off. I don't believe he has had a full day off this entire pandemic. Please take some time off to spend with your beautiful wife, your wonderful daughters and your friends and relatives.

Thank you, everybody. Stay safe, and enjoy the warm weather.

INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.
Remarks in Oji-Cree.

Since the state of emergency began in March, there have been 10 deaths by suicide in the communities in my riding. Unfortunately, this situation is not unique. First Nations people face mental health issues and experience crises on a regular basis. These issues come from our experiences of inequality, cultural disruption, oppression, and colonialism that continues today.

Although there have been many announcements of funding to support mental health, there's a difference between investing in communities and committing to actual mental health transformation. Fly-in First Nation communities are left to face the consequences of having no drinking water, no safe affordable housing, reduced access to education and health care, all of which reduce our quality of life. Speaker, we understand—we have to understand—that this is a much deeper issue. Our communities do not have the social determinants of health. On top of that, they are responding to mental health and suicide emergencies.

This is a crisis, and it needs to be taken seriously. Life under this pandemic has worsened these issues. Without appropriate and proper access to medical supplies, health care professionals and mental health supports, we cannot call this equality. How can Ontario say that they provide equal treatment for everyone? We need better mental health supports, better access and better treatment, and we need it now.

Miigwetch, Mr. Speaker.

MEMBER FOR OTTAWA–VANIER LA DÉPUTÉE D'OTTAWA–VANIER

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I want to take this opportunity to reflect on my first few months as the new MPP for Ottawa–Vanier. I want to start by thanking you, all members, for the kind words of welcome as I joined the Legislature in this unique, challenging time. Navigating my way through a reality that has been changing every day has been part of the challenge, but keeping on top of things so that I can guide the constituents reaching out to me has revealed the importance of being there to help.

Sitting in this chamber, I have been encouraged by the spirit of collaboration I have seen between all members since the beginning of this pandemic. Many people have expressed how much they appreciate this collaboration as it reflects that we are working together in their best interests. However, as we continue into the fall, we should be aware of how we can still do better and strive to build upon our collaborative efforts of this summer.

L'autre aspect du travail à la législature qui est important pour moi, c'est la capacité de travailler dans le respect. J'ai élevé mes enfants en valorisant le respect, le respect envers les autres et le respect envers l'environnement. Je souhaiterais qu'ils, et que tous les Ontariennes et les Ontariens, se sentent inclus et inspirés par nos actions, au lieu d'être cyniques à propos de la politique.

J'ai hâte de continuer de travailler avec tous les membres lorsque nous recommencerons à siéger à l'automne, et j'encourage chacun de nous à tirer le meilleur parti de ce que nous avons appris pendant la pandémie en étant plus collaboratifs et respectueux les uns envers les autres.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mrs. Robin Martin: We've come so far since COVID-19 first emerged as a public health threat in Ontario earlier this year. In fact, it's been almost six months since the first case, January 25. Thanks to the hard work and determination of people across our province, we are seeing positive trends continue. More businesses are reopening and more people are getting back to work.

Many regions of the province have already entered stage 3, and more will enter this Friday. While it may take a little bit longer for those of us in Toronto, Peel and Windsor-Essex, we're on the right track.

But this does not mean that the pandemic is over. Far from it. You don't have to look any further, unfortunately, than my riding, where the Villa Colombo continues to struggle with a COVID-19 outbreak that has yet to be resolved. Last week, Humber River Hospital was appointed by the Ministry of Long-Term Care to manage Villa Colombo on an interim basis. I sincerely hope that they can resolve the outbreak very quickly as residents in the home need to be healthy and safe first, but they also need to see their loved ones.

I want to extend a sincere thank you, on behalf of the residents of Eglinton–Lawrence, to all who are working tirelessly to protect residents and resolve this outbreak.

To everyone else, let this be a reminder as to why we must continue to stay vigilant and think about each other as we move into the next stage of the pandemic. There is too much at stake to do anything else.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: With the COVID-19 pandemic, children have seen their world change drastically and suddenly. It was necessary to close schools and isolate in order to flatten the curve. With these vital changes, however, children are struggling to make sense of their new normal. These are formative years, and the isolation, uncertainty and fear has caused increased anxiety or an exacerbation of existing mental health concerns.

For each child who is struggling, there are parents who are desperately trying to help in the best way they know how, while handling their own stress, fear and uncertainty. Mothers are disproportionately impacted, as women take on the majority of child care and emotional household labour.

The work of mothers during these unprecedented times is a Sisyphean task. The emotional and mental burden never ends. Mothers trying to work from home have also had to act as supplementary teachers, as child psychologists. They've lain awake at night wondering, "Am I doing enough? Am I letting my colleagues down? My partner? My parents? My children?"

That is why it is so important for Ontario to have a properly funded and safe planned return to school and child care. The mental and emotional impact of this pandemic on women and children cannot be overstated, and the long-term effects will be overwhelming unless we get it right.

To fellow moms out there: I see you. I see your child's struggle and your efforts. I see you put aside your own struggles so that you can be a reassuring constant in your children's lives. You are unsung heroes.

DON MacEACHERN

Ms. Jane McKenna: Acts of kindness continue to flourish in the city of Burlington during the COVID-19 pandemic. One example is Project Kindness.

This initiative was created by Don MacEachern, who saw struggling restaurants doing everything they could to keep their doors open. Then he heard about a Burlington family that lost one of their own to COVID-19. He was a father, a husband and a brother. The family was devastated and faced tremendous financial challenges ahead.

So Don began visiting supermarkets and restaurants to obtain gift cards to ensure this family had their basic needs met. Then he thought, "Why stop here? There are many more people struggling through the pandemic."

Through a Facebook group entitled BurlingtonON Restaurants Takeout/Delivery, founded by Trevor Poczynke and Sandy Stark—they now have over 12,000 members—Don began distributing gift cards from local restaurants,

which he purchased himself, to people struggling financially, physically and emotionally. To date, hundreds of people have been impacted by his generosity and his kindness. These include front-line workers, first responders, single moms, the elderly, and kids who are helping others during this crisis, just to name a few.

1030

Speaker, it is my pleasure to publicly acknowledge Don's efforts and thank him for his selfless compassion. His actions are one more example of the Burlington spirit that I have seen over and over again as the community has rallied together, to each other, during this difficult time.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I rise in the House today to share how our government has been working hard to expand access to reliable broadband and cell service in underserved parts of the province, including rural areas in my riding of Niagara West.

A student learning from home, a farmer checking commodity prices on a phone, or a rural small business owner setting up a website to sell a product online—the COVID-19 outbreak has reinforced the need to improve access to modern digital technology.

This month, I was pleased to inform residents in my riding of the opening of the application intake for the \$150-million Improving Connectivity for Ontario program, or the ICON program, as well as \$13.3 million for the Niagara region through the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology program—including expanded access in Niagara West. This funding is going to help drive economic investment and job creation across our province as well as allow more people to work from home more efficiently, engage in online learning and connect with family and friends. These funds will help ensure that every region in this province, including Niagara, is able to participate in the modern digital economy and contribute to Ontario's economic recovery.

I've heard from many constituents in Niagara calling for better connectivity. Up to 12% of households in the province—mostly in rural, remote or northern areas—don't have adequate broadband service, according to the CRTC. We are taking steps to address this need. Fast, reliable Internet is critical, and the ICON program is an important step in bridging the rural-urban divide in Ontario.

QUESTION PERIOD

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question this morning is for the Premier. Over two months ago, the Premier announced that he would strike a commission into long-term care, claiming that a government-controlled commission would be able to move faster than an independent

judicial public inquiry. Two months later, it seems that they've forgotten any sense of urgency whatsoever.

Over 1,840 seniors have died from COVID-19 infections, staff shortages and, in some cases, potentially, criminal negligence.

Why has the Premier failed to launch his scaled-down commission into long-term care two full months after having announced it?

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

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

Our government has said that it is committed to an independent commission. That is in the works. It will be announced. Our government is committed to transparency. I want to assure all Ontarians that this will happen.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, residents of long-term care, their families and the staff who work there are skeptical about the Premier's plans for a government-controlled commission. In fact, the last commission struck by this Premier was a political exercise completely designed to artificially inflate the deficit, so it's hard to blame people for being skeptical.

The Premier has had two months to work on this project and the entire public service to help with what he said was an urgent action that was required. So can the Premier tell us what, exactly, is causing the delay?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: There are many actions that our government is taking to address the issues surrounding the pandemic. There is no doubt that this affected Ontarians—our loved ones in long-term care, the hard-working staff. My heart goes out to everyone who has been affected by this, not only in Ontario, but all across Canada and all across the globe.

Our government is committed to having the commission happen. It will happen. And I want to reassure all Ontarians about our government's commitment to transparency.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, families are fearful that this government is about to sweep their concerns about this broken system under the rug.

Over the next few weeks, the government is scheduled to start handing back control of long-term-care facilities to for-profit corporations after they had to be taken over because they were utterly incapable of protecting and caring for the residents who lived in their homes. Families know that these for-profit companies are working the backrooms. They see that they've hired connected Conservative insiders to ensure that this broken system stays in place.

Can the Premier assure families today that for-profit operators will have no role whatsoever in the commission that he has yet to appoint?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you, once again, for the question.

The commission will be announced. There will be transparency.

When we talk about the ownership of homes, the most important thing that we should be talking about is putting the residents at the centre. We are modernizing Ontario's long-term-care system to be ready for coming waves, putting the capacity in place that the previous government did not do for many years. We are putting residents at the centre, and their families and staff. This is our mission in long-term care. This is what we will do, and this is what our government is committed to doing.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. But it is unbelievable that this government pretends that for-profit corporations put anything at the centre other than profits. That's the problem. That's why we have to get profits out of long-term care.

This question is about the Halton District School Board, which has now joined a growing list of opponents to the Conservatives' plan to make everyday families choose between their kids and their jobs this fall. Trustees wrote to the Minister of Education saying that they are especially concerned about the lack of available child care spaces for families in our province.

The government has repeatedly stated that 90% of child care spaces could potentially be available. Can the Premier tell parents how many of Ontario's 5,523 licensed child care facilities are actually up and running as of today?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I thank the member opposite for the question.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we understand and appreciate that moms and dads of this province need continued support. They need to have confidence that, as they return to the labour market, they can have their children in care.

That's why we've taken action to expand the cohort, to expand support, to ensure that our operators have the PPE, the cleaning supports and the financial support that enables them to be sustainable for the decades to come.

It also ensures that, yes, we do get to 91% capacity, as the Premier has mentioned as recently as yesterday. We're committed to getting to 100% and to working with the sector—with home care, child care, institutional child care and all other options available to us—to ensure parents have that confidence and have that choice.

Speaker, in addition, we've dedicated \$1 billion to build 30,000 spaces within this province. We are on track to doing that through investments in the child care tax credit, to give up to 75% of child care expenses to the working parents of this province. We know this is important.

We're going to continue to focus on accessibility and affordability for all parents of this province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, this is a government that—one of their first actions was to take a hatchet to

child care funding in our province. It's unbelievable that this minister pretends that that never happened.

As of last week, less than half of those child care centres were open—only 2,066 out of 5,523 child care centres. School trustees in Halton were clear with the government that their model relies heavily on accessible and affordable child care that is not available. But let's not forget, for everyday Ontarians, as I said, that was one of the first things that the government cut when they came into office.

When parents are stressed and they're clamouring to find available and affordable child care that allows them to get back to work, does the Premier really think that he can successfully reopen the economy without affordable child care for families?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I'm very proud that the government initiated earlier on in our mandate the child tax credit for all working parents in the province of Ontario. I think if we are to assert that affordability is a cornerstone of our political program, then I think the member opposite may want to support it in the next budget—because, Speaker, they opposed it.

1040

I think there's an opportunity to support 300,000 working parents of this province up to 75% of expenses. We've dedicated \$1 billion to build 30,000 child care spaces within our schools. We are ensuring that, yes, institutional child care is supported, but we also give parents the choice of where they choose best to raise their children. That flexibility, that support for universalizing access is important.

In addition, we've set aside additional funding in this current iteration as we deal with the COVID-19 reality—more funding for PPE, for cleaning. We're doing that because we want to ensure that parents have access to child care within their communities in the coming decades.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, New Democrats don't support cuts to child care, and we don't support cuts to public health and we don't support cuts to mental health. We don't support this government's agenda, because it's bad for families. We are seeing right now in the COVID-19 context just how bad it is for families.

School boards, though, need direct information right now. They need clear direction, they need clear leadership and they need a plan that works for them. They need a plan that works for parents, and they need a plan that works for teachers and a plan that works for students.

As trustees have told the Ford government, "Child care costs money.... Single mothers may have to make unbearable, life-altering choices. We may find desperate parents who could not secure or afford child care leaving the workforce or leaving their young children alone at home."

When will the Ford government step up with innovative planning and actual investment that is needed to ensure that schools can open safely and that child care will be available for our kids and our families?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We appreciate that ensuring child care remains accessible in communities, as well as

getting schools reopened in September, is extremely important for our economic recovery. It's why we've put in place a phased approach to support child care, to incrementally grow that capacity based on public health advice and the concurrence of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, who has said that he is supportive of moving to a cohort from 10 to 15, keeping in mind that we had emergency child care open and we've been able to demonstrate to the people that we've done this right.

We know, Speaker, when it comes to our kids, that the government has been clear and the Premier has been clear: We will do whatever it takes to keep them safe.

In the context of schools, we're putting more funding and training in place. We're coming up with three options for every school board because of the challenges that are very real that may manifest this fall, including a second wave. In our developments of our planning for that to be proactive, to be ready, to ensure that children remain learning, we are asking school boards to get those to the ministry by August 4. We will review them with the best medical minds in this province to ensure one objective, which is the safety of all staff and all kids in this province.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. The Financial Accountability Office released a report today that confirms what families across Ontario know about autism services: This government has increased waiting lists for the services that children with autism need. They haven't solved the problem. In fact, the problem is getting worse under this government's watch. The FAO said that kids already in the program got needs-based funding, but the Premier has literally left everyone else without a plan, without stable funding and without help. Everyone else is just stuck waiting, Speaker.

Why have autism services wait-lists grown under this Premier's watch?

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

Hon. Todd Smith: I want to thank the member opposite for her question on autism this morning. It's been a long time since I've been able to update the House on what's been happening on the autism file.

and I also want to thank the Financial Accountability Officer for the report on autism this morning. It confirms what we've been saying for a long time, Mr. Speaker: that no government in the history of autism in Ontario has ever got this file right.

That's why we took the time last summer to spend with the Ontario autism panel in making sure that we're going to get it right once and for all. They came forward with many recommendations, and those recommendations will serve as the foundation for the new needs-based program that we're rolling out in Ontario.

To the member opposite's question: More kiddos in Ontario and families with autism than ever before are receiving support from the Ontario government. The Financial Accountability Officer's report says just that, Mr.

Speaker. There are now 22,000 children in the province—more than double at any time in the province's history—receiving support from the provincial government when it comes to autism. It's a reason to celebrate.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, what the FAO actually said is that the wait-list for needs-based services has reached 27,600 children. These are children who are languishing on wait-lists without the needs-based services they were promised by this government when it was running for election, but have not seen yet, even though this government is over halfway through their mandate. Just like the Liberals before them, the PCs have said to families that children with autism can wait, they can wait, and they can wait some more.

According to the FAO, government funding is half—half—of what it needs to be to maintain services and eliminate the wait-lists. This government has ignored, belittled and hurt families and children with autism. That is their short legacy thus far. It's disgraceful, and the problem is only getting worse.

When is the government going finally step up, stop hurting these families and start helping them for a change?

Hon. Todd Smith: In spite of the political rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, the actual circumstances on the ground are very different than that. As the member opposite knows, this government doubled the amount of funding in the Ontario Autism Program to \$600 million, and the FAO's report actually says just that. Some \$270 million in direct support is going to families on that wait-list in the form of interim one-time funding and childhood budgets, as well as to the kids who are still in that legacy core behavioural programming. We doubled the amount of funding to \$600 million in this program.

The implementation working group is working extremely hard at implementing the recommendations from the Ontario autism panel. I again want to thank all of those members who worked extremely hard last summer in putting these recommendations together so that we can, once and for all, fix this problem in Ontario, have a needs-based program that works for as many kids as possible and, at the same time, provide those supports to families that are waiting. We're well on our way to doing that. I look forward to having some really good news on this front next week.

MUNICIPALITIES

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Minister, we all know that municipalities form the backbone of our economy, and they provide the services that our residents rely on every single day.

The minister recently introduced Bill 197, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, which is the first step in Ontario's recovery. This bill introduces many measures that will help our communities.

Could the minister please explain in some more detail some of the things this bill will do?

Hon. Steve Clark: First, I want to thank the member for Brantford—Brant for the question. I also, on behalf of his constituents, want to thank him for his advocacy and his hard work during the pandemic. He has been a real shining star in his local community.

Bill 197, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, will ensure that every community in Ontario gets the help they need to bounce back stronger than ever. Changes proposed in this bill will allow municipalities to hold meetings electronically, which we've heard loud and clear has actually increased public participation.

It will also change the way that municipalities collect revenues from development, ensuring services like libraries, long-term-care homes, parkland development, affordable housing and more, are 100% cost recoverable by the municipality.

Throughout Ontario's recovery, our government will continue to be a champion for communities all across Ontario.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Minister, for your response. I know that you, the Minister of Finance and our Premier have all been incredible advocates for every single one of our 444 municipalities, especially at the federal negotiating table.

Minister, I know that our government is still ironing out the details of the funding commitment with our federal government, but as I'm sure you know, our communities are anxious to hear more.

Could the minister please explain how important this commitment is?

Hon. Steve Clark: Under the incredible leadership of Premier Ford, our government has ensured Ontario got its fair share of federal assistance. Ontario will be receiving \$7 billion through the Safe Restart Framework. The funding will, in part, flow to support municipalities to help restart their economies and support essential services to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Our greatest challenges lie ahead of us, Speaker, and we cannot overcome them alone. Everyone has a role in rebuilding our province, and Bill 197 is just the start of that restart.

1050

CAREGIVERS

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. This Conservative government continues to restrict residents of long-term care, group homes and all congregate settings from accessing their essential caregivers. Yet families, workers and experts are telling us that the social isolation and separation from loved ones is causing incredible and, in some cases, irreversible harm to people's health and well-being.

One of my constituents, Tom, has intellectual disabilities and lives in supportive housing. With the restrictions

on group homes, Tom could not see his mother, Linda, for three months. The loss of routine and access to his mother was incredibly difficult, and Tom ended up in the hospital after his behaviour escalated dramatically. The rules for group homes do not take into consideration Tom's unique needs and means of communication, and Linda is still seen as a visitor rather than an essential support for Tom.

Why does this government continue to ignore the rights of residents and keep forcing families apart?

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

Hon. Todd Smith: I'm happy to take this question from the member opposite.

One of the things that we've been focused on in congregate care during COVID-19 is ensuring that we're keeping the residents in those facilities as safe as we possibly can, whether it's in the long-term-care sector, whether it's in our youth justice facilities, our correctional facilities—certainly, our retirement homes, as well. Minister Cho has been very active in making sure that those residents are safe in those facilities. Likewise, I've been doing the same in the developmental services sector, to ensure that some of our most vulnerable residents, who are in those homes, are protected from COVID-19.

We came forward with visitor restrictions very, very early on and making sure that non-essential visitors were not permitted in those homes, so that we could stop COVID-19 at the door. We have essential visitors out there who need to get into these homes to provide care as well, and we're working with all of our partners in the sector to ensure that we're meeting those needs for those individuals.

But right now, the most important factor in all of this is ensuring the safety of all of the individuals in those homes, protecting them and stopping COVID-19 at the door.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's very clear that the minister missed the fundamental point: These families are not non-essential visitors; they are essential to the well-being of the residents within congregate care.

This is all about priorities. We do not accept this government's answer that there's simply nothing they can do to allow full access to reunite families, especially as other parts of society, like bars and restaurants, are opening up. This is having a very real, very harmful impact on people's lives, and it cannot continue.

Yesterday, I tabled a motion for the government to immediately implement a COVID-19 essential caregiver strategy. My call has been echoed by the RNAO, the Institute of Aging and so many other experts in the field. The motion urges the government to recognize and respect that essential caregivers are more than visitors, and people residing in congregate care settings must be able to fully access their essential caregivers. It's their right. The government must also step up with the resources required to safely implement this, including PPE and adequate, stable staffing levels. You should not be telling families they can hire people to send in to work instead of staffing these homes appropriately.

Will the Premier support my motion and reunite families today?

Hon. Todd Smith: Again, I want to assure the member opposite that we are working with the medical professionals at the command table, through the Minister of Health and our Chief Medical Officer of Health. The Minister of Long-Term Care, my ministry and many others are involved in these discussions. That's why we are making sure that we're protecting these vulnerable individuals in their home.

I understand the sensitivity of the issue that the member opposite is talking about. She's talking about essential visitors, and we are having those discussions at the command table, but the most important priority right now is that we keep those individuals safe. That's at the top of the list in everything that we're considering in the government right now. That's very clear when you hear the Minister of Health or when you hear the Premier talk—that all of the decisions that we're making are based on the health and safety of the people of Ontario.

We're working on these plans. I assure the member opposite that we are having those discussions to allow these essential visitors into the home, but right now, we're not ready to make that move just yet.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for the Premier. COVID-19 has created an environment of uncertainty for those in the autism community, compounding the challenges already experienced by these families across Ontario. Services have essentially come to a halt. No one in the community knows the future of the OAP.

Parents and service providers are asking for a centrally coordinated and comprehensive framework, and regular communications with the ministry. What are they getting? They're getting radio silence. Parents are frustrated that the government's one-size-fits-all approach to funding, particularly bridge funding, runs contrary to their rhetoric about every other government program.

Today, the FAO confirmed that there's a glaring lack of capacity in the system, and the government is spending three times less money per child today than just a few short years ago.

When will the government finally take action and deliver a needs-based program for these families?

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

Hon. Todd Smith: I want to thank the member opposite for the question today. It's the first question that I've received from this member, and I'm happy to address his concerns.

We would thank, again, the Financial Accountability Officer for his report this morning. I think it shines a light on the fact that no government has ever gotten the autism file right. We realize that. That's why we took six months last summer to make sure the community was actually involved in developing a plan for the autism community. They came forward with 69 pages of recommendations in

their report, and they are the foundation of the new needs-based program that is currently being developed.

I want to assure the member opposite that the implementation working group has been working over the last six months—volunteers from the sector—providing key input into this new needs-based program. We're working extremely hard at that. At the same time, we're supporting families until that needs-based program is ready, with interim one-time funding and the childhood budget program.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Stephen Blais: My supplementary is also to the Premier. Last month, my colleague from Don Valley East released a report outlining what we've heard from parents about the challenges they've had navigating the devastating program during this pandemic. Parents with autistic children are finding ways to manage, but it's clear they're facing additional stress and anxiety as a result of COVID-19. Methods alternative to in-person therapy have had poor results. Without in-person treatment, parents are reporting widespread regression in the progress of their children. The lack of communications from this government and no plan for back-to-school has caused additional anxiety that the ministry is not prepared for the return of their children with autism to school in September.

My question for the Premier: How are you prepared for the return to school in the fall for these families with children with autism?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member opposite for the thoughtful question this morning. These are all things that we are considering as we move forward, both with the needs-based autism program and the restart of school coming this September. I can assure you that the Minister of Education, our cabinet and our caucus have been having great discussions on what that will look like, particularly for children with special needs.

We know that the recommendations from the Ontario autism panel will serve us as we develop the new needs-based program, which has doubled in funding since the previous Liberal government. I just want to remind the member opposite that there is \$600 million now available in that program, compared to \$300 million under the Liberal government.

We also recognize that over the last number of months, with COVID-19 in our community, in our province, life has been very, very difficult for families with children with special needs. That's why we're working extremely hard, as cabinet, to ensure that we're coming up with the accommodations that will be necessary to help those families that are feeling stressed at this time, to ensure that there is a logical move back into the classroom and that they're getting the supports they need when they get there.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. Our government has been clear that we've made long-term care a priority, and we're backing that up with action.

Last week, the minister announced a modernized funding model, which seems like a major step forward toward the sorely needed development of new long-term-care beds, as well as upgrading existing ones to modern standards.

In the past, allocations were announced with little or no progress toward construction actually starting. I remember the minister once saying that some of these beds had been allocated 10 years ago without any movement on construction. Ontarians know and we know that's simply not good enough. We've seen the need for long-term-care beds get more critical with each passing year. The crisis we've seen during the pandemic underlines how critical the need is.

1100

Speaker, can the minister tell this House what the modern funding model will do to actually build beds?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member from Sarnia–Lambton for his amazing work over many years to serve his constituents and for his concern about long-term care.

The modernized funding model is a new approach that will help overcome barriers to the development and acceleration of construction of urgently needed long-term-care spaces. The member for Sarnia–Lambton is right when he identifies how much we need these beds and these spaces, not only new ones—but also redeveloped to modern design standards. He's also right when he points out that previous governments failed to build beds when they were needed, particularly within the last 10 to 15 years.

Our government is taking a different approach. We are building a 21st-century long-term-care system where Ontarians can be confident in having the care they need when and where they need it. Our government is putting forth bold new efforts to accelerate the development of long-term care across this province. We are investing \$1.75 billion into long-term care and providing development grants to cover upfront costs like development charges, land and construction expenses. We are moving for our residents in long-term care and those who need it in the future.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to the minister for that answer. I'm glad to see the government acknowledging the differences between communities and regions, and addressing that each type of community faces different issues in their development. It's also important that she recognizes that smaller homes face real challenges in adding new spaces and redeveloping old ones.

In southwestern Ontario, for example, the region I'm proud to represent in this House, we have larger communities like Sarnia, Windsor and London, with many towns and rural areas in between. Each of these communities requires a different approach, and their developments face different challenges. The flexibility to deal with that need is a hallmark feature of this new policy.

I'm also glad that that flexibility is accompanied by new funding dollars and new supports for the development of these long-term-care homes.

Will the minister tell this House what the modernized funding model will do for southwestern Ontario?

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

In Chatham-Kent, there are two projects that will upgrade 192 beds to modern standards. In Essex, one project will build 36 new beds and redevelop another 60. In Lambton and Sarnia, a project will add eight new beds and redevelop a further 152. In Elgin, our government is modernizing 100 beds. In Middlesex and London, there are seven projects that will create 100 new and 645 redeveloped beds. These projects are in various stages of development, and we expect nine of them to be under construction over the next year.

In southwestern Ontario and across the province, we are and will be building long-term-care capacity. We are taking bold action to get shovels in the ground faster and get people in the beds faster, getting the care that they need now and in the future. The modernized funding model is a major step toward repairing, rebuilding and advancing long-term care in Ontario. There are more steps that will be taken, and we will continue to do this work. This is very real.

I want to assure all of Ontario that these projects are in the pipeline, they are under way, and they will arrive.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Across this province, our government, the government of Ontario, and this Legislature appropriate dollars in order to keep our highways open, in order to run the trains, in order to put the buses on the roads. We don't think twice about it because that's basic transportation infrastructure. But in places in northern Ontario, where you have fly-in communities in the northwest and the northeast, there are no roads. There is no rail. The only connection is by aircraft.

During this pandemic, revenues are down by 70% for most of the northern airlines. They approached you early on and said, "Will you help us put in place some sort of program so that we can keep our planes in the air and move people and freight in and out of those communities who need it?" They're now announcing and have announced reductions to service. The sad part is, when they did approach you, you asked them to put something together, and then you walked away and said, "Go talk to the feds."

Why are these people not any more deserving than the rest of Ontarians when it comes to the transportation infrastructure that everybody else gets and deserves?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please make your comments through the Chair.

The Minister of Transportation to reply.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: First of all, I absolutely reject the premise of his question. Our government has been incredibly supportive of communities and transportation projects in northern Ontario. First of all, with respect to remote airports, we have provided additional funding to remote airports throughout this pandemic. Then, as private

carriers were withdrawing from the north, we accelerated plans of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission to provide intercommunity bus service from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, this is unprecedented.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, we've just recently announced hundreds of millions of dollars of new funding for transportation projects across this province, including in northern Ontario.

If the member opposite objects so much to the way we treat northern Ontario, then perhaps he would prefer that we did not build those highways and rehabilitate those roads.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay, let me try this again. Nobody is against fixing highways or doing what you did with the buses. Those are good things. Nobody argues.

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: However, stop applauding yourselves, because there are communities that don't have highways and don't have rail. The only connection is by airplane, and they're pulling out. Why? Because they went to your government, asked for assistance, as they did in Nunavut, in the Northwest Territories and in the province of Quebec—where those provinces and territories stepped up, provided a subsidy in order to allow these operators to operate at a break-even point. You have now pulled away and said, "Go talk to the feds. Not my problem; it's theirs."

Why are Ontarians who live in First Nations communities no less deserving of the attention and the dollars of this government when it comes to providing transportation infrastructure?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: As I said, Mr. Speaker, we have been supporting remote airports since the beginning of our mandate. Most recently, in the middle of this pandemic, we provided \$4 million in additional funding for remote airports to deal with exactly the concerns that the member opposite is raising.

Mr. Speaker, the province funds 100% of the operational costs of our remote airports. We are continuing to do that, and we are working very closely with our partners in First Nations to understand what their transportation challenges are so that we can continue to meet their needs. I look forward to a continued conversation—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins, come to order.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'd be happy to speak with the member opposite to address some further concerns if he has them, but we have been great partners with the First Nations in addressing their transportation needs, and we will continue to do so.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Minister of Education. We have just over six weeks remaining before back-to-school begins, and yet there is no provincial

guideline to help families set expectations or give them confidence in the safety of their children's classrooms.

Yesterday, the Premier stated that he hopes that students will return to school five days a week, but he has not taken any real steps towards making that a reality. The government expects school boards to draw up plans based on three scenarios, from scratch, with no standard guidelines or additional funding to rely on.

The province's hybrid scenario has been widely rejected by a number of school boards, including Halton, which cites the lack of available child care spaces making this option unworkable—which the minister should know.

Will the minister consult with public health officials, together with educators, to make a safe return to school possible and protect Ontario's two million students and over 300,000 education workers? Or will he try to do it on the cheap?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

Indeed, we are absolutely committed to working with the chief medical officer and Public Health Ontario, as we have to date, to ensure that our kids remain safe.

Let it not be forgotten, Speaker: It was this government that was the first in the country, and one of the first in the industrialized world, that closed schools, very much because the evidence suggested the risk to children. That's why we took that action then. It's why we are taking action today to ensure that we are prepared for all three circumstances.

To ensure that children remain learning in class day to day, as the government has clearly suggested, remains the aspiration, something that I think parents who are working people would like. Obviously, we're preparing for a potential second wave, and in that preparation, ensuring that there is a formula that has been supported by public health of a reduced amount, a quantum of students in class at 15, cohorted, using the adaptive model—and yes, in all nine models, should we have to, God forbid, close schools again.

Obviously, the latter two options are not our preference, Speaker, but it is prudent and it is responsible for any government to be prepared for the very unknown that may manifest in the next 30, 60, 90 days. We will continue to invest. We will continue to support training. We will do everything it takes to keep these kids safe.

1110

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I think it's great that we were the first to close schools, and that's why I would expect that we would be in a better state of readiness—because the bottom line is, we're not ready.

We have detailed plans for reopening bars, but not for classrooms. Bars have standardized protocols in case of an outbreak. They keep track of their patrons' contact information for a period of time, and if contact tracing is needed, there is a process.

Basic rules and requirements for returning to school are still unclear. If you get on the TTC today or the GO Transit

system, you know you've got to put on a mask. Do we need to do that in schools? We still don't know.

What is even more unclear is what will happen in the case of an outbreak. You've said that you're preparing for a second wave.

My question is, given the fact that we know that there is likely going to be a second wave—cases are over 200 today—what will you do if there is an outbreak, in terms of testing and contact tracing in schools? What is the plan? Parents—

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Obviously, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, led by the command table and working in conjunction with the Deputy Premier, has been very much engaged in developing this protocol. I appreciate that our educators and likewise our staff, our parents, our communities—all of us—have an interest in ensuring that that medical advice reflects the risk profile of the time.

As we look to the data over the last few weeks, we've seen some progress as a consequence or result of the people of Ontario doing the right thing: staying home and adhering to public health advice. As a result of that good work of the people of this province, we are prepared and we're moving toward conventional delivery.

But having said that, our obligation to school boards—and I express gratitude to them for their hard work over the past weeks preparing—is to ensure that they get the best advice from the chief medical officer. We've ensured that we've created a command table, if you will, of medical experts who will review each of the board's plans. We've also ensured there's more training in place for all workers and educators in school boards.

I've been clear: We will do whatever it takes to keep kids safe in this province.

MARRIAGE LICENCES

Mr. Stan Cho: Marriage is something that many Ontario couples look forward to every year, especially in the summer months. Couples across this province have had a challenging summer when it comes to weddings. I know that first-hand because I was supposed to get married in May and of course was forced to postpone.

Like many couples in Ontario, we went ahead and got our marriage licence. But as we all know—

Applause.

Mr. Stan Cho: Thank you—marriage licences expire 90 days from the date of issue in our great province.

Speaker, my fiancée has put up with me for eight years. Through you to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services: Can you tell the people of this province and my fiancée what actions our government is taking to address the issue of expired marriage licences in Ontario?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much to the great member from Willowdale for your question. I can tell you in front of everyone in this House, your fiancée is so lucky. You're very hard-working, and we wish you the very best in your upcoming nuptials.

Speaker, I have to share with you, the member from Willowdale is absolutely right: Marriage is such an important milestone. As the situation of COVID-19 progressed across the province, couples began to postpone their big day. It happened in my immediate family.

We also heard from hundreds of couples across Ontario that they were concerned with expired licences. Having to replace this documentation may seem like a small change, but it makes a big difference when you consider that huge to-do list that couples face when they're planning their weddings.

That is why our government has taken action. We're proposing changes in Bill 197 that will extend the expiry date for marriage licences issued between December 1, 2019, and the end of the emergency declaration.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question? The member for Barrie–Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I'm so grateful to the minister. Now, newlyweds will not need to dread that their marriage licence is going to be expiring. While some might have to wait to walk down the aisle, they will be reassured that their licence will not expire.

I am one of those couples, actually, similar to other couples in Simcoe county, like Lisa and Chris, and Brennan and Monique, who also had to postpone their weddings. Kevin and I were to be married in May, very much like the member for Willowdale. We were very excited to be married in May and we have postponed to October. So I want to thank the minister for that extension.

I also wanted to ask her if she could tell us—with the public health guidelines changing every day, I'm wondering how long the marriage licence extension is going to last, and will it cost couples any more money as well.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much to the member from Barrie–Innisfil. I can tell you, MPP Khanjin, when your big day comes, everyone will be sincerely celebrating you and your fiancé.

Interjection: A beautiful bride.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: A beautiful bride.

Speaker, I can tell you as well that marriage licences that expired between December 1, 2019, and through to the end of the emergency declaration—all of them will be extended without any cost to couples in Ontario. These licences will remain valid and can be used for up to 24 months from the last day of the emergency declaration.

In cases where couples require a new licence because critical information on the licence is no longer accurate or the original unused licence perhaps gets lost, our government, as stated in Bill 159, and if it should pass, will be moving forward to make regulatory changes to the Marriage Act to waive the provincial fee for reissued licences. This is good news, and just one example of how we're listening, taking action and making life easier for Ontarians.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ian Arthur: Speaker, through you to the Minister of the Environment: The Environmental Assessment Act

is one of the oldest and most important environmental statutes in Ontario. The act asks you to look before you leap so that people know that when projects go ahead, it's not going to hurt the environment and their communities are going to be safe. It is due diligence; it is not unnecessary red tape.

Instead, this government has decided to move from an “unless exempted” approach to a regulatory list approach, which was considered and then rejected by none other than former Premier Bill Davis when the act was introduced.

My question to the minister: Why is this government taking us 40 years into the past with their changes to the Environmental Assessment Act?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks for the question from the member opposite. He did mention one thing that was correct, Mr. Speaker, and that's the fact that the act is 50 years old. At that time, Pierre Elliott Trudeau was the Prime Minister of Canada.

Interjection: You were just born.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I would say at least half of our caucus wasn't even born at the time.

It's time to relook. The world has changed. What we know about science and what we know about the environment has changed, and what has applied in 1975 to today—it's a different world.

What we're doing is, we're modernizing the Environmental Assessment Act. We're aligning this province with Canada and numerous other provinces which have moved to this type of system. I'm looking forward to, if this act is passed—and I hope the member opposite is supportive—that we'll start the consultation with municipalities, Indigenous communities, stakeholders and environmental groups so that we can come up with this list of projects that will be needing an environmental assessment, so that we are focusing all our efforts on the medium- and high-risk projects that impact the environment the most, to ensure that we have strong environmental protection that continues as we move forward in this country, to ensure that it matches our environmental plan for Ontario for a strong, healthy environment and a strong, healthy economy.

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

Mr. Ian Arthur: Respectfully, what the minister didn't mention is that 50-year-old act was actually updated by former Premier Mike Harris in 1996—it has been updated; it is not 50 years old—and Mike Harris also rejected the idea of a regulatory list approach, because it did not do a good enough job.

But they're not just forgetting the process by burying this in an omnibus bill rather than addressing it head-on; what they're doing is potentially illegal, Speaker. Many Ontarians will remember that this government has violated the Environmental Bill of Rights before, and by introducing these amendments without posting them on the Environmental Bill of Rights, as they are obligated to do, they are going down that exact same path again. Enough is enough.

I have written the Auditor General to ask her to look into this, because this government keeps making the same mistakes again and again and again, and it is the environment and the people of Ontario that are going to be hurt by these mistakes.

1120

Will the Premier admit that this legislation violates the law and withdraw it from Bill 197?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Again, thanks to the member opposite for that question. The member is saying that he's against this bill.

What this bill will enable people to do right away, if passed, is exempt environmental assessments from land claim settlements and other projects with Indigenous communities, environmental assessments from provincial parks and conservation reserves—and, for the first time in the history of this province, giving municipalities a say in whether or not they site a landfill in their municipalities and adjacent municipalities.

I don't know why the member is against those changes to environmental assessments. I don't know why he's against enabling this government to move forward, if the legislation is passed, to consult with Indigenous communities, municipalities, stakeholders and environmental groups to come up with a list as to what will be needing an environmental assessment—which aligns us with the rest of the country and other provinces.

This bill has been on the floor for almost three weeks. That is the first time members of the opposition have raised any issues with this bill.

In fact, I have yet to hear the member opposite or that opposition party come up with a plan for the environment for the province of Ontario. All they say is, “No, no, no” instead of saying, “Let's work together and build up”—

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock.

Next, we have the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Michael Parsa: Speaker, my question this morning is for the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Over the past few months, we have heard that more Ontarians are seeking help for their mental health or addictions challenges every day. Many Ontarians have had to spend months at home while experiencing widespread physical and social isolation.

Minister, I recently had the opportunity to host you for a virtual round table in my riding of Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill. As you heard, it's important that Ontarians are able to continue accessing appropriate supports as we continue moving towards carefully and gradually reopening the province.

Minister, could you please explain to the members of this House how we're making mental health and addictions a priority during the COVID-19 outbreak in Ontario?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I want to thank the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill for that excellent question and the great work he does in advocating on behalf of his community.

Mr. Speaker, the magnitude and the impacts of the outbreak in Ontario—including months of staying at home, widespread physical and social isolation, and having been inundated with constant information on the virus—have been a lot for many people and families in the province. That's why our \$12-million commitment to mental health during COVID-19 will continue supporting the mental health of Ontarians across all stages of life. That includes supports such as ConnexOntario, Kids Help Phone, Good2Talk and BounceBack. These programs will all ensure that the mental health of families and the people in the province will be looked after—in addition to the iCBT programs that we now have running in the province.

During this time, nothing is more important than protecting the health and well-being of Ontarians, and that includes their mental health. It is something that our government takes very seriously.

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

Mr. Michael Parsa: I want to thank the minister for the great answer. I know that constituents in my riding were very pleased to see and hear from you during our round table with local mental health and addiction agencies in York region.

I know that this government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, will continue making mental health and addictions a priority.

We know that the COVID-19 outbreak in Ontario has presented many challenges across sectors, including the mental health and addictions system. As we continue moving closer towards the gradual restart of our economy, it is important that we are able to quickly respond to any issues within the system to ensure Ontarians can receive the support they need, where and when they need it.

Minister, could you please share with this House what our government is doing to ensure that any challenges identified within our mental health and addictions system are quickly resolved?

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

Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 outbreak has forced many people and families to seek help in new and unfamiliar ways. We knew this would be a challenge for many Ontarians with mental health and addictions challenges. That's why, as part of our commitment to mental health during COVID-19, our province established a mental health and addictions response table. Chaired by the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence, this table has been meeting regularly to discuss issues impacting the system, sharing best practices and connecting with provincial and regional tables to ensure any issues are quickly resolved.

I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank every member of this response table and all the staff and volunteers at Ontario's community mental health and addictions agencies for their incredible work since the start of this outbreak. They've come together and demonstrated how agile they are and how quickly they can change and adapt to difficult circumstances. Their efforts have been instrumental in protecting the health and well-being of people and families in the province of Ontario, and I cannot thank them enough. Our government thanks them for the incredible work they continue to do for all of us.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: My question is to the Premier. For the past month, I, along with my colleague and friend the member for Waterloo, have been in close contact with the interim vice-president of the Association of Ontario Midwives, Ms. Bounmy Inthavong. Bounmy was worried about the second wave of COVID-19, and she was desperate to ensure that midwives, patients and their families from across Waterloo region were, in fact, protected.

Speaker, across the province, nearly a thousand midwives are on the health care front lines and, each year, they provide care to 25,000 pregnant people, their newborns and their families. While the government insisted that they had delivered enough PPE for all front-line workers during the first wave, my office was informed by health care heroes like Bounmy that the stock of PPE was actually only going to the hospitals. This left midwives, along with other community health care workers, scrambling to access hospital-grade PPE for themselves and for their patients.

Can the Premier confirm to midwives across the province that they will supply them with the PPE they need during the second wave?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: First of all, I certainly want to acknowledge and express gratitude to the registered midwives in Ontario and Aboriginal midwives. They perform an incredible service for many people in Ontario, and we want to make sure that they continue with those services.

As with wave 1, we have provided all front-line health care providers with PPE, and we will continue to do that. We have the pandemic warehouse, of course. We have regional availability. If they need additional PPE, they can simply be in touch with their regional providers, their public health units, and they will be provided with that. It was the case with wave 1, and it will, of course, be the same with wave 2.

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

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Through you, Mr. Speaker, and back to the Premier: With the second wave of COVID-19 on the horizon, midwives aren't confident in this government. Forty-five midwives from six practices in Waterloo region wrote to the Premier demanding the establishment of a streamlined and equitable process to access PPE, regardless of whether care is provided in the community or in the hospital.

Midwives are losing faith in this Conservative government, and the Liberals before them, because a disturbing pattern was set long before this pandemic. Speaker, midwives are almost all women. They were forced to fight the provincial government in court to be paid fairly, and they won. But so far, this government has refused to pay. This government was even refusing to provide midwives with the pandemic pay that was promised to other front-line heroes.

So, through you, Mr. Speaker, will the Premier guarantee today that his government will establish a streamlined and equitable process to access PPE for all midwives, no matter where they do this important work?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I want to assure everyone in this Legislature, as well as the people of Ontario, that there already is a streamlined and equitable process available for PPE for all front-line health care providers, including midwives. This is incredibly important. We need to protect our front-line health care heroes, who have allowed us to be as successful as we are in dealing with COVID-19, such that we're able now to open up many parts of the province to stage 3.

Wave 1 we have certainly learned lessons from. Wave 2 we are preparing for, and that includes the provision of PPE. But as the Premier has indicated many times in the past, we never want to have to be reliant on another country, on another government for PPE, because we saw what happened during wave 1, where there was an international race to get PPE. We are now producing much of that in Ontario thanks to the incredible entrepreneurs and innovators in Ontario who have been able to change some of their product lines to produce things like gowns, face shields, masks and whatever else our front-line providers need. That will be available to midwives. As it has been in wave 1, it will certainly be so in wave 2.

1130

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Jane McKenna: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the government House leader. In March, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread across this province, the House broke away from its regular schedule out of an abundance of caution. MPPs worked from home and in their ridings to support local businesses and health care workers, and to do their part to fight the pandemic.

When we needed to return to this place to pass emergency legislation, all parties came together to do just that. In the last two months, members have worked hard on legislative items which had been put on hold by the pandemic.

Would the government House leader please update the House on the legislative work that has been done in the past month?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the honourable member, who was a mentor of mine when I was elected here. I want to thank her for all of her help in helping me as I transitioned to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly a testament to the hard work of members on both sides of the House and, frankly, to the people who work in this place who helped us bring Parliament back in a way that was respectful and that could ensure the safety of all members.

By way of example:

—the standing committee on finance: 250 presenters and over 100 hours of hearings;

—Bill 159: 23 presenters and over 11 hours of hearings;

—Bill 156: 39 presenters and 16 hours of hearings;

—Bill 161: 48 presenters and 21 hours;

—Bill 175: 45 presenters, 22 hours;

—Bill 171: 29 presenters, 17 hours;

—Bill 184: 57 presenters and 23 hours.

That's a total of over 200 hours and over 500 presenters in that time period. That's extraordinary work, and I congratulate all members on both sides of the House for that.

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

Ms. Jane McKenna: That was very kind of you to say. It's an honour to be in here with you as the government House leader, I'll tell you that. It's an honour to work with you.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Best House leader ever.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Best ever.

Just to get back to my question, Mr. Speaker—I am incredibly proud of the hard work being done on behalf of the people of Burlington and Ontario. However, over the past several weeks, I've heard the NDP raise concerns with the amount of committee study, including on important things like economic recovery. With 100 hours of committee study and nearly 250 witnesses so far, it seems like Ontarians will have a far greater opportunity to participate in consultation than under the NDP's proposal for a shorter one-month COVID-19 study. I was also under the impression that the NDP supported the motion establishing the standing committee's study on the economic impact of COVID-19.

There seems to be a lot of contradicting information. Could the government House leader please clear some of this up?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Yes, the member is correct. There was a little bit of confusion at the beginning because, as you know, Mr. Speaker, we've passed 14 bills, and six of those bills were passed through unanimous consent in this place.

Before I directly answer the question, I just wanted to quickly also congratulate the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, who had her private member's bill passed. That's three private members' bills passed in less than a year.

But the member is quite correct, and she will know—when she heard the suggestion from the NDP that we have a shortened one-month time frame for the standing committee on finance, it was the member for Burlington who aggressively said that would not be enough and that she wanted to make sure that all sectors of the economy, including the very important tourism and culture sectors in her riding, the building industry in her riding, had the

opportunity to give their say, give their points as we head into a budget that will be presented by the Minister of Finance to help us continue on the path to growth and prosperity as we come out of COVID-19.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 86, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 195, An Act to enact the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, and Bill 197, An Act to amend various statutes in response to COVID-19 and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

The bells will now ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes. I'll ask the Clerks to prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1136 to 1206.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The vote was held on government notice of motion number 86 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 195, An Act to enact the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, and Bill 197, An Act to amend various statutes in response to COVID-19 and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 63; the nays are 31.

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

Motion agreed to.

PROTECTING TENANTS AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY HOUSING ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 VISANT LA PROTECTION DES LOCATAIRES ET LE RENFORCEMENT DU LOGEMENT COMMUNAUTAIRE

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

Bill 184, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the Housing Services Act, 2011 and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 and to enact the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Corporation Repeal Act, 2020 / Projet de loi 184, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment, la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation et édictant la Loi de 2020 abrogeant la Loi sur la Société ontarienne d'hypothèques et de logement.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we have a deferred vote on a motion for closure on the motion for third reading of Bill 184.

On July 14, 2020, Mr. Clark moved third reading of Bill 184, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the Housing Services Act, 2011 and the Residential Tenancies

Act, 2006 and to enact the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Corporation Repeal Act, 2020. Ms. Khanjin has moved that the question now be put.

The bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes on Ms. Khanjin's motion that the question now be put.

Interjection: Same vote.

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 63; the nays are 31.

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

Mr. Clark has moved third reading of Bill 184, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the Housing Services Act, 2011 and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 and to enact the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Corporation Repeal Act, 2020. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, the bells will now ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes.

Interjection: Same vote.

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 63; the nays are 31.

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 1209 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TAXATION AMENDMENT ACT (TRAVEL ONTARIO TAX CREDIT), 2020

LOI DE 2020 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS (CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR VOYAGER EN ONTARIO)

Mr. Gates moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 199, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a non-refundable tax credit to encourage tourism within Ontario / Projet de loi 199, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour prévoir un crédit d'impôt non remboursable afin d'encourager le tourisme en Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm guessing the member for Niagara Falls would like to tell us about his bill.

Mr. Wayne Gates: That's a good guess, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to introduce the Travel Ontario Tax Credit Act. The government has been clear that the tourist sector was hit first and the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. This bill gives the government the opportunity to support tourism by passing my bill, which encourages the residents of Ontario to visit the many tourist attractions within this great province.

The tax credit outlined in my bill would make it more affordable for families to travel within Ontario and in turn support and give a much-needed boost to businesses and municipalities like Niagara, like Windsor, like Ottawa, like Timmins and Toronto, while also protecting the jobs that are tied to tourism.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that when the House adjourns today that it stands adjourned until September 14, 2020, at 10:15 a.m.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that when the House adjourns today that it stands adjourned until September 14, 2020 at 10:15 a.m.

The member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to debate this at length, because obviously the government has a majority and they're going to do what they're going to do, but the government had decided to bring this House back up until tomorrow. Some people may say, "Well, it's only one day, so what the heck?" But the point is that people did manage to figure out to be here up until Wednesday and the government is cutting out of this place a little bit early.

I think question period is one of the very few things that we have in this Legislature that's left to hold this government to account, and I've just got to say I'm disappointed with the government that they would do that and they wouldn't even have a discussion with anybody in regard to this particular motion. So we will be voting against that motion based on those comments.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is there any further debate?

Mr. Calandra has moved that when the House adjourns today that it stands adjourned until September 14, 2020 at 10:15 a.m. 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.

Interjection: On division.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On division. Carried on division.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Jill Andrew: This is a “Petition to Reintegrate Family Caregivers as Essential Partners in the Care of LTC Home Residents, on Behalf of Ontario’s Family CareGivers” across Ontario and in our fine riding of St. Paul’s.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“In Ontario, long-term-care (LTC) homes have experienced the worst impact of the coronavirus pandemic, with residents of these homes accounting for around 80% of all Canadian COVID-19 deaths. As community spread of COVID-19 continues to decrease in Ontario, and regions gradually phase reopening, experts and advocates have grown increasingly concerned that visiting policies and family caregiver access to LTC homes remain overly restrictive, causing substantial and potentially irreversible harm to the health and well-being of residents. The needs of vulnerable older adults in LTC are not being considered by the government as they continue to limit their access to family caregivers, creating and implementing visiting policies that fail to differentiate between family caregivers providing direct care to residents and general visitors attending primarily for social reasons;

“Whereas a more balanced approach is needed that both prevents the introduction of COVID-19 into long-term-care homes but also allows family caregivers and general visitors to provide much-needed contact and care to residents to maintain their overall health and well-being. This could be supported by the National Institute on Ageing’s Evidence-Informed Guidance Document to Support the Reopening of Canadian Long-Term-Care Homes to Family Caregivers and Visitors During the COVID-19 Pandemic;

“Whereas Ontario’s long-term-care homes must use informed and data-driven guidance informed by Canadian provincial and territorial policies, international policies, as well as by family caregivers, clinicians, researchers and public health leadership;

“Whereas in Ontario, reopening LTC homes will require additional resources, including funding for PPE and addressing chronic staffing shortages. Existing care resources must not be reduced to support the reintegration of family caregivers and general visitors;

“Whereas Ontario must balance the risk of COVID-19 infection in LTC with the risk of social isolation and restricted access of family caregivers to resident health, well-being and overall quality of life. Visitor policies should prioritize equity over equality, while being both flexible and compassionate;

“Whereas visitor policies in LTC homes must differentiate between family caregiver and general visitor, the latter who are visiting primarily for social reasons;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize and reintegrate family caregivers as essential partners in the care of LTC home residents.”

I couldn’t agree more with this petition. I affix my signature to it and hand it to the page.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition 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” in some cases; “and

“Whereas the digital divide has been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically for rural and northern Ontarians;

“Whereas rural and northern Ontario businesses continue to face challenges accessing the 21st-century digital economy which creates a serious economic disadvantage when following the advice of health officials during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

“Whereas as Ontario carefully reopens the economy, every region and every community must play a role in attracting jobs and investments to restore economic prosperity to the province; and

“Whereas investing in reliable broadband and cellular service creates greater opportunity for families, farmers and small business owners in rural and remote areas not only during the COVID-19 pandemic but after the pandemic ends;

“Whereas Ontario is investing \$150 million in a new program that, when leveraged with partner funding, has the potential to result in a total investment of \$500 million to improve broadband and cellular coverage service in underserved and unserved communities;

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

“Urge the federal Minister of Infrastructure, the federal Minister of Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development and the federal Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry to provide Ontario with its fair share of funding through the Universal Broadband Fund and to commit additional funding to the province so that:

“(1) All of Ontario’s underserved and unserved communities can access reliable broadband service;

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“(2) Ontario’s rural and northern communities can have the same opportunities for economic growth, recovery and participation in the 21st century digital economy as urban municipalities;

“(3) Ontarians in rural and northern communities can access government services, conduct business and connect with loved ones especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

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

EDUCATION

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: My petition is entitled, “Petition to Stop Bill 197’s Attempt to Allow Non-Educators to Run School Boards.”

“Whereas the Conservative government of Ontario is set to pass the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020 (Bill 197);

“Whereas this bill removes the requirement for directors of education to be qualified teachers;

“Whereas this is the beginning of an approach to privatize education and further enhance a two-tiered education system in Ontario;

“Whereas lack of education experience means that directors will not understand the anti-racist and anti-oppressive considerations necessary to align resources and supports across the organization to support marginalized student populations;

“Whereas this should raise significant concerns for all communities, especially those who are most marginalized—Indigenous, Black, racialized, children with identified learning needs/non-neurotypical/those with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+-identifying children and those coming out of poverty—as they will be the ones who will be most hurt by this move;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to reject Bill 197 and stand up for public education.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my name to it.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Mr. Michael Parsa: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government of Ontario remains committed to pressing forward towards a more accessible, responsive and resilient justice system; and

“Whereas the current process to appoint justices of the peace is outdated and slow. This has created obstacles to filling vacancies, resulting in delays for people wanting their day in court; and

“Whereas there is a need for greater transparency and the promotion of more diversity throughout the recruitment and appointment process; and

“Whereas maintaining the integrity of Ontario’s appointment process for justices of the peace is vital to the administration of a strong justice system;

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

“(1) The act is amended with respect to the composition and processes of the Justices of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee;

“(2) The composition of the committee is changed to be leaner and more efficient while continuing to ensure local voices are present. The importance of committees representing the diversity of the communities they serve shall be recognized;

“(3) The committee may hold its meetings and conduct interviews in person or through electronic means, including telephone conferencing and video conferencing.”

Of course I support this petition. I will add my name and hand it to one of the pages.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled, “A Safe Plan to Reopen Schools and Child Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas” Premier Ford and Minister Lecce “have failed to provide the funding or the plan needed to ensure kids can return to schools and child care centres in a safe and supportive way; and

“Whereas we need an immediate action plan;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to create a plan that includes:

“—paid sick leave and parental leave in any modified return;

“—immediate funding to stabilize the child care sector to prevent fee increases and worker layoffs;

“—increased funding for teacher hiring, bussing, school repairs and cleaning;

“—expanded funding for child care and schools for more, smaller classes;

“—real collaboration with front-line education workers, students, parents and school boards through a COVID-19 recovery school advisory group.”

As a parent of a child in the public school system, I fully support this and I will be affixing my signature to it.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Mr. Will Bouma: This petition is entitled, “PPE Procurement Petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the global competition to secure critical personal protective equipment and medical supplies is fierce; and

“Whereas in the face of a global shortage of medical equipment, Ontario-based companies have stepped up in a big way to produce these items in order to ensure our front-line workers are protected against COVID-19; and

“Whereas Ontario is making considerable progress in procuring critical supplies and equipment, while the global supply chain remains constrained; and

“Whereas nothing is more important than protecting the health and safety of patients and the workers caring for them, as well as our first responders;

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

“Proceed as expediently as possible to continue to ensure that patients, front-line health care workers and first responders have the critical equipment and supplies they need to protect themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic, so that:

“(1) Ontario continues to procure vital supplies and personal protective equipment through its traditional suppliers and donations, as well as working in collaboration with the federal government, other provinces, and Ontario’s manufacturers;

“(2) Maintaining Ontario’s same-day deliveries to hospitals, long-term-care and retirement homes and other facilities to support essential workers in all settings and

ensuring supplies and equipment are expedited to those most in need;

“(3) The province continues to collectively explore how to overcome supply chain challenges, including through domestic production opportunities and the safe reprocessing of supplies.”

I completely support this petition and will be affixing my signature thereon and giving it to the page.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank all my constituents who have reached out to me with this ask and have given me this petition.

This petition is entitled, “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 over-represented 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.”

I support this petition, and will affix my signature to it and give it to the page.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

REOPENING ONTARIO (A FLEXIBLE RESPONSE TO COVID-19) ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020

SUR LA RÉOUVERTURE DE L'ONTARIO (MESURES ADAPTABLES EN RÉPONSE À LA COVID-19)

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 14, 2020, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 195, An Act to enact the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020 / Projet de loi 195, Loi édictant la Loi de 2020 sur la réouverture de l'Ontario (mesures adaptables en réponse à la COVID-19).

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Jones has moved second reading of Bill 195, An Act to enact the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, the bells will now ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes.

I will ask the Clerks to prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1322 to 1352.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 195, An Act to enact the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020 was held.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 59; the nays are 29.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is now ordered for third reading.

COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY
ACT, 2020
LOI DE 2020 VISANT À FAVORISER
LA REPRISE ÉCONOMIQUE
FACE À LA COVID-19

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 15, 2020, on the motion for second 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): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question. Mr. Clark has moved second reading of Bill 197, An Act to amend various statutes in response to COVID-19 and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, the bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes.

Interjections: Same vote.

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 59; the nays are 29.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is now ordered for third reading.

REOPENING ONTARIO (A FLEXIBLE
RESPONSE TO COVID-19) ACT, 2020
LOI DE 2020
SUR LA RÉOUVERTURE DE L'ONTARIO
(MESURES ADAPTABLES EN RÉPONSE
À LA COVID-19)

Ms. Jones moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 195, An Act to enact the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020 / Projet de loi 195, Loi édictant la Loi de 2020 sur la réouverture de l'Ontario (mesures adaptables en réponse à la COVID-19).

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I look to the Solicitor General to lead off the debate.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Before I begin, and as I have been doing as often as I can in this chamber, I want to express

my deepest gratitude to Ontario's front-line workers. They have permitted Ontario to navigate what have been unprecedented times and they have stood between Ontarians and the threat posed by COVID-19. These heroes have selflessly and bravely served the people of this province with tremendous dedication over the past several months. On behalf of the people of Ontario and our government, thank you for all that you continue to do to keep our communities healthy and strong.

I would also like to acknowledge the staff here at Queen's Park who have made it possible for members of this Legislature to come together in this global public health emergency to discuss Ontario's response to COVID-19 and the start of our recovery. Because of your work and diligence, the extraordinary circumstances outside these walls have not prevented my colleagues and I from getting to work each day and week on behalf of our constituents. Thank you.

Speaker, I'm pleased to begin third reading of our government's proposed Bill 195, the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act. My parliamentary assistant, the excellent member from Etobicoke-Lake-shore, will join me and speak after me.

Bill 195 is not the type of proposed legislation that any members could have expected debating in this assembly when we were first selected here to represent the people of Ontario. The bill represents the next important step in what has been an unprecedented response to an unprecedented challenge. The scope of this challenge has encompassed nearly every part of our daily lives and has changed the way we see everything around us and even how we regard what we cannot see.

I know that members of this House and people across the province have appreciated our efforts to transparently share the evidence and the public health rationale behind each emergency action we have taken, and I appreciate the chance to continue to share this important information today. Since declaring the provincial emergency on March 17, our government has taken swift and decisive action to protect Ontarians while carefully relying on the guidance of public health experts. Our balanced and measured approach has always put the health and well-being of our most vulnerable citizens first, while supporting the front-line heroes on whom we continue to rely.

The provincial declaration of emergency supports our government's comprehensive response to the COVID-19 outbreak and allowed for temporary emergency orders to be established to keep our communities safe. Throughout this process, the advice of public health experts and front-line workers has been paramount in guiding each of the steps we have taken. I assure you that these are responsibilities we have taken very seriously, and I know each member of this Legislature feels the same way.

These decisive actions set Ontario on a steady path to combat the spread of this virus and allowed us to begin to overcome the toll it took on the individuals and families in each of our communities. Together, we steadied Ontario and initiated the first important steps toward recovery and re-establishing our province.

1400

Speaker, we need only to look at the headlines from the past number of months to see how far we truly have come. On March 25, for example, CBC News published a news story with the title, “When it Comes to Ventilators Per Capita, Ontario’s Near the Bottom. Province Has Only 12 Ventilators Per 100,000 People.” On April 3, CP24 reported, “Experts Project Between 3,000 and 15,000 Deaths in Ontario Due to COVID-19.” And as recently as May 24, CTV News reported, “Ontario Records Another Spike in New COVID-19 Cases.”

It can be easy to get locked into our daily or hourly news cycle and to lose sight of what we have been through and the risks we have faced as a province, but these headlines show the very real fears and threats we have dealt with as a province and some of the work that has gone into keeping each other safe.

Building on the strength of the hard-earned progress made through Ontario’s regional response to COVID-19, we established positive momentum in the first and second stages of the recovery as Ontarians adapted and found creative ways to move forward together. The ingenuity and perseverance of people across our province is what made it possible for Ontario to enter the third stage of the reopening, as it was recently announced.

Kids are now going to daycare. Friends are respectfully reuniting at their favourite restaurants and are enjoying a much-needed and thoroughly appreciated patio season. And we are once again visiting our loved ones in seniors’ homes and long-term-care facilities, and cherishing these precious moments.

Ontario is on the path to recovery, and we owe this progress to the hard work and irrepressible spirit of the people of this province. Government actions alone couldn’t have brought us to this point where we can once again regard the weeks and months ahead with hope and continued care. Ontarians stepped up by staying home, wearing masks when on transit and in public buildings, dropping off groceries for those who needed a helping hand, looking out for their neighbours, and so much more. We could never say enough about the contributions of the caregivers, front-line responders and other essential workers who did not waver when their considerable skills and courage were in demand. They are our family members, friends and neighbours, and they represent Ontario’s best: compassionate, resilient and always there.

I do also want to take a moment to thank the members of the Canadian Armed Forces who also stepped up when our province’s most vulnerable were in great need—for their courage, expertise and resolve. These extraordinary men and women stepped into very challenging situations and provided critical care as they stabilized a number of very difficult and dangerous situations. For this and all you do to protect our country, thank you, on behalf of all Ontarians.

While the provincial emergency may come to an end, as it was always intended to do, public health experts tell us that the danger posed by COVID-19 will continue for months to come. Speaker, entering stage 3 certainly does

not mean that the fight against COVID-19 is over. Some countries around the world are reporting record levels of new cases of COVID-19, and the spike in numbers south of the border remains of significant concern.

I would like to highlight just a few striking numbers to illustrate the gravity of the threat that continues to grow and, frankly, to evolve beyond our borders. These numbers demonstrate how truly hard-fought our progress has been and how much work still remains before we can get to a point where we have permanently managed the threat of COVID-19. As of Sunday, July 19, Ontario has recorded 37,604 COVID-19 cases, which represents 256 cases per 100,000 residents spread across our province’s population of more than 14.5 million people. We know that this deadly virus has created great loss and heartache in Ontario. Sadly, 2,751 lives have tragically been lost due to COVID-19.

Still, Speaker, the numbers do show that we have achieved positive results in terms of limiting the spread of the novel virus. If we look at the experience of some jurisdictions of similar size to Ontario, we can plainly see the threat that continues to be present even though we have made encouraging strides here at home.

I want to say that our hearts and our supports go out to the people of New York, which is a valued neighbour to Ontario and one with which we share a border, countless critical trade links, friendships and family ties. Sadly, the spread of COVID-19 in New York has resulted in 406,807 positive cases across a population of more than 19 million people. The 2,087 cases per 100,000 residents represents almost 10 times more than the number of cases we have recorded here in Ontario per capita. Tragically, 27,048 lives have been lost in New York, and we express our sincere condolences to the people of New York, particularly the friends and families who are grieving their loved ones.

Another jurisdiction with a similar population to ours is Illinois, which is home to more than 12.5 million people. In Illinois, there have been 161,575 cases of COVID-19 as of July 19, which represents 1,272 cases per 100,000 residents. That represents about five times the number of cases we have seen in Ontario. Tragically once again, these neighbours and friends of our province have seen 7,295 lives lost due to COVID-19.

I share these numbers to demonstrate that the heartache and devastation caused by COVID-19 has been severe in some regions of North America, and to underscore that the threat posed by this deadly virus is not, in fact, behind us, even though we have made it this far. We cannot escape the threat of a second wave or the anticipated mingling of the new COVID coronavirus with the fall and winter flu season. And so we have no responsible choice but to remain vigilant and continue following public health advice to ensure that the progress we have made so far in stopping the spread of this deadly virus will not be undone.

As legislators, we have a duty to deliver a practical and flexible plan that supports the progress Ontarians have made while recognizing the ongoing risks and effects of COVID-19. Speaker, that is why we are carefully and

thoughtfully planning every step of our recovery process and our efforts to re-establish Ontario. Our government's proposed legislation maintains the steady approach we have taken through this global public health emergency and builds on the experience that has been gained at every step. If passed by this House, the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act would help support the careful and gradual reopening of our province and our economy while maintaining vigilance against the ongoing threat and effects of COVID-19.

The proposed legislation would bridge the gap between the public health measures that were needed to respond to the immediate threat of the virus in the earliest moments of the global public health emergency and those now needed to support the province's safe recovery as the virus continues to spread around the world.

Specifically, as we continue with the transition to recovery, the proposed legislation would allow certain emergency orders in effect under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act to be maintained under this proposed legislation for an initial 30 days. It would also include the ability to further extend orders maintained under the proposed bill, as required, for up to 30 days at a time based on the advice of public health experts, as well as adjusting certain existing orders, including those related to labour redeployment or workplace and management rules; closure of places and spaces or regulation of how businesses and establishments can be open to provide goods or services in a safe manner; and compliance with public health advice and rules related to gatherings and organized public events.

1410

However, the new proposed legislation would prevent the government from creating any new orders. Furthermore, orders would be lifted when it is determined that they are no longer required to advance Ontario's fight against the spread of COVID-19 and as we continue forward through the recovery phase.

The provincial declaration of emergency was the action Ontario needed to face an unprecedented situation that threatened to overwhelm our health care and emergency services. It provided a platform for action that was flexible and able to respond as the situation evolved rapidly.

Ontarians see the progress we have made together every day that another piece of our community is re-established, and they deserve to know that their government sees it too.

Today, as the people of Ontario are moving forward and adapting to new habits, like wearing masks and interacting carefully with their friends and loved ones, there are still things we don't know about COVID-19. And while case numbers are down, we know that there are still many people suffering and there is still much work to do before we can permanently eliminate this virus from our communities.

Our government and the business community have worked closely to ensure the province is equipped with whatever lies ahead, including developing stores of personal protective equipment and other life-saving equipment made here in Ontario by Ontario workers. The

current situation calls for a more sustainable and tailored solution to keeping Ontarians safe and protecting jobs and our economy.

While the current emergency declaration is set to expire on July 24, if Ontario were to experience a significant spike in cases, the need for a new provincial declaration of emergency cannot be ruled out. Speaker, our government has proposed a transparent and accountable approach because we know it is what Ontarians expect and deserve. It is also the most effective path forward to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to continue to support the remarkable efforts of Ontarians, who are finding new ways to move ahead in the face of this evolving challenge.

As part of the House proceedings, my colleagues have reviewed the orders made by cabinet under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and debated those orders that would be part of the proposed legislation.

There are four components to our government's proposed Bill 195.

First: the continuation of emergency orders made under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act that are in effect when the proposed legislation, if passed, comes into force.

Second: limitations on the government's powers as compared to the extensive powers available under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act during a declared provincial emergency. These include prohibiting new orders and allowing only some orders to be amended, subject to meeting specific criteria. As I mentioned earlier, orders can also be ended when and if they are no longer necessary.

Third: importing certain provisions from the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

Fourth: transparency and accountability.

While some, including members of this House, have criticized Bill 195 as an overreaction, this bill, in fact, includes a series of balanced transparency and accountability measures.

While the parliamentary assistant for community safety will address each of those points individually, I would like to point out that Ontarians have been engaged in our government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic either through interactions with members of this House or through targeted initiatives across sectors, professions and areas of economic activity.

Ontarians have contributed their perspectives and ideas and they have been supportive of our open approach that remains focused on a safe recovery. They have been supportive of the emergency orders that we have implemented and the outcomes that these orders have achieved. For example, orders were put in place to help limit the spread of COVID-19 among our province's most vulnerable by limiting long-term-care employees to working in no more than one facility. It also afforded hospitals the flexibility to redeploy staff in areas where the need is most urgent.

The people of Ontario have also reached out in support of the work we have done to encourage businesses to

manufacture more PPE here in Ontario and reduce our reliance on other countries.

As COVID-19 has evolved, so too has our government's response, especially with regard to emergency orders. These orders have been implemented, amended and, in some instances, lifted as the situation evolves. We are continuing along that course and will follow the example of Ontarians. We will not waver.

The government must be up front with the people of Ontario about the actions taken under this proposed legislation and its impacts. After all, it is through the leadership and dedication of Ontarians that this Legislature is in a position to debate using new tools to continue to reopen the province and reduce the risks of COVID-19.

The proposed Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act has a number of accountability measures. The Premier or a designated minister would have to report regularly to the public on the orders continued under the proposed legislation that continue to apply. A report would have to be tabled within 120 days of the first anniversary of the act coming into force to provide information on orders that were extended or amended during this time.

While the government estimates the need for the power to amend or extend orders for one year, there is no crystal ball when we are discussing COVID-19; an extension of those orders might be necessary. If it is, the government will require the scrutiny and approval of the Legislative Assembly to extend such powers, which would be limited to periods of up to one year. If the powers to amend and renew orders are extended by the Legislature, a report will be required 120 days after the end of the extension.

Ontarians have not been shielded from the pain, loss and upheaval that COVID-19 has caused around the world. Communities have shouldered an enormous burden. They have made many sacrifices. Everyday heroes are working hard to protect and feed our families, and great sacrifice has been made by the victims of COVID-19 and the loved ones they left behind. We will always remember who you are and the sacrifices you have made.

We would not be honouring our responsibility to the people of Ontario if we did not produce clear and effective parameters to continue the gradual reopening of Ontario while also preparing for the uncertainties that lay ahead.

The proposed legislation, if passed, would give us the flexibility and capacity we need to support our continued efforts to cautiously reopen Ontario in a way that recognizes that COVID-19 impacts may still be felt for an extended period of time. It would assure the public that Ontario will continue its path to recovery while maintaining select tools to manage the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and to protect their communities.

We must remain vigilant so we can re-establish our province and realize the growth and promise that lays ahead. Ontario is on a steady path to recovery, but we must not allow the progress we have made to be undone. Ontarians have continued to respond in extraordinary ways over the past months to help stop the spread of COVID-19, and our collective resolve and vigilance will

endure beyond the immediate threat we continue to face. There is no stronger way for this Legislative Assembly to show our support for the people of Ontario than to pass the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act.

I will close by asking my colleagues to support this balanced and carefully considered bill, which would allow our province to continue moving forward safely and together.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Etobicoke—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Are we not doing the rotation?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Yes. Rotation, correct.

Further debate? The member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want you to know that I brought the wrench—I'm going to put a wrench in this legislation. No, just joking. I've got to fix something. It's a prop, I understand. I put it down, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say how extremely disappointing this particular legislation is from the perspective of what the government says when it comes to saying that they're wanting to work with everybody in Ontario so that we can work our way through this pandemic in a way that Ontario can rise to the top, that we can all do the right thing and we can all be contributors to trying to fix the problem and trying to make sure that everybody is safe. The government, in this particular case, in Bill 195—they're giving themselves some pretty extensive abilities to do things that, quite frankly, are issues of concern for a lot of people.

1420

For example, you would know that emergency orders allow the government to infringe on people's democratic rights. You can tell people not to congregate in crowds larger than a certain number. You can change the terms of the collective agreement within the health sector, as we've seen they have done. You could do all kinds of things like we have seen which, in normal times, would be unconstitutional.

A government doesn't have the right to take away a person's right that's supported in the constitution. You could do it by emergency order only for a period of time, as a way of being able to deal with the pandemic. That's why, when the legislation was drafted, the emergency—what is it again? It's called the emergency—

Hon. Sylvia Jones: CPA.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: CPA. All right; let's do it that way. Anyway, when the legislation was originally drafted, whenever these powers were used in order to override people's individual rights, it had to come to the House so that it was in the full light of day that government would make these orders. The order had to be coming to the House, which allowed everybody to have their say who wanted to say something.

By the way, these are very nice water bottles that you got us, Speaker. They actually work pretty well.

I've got to say this: We haven't had one case, Mr. Speaker, where the government has come to the House and

they've been refused an emergency order. Everybody understands that those emergency orders were very necessary and are necessary to deal with this pandemic. But what the government is doing in Bill 195—they're saying, "Listen: Trust us. You know you can trust us. We're the Doug Ford Conservatives and we would never do anything to infringe on your rights, like change the method of electing people in downtown Toronto in the middle of an election. No, no, no. We would never do that." No. God. Never would they—oh, they did it? Oh, my God. I must have missed that.

Mr. Wayne Gates: No, you didn't.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, I didn't. I was there.

The point is, this is exactly what they're doing here. They're giving themselves the ability to change orders and amend orders by cabinet decree. The only way we would find out what's going on is if the government communicates with us what was said at cabinet. Which cabinet member is going to come running out of the cabinet room to say, "Hey, everybody, guess what? We're going to take somebody's right away, and we're going to do X, Y or Z." It's a possibility. The government could do it. Because of cabinet solidarity and people wanting to remain in cabinet, they're not going to go and tell the public anything that the head of cabinet, being the Premier, is going to say.

I just say to the government: This is a really, really disappointing move on your part, and, quite frankly, an overreach. You're trying to fix something that's not broken. There has not been a case where you have not been able to issue an emergency order.

Everybody in this Legislature understands that you have to do that. If we hadn't done that, we would be in real trouble. The amount of infections that we'd have in Ontario would rival Florida or Texas. But we didn't because of the emergency orders and because people did what they had to do. The Premier said it himself: We can't pat ourselves on the back. A lot of this is the public choosing to do the right things, based on the advice they get from their government and the advice they get from the medical officer of health and others. But to give the cabinet the ability to amend an order in the dark is, I think, a really, really big overreach on the part of the government when it comes to what powers they are giving themselves.

The government may or may not abuse it; who knows? But one thing I do know, reading history—I love to read history, as you do, Mr. Speaker, because I've seen your library—is that people do abuse power. Once you've got it, it's there to be used, and people do abuse power. The government giving themselves the right to be able to amend emergency orders in the way that they have in this particular bill is a huge overreach. It's really an affront to our democratic way.

We're very fortunate, Mr. Speaker, that we live in a province that has a parliamentary system. I'm proud to say that I'm a member of the Ontario Legislature, as you are and every other member in this House. One of the reasons that we're proud is that this legislative process that Parliament provides is, as Winston Churchill said, the best of all the bad systems. There's no perfect system. But the

parliamentary system has built within it a history—hundreds of years—of how to govern in a way that the people have their say but that the government has the power to do what it needs to do.

As I was saying yesterday in another debate, nobody denies the right that the government has, on this side of the House, to pass legislation. In the end, the government can propose anything it wants. That's their right. They won a majority government. They have the ability to do that; I don't contest it. I wish the election would have been a different result, but that's a whole other issue. The point I'm trying to make here is that nobody contests that the government has the right to propose and, at the end of the day, that they have a responsibility to govern and that they should, in fact, always be able to pass their legislation if they have a majority government. That's just the way the system works.

Now, we see in Great Britain a little bit of a more, how would you say, seasoned system. In Great Britain, with the House as large as it is, it's sometimes hard to get the party to fall into step with the Prime Minister. We saw that during this particular Brexit debate that was going on in Great Britain. There were a lot of Conservatives who didn't agree with the Prime Minister of the day, or the former Prime Minister when she was in power, and who had difficulty with what the government was trying to accomplish. The beauty of the British parliamentary system, in that particular case, is that those Conservative members, along with the Labour members and along with the Scottish National Party and others, were able to temper what the government was trying to do around the Brexit deal. At the end, the government got a majority and they can do what they want over there. But my point is, the parliamentary system affords that, so that if the government was doing an emergency order, and it was an emergency order that they were amending by way of regular legislation that, let's say, did something that a Conservative member was extremely upset about—and I can think of one member; the member from Lennox and Addington is a good example—at least that member has a right, and any other member in this House has the right, to say, "No, that's a bad idea," and vote against the legislation. You have to give members that ability. Conversely, there may be people in the opposition that want to support it.

My point is, that's why the legislation was initially designed so that it comes back to the House for approval, because once you say that you've got to bring something here, the government is well aware that this is going to be in the full light of day. They're being scrutinized, so they're tempered in what it is that they may put inside an emergency order. But the minute you say, "Don't worry. It's not about new orders; it's only about amending existing orders," well, there is a whole bunch of orders that are now issued that you can amend to do all kinds of things. The government may choose not to do something that is controversial, but they might. I was a member of government, as you are members of government, and governments sometimes do things where not all of the members in the government agree. What do you do then?

What do you do if the Premier decides to slip something into one of those amended emergency orders that you don't like? What can you do about it, other than say, "I'll call the Premier to committee and have a talk with him for 30 minutes"? He doesn't have to answer your question.

I've sat on committee during the—you might have been there as well, Mr. Speaker, when two former Premiers were brought to committee on the gas plant scandal. There was no obligation for them to answer questions as fully as we thought they should. Their job was to try to defend themselves. As long as they didn't get caught lying to the committee or refuse to provide evidence that we asked for as far as documents or anything, their primary objective was for them not to answer in a way that got them in trouble. That's why you have to bring that legislation back. The legislation that we currently have allows for a full debate in the Legislature.

I know that I have other members that want to speak to this, and I'm only going to take a couple of more minutes, but I just say to the government that this is an overreach. This is something that you don't need to do. This is you trying to fix something that doesn't need to be fixed. You're following along with something that the Premier and the cabinet decided to do that, quite frankly, you may regret down the road.

1430

I think that when Legislatures defer their power to cabinet, it really demeans what this House is supposed to be about. The government, being the Premier and the cabinet, are the executive, and they have certain rights under our parliamentary system and under our Constitution, but the Legislature oversees the expenditures. We approve expenditures and we oversee policy when it comes to law, and we either approve or disapprove of the law, or amend. When we start giving away that ability for us to review and to approve or not approve, I think we're really demeaning what this Legislative Assembly is supposed to be all about.

Mr. Speaker, when you first got here in 1990, the rules were very different. There was little in the way of bills that went into committee and then eventually came out that had delegated authority to cabinet. The only time that you delegated to cabinet was on something that was very technical. When the bill was written, it was written, "The bill shall do the following thing," and not often, we delegated the authority to cabinet to make the regulations on the entire bill. Now we've gotten to a point where we write legislation, and we're essentially saying, "By regulation, the government can do anything that it wants in the particular purview of what this bill is all written about," and then cabinet can do what they want. They can do the complete opposite as long as it's on the subject matter that was opened in the bill.

We've seen that happen, where the Conservative government passed legislation when they were in place in order to force a referendum in a community if they didn't want a casino, and then the Liberals came and they changed the regulation so that you didn't have to do so. The intent of the bill was to give municipalities a referendum. That was clearly what was intended when that

bill was written. Rather than the Liberals coming back and changing the legislation and saying, "No, we don't agree with that," they changed the regulation and they completely gutted what the previous government, under Mr. Harris, had done. I don't think that was right. I don't think that the delegation of authority into regulation in that way is a way that a Parliament should operate, and that's essentially what you're doing in this bill: You're delegating the authority of this Legislature to cabinet when it comes to amending emergency orders, and that, to me, is the wrong thing to do.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the time in debate. I know that some of our colleagues would like to speak as well.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I will not be supporting Bill 195, for the third time today, when we come to a vote later on.

My colleague from Timmins is right: You're delegating authority for something that's critical. The emergency act works. It has worked up until now, and there has been no delay in taking those actions that we need to take, so the government has not made a case as to why they need to delegate the authority to cabinet for amending these orders, nor have they made the case for taking it out of this legislative body and giving each member an opportunity to speak about those things that are affecting each and every one of their constituents.

Let's remember what we're talking about here. We're talking about people's charter and constitutional rights. Number one: collective agreements. You can override collective agreements for health care workers, nurses, the people who have been on the front lines. What you're saying now is that it doesn't have to come back here so that we can debate it and talk about it. A minister of the government can just continue that order, amend that order, and maybe change that order to make it even stronger. They can. That's the way the legislation is written.

You're saying to the people who have been on the front lines, "We still need to override your rights, and we can do that for two years if we like," and we don't actually have to bring it back here for a vote, because you didn't change the piece of the emergency legislation that allows the government to extend by a year by simply putting a motion on the table, never calling it and never debating it—didn't change it. The government knew it needed to be changed; it didn't get changed in this bill, because the government wanted that power.

I would like to think that the reason for this, although it's not a good reason, is that you're just in a hurry, because that's what it looks like to me. The other rights that you're overriding are—these are rights that we took away from people because we needed to do it. But as we go along, that need will decrease. Rights like: We've closed their churches, their mosques, their temples, their places of worship; we've closed their schools; we've closed their businesses; we've told them they can't have more than five people in the backyard and that they shouldn't gather with other people—in places where it's their own private property.

So take a look at those things that can still be amended—and they are very important rights. I'm not saying that it was wrong for us to make those orders—we had to; we had to move quickly—but that doesn't mean that we don't need to consider it fully, which is what we need to be doing in this Legislature with the emergency act. It's not an inconvenience to come back here and debate those things that are critical in our democracy—all those rights that we've taken away. That's why we're here. It's not for a select committee of a few people to interview whoever wants to come before committee—because the Premier doesn't have to come—once a month, for an hour and 20 minutes or whatever it is. It will never get debated or discussed in here. It's not right. Whatever side you sit on, it's not right.

I don't know why Bill 195 is such a priority for the government when the most important thing we could be doing is having a plan for our kids to be back in school this fall, five days a week, in classes that are smaller and safer. Not only because it's good for kids—because they need it for their development and education—but families are struggling because it has affected people's work. A lot of women are out of the workforce. You can see, I think, the RBC report that shows that that has happened. The most important thing we could do for our economy is to get our kids back in school, but we're debating this: how we can override or get by emergency orders. I don't understand why that's a greater priority than having a plan for getting kids back in school. It doesn't make any sense to me. I know it doesn't make any sense to parents. It doesn't make any sense to our economy not to be investing in that plan.

I'm going to leave some time for my colleagues. I appreciate your time, Speaker.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I'm pleased to join in this debate on Bill 195. I want to thank the Solicitor General once again for her leadership on this file, all the government for their continued leadership as we go through COVID, and everyone here in the chamber for the work they do in their ridings for their constituents in helping them through this situation.

I'm pleased to join the debate to talk about how the government's proposed Bill 195, the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, will help support the safe reopening of our province as we continue to recover and manage the risks of COVID-19. We have many individuals to thank for this recovery: the skilled hands of medical professionals and front-line workers who have supported us over these difficult times; the essential workers who, when much of our province stayed home following the public health advice, were out there helping put food on the table and making sure that we had what was needed to help us all get through the crisis; and community organizations that have been stepping up to the plate to support those in need during challenging times. In my riding, we have GlobalMedic and the kind people at Haven on the Q, Stonegate health, LAMP and our New Haven group—just little pieces and little parts that they do

to help people get through. I want to join the chorus of thanks to all those who have supported Ontario's recovery.

Ontarians have been through a lot when it comes to COVID-19: the initial uncertainty over a new virus, the fear over rising case counts and other concerning metrics, collective determination in the face of adversity, and gratefulness for those who stepped up in so many different ways. That is just to name a few of the many complicated emotions that I know many Ontarians have felt through these last few months. I would be naive to think that this crisis is over; we're far from it.

But while some jurisdictions are recording new daily COVID-19 cases in the thousands, Ontario has reported fewer than 200 new cases a day for the past few weeks. Many of our public health regions have reported zero cases in the last 24-hour period. Compared to where the province was two months ago, there is a clear and hopeful sign that our strategy is working. Ontario is better positioned than we were a few months ago—all of that in the face of a virus we still don't know a whole lot about.

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As the Solicitor General highlighted, when compared with other jurisdictions of similar size, such as those surrounding the Great Lakes region, Ontario has been a leader in slowing the spread of COVID-19. But we must remain vigilant. One serious misstep can turn the clock backwards on all the work we have achieved by working together, and none of us want that. That is why we are proposing to have these legislative tools in place to help our children return to school, our hospitals and municipalities deliver critical services, and our places of business thrive once more.

The proposed Bill 195 enables us to travel a course we know is working while providing the flexibility to adjust to the unknown. What if there is an influx of new cases? What if there is a renewed demand for hospital care? What if there is a second or even a third wave? These are just some of the questions on our minds when determining our path forward. One thing is certain: Ontario can be confident that this government will never put expediency ahead of safety or put Ontarians at risk. That is abundantly clear with this legislation, Speaker, and what it sets out to achieve for the people of Ontario.

In her opening statement, the Solicitor General referenced four basic components to this government's proposed Bill 195:

(1) the continuation of emergency orders made under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act that are in effect when the proposed legislation, if passed, comes into force;

(2) limitations on the government's powers as compared to the extensive powers available under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act during a declared provincial emergency. These include prohibiting new orders and allowing only some orders to be amended, subject to meeting certain criteria. Orders can also be extended when and if they are no longer needed;

(3) importing certain provisions from the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act; and

(4) transparency and accountability measures. I would like to expand on each one of these components, Mr. Speaker.

The declared provincial emergency was a temporary solution that provided the province with a set of extraordinary powers under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act to deal with the initial urgent phase of the COVID-19 emergency. It was not a long-term answer to reopening the province or facilitating the province's recovery while protecting the health care system. The emergency orders helped to limit the spread of COVID-19 when the situation was most urgent. We wanted to protect Ontarians and give the flexibility to allow front-line providers to support the response and gradually reopen the province in a way that does not jeopardize our recovery. The emergency orders have driven so much of our success over these last few months, and these orders would continue to be able to work under this new proposed legislation.

The proposed legislation would continue the orders that are in place under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act at the time the proposed act comes into force. This recognizes the reality that COVID-19 is unlike any other kind of emergency. It's going to be with us for the foreseeable future, even as the numbers of new cases decline. Unlike other types of emergencies contemplated under the EMCPA, such as weather events that bring down property, there's not a physical rebuilding of the world from COVID-19. Unlike emergencies that require the rapid evacuation of people away from danger, there's not a realistic evacuation from COVID-19 while maintaining our society.

Those emergency orders not deemed integral to the fight against COVID-19 over the longer term would be discontinued before the proposed legislation, if passed, is proclaimed into force. These orders would cease to apply 30 days after being continued under the proposed legislation, unless revoked sooner, but could be extended by the Lieutenant Governor in Council for subsequent periods of up to 30 days at a time.

I'm going to repeat that. These orders would cease to apply 30 days after being continued under the proposed legislation, unless revoked sooner, but could be extended by the Lieutenant Governor in Council for subsequent periods of up to 30 days at a time. The maximum 30-day extension periods would allow certain measures in place to be maintained as necessary. At the same time, they would ensure that a rigorous review happens at regular intervals to help determine whether they are still needed, and I'll return to that later on.

As mentioned by the Solicitor General, the proposed bill would also provide the ability to amend certain existing orders, provided any amendment relates only to one or more of the following specific criteria. I just want to make sure the opposition is listening to this, because this is really important. The specific criteria are:

- work redeployment and workplace rules or practices;
- restrictions on gatherings or organized public events;
- closure or regulation of places, such as businesses; or
- compliance with public health advice.

We have asked a lot of those on the front line during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially our heroes in health care and other sectors. Redeployment of front-line workers and workplace flexibility have been key elements in responding to this crisis. As we transition out of the declared provincial emergency, we ask that employers and the labour community continue to work closely with each other and the government to support the delivery of critical services to the people of Ontario. For example, absent these types of orders, a hospital would have been required to lose critical time before being able to move staff from an emergency department to a COVID-19 assessment centre.

I know that all of our ministers are committed to working with their sector partners in developing plans that allow the province to respond rapidly to any situation and ensure the health and well-being of Ontarians. Through the framework proposed in Bill 195, these orders will be able to be renewed, amended and narrowed as appropriate, or revoked.

As the province gets back on track, the government is proposing legislation that would bridge the gap between the measures that were necessary to respond to the initial and immediate threat of COVID-19 and those now needed to support Ontario's safe recovery. It is a situation-appropriate response that includes important limitations and more targeted abilities than those that existed during a declared emergency.

As noted, the government cannot introduce any new orders under this proposed legislation, period. They cannot introduce any new orders; that's it. While this bill contains a provision that would allow certain continued orders to be amended within limited subject matters, we have outlined the strictly limited ways in which orders could be amended. I just would like to take a little bit more time, so everybody understands, to highlight those areas that were previously available through the EMCPA and would now not be through the Reopening Ontario Act.

So these are the changes, just to name a few:

- regulating or prohibiting travel or movement to, from or within any specified area;
- evacuating individuals and removing personal property;
- constructing works, restoring necessary facilities and appropriating, using, destroying, removing or disposing of property—there's a mouthful for you;

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- facilities for the care, welfare, safety and shelter of individuals, including emergency shelters and hospitals;
- collecting, transporting, storing, processing and disposing of any type of waste; and
- authorizing facilities, including electrical generating facilities, to operate as necessary.

Moreover, any such amendments must continue to meet stringent legal thresholds, just as they would have under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. Once again, to name those thresholds specifically, they include:

- amendment to an order must be necessary and essential in the circumstances to prevent, reduce or mitigate serious harm to persons or substantial damage to property;

- amendment to an order must be a reasonable alternative to another measure that could be taken;

- actions authorized by the amendment to an order must be exercised in a way that limits its intrusiveness; and

- an order, as amended, must only apply to areas of the province where it is necessary and only for as long as necessary.

Mr. Speaker, the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act is one of the province's legal authorities and a framework for managing emergencies. The act contains provisions on who is in power to make and amend orders, legal thresholds and enforcement.

Some of the provisions of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act have been carried over to the proposed Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, specifically:

- offences and maximum penalties for non-compliance of orders;

- civil liability protections for individuals acting in good faith under the proposed legislation;

- the ability to delegate the power to amend orders to a designated minister;

- the power to make amendments to orders apply retroactively; and

- that, with limited exceptions, such as the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the continued orders would prevail over other statutes.

These provisions are essential to give the government the flexibility it needs, including tools to enforce compliance, and orders to protect the people of Ontario and limit the spread of COVID-19.

Speaker, this is a government that takes great pride in being up front with the people of Ontario. Premier Ford's mantra, "You will know what I know as soon as I know it," is a sentiment echoed across our entire caucus and is something that people in our communities have come to rely on.

Ontario has put a lot of trust in this government during the early months of COVID-19, and people have sacrificed personally by largely following the emergency orders of public health advice. We certainly thank them for what they have done.

As we anticipate transitioning out of the provincial declaration of emergency, subject to the will of the Legislature, Ontarians are going to want to know more about the what, the why and the how of our response to COVID-19: "What is our government doing? Why are you doing it? How will this help to continue to support the health and safety of Ontarians and not jeopardize our recovery? And how will this prepare us for whatever lies ahead?" Mr. Speaker, under this proposed bill, this assembly and the people of Ontario will get these answers, and they will get the answers to their questions.

The Premier or the designated minister will be required to report regularly to the public on orders contained and

continued under this act, as well as any orders that may be extended to a committee designated by the Legislative Assembly. The people will get their answers.

The reporting mechanism to the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight will include both a presentation segment as well as an opportunity for direct questions and answers. I think we heard something opposite earlier today. I'll say that again: The reporting mechanism to the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight will include both a presentation segment as well as an opportunity for direct questions and answers. I want to be clear, Speaker: This is a reporting requirement and it's completely new. It does not exist under the current declaration of emergency.

Additionally, just like under the declaration of emergency, the Premier would be required to table a report within 120 days after a year of the act coming into force.

Finally, the Premier would be required to table additional reports should the Legislative Assembly vote to extend the power to amend or extend orders under this proposed bill. These reports should include a rationale for such extensions. Let me repeat that last part, Speaker: It is the Legislature and not the government alone that holds the authority to extend the proposed legislation beyond its one-year sunset period.

The declared provincial emergency served its purpose. It is time for my colleagues to decide what takes its place and when the declaration terminates. We are at a crossroads in our response to COVID-19. Overall, new cases are declining and the pressures on the hospitals and the health care workers are easing, but there is potential for a spike in cases, and the next wave could still be with us.

Most of the province is now at stage 3, and those in Toronto will get there soon. Most of the province is now in stage 3 of the government's plan for reopening, and the rest will come soon. That said, we have read the research that says that COVID-19 is more likely to spread between people in indoor settings than in outdoor spaces. As the summer ends, more activities will start to move indoors. As we know, to prevent further spread province-wide and to lower the risk of COVID-19, we must have the flexibility to respond quickly to any regional outbreak. The situation with COVID-19 remains fluid, and so too must be the response.

Ontario must continue to have the most effective tools at its disposal to responsibly reduce the dangers of COVID-19, protect Ontarians and reopen the province in a gradual and safe manner. As the Solicitor General indicated during second reading, the government's proposed Bill 195, the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, is a practical and flexible plan that supports where we are today while preparing for the fact that COVID-19 will still be with us tomorrow.

Ensuring that Ontario is truly ready for tomorrow begins with passing Bill 195 today. We are asking all members of the House to join us in passing Bill 195. Let's get this legislation passed today.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House. But I'll tell my colleague very straight: You'll have a hard time getting the NDP to support an undemocratic bill in this House, ever. This is all about control.

I want to talk to my brothers and sisters on the other side. I call you "brothers and sisters" even though you're attacking unions incredibly hard in this bill.

Over the last number of months, we've worked together; you can't argue that. You cannot say that the emergency order hasn't worked. You've had the support of the Liberals, my buddy from the Greens, the NDP and yourselves, and we've done a great job. We've saved a lot of lives over the course of this. We've had our struggles in long-term care, which I talked about yesterday. We've had our struggles in retirement homes. But we sat in this House and debated them and were able to get our positions across.

What does this do? I'm going to read a couple of lines here. It drives me nuts. Here it is: "This is a bill that's like having your cake and eating it too." I think that's relatively fair. Providing health services with flexibility in staffing, including permitting violations of collective agreements—you know you guys love unions. I hear you guys talk all the time about how great unions are. But you want to violate their collective agreements.

And this one here, Mr. Speaker—I know; I'll look at you. I know. I like looking at you. I apologize. I always get—you know me. It's not the first time this has happened; it won't be the last. But you've been here since 1990—I think 1990. Am I right? You've been here a long time.

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I want to read this to you because I know you'd disagree with it. You can't say that now because you're the Speaker, and I understand that, but you'd disagree with this: It allows the government to continue to renew in the modification of emergency orders on a regular basis. Do we all understand that? Do my colleagues understand that? Here's the part that you don't understand, my colleagues on the other side: without seeking the approval of the Legislature. Why do they elect us? If they don't need my approval, what am I doing here? Why am I coming in from Niagara Falls and representing my community of Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake when you don't need my approval? How is that democratic? How is that democratic?

And then, I think it was one of your colleagues—it might have been you; I'm not sure, but it might have been one of the sisters over there, or one of the brothers—who talked about how much they care about front-line workers, and how front-line workers have worked and saved lives and worked 12-hour shifts, double shifts, no time off. They say what a great job they did and, "We wouldn't be in the situation we are in today without our front-line workers." And what do they do? They attack their collective agreements.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has concerns, and the carpenter unions, and the OFL, which represents about 1.5 million workers in the province of Ontario. I'm looking over there only because I want to make sure

they're listening, because some may not know what the Ontario Federation of Labour is. "Bill 195 must not go forward. It is a blatant ... power grab by the Ford Conservatives" and "a bid to give themselves carte blanche to skirt their democratic responsibilities"—pretty strong language. That's why I'm here. I know they got a majority government, and I may kid in here that we're probably going to lose the vote. I know that's going to happen; we've already lost a couple today, but the reality is that at least I had a vote. It wasn't undemocratic. I may disagree with the bill and I may disagree with time allocation, but I had a vote. With this bill, they get to do whatever they want. It's all about control—undemocratic.

CUPE—we've all heard of CUPE. I've heard them mention what a great union CUPE is every once in a while. "The Ford Conservatives' proposed legislation extending emergency powers will give the province significant powers at the expense of front-line workers." And who are the front-line workers? I ask my colleagues. Does anybody know? Health care workers. Health care workers. This is what I really want you guys to listen to.

Unfortunately, he left, because I would say this while he's here: I'm not even sure Mike Harris would do this, by the way. I just want to get that out. CUPE—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Take your seat for a second.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You can't use props. You can't make reference to the absence of another member. You've got to make your comments through the Chair.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. I apologize. Thank you.

CUPE: Bill 195 overrides workers' rights in the following areas—now, I don't know if my colleagues know this, but I was a president of a union. I bargained 150 collective agreements, and I know how important they are. Here's what it violates:

- article 7: grievance and arbitration procedures. This one's really important if you belong in a union. I know some of my colleagues were in a union;

- seniority;

- contracting out;

- work of the bargaining unit;

- leaves of absence—think about that;

- sick leave—now, we know they don't believe in sick pay, because they squashed two days of sick days, so I understand that one;

- this is important, if you're a PSW or you're a health care worker: hours of work, where they can change your hours of work. So when you think you're going to be on an afternoon shift, they can call you up and say, "You're on days," or, "You're on the midnight shift." Terrible; and

- holidays. Is there anybody who deserves holidays more than our front-line workers, our nurses, our doctors, everybody? They're working; they're saving our lives.

This is one that we all like, because tomorrow—just so everybody knows, I had a question tomorrow. I was looking forward to doing a question, because I put a bill forward to try to help the tourist sector. So I was really

excited about getting my question tomorrow. Guess what happens at 1 o'clock today? They cancelled question period for tomorrow. But why did they do that? In fairness—I want to be fair to the Conservatives—they want to go on vacation. It's the same vacation they want to take from every worker in the province of Ontario who works in the health care sector. I don't think that's fair. I actually don't think it's fair that I'm not getting my question tomorrow either, by the way, but I'm not.

This will hurt in the following ways: Vacations will be cancelled, your shift can be changed—I already said that—your job can be eliminated and you can be re-assigned with no say. This is awful, man. Leaves of absence can be denied or cancelled. Well, we should cancel your leave of absence starting tomorrow and come back for question period. At least I would get my question. Contractors and volunteers can be brought in to their job, as long as there's not a layoff.

The SEIU says that Bill 195 is an attack on health care workers: “Bill 195 is an extraordinary overreach that would allow for already precarious workers to be further exploited by the for-profit long-term care industry, including denials of vacation.”

This is what we're talking about. They're sitting over there listening to me—and I've got to wrap up, because I know my colleagues want to talk. How can you defend this, if you live in the province of Ontario and you're an MPP? And I know there are some new MPPs over here; maybe they don't understand what they're actually trying to get passed here. This is terrible: that I got elected and I'm not going to be able to be democratically represented in this House because of this bill. It's wrong, it should be stopped, and everybody on that Conservative side should vote against their own bill and stand up for democracy in the province of Ontario.

The last thing I want to say, which really isn't on the bill, so you may stand up when I say this: But at the end of the day, I believe that we should all be wearing masks to protect everybody in the province of Ontario. I'm one of those ones—I've said it in here that I've had open heart surgery. I've got some issues, but if everybody wears a mask, I've got a 56% chance of not catching COVID-19. Anything that's going to help to stop this terrible, terrible virus, we should do, and I think masks should be mandatory in the province of Ontario. Thank you for my time.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: This afternoon, I will be speaking against Bill 195, the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, for the following reasons.

Bill 195 has no precedent in our province's legislative history. If passed, it will grant the government the executive discretion to extend and modify emergency orders made under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act for up to two years beyond the formal ending of the emergency that first enabled them. Exercising emergency powers outside of a formal state of emergency was never contemplated in the act. This is in

recognition that these powers should not be exercised at the whim of cabinet in non-emergency circumstances.

We all appreciate that we are in unusual circumstances presently and that a flexible response is required to reopen the province while COVID-19 remains a threat; however, these discretionary powers require proper oversight that is absent from this bill. The powers to maintain or amend existing emergency orders for up to two years will mean that this government can overrule collective bargaining agreements, ban gatherings, restrict movement and close both public and private places essentially up until the next election, if it wishes.

While I don't believe that it is the intention of the government to misuse this power, everyone in this room must be able to appreciate the incredible potential for abuse built into this bill. When it comes to the charter rights of Ontarians, it is better to be safe than sorry when it comes to oversight. I suspect that a Conservative government that emphasizes individual liberties must be able to appreciate this sentiment. Passing this bill as is not an act of maliciousness, but it is an act of carelessness.

We are the stewards of a democratic tradition of government that is accountable to and representative of our constituents. The executive doesn't speak on behalf of Ontarians in the same sense that this Legislature does, and to hold a whipped government vote where the Legislature hands the executive incredible powers to interfere in the lives of Ontarians is not compatible with our history of representative governance. It is an understandable expediency in a time of emergency, but this very act will conclude the emergency that has necessitated these same measures over the previous months. A return to normalcy means a return to legislative oversight that is simply absent from this bill.

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If passed as is, oversight of the government's use of these powers will come in the form of a number of reporting obligations. The Premier or a designated minister will simply need to report to the public regularly as to how it has used these powers, not get their consent. The Premier or a designated minister will need to report to a committee monthly on its use of these powers, but again, it is merely informing, not requesting consent. This committee will further be required to have a majority of government members on it. If the government seeks to extend these powers beyond a full year of enforcement following the passage of Bill 195, it will need to request this extension via a vote in the House. Collectively, these provisions create a serious democratic and accountability deficit in a bill which hands the government the executive discretion to massively interfere in the rights of Ontarians.

Extraordinary powers require extraordinary oversight. I am calling on the government to build stronger safeguards in this bill. These could include modifying the composition of the oversight committee to be composed of an equal representation from the government and opposition parties and require the consent of this committee to extend these emergency powers every month.

I am further calling on the government to hold genuine consultations with the public before it makes sweeping

changes which affect all Ontarians. This means that this bill should have gone through committee to allow the public to provide input, not be expedited through the House. The government should additionally conduct a public assessment of the potential ways that Bill 195 could compromise Ontarians' charter rights and detail how it intends to mitigate against these risks as much as possible while meeting Ontario's public health needs.

The government should also consider requesting that the Court of Appeal for Ontario conduct a judicial reference on the constitutionality of extending these emergency powers beyond the formal ending of the state of emergency that enabled them. It is unclear whether the present circumstances can justify the infringement of charter rights, such as those to collective bargaining, and we should seek clarification from the court on whether this is indeed the case.

Bill 195 will grant the cabinet extraordinary powers to restrict how Ontarians work, gather and travel. While this might be an adequate means of addressing the evolving challenge of COVID-19, it must come with clear and comprehensive oversight mechanisms, which are missing from this act. Until this act is amended to include more meaningful oversight of the government's use of these extraordinary executive powers and until we establish the constitutionality of these changes, I cannot support it.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents to speak about Bill 195, which is ironic considering this bill essentially takes away the voice of every Ontarian in this province, including those that are represented by Conservatives, and their democratic right to have their elected representatives participate in debate.

This bill gives the government extraordinary powers to do whatever they see fit for the next year or two. Speaker, I just want to point out the title of this bill. The title—it's actually not a laughing matter, but I have to laugh. It says, "a flexible response to COVID-19." What I'd like to say to the folks on the government side is—

Mr. Will Bouma: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Oh, the member from Brantford-Brant says, "Hear, hear." I think he might change his tune in a minute.

It's called "a flexible response to COVID-19." On behalf of the thousands of workers at Chrysler and the thousands of workers at Nema, Syncreon and TRW who just lost their jobs, they would have appreciated any response from this Conservative government—any response, even a flexible one—and they heard not a peep as thousands of jobs left my community.

Interjection.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Shame on the member for Brantford-Brant for laughing about that.

This bill specifically gives the government extraordinary powers, as I said, to do what they want without having to bring it before this House or answer to the public or anybody who we represent, who we are elected to represent.

Speaker, I'm going to take people back to December 1923, a little before my time. In December 1923, the Equal Rights Amendment was introduced in Congress in the United States. For those folks who aren't familiar with what the Equal Rights Amendment was, it specifically talks about the right of women to autonomy over their own bodies, their right to work, their right to vote, and their right to have complete autonomy over their own decisions. Up until 1923, this conversation wasn't happening. Women were basically the property of the men who they were married to. Sadly enough, we're now in 2020, and the Equal Rights Amendment still has not been ratified in the United States. Women are still fighting for equal rights when it comes to their children, their right to keep their own paycheques, their right to go to work, and their right to have their own opinions.

I bring up the Equal Rights Amendment and the fact that women are still fighting for equality in the United States while in this House, we have women—by the way, it was women who fought for women to even have a vote. It was women before my time who fought for my ability and my right to stand where I am and speak on behalf of my constituents. Yet today, we have women on the other side of the House, through this bill, who are not only supporting but are pushing through this legislation that directly attacks women workers in the province of Ontario. The vast majority of the workers in this bill—

Interjection.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore is saying "shame" and shaking her head. Well, shame on you for not recognizing the fact that the majority of the women—when you go after their collective bargaining rights; when you rip open their collective agreements and tell them, "You don't have a right to say when you're scheduled to work, or how often you're scheduled to work. You don't have sick days," even though you're calling them heroes and they're on the front lines of the battle with COVID—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I'm going to ask again that you address the Chair, because the manner in which the debate is heading right now—it's becoming personal, and I don't want it to become personal. That way, we keep the tone in the House down. So we'll maintain the eye contact with the Chair and we won't have any additional problems. I'm sure you would agree with that.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Good answer. Thank you. Start the clock. Back to the member from Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker.

When you are telling women in the workforce that they don't have a say in what shifts they're going to work; how often they're going to work; whether they can stay home when they're sick; when you're saying, "You can't stay home to look after your children"—because women are the ones who are most affected when it comes to child care; when you're telling them all these things, when you are stomping on their rights, the rights within their collective agreements, that is a direct attack on women. And most

of the attacks in this bill on collective agreements are on jobs that are held by women.

The government can argue that all they want, but they need to do their homework. They need to do their homework. They cannot sit on the other side of the House and say that these are front-line heroes and that we should be applauding the work they're doing when in a bill like this, they are taking away their rights. They are stomping on their rights. Because the majority of these jobs are held by women, they are attacking the women in this province.

As a woman standing here in an elected position, where women before me fought so that I could not only vote but stand here and take up my space and represent my constituents, I will not miss the opportunity to point out that this government, through this bill, is directly attacking the women in this province.

Speaker, I know I have other colleagues who would like to speak to this bill, but again, I will just say to the government that the title of this bill, A Flexible Response to COVID-19—there is no flexibility in this bill. As my colleague had pointed out, it's all about power. It's all about this government having complete control. They have a majority government. If they bring stuff back in here and give us an opportunity to share the voice of our constituents, they can still vote us down every time. They can still do it. There is absolutely no reason why this government, under any circumstances, or any government, should be giving themselves the power that this Conservative government is in this bill, and that is why my colleagues and I will proudly stand to oppose this legislation and anything else like this that they bring forward.

1520

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise in this House and contribute to the debate on Bill 195. I just want to take a moment to say that we're starting to hear a growing chorus of people outside this House from across the political spectrum who are starting to raise the alarm bells about this Bill 195. For example, in an editorial in yesterday's National Post, Christine Van Geyn from the Canadian Constitution Foundation wrote:

"This power grab by the Premier is an unjustified violation of charter protected rights, and citizens should be concerned...."

"Bill 195 is power seeking, but it may be only the beginning. If these intrusions into our rights are not resisted, we may be at the beginning of a new policy cycle that seeks even longer-term and larger changes that further limit our rights. Emergency powers should apply only during emergencies, and any attempt to extend them beyond must be described as nothing more than a power grab."

Let's move to the other side of the political spectrum and let's hear what Michael Bryant, the executive director of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, has said: "The proposed legislation is unnecessary and eliminates essential democratic controls over unprecedented emergency powers. It is a significant threat to democratic oversight that should be rejected."

Or let's go to Lakehead University law professor Ryan Alford, who has described the bill as a "power grab" and that any "attempt by the government to argue that the current crisis can justify the infringement of fundamental rights two years later is bound to fail. The precedent this would create is horrendous: a hypothetical state of affairs should never be the basis for an actual and substantial restriction of liberty."

Speaker, my friends in the official opposition have quoted a number of labour leaders, so I'll spare the House even more of those quotes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Go ahead; go ahead.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Go ahead? Should I say a few? But I'll just say, Speaker—I'm going to stick to what the legal experts are saying in my remarks—it is clear that legal experts from across the political spectrum are raising serious concerns about Bill 195. It gives me pause, and I would recommend to my colleagues—I think a few of them actually are lawyers over there. I would think it would give them pause, and I would encourage them to listen to their legal colleagues and what they're saying about how Bill 195 threatens our constitutional and charter rights.

At the very least, Speaker, this bill should be going to committee so we can hear from legal experts, so we can hear from labour leaders, so we can hear from average Ontarians about how this bill affects their constitutional rights and their civil liberties. The fact that it appears that we're going to vote on second reading and third reading in the same day on this bill—a bill that affects our fundamental rights at the very least should go to committee.

Speaker, the lessons we've learned from the COVID crisis have shown that we may need to bring some amendments to the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. But I must agree with former Attorney General Michael Bryant, who so aptly pointed out in an op-ed over the weekend that the time to amend such an important bill is not while we're in the middle of a pandemic. I want to quote from his op-ed: "The problem with legislating during a crisis, when that legislation involves creating new government powers, is that it all ends up being like the notorious U.S. Patriot Act. In other words, it's always bad ... for your human rights." Or because, Speaker, you know I love a good hockey analogy, I'll quote Mr. Bryant one more time: "It's like changing the rules in the middle of the playoffs—it's never a good idea."

Mr. Wayne Gates: Unless it's in favour of the Leafs.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Unless you're a Leafs fan; then the playoffs don't come often enough, do they?

Speaker, the point I'm making here is that we need time for reflection. We need time to consult with the experts. We need time for collaboration and input from all parties and all parts of our society if we're going to even consider granting the government such extraordinary powers.

And here's the thing. Speaker: Government has the ability to continue doing what they're doing with the emergency orders without changing the legislation. The government can extend the state of emergency right now,

today. If we're in a state of emergency, I'm assuming that all members of this House would probably grant unanimous consent for that—that would be my guess. If a second wave hits—experts are telling us a second wave likely will hit—and if we have to move into another state of emergency, I've seen no indication over the last four months that any opposition party would oppose that. All of us, everybody in this House—we've all worked together to put the people of Ontario first. We've all said that the health and safety of the public comes first. I don't think anybody has indicated that they would block that.

I certainly wouldn't be afraid to move and act quickly to grant the government the powers they need to protect people. I haven't blocked it in the last few months; I don't know why we would consider blocking it in the future. But to provide this government with emergency powers that affect our civil liberties, our constitutional rights, that affect collective bargaining agreements for front-line health care workers for up to two years, whether we're in a state of emergency or not, is wrong and it's not in the best interests of Ontarians.

Speaker, I urge my colleagues, especially those on the other side of the aisle, to reconsider Bill 195. The government's actions over the last few weeks leave the impression that the Premier is against big government when it comes to spending money to help people, but he's all for big government when it comes to granting the Premier more power. Is that really the impression the members opposite want to leave the public?

The extension of extraordinary powers should remain in the hands of the MPPs—MPPs from all parties, representing all voices in our society, representing all geographical locations in our society. Speaker, it is dangerous to take that power out of the hands of democratically elected representatives when that power and the exercise of that power is so extraordinary.

I will be voting against Bill 195, and I encourage my colleagues to vote against it as well.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: I'm honoured to stand today and speak against Bill 195, the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act. I'm not going to reiterate what our colleagues have said. There is certainly no flexibility in this.

What we see is a bill which, in my opinion, is an anti-worker bill, and that is much of what we've seen during the COVID pandemic, with PSWs and over 6,000 health care workers getting sick primarily because they didn't have access to PPE—but I digress. Again, this is an anti-worker bill. This particular bill has no mention of pandemic pay.

I am personally sick and tired of hearing the government congratulate themselves and congratulate and thank health care heroes, quite frankly—unionized health care heroes, by the way, as well, who are not getting their pandemic pay. They're not getting their hazard pay. They're unable to pay their rent. They're choosing between their food and medicine and child care. That, to

me, means that you're between a rock and a hard place; you're not flexible. There's no flexibility in that whatsoever.

1530

Something I really want Ontarians who are watching this to understand is that we have an emergency measures system in place, the EMCPA, which already gives the government the authority to extend emergency measures. As far as I can remember, the NDP official opposition has never had a problem supporting emergency measures to keep Ontarians safe.

So my concern is: Why create this bill which, essentially, takes away the power of any MPP in here—forget about us, as the official opposition, but even the independents—from having a say, from being able to vote on a piece of legislation that impacts my folks in St. Paul's, your folks and all of our folks across Ontario. To me, that means that this is a power-grab bill. This is a bill that says, "We already have the powers we need, but let's cook up something in a backroom that gives us more power, so that we can pass God knows what over the next year and a half or two years and say it's based on COVID-19—but not really."

For instance, I don't understand—the chief of police is a police officer, the Toronto fire chief is a firefighter, but all of a sudden, the director of education can be a CEO from a corporate organization who doesn't know anything about teaching, which is at the root of education. But again, I digress.

Nonetheless, I wanted to read into the record the words of one of my colleagues, who also has a bit of concern around Bill 195:

"I am writing to you because I am outraged by Bill 195, draconian legislation that takes away workers' rights, especially after all we have given over the last five months of this pandemic as nurses, nurse practitioners and health care professionals for Ontarians." By the way, their name is Chun. "We have risked everything to care for patients, residents and clients on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I want to know if you will stand with me, your constituent and" vote "against this legislation."

Well, Chun, I'm very, very happy to say that you are absolutely right; I will be standing right next to you and the rest of your colleagues and voting against Bill 195.

"When the state of emergency was declared in Ontario, it gave you temporary power to make orders to protect the health, safety and welfare of Ontarians. Bill 195 is now being used to hurt health care professionals as it is being used to override collective agreement rights when a pandemic emergency has been declared to be over; this is an extraordinary overreach of power.

"Nurses and health care professionals should have the same rights as workers in other sectors. Outside of a state of emergency, health care employers should not be awarded sweeping powers to cancel leaves and vacation; redeploy and reassign staff; suspend scheduling provisions and change the hours of work; and employ extra part-time, temporary staff..."

Chun goes on to express how this is impacting them individually. “My schedule can be changed. My schedule is one of the most important working conditions. It enables me to have” valuable time scheduled to spend with my family. “Without decent schedules, I will not be able to meet my” own personal and family commitments.

“My hours of work can be changed. Set hours of work support me in balancing other responsibilities, such as child care, family obligations,” going to the doctor and whatnot.

Chun also talks about vacations being potentially cancelled, leave denied, and really makes the point here to talk about how physically and mentally drained Chun is after months of providing front-line care under the precarious work conditions of COVID-19. And now, this government, the Conservative government, is saying to Chun, “Ha, ha, ha. Who cares? We’re going to stomp on your collective agreement. We’re going to stomp on your opportunity to negotiate. Just get on back to work. Keep quiet. Be seen and unheard.” I think that takes us way back, past the 1950s, all the way back to the 1920s.

“My layoff and reassignment rights can be eliminated. In hospitals, we have been redeployed to other units, areas and into long-term care....

“In the case of long-term care or retirement homes, we continue to be restricted from working for more than one employer. This has had a devastating financial impact on those of us working in long-term care. And this, too, could continue under Bill 195.”

If you ask me, that’s a cry to this government to increase the pay of the workers whom we are all calling health care heroes. They were health care heroes before COVID-19. My colleague from Niagara Falls talked about having heart surgery. Well, I stand here as a person who is immunocompromised as well and has had several surgeries. I’ve been hospitalized myself and have had PSWs. I don’t know how many specialists I have right now that I see consistently across the year. I’m telling you: These people are working hard and they are angels. This government has a chance to pay them what they deserve, and every time it’s a big no. That makes no sense. That’s not flexible. And if we’re talking about reopening this economy in a way that keeps people safe, keeps people mentally sane, for goodness’ sakes, this is not the way to do it.

“As nurses and health care professionals, we need time off to rest and recoup. As a women-dominated profession, we must also balance work and other responsibilities, including family and child care needs, every day.” That’s also on top of the fact that Chun and many other health care workers like her don’t know what they’re doing for child care come September. Heck, they don’t know what they’re doing next week, quite frankly, because, in St. Paul’s, some of our rates will go up 400% for child care; \$10,000 a month for two kids in St. Paul’s if the government doesn’t pony up and show them the money so they could actually open their daycare centres properly, healthily and within socially distanced codes.

The bottom line is, I’m really thankful to Chun, and I’m going to say thank you very much for writing that letter.

How much more time do I have, my dear whip? Do I have a few minutes? One minute. Well, all I will say at that point is, thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak. We won’t get to talk more tomorrow because I understand that question period has been pulled. I was certainly hoping to talk a bit about Bill 195 and the disgrace it’s making of our education system as well, but I’ll leave it there for now.

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

Mr. Jamie West: If I could just digress for 30 seconds, Sunday was my wedding anniversary, so I want to wish my wife a happy anniversary.

Applause.

Mr. Jamie West: It was our 23rd wedding anniversary and our 29th year since we started dating, and I just want to recognize it because I spent Sunday, our anniversary, driving to Toronto to come here to be with you guys.

Today, we’re here to talk about Bill 195, the creative writing bill, the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act. I went through this with great interest because COVID-19, as for many of us, is our number one concern. I saw nothing in this about paid sick days, which really help people be able to isolate and stay home, especially those who have to isolate for 14 days.

I saw nothing about pandemic pay for workers. I’m hearing, and I’m sure everyone in here is hearing, about security guards and people who are screening for COVID-positive patients being ignored. Lab techs, the people testing for COVID-19, are being excluded. All of these different people who really are front-line workers who are at higher risk are being ignored.

There’s nothing about rent subsidies. I’m sure, like everybody here, you’re getting phone calls from small businesses who are saying, “The government asked me to take a knee,” and that was a bold decision. “The government asked me to take a knee. I shut my business down for three months and a half months, going into four months. I have no income coming in. I need some help so I can get back on my feet, but the government doesn’t provide any help.”

The same thing is happening with landlords in Sudbury who are struggling because of tenants who can’t afford to pay their rent. A rent subsidy would go a long way to keeping these small businesses going and a long way to keep these small-business landlords going and keeping people in their homes, but nothing like that is in here.

There’s nothing in here about safe return to school. Safe return to school: I keep hearing that it’s going to come out in August. I don’t know if the government realizes that school starts in September. That’s a short amount of time, and it’s causing an incredible amount of stress to parents.

There’s nothing here about long-term care. Remember the iron ring you promised? There was an iron ring around long-term care, but it was more of a pool noodle. There’s nothing in here about that.

What we have instead is basically a power grab—and people have talked about it again and again. We have the ability to have an emergency order, and we do this every

28 days to renew it, because it's an amazing amount of power. The government has decided what they want to do now is not have to do it every 28 days: "Just trust us. Trust us. We'll do it on our own."

1540

The member opposite, the Conservative member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, during her debate—I was listening very intently—had said, "It's the Legislature that has the power to extend this, not the government," and that's comical. That might work on the street with the average person who doesn't understand that you have a majority government, because technically the Legislature time-allocated this bill. Even though we disagreed with it, technically the Legislature decided we're voting on a second and third reading today. Technically, the Legislature has decided that we're going to rise today. So don't pretend it's different than the government deciding. You have these amazing powers already as a majority, and I can't understand why it's not enough, why you want to extend farther than that.

The member from Niagara talked about how this is a bill that that's a cake-and-eat-it-too. When he said it, what I thought of is that it's not just that; it's the corner piece. It's the corner piece you get at Costco, with the balloons on it, with all the icing. It's that big of a greedy piece. It's embarrassing that you think that people can't see through this, that you think that you're smarter than the average person, that the working-class guy doesn't see what you're doing here.

Because of COVID, we're not in our normal seats, and today I'm back in the corner office. When I was first elected, I was in the very final seat, seat 124, and I'm back here today, sitting here. I'm reminded that, when people would ask me, "How do you feel about being in the last seat?"—it doesn't matter, because we all have a voice. All of us in this room have a voice, but what the government is saying is, "You don't need your voice anymore. Trust us. We'll get it right for you."

My colleague—I keep wanting to say his name; sorry—the member from Niagara talked about the quotes that came from the different unions and different organizations about the overreach, about the concern. I want to read what the carpenters' union said, because carpenters aren't known for representing long-term-care retirement homes. But I'll just read this quote. It says: "From a labour relations perspective that has troubling consequences.... In the long-term care/retirement homes, the emergency orders which are in place, and which the cabinet would be able to keep in place with virtually no scrutiny or control if this bill passes, have overridden collective agreements and have granted employers extraordinary powers.... The government's actions will enable employers to keep forcing workers to work the extended hours/days without any recourse but quitting."

I talked earlier about how we cancelled our sitting tomorrow. I had a question that was on the table today that we didn't have time for—it was going to come tomorrow—but it was important because it talks about health care workers and how health care workers accepted the

suspension of their collective agreements for the pandemic. That's why we call them heroes. Remember, you keep calling them heroes; I actually believe it, that they are heroes.

As a result of this, they were able to move them from site to site. They had their shifts changed. They refused them vacation. But now, what we need to do is allow them to have time to recharge, especially in areas like mine where the rate of COVID is so low. We've had several weeks with none. We've had a few weeks with one or two. But we don't do that. We don't put back their rights. I'm saying "we, the Legislature," but really, it's the vote of the Conservative government that's doing this.

So when you deny the health care workers' rights, it deprives workers of the leaves of absence and it deprives them of seniority and it deprives them of their workplace health and safety rights. And then you stand up and call them heroes and you applaud. They're not photo ops; they're working people.

Last week, Speaker, I was on the Bridge of Nations in Sudbury with all of these nurses. They're coming off a night shift. We have our masks on. They're mad at the government because they're sick and tired of the government calling health care workers heroes without their putting their money where their mouth is. And I agree with these workers: You can't just use them as photo ops. You can't use them as talking points. If it's good enough for that, then you've got to put your money where your mouth is and take care of these workers the way they deserve.

MPP Gates got to the quotes, but I want to talk about SEIU—because they represent so many of our PSWs—talking about it being an attack on health care workers "which would deny burnt-out staff desperately needed respite and vacation after months of excruciatingly difficult circumstances."

That's what's wrong with this. It's a broken bill. It's an overreach of power. I'm proudly voting no.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: I rise today to speak on behalf of the good people of Scarborough Southwest who are extremely concerned about the many components of Bill 195. I want to thank my constituents who have reached out to me. I had a really nice conversation with a woman named Marsha, who spoke about this. Actually, instead of the Reopening Ontario Act, she named the bill "the death of democracy." And frankly, I agree with her.

We have faced a crisis unlike ever before, and during this difficult time the official opposition has been very clear: We will support the good actions by this government, and where there are gaps, we will point out those gaps.

I want to recognize all the members in this House who have been here day after day because it was necessary to do the necessary things to provide the support that the people of Ontario needed. We needed to change legislation; we needed to be here to provide those supports. I want to thank the members for doing that.

As an opposition member, through this debate and the conversations and consultations, we can effectively have

our constituents' voices heard. That's why we're here. As an official opposition member, that's why I'm here. And this government—you have a majority. This government has a majority. They have a tremendous amount of power. So these deliberations between the opposition and the government are so essential, so that our constituents can be heard.

Engraved on the walls of this Legislative Assembly of Ontario, in this House, are many Latin words. Three of them are “Audi alteram partem,” which in English means, “Hear the other side.” That is the motto of the Ontario Legislative Assembly, carved in the chamber of the Legislative Building. Hear the other side: a fundamental pillar of upholding our democratic process in the Legislature.

This bill not only is an opportunistic power grab by the Premier during a pandemic, but also an attack on the very foundation of democracy. As soon as the government announced Bill 195, my office started receiving calls from constituents, many of whom are health care workers—those whom we're calling our heroes; those who have been working hard on the front lines of the pandemic. These health care workers are concerned about their rights in Ontario; nurses, for example. Nurses are extremely concerned and disturbed with the lack of democratic accountability included in this bill. Nurses' workloads are ever-expanding, both because of the poor staffing ratios and due to the inequity of their patients; not to mention the fact that we actually haven't helped the health care system in the past decades, so these people are already overworked.

Now we are awarding sweeping powers to the CEOs of the health care employers, essentially, so that they could take control of contracting out; they could have temporary staffing; they could change so many components of the health care system. Essentially, this legislation may even enable the government to close hospitals. Our health care workers need support right now, not punishment for the work that they have been doing in saving lives during this pandemic.

Bill 195 is an extraordinary overreach of power. I think my colleagues have done an excellent job pointing this out over and over again. So I want to reiterate: This is an extraordinary overreach of power, and this government already has so much power. So why does the Premier need even more power so that they don't have to have any accountability? Why are you undermining the very foundation, the very pillars, of democracy when it is so important to let people know what's going on, to let people know what is happening in this province? People are waiting to hear from their members. You're not only taking away the voices of the members in the opposition, but also the voices of the people in this province.

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

Mr. Jim McDonnell: On a point of order, Speaker: I just wanted to highlight that today is my grandson's birthday—he's three years old—George Marcel Brunet. I want to wish him a happy birthday.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That was not a point of order. However, I will accept it. What can I do about it now anyway, right? It's all good.

There is no time remaining with regard to debate on this bill. Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question. Ms. Jones has moved third reading of Bill 195, An Act to enact the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I believe I may have heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, the bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes. Please prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1553 to 1623.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 60; the nays are 28.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): 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 Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day?

COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, 2020

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

Mr. Clark moved third 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 Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Clark?

Hon. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to rise before the members of this House to continue debate, this time on third reading of our proposed COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act. Through this proposed legislation, we are taking decisive action to support a strong restart and recovery.

Avec ce projet de loi, nous prenons des mesures décisives pour soutenir un redémarrage et une reprise solides.

Our proposals are part of our government's made-in-Ontario plan to help boost the province's economic recovery by getting infrastructure projects built faster, creating thousands of jobs and putting more opportunities within reach of our business community. The proposed legislation also includes measures to boost local economies and help ensure that municipalities across the province are well positioned to play their critical role in our economic recovery because their success is our success.

We all know municipalities are the level of government closest to the people. They need to be able to make decisions that will keep their communities safe, functioning

and informed, even when they're facing challenging circumstances, and, Mr. Speaker, without a doubt, circumstances under the COVID-19 outbreak have been very, very challenging. Before the outbreak, a quorum of council or local board members needed to be physically present at meetings to conduct their business. This was no longer feasible for municipal council and it wasn't practical for local boards of health whose members were spread over large distances and needed to work effectively to stop the spread of COVID-19. It was especially difficult to function if a member had to self-isolate to protect the health and safety of their colleagues and their staff.

Municipal representatives called for changes to solve this problem. They needed to maintain day-to-day operations and make timely decisions to keep their communities safe. We knew we had to take action to ensure municipalities could continue to make decisions and provide the services that their residents rely on. That's why, in March, we quickly made changes to the Municipal Act and the City of Toronto Act to allow members of councils, committees and boards to choose to meet electronically and be counted for the purposes of quorum during emergencies that were declared by the Premier or by the local head of council.

Municipalities have told us overwhelmingly that they want to continue to have the flexibility to make local decisions quickly and effectively in the years ahead. The outbreak has showed us how critical this option has been over the last few months. In fact, close to 80% of municipalities met electronically during the state of emergency.

The changes we are proposing to the Municipal Act and the City of Toronto Act in the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act would allow municipalities and their local boards to continue to choose to hold meetings electronically, and not just during emergencies. Electronic participation would obviously count towards quorum and, if the legislation is passed, municipal councils would also have the flexibility to choose to allow proxy votes in certain limited circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities have expressed tremendous support for these changes. The mayor of Burlington, Marianne Meed Ward, said that our proposed changes were "great news from the province" and "important in ensuring the safety of members of council, staff and the public." The mayor of Guelph, Cam Guthrie, also expressed his appreciation for the changes that we made to help municipalities continue to function throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. These changes are not only well supported; they allow for safe and modern ways of conducting council business while ensuring there continues to be significant public participation in meetings.

The measures we are taking forward on electronic meetings and participation build on the steps that we've already taken to help our municipal partners recover from the COVID-19 outbreak. But we know that there is much, much more we need to do. We know that municipalities are facing significant financial pressures because of the outbreak. The need is urgent. That's why, early on, we joined with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and

the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in calling for federal government emergency municipal funding.

1630

Ontario's municipalities know that we are on their side, and they know we have been working to secure the federal funding needed to support their recovery. The Chair of Waterloo region, Karen Redman, thanked us for advocating for Ontario municipalities and front-line public services. And the mayor of Markham, Frank Scarpitti, expressed his appreciation to the Premier for pushing, on behalf of municipalities, to secure urgent financial assistance from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to work alongside Premier Ford, who understands the needs of Ontario municipalities. Last week, we were both very pleased to see the fruits of our labour pay off when we reached a deal with the federal government that will mean that Ontario will receive \$7 billion through the Safe Restart Framework. This money will be in part to support our municipalities, to help restart their economies, and to help put in place precautions for public spaces and essential services to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The funding will also support public transit.

I'm grateful for everything that our municipal leaders and local staff have done to see us through this outbreak. They have worked incredibly hard in unprecedented situations.

Our government will continue to be a champion for communities with the federal government, and we will work very closely with them to ensure that every Ontario community can chart a path to a strong economic recovery.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities also need our help to boost their local economies. Our government has been clear, and we've committed right from the start to doing that—to help create jobs, to help build housing and to attract business investments.

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 key projects that local communities need. The enhancement could help get key infrastructure projects like transit built faster and would be used to stimulate economic recovery across the province. The enhanced minister's zoning order would also help address Ontario's housing challenges by allowing the use of inclusionary zoning, a tool that requires builders to include affordable housing in new development projects.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes that every Ontarian deserves a place to call home. This new authority would help increase the supply of affordable housing in areas where there is rapid population growth, high demand for housing and transit.

Inclusionary zoning would also contribute to the objectives of More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan.

Our government's plan to build the right types of homes in the right places makes housing more affordable and helps taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned tax dollars.

The proposed enhancement would also provide us with the authority to address site plan matters and avoid delays

in development projects. If the legislation is passed, we could use the enhanced minister's zoning order to address matters such as access for pedestrians and vehicles, walkways, lighting and waste facilities. And if a municipality and a landowner are unable to come to an agreement, then the minister would be able to provide binding direction to resolve any issues.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stress that our commitment to protecting the greenbelt has not changed. As I have said many times before, we will not consider any requests for minister's zoning orders within the greenbelt.

Comme je l'ai déjà dit bien souvent, nous ne prendrons en considération aucune demande d'arrêté ministériel de zonage dans la ceinture verte.

After extensive consultation with municipalities, with builders and with the public, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act also proposes changes to make the upfront costs of building new housing more predictable for both municipalities and for builders. Municipalities would have the flexibility to collect funds to cover the growth-related costs of community services and parkland by using development charges and a new community benefits charge. Our proposal would make more services 100% recoverable through development charges. That includes many important local services like libraries, child care facilities, day care, playgrounds, public health facilities, affordable housing and shelters.

Local municipalities would still have the flexibility to use a new community benefits charge to collect funds for other growth-related costs in their communities. Our proposal would also allow municipalities to continue using existing tools to create land for parks, even if they do not choose to use the new community benefits charge.

The mayor of Markham, Mayor Scarpitti, appreciates that we kept the existing parkland provisions in place and said it was "a good sign that the provincial government is listening to municipalities." Mr. Speaker, we are a government that listens, and we have listened to our municipal partners and kept those provisions in place because we know that outdoor space and outdoor recreation is an important part of our communities, especially post-COVID-19.

Our proposal also includes changes to give builders greater certainty about the fees of development. Their costs would be calculated based on a percentage of the land value proposed for development. This percentage would be set out in a future regulation and will be informed by feedback from municipalities and the development sector. Our government understands that growth must pay for growth, and municipalities need to have the resources to support their growing communities.

I want to point out that our partners in the development sector understand this principle. The Ontario Home Builders' Association represents 4,000 member companies in the residential construction industry right across Ontario. This association has said that our proposed legislation "will create more accountability and predictability in the housing approval system while supporting the principle of growth pays for growth."

Our municipal partners have also been supportive of the proposed changes. Jamie McGarvey, president of AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, said, "As part of changes proposed in Bill 197, development charges will fund a broad range of vital community services, with community benefit charges an added flexible tool. AMO and its members are pleased that the Ontario government has listened well to the municipal community in developing these amendments."

Mr. Speaker, we believe that our proposed changes would help bring new housing online faster, make development costs more predictable and more transparent, and provide more housing options for Ontarians.

The COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act would allow our government to provide leadership in resolving matters related to growth and land use planning. We'll do this by establishing the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator as a permanent role. Currently, we are required to re-establish the position every three years, and the current term for the facilitator expires on September 30, 2020. The facilitator helps the province, municipalities, developers and community groups resolve issues related to growth management, land use, infrastructure planning and also environmental protection. Making this role permanent saves the province time and money and would help speed up priority projects that support Ontario's recovery and address our province's housing needs.

We're also proposing changes to the Building Code Act that would improve Ontario's ability to respond to urgent public safety or building-related issues. We want to make it quicker and easier to implement changes to the building code. We would do this by allowing the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to make most regulatory changes under the act. This would effectively bring the building code in line with how changes are made to the Ontario fire code. Of course, we would continue to consult with technical experts, the building sector and the public on any proposed changes as needed.

We also want to make it easier to harmonize Ontario's building code with the national construction code. Ontario's building code already establishes high standards for construction to protect the health and safety of the public. Our proposed changes will help ensure that buildings across our province continue to be among the safest in North America.

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Les changements que nous proposons contribueront à faire en sorte que les bâtiments de la province continuent d'être parmi les plus sûrs en Amérique du Nord.

Cross-country harmonization would reduce barriers for trade for Ontario manufacturers. It would also help to keep the cost of construction affordable, which makes it easier for businesses and for manufacturers to sell their goods right across our country. Harmonization would encourage more construction, create the jobs needed to support our recovery and get more housing built in all corners of our province. The Residential Construction Council of Ontario said that our proposed changes are "imperative to removing unnecessary red tape in the building-approvals

process and expediting the building of much-needed housing for Ontarians.” We believe these changes will help get Ontario back on track, and I’m glad that our industry partners agree.

Speaker, the COVID-19 outbreak pushed many families, many businesses and all levels of government into very uncharted territory. Collaboration with municipalities was a key response to COVID-19 in the early days—and continues to be extremely important today. We’re going to continue supporting our municipal partners as they adapt to the new environment and ensure they can emerge from the crisis able to lead our economic recovery efforts.

I have said this many times: I believe very strongly that our proposals support Ontario’s 444 municipalities by ensuring that they’re equipped with the tools they need to face our province’s most pressing challenges, to generate economic activity through local infrastructure projects that will help create quality jobs, get more affordable housing and get transit built faster and ensure that the high standard of living in every corner of our province continues. We are removing barriers as we reopen the economy and ultimately helping communities recover and come back stronger than ever before.

Nous éliminons des obstacles à mesure que nous rouvrons l’économie et, en fin de compte, nous aidons les collectivités à se rétablir et à devenir plus fortes qu’elles ne l’ont jamais été.

Thank you, Speaker. I’m pleased to kick off Bill 197, and I look forward to comments from the other members of the House.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: As always, it’s an honour to rise on behalf of my constituents of Parkdale–High Park, and today I’m speaking in opposition to Bill 197. This bill, which the Ford government claims addresses COVID-19 recovery, does nothing at all to help the people of Ontario. It does not fix the broken long-term-care system. It does not help struggling small businesses or support families, schools and child care. It also does not help First Nations communities or help municipalities recover from the pandemic. This bill also does nothing to support tenants through the pandemic and recovery.

The government is ramming through Bill 197, just as they did with Bill 195 and Bill 184—and by the way, Bill 184 was an already problematic bill before COVID-19 and it’s completely inappropriate and harmful to our current context. It’s a bill full of changes that benefit corporate landlords at the expense of tenants. Let’s call it what it is: It’s a gift for corporate landlords.

Now, as we debate Bill 197, where is the relief for tenants? Right now, the average one-bedroom apartment in Toronto is about \$2,300, and the minimum wage is \$14 an hour. A minimum wage worker can work full-time and still not earn enough to be able to pay rent. In Toronto, we have over 100,000 households on waiting lists for affordable housing, waiting an average of 10 years—and these are figures from before the pandemic. It’s about to get much worse.

What the Ford government is failing to address is that the situation for many tenants was already in dire straits before the pandemic. The Ford government has not only failed to support tenants through the pandemic, they have considerably harmed tenants. This is a government that is not listening to the people. It is essential that the voices of tenants are heard when the government plans the recovery from the pandemic.

I’m very grateful for the activism and ideas put forward by many tenants and housing advocacy groups. In my riding, we have many tenants and we have a long history of tenant organizing. We’ve seen marches and rallies by working-class tenants from areas across the GTA, including Parkdale, Scarborough, East York, Jane and Finch, Etobicoke and Malton. These groups have demanded that the government permanently ban forced evictions during the COVID-19 crisis. They have demanded that there not be any COVID-19-related evictions. We have seen similar rent strikes across the province so that tenants have money for basic necessities such as food and medicine. The COVID-19 crisis has led to financial hardship for so many tenants, and many landlords have already threatened to evict those who will not be able to pay full rent as soon as the eviction moratorium is lifted.

Parkdale Organize is a group of working-class people who organize against exploitation and poor conditions from landlords, employers and the government. They have been very vocal in their opposition to the government’s “mass eviction” bill, saying that it is nothing short of an attack on the health and safety of thousands of tenants and families across Ontario.

As the official opposition critic for mental health and addictions, I’d also like to talk about the effects of the lack of supports on the mental health of tenants. The government’s actions will lead to an increase in anxiety and other mental health concerns. Not knowing whether you will be able to keep a roof over your head and whether your children will have a place to live is incredibly stressful under normal circumstances, but especially during a pandemic. Housing is a core determinant of health and well-being.

The reality is that we are going to see so many families hurt by COVID-19 become homeless as soon as the eviction moratorium is lifted.

An important part of recovery is taking action and stopping all pandemic-related evictions. The government could have done that with this bill. The government could have banned all COVID-19-related evictions, just as the NDP proposed at committee, but it was voted down—Bill 184.

Despite the Premier’s claims to be for the people, legislation after legislation shows that he’s for the rich people, for the corporate landlords, for the developers.

I want to take a moment to talk about the environmental impacts of this bill. This bill proposes a wide range of changes that threaten the health of our environment. It represents a continuation of the government’s support for wealthy developers by attacking environmental protections in Ontario. Many schedules in this bill, including the

proposed changes to the Environmental Assessment Act, the Drainage Act and the Planning Act, are all designed to fast-track development by weakening environmental protections and preventing public participation.

The Canadian Environmental Law Association strongly opposes Bill 197 and has said the Environmental Assessment Act changes are “regressive and unacceptable.” These changes will result in fewer development projects undergoing an environmental assessment process.

Speaker, we need to make environmental protections stronger, not weaker. We need to prevent biodiversity loss, mitigate the effects of climate crisis and ensure input from local communities, from the public. These should be the key pillars of the process to assess whether proposed development projects should go ahead, but Bill 197 is moving in the opposite direction.

Ontarians deserve a just and equitable recovery that works for all of us—no more backroom deals that prop up corporate interests. That’s what I’m fighting for. That’s what’s lacking in this bill. And that’s why I will not be supporting Bill 197.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? The member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Speaker. I love the zest with which you say that. However, I don’t have that same kind of zest for Bill 197. “An act that has absolutely nothing to do with economic recovery” is what it should be titled.

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I want to be fair, not to say that there aren’t some things in the bill that are important, are necessary and need to be done, but you’ve surrounded them with a whole bunch of stuff that’s not related to COVID, not related to economic recovery. The kinds of things that you’re doing in environmental law are like—we don’t need to do that right now. Why are we doing that? Expropriations, how we appoint justices of the peace: What does that have to do with COVID or economic recovery?

I guess the thing that really sticks in my craw—and before I get there, I want to say that ending suspensions for children in primary is a good thing. But the other thing that you did in education was, you think it’s important right now that directors of education don’t need to have teaching experience. That’s a priority in the government’s mind in terms of what needs to be happening in education? What needs to be in the government’s mind is our return to school five days a week in classrooms that are smaller and safer. That’s the thing we should be debating. That’s the thing that government should be investing in.

You could get a director of education. I’m sure the minister has the authority to override that.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: You do, so why would you need to put that in a law right now? Why would you just not exercise that authority? This is how I’d like you to exercise your authority: I’d like you to say to school boards, “We’re going to give you more money so you can make sure classes are smaller and safer so you can hire more educators, so you can create more spaces, so that you can do

some outdoor education,” just like they did in this province 110 years ago. That’s what the priority should be.

Thank you, Speaker. I will not be supporting Bill 197.

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I’m proud to rise in the House today, and I want to thank the members opposite for their commentary. I didn’t intend to speak about the director of education, but you’ve really excited me, the interim leader of the Liberal Party. I will provide context on the matter just because it has come up as a lack of priority. Let me just address why it is a priority, respectfully, at a time when I know we are all seized with the health and safety of students and the return to class in a conventional model.

Speaker, we have about 20 directors of about 72 in the province of Ontario that indicated either publicly or privately to the ministry that they will retire. We have an opportunity for generational change within the ministry, within our school boards and, of course, within our schools.

Currently, roughly 4% of directors of education are a visible minority in the province. So we have an opportunity to effect change with a significant amount of individuals, baby boomers, etc., exiting the workforce, and we have an opportunity to diversify, not just their background professionally, but of course the ethnocultural background of these leaders who better reflect their communities. I would argue it’s not an either/or proposition. I think we could actually do both. We could prioritize equity while concurrently coming up with a health and safety plan for students. It’s the same principle why we seek to diversify the competence and the background of our educators, that they better reflect our school community.

In the Peel report, one that has been well-discussed in this House, it demonstrated in over 50% of schools with visible minority communities, racialized children within those communities, disproportionately low numbers, often less than 25% of the educator workforce, would be from those communities. The research overwhelmingly, I would submit, is not particularly a political discussion. The OISE research and others have suggested that when students see themselves reflected in their leaders, they perform better. The accountability that comes with that and the improvement of students is something I think should be a priority for all of us

In the context of directors of education, the member opposite said, “Well, you have the regulatory authority.” He is right. Indeed, the member is right. The minister of the day can permit boards to appoint non-educators. But it actually makes my case that there are boards in the province over successive years, over successive governments, appealing to the minister and petitioning them to permit an override. Why not provide that latitude to a board of trustees?

In the case of Toronto, Carlene Jackson: A unanimity of trustees in Toronto called on me privately through a letter some weeks ago to permit this individual—who happens to have a CPA, who happens to have 20-plus years of public sector leadership and management and

who also happens to be the first Black female director within the province of Ontario. I'm proud of that. But if the example cited is that they've appealed to me to use the exceptionality, why not permit boards of education that latitude?

Likewise in a hospital: We've moved away, over decades, of having doctors run them. So we can have that latitude for trustees. And the fact that ministers over political parties, over many years have had to make that exception I think makes the point, in fact.

But, Speaker, when we look back over the past year, it has been obviously a busy time in the ministry, and we seek to make reforms in the system. We seek to drive accountability, student improvement and, ultimately, give opportunity to young people who have felt, for many years, ignored by government. When we look back at what we started, in the context of our curriculum reforms, we started with the health and physical education curriculum. It was that curriculum, for example—and I'll bring it back to the bill, I promise, Speaker—where we became a leader in the nation in the context of concussions, in the context of mental health that was not in the former iteration, in the context of vaping and cannabis and cyberbullying and trafficking and healthy eating and body image and healthy relationships.

In the context of the grade 10 career course, I was proud to have launched that last year with the parliamentary assistant. Indeed, we embedded financial literacy for the first time. For the first time, we included curriculum requirements on AI—the first time it's mentioned in the curriculum—in STEM education and likewise in the jobs of the future, particularly through the lens of innovation. And as a condition of graduation from high school in the province under this government today, a student has to complete a budget for their first year after high school. It's this type of learning that's going to help these students succeed.

In the context of the math curriculum, we just launched that. That is important because part of the curriculum—which in isolation is, I think, a very important modernization to make sure that elementary students actually have a competitive advantage as they go through secondary and beyond in learning. But in the context of that, we made a decision to destream, which is subject to the legislation and is part of our reform, our plan to ensure equal opportunity and really optimize the full potential of young people and remove the barriers that are systemic that literally do impede progress in our system.

Irrespective of who created that problem or who permitted it to continue, it's actually immaterial. We have an opportunity today to accept a premise that the data points surrounding suspensions and likewise streaming are disproportionately affecting racialized students in Ontario. Those just are the facts. The stories you hear from those communities I think underscore the necessity to act. But the data in Toronto where it's public, and likewise in Peel, underscores an urgency of action, and it's why we brought that forward.

But back to the math curriculum, what we have done is included for the first time—we are leading in the nation in

the context of coding, in the context of financial literacy and those types of core competencies that I think young people really need going back to basics and memorization and just understanding these concepts, as well as a program to support our teachers in that development.

So when you look at the equity plan, it's a pretty significant, pretty serious, step forward. I would argue that it is not meant to be an event or a one-hit wonder, if you will, Speaker. This really has to be a journey of continuous improvement. This is the first step in that process. I think there is more to do, and there's more that I'm looking at doing in this respect.

But on the areas of suspensions, the disproportionality affecting racialized students I think is really disheartening and alarming. We're talking about—in the context of what the government has proposed to reform—kindergarten kids, grade 1, 2, up to 3. We're talking about really young kids. So when you see the data, twice the rate, three times the rate in some communities, of racialized students being suspended, the question fundamentally is: Why? Of course we seek to remedy this through reform by changing the discretionary elements that account for a significant amount of suspensions in the province. It disproportionately affects special education children—50% of all suspensions affect those kids—but it is of course noted in the context of racialized students that it also really impinges their ability to succeed, and we think that's a problem, and that's the motivation to act.

In the context of streaming, likewise, roughly 25% of students in Ontario are streamed into applied, and yet in Toronto it is three times the rate for racialized kids, for Black kids specifically, who are streamed into applied. In Peel, in our most recent review, it's twice that rate. There is a problem, and I think we agree that we need to act decisively to change it.

Also, there's a problem in the Ontario College of Teachers—I mean that, Speaker, respectfully—in the lack of enforcement and accountability for when racism does manifest within our classrooms. I know educators. I really do believe that for them it's a vocational career path. They're doing it for all the right reasons. There's a real sense of altruism in their heart to educate.

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But there are circumstances, if you speak to families in the various communities, where they hear this type of language that victimizes and often haunts their children. In fact, these kids—if you speak to adults today who are 40, 50 or 60 and it's embedded in their minds. They will not forget those comments, that language, that has had life-changing impacts on them. So we need to ensure accountability, respectfully.

The past 15 years, if I recall, the number was about 33 examples where the Ontario College of Teachers actually disciplined a teacher. I would submit that there may be more than 1.5 examples within a year of these types of inappropriate language manifesting, notwithstanding that the overwhelming amount are abiding by best practices and the high moral standard we expect from public servants, particularly when they're dealing with kids. But

there is a problem and we seek to remedy it through the OCT by ensuring greater penalty, greater accountability, for those circumstances when they arise.

We're also ensuring data collection. It came up—the members opposite have spoken to the importance of data collection. In fact, by 2023, boards will have to have race-based data completed as an annualized practice. We're asking them to expedite that. That's important, too, to understand the problem, Speaker. We have to benchmark improvement—or regression, I suppose. The aim is to do better. That's why data is important to understand that.

In the area of training, we do not have an annualized training program or a training regime for trustees in the province. In fact, trustees do not have any form of real province-wide anti-racism, human rights training. Through the support of the trustees association—all of them—we were able to work with them collaboratively, some weeks ago, to get their concurrence to get a mandatory training program for all elected trustees in the province on an annualized basis going forward. That is an incremental step forward that's important. Likewise, for senior staff within our school boards—it's not just for the elected trustees but also senior staff. And that applies a different lens to our educators.

I do believe that there's an opportunity for them to work with the ministry and, of course, work with our federation partners and everyone in our school boards to ensure that, indeed, educators are better trained in this context, because I think they want to be part of the solution. We have a role to play to provide them with that support.

In the area of financing and supporting these kids, in the Grants for Student Needs, when it comes to things like—

Mr. Jamie West: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order. I recognize the member from Sudbury.

Mr. Jamie West: We seem to be drifting away from the bill. If I could ask the member to come back to the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I appreciate that. I have been listening closely. What he is referring to and talking about is, in fact, covered in one of the schedules in the bill regarding education.

I will allow the Minister of Education to continue, please. Back to the member.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you.

Indeed, Speaker, while the funding elements wouldn't be provisioned in the legislation, the statutory changes—I just want members to know that we often get cited as a concern that there needs to be a funding element that complements the legislative change. I am submitting to the members that that's relevant for discussion today because \$40 million has been dedicated to achieve that in that context, particularly when it comes to suspensions within the Grants for Student Needs to support those kids. That is very much at the heart of our legislative reforms today.

There was also a million dollars announced within the new mental health dollars for September: \$10 million is net new, \$1 million of which will be dedicated for racialized students. So we really think that is important.

In the area of first—

Ms. Doly Begum: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order. I recognize the member.

Ms. Doly Begum: Respectfully, Mr. Speaker, the bill doesn't have any portion about the funding component of education. Since the minister is speaking about funding, I just wanted to clarify: Which section is the minister referring to?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I appreciate that. I've been listening, again, closely and I have already made a ruling with regard to what the minister is referring to.

So I will refer back to the minister to continue with your debate, sir.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you.

In the context of our First Nation, Métis and Indigenous students in the province, we have—one of our priorities is the reciprocal education approach. What we have understood, Speaker, for students on-reserve and off-reserve is, by design, systemically, there were literally barriers and red tape that really inhibited the ability of a student off-reserve to access education on-reserve, should they choose, or likewise if a student on-reserve wanted to seek education off-reserve—massive roadblocks and red tape and, really, just a headache, which ultimately created a disincentive for some of these students to continue through education. We saw graduation rates decline as a consequence.

Listening to First Nation leaders, as the legislation notes, we've introduced changes to the reciprocal education approach, which I proudly announced with the Minister of Indigenous Affairs at the Nipissing First Nation some months ago and had their strong support to ensure that we have more interoperability and movement for these students on-reserve and off-reserve. That's why, in the legislation—this is a cornerstone element of it, because when equity is dealing with, of course, including Indigenous students, we want them to know that we see and hear them and ultimately want them to succeed in Ontario.

Speaker, within the legislation, we have also taken action to ensure that online learning courses are provided using the excellence of TVO and TFO. Both agencies have, for a generation, been inspiring young minds in our province in both official languages, respecting denominational rights of Catholics and, likewise, French-language minorities. By choosing those organizations, what we have signalled is not just our support for agencies that happen to have proficiency in pedagogy and education, but we've also chosen reliable partners, with school boards and unions that have been doing this for so long, that employ Ontario-certified teachers to lead the way forward.

What we've also indicated, given that TFO has a massive digital footprint—TFO is quite a leader in the digital learning space. I attended, with the parliamentary assistant, the member from Thornhill, the Minister of Francophone Affairs and others, at TFO headquarters some months ago, an announcement of TFO reaching one million views on their social media platforms. It's pretty

significant and pretty noteworthy for a made-in-Ontario platform to have that kind of global reach.

Of course, TVO's ILC, their learning centre, has done incredible work, reaching almost 20,000 students every year learning online—incredible quality, with a reputation that is known, for young students, for many years in the province of Ontario.

These types of reforms will really make a difference.

When we made that change, we did it because we also recognized—part of our broader transformation in education is to make sure that we provide more optionality for young people. It is offensive when I hear those who criticize the concept of providing online options—not mandates—to students. Speaker, where you proudly hail from and represent versus a member opposite in the downtown core—to be fair, just in economies of scale, you're likely not going to have nearly as many course selections in your high schools as they would in theirs, because they have more students, more population and more diversity of course offerings in those communities. What I seek to do is to universalize that access. I appreciate that it's not the same as in-class learning, but let the student decide—not, respectfully, a politician or a union president. It's not really a decision point we should make.

We should arm young people with more options for specialized STEM-area courses, which is what we've done. TVO and TFO will be delivering those. We have a plan for the procurement of an additional 10 online courses to complement the 90 that already exist in this province—made-in-Ontario quality education: five more in English and five more in French for September, and an additional five more in English and five more in French for January—to continuously have more content for all students, urban and rural. To be fair, many students in urban centres take them as well—and in suburban communities in my own riding. But especially in more remote parts of the province, that could be important. And obviously, the new investments in technology and broadband expansion will no doubt go a long way.

I think we have demonstrated through this reform that we seek to deliver three things: One is excellence and quality in education. The second is universalizing equity and giving equal opportunity to every young person, irrespective of their difference—irrespective of their faith or their skin colour or their sexual orientation or their place of birth or their income. Every single student in this province, in this country, deserves to have a good education, led by a teacher. That's really the aim of our reform.

So we're very proud of what we've done. We know that there's more to do. We appreciate the feedback we're hearing from parents across the province, who want us to stand strong in the defence of quality and want us to be fairly resolute in our commitment to ensuring greater accountability and greater quality in a meritocracy—which should not be offensive in public education. When it comes to directors and teachers, I want the best person to lead the way forward. That's what we believe, as Conservatives. It's what we're going to fight for every day in this negotiation.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I've now been a member of this Legislature for two years, and I'll say that one of the most frustrating things in this Legislature is that we don't often debate the real agenda of this government.

So when they talk about being open for business, what they really meant was that they're going to privatize public services and they're going to sell off public assets, and we've seen that over the last two years.

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One of the schedules, schedule 5 of this Bill 197 that we're debating today, is about privatizing our public and Catholic school systems. That's what it's about, and that's what we should be debating.

The Minister of Education was just talking about this as an equity initiative. It's not an equity initiative. If they wanted to improve equity—and I would fully agree with that. I would fully agree with having teachers in front of students who represent those students so that students can see themselves reflected in the teachers who teach them. But if the government really wanted to improve equity and equitable outcomes in our schools, the first thing they would do is reverse the \$700-million funding shortfall from last year's schools. That \$700 million added up to \$70 million for the Toronto District School Board, and one of the cuts they had to make was that they actually implemented tuition fees for their international baccalaureate program at the TDSB. It's \$1,500 a year; \$3,000 over two years. That makes the system incredibly inequitable, and it undermines the value and the purpose of universal public education that's free to the students. That's what this government has done. You're not making the system more equitable; you're making it less equitable; This is the record of the Conservative government.

There was a time when the Conservatives, under John Robarts and Bill Davis, actually built public education in this province. But for the last 30 years Ontario Conservative governments' goal has been to privatize public education because they want to open up the \$30 billion a year that we spend on education to for-profit corporations. That's what the goal is; we've seen it. That's why I'm here.

Twenty years ago, Mike Harris was making all kinds of cuts to schools. As a parent, I joined a parent organization and got involved in fighting those cuts. Twenty years later I'm still fighting Conservative cuts to education, although I did have to fight against Liberal cuts to education, and I was actually there—

Mr. Michael Coteau: Leave us out of this, Chris. Leave us out of this one.

Interjections.

Mr. Chris Glover: I was actually there—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order.

Mr. Chris Glover: —at the school board as a fellow trustee fighting against Liberal cuts to education.

We were fighting against cuts, and at first I just thought, "Why was that Mike Harris government cutting so much from education?" Then I started to look at what was

happening in England with the privatization of the system there, and within the United States with the charter schools and the voucher systems. They were opening it up to private, for-profit industry.

That's what the goal of this government is: to privatize our public and Catholic school systems. Ninety-five per cent of the children in this province go to publicly funded schools. That's two million children, and yet the Conservatives have consistently chosen Ministers of Education with no educational background. Why? Because you don't need an educational background if your goal is not to improve the system but to privatize it.

When the last Conservative government was in, the Minister of Education was actually caught on camera stating that his goal was to create a crisis in the public school system in order to open it up for change, and that change was privatization. The government's own investigation of public school funding, of education funding in Ontario, found that that Conservative government had underfunded our public and Catholic schools by \$1.2 billion while, at the same time, introducing a private school tax credit that would have cost taxpayers \$700 million.

So they were taking money out of the public systems and putting it into private schools. And with this bill, schedule 5, this government is taking on the power to have directors of education who are not teachers, without an education background, just like the minister, and also to assign additional duties to directors and to teachers without specifying what those duties will be. And based on that background, based on the history of the recent Conservative government and education, it looks like the goal is actually to privatize, and I think that's what we're going to be talking about for the next two years in this Legislature.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Merci, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to speak to Bill 197 and voice several concerns that I have with the bill. I am completely in agreement that Ontarians across the province, including many in our business communities, have been very hard hit economically during this pandemic. Last week, we moved into stage 3 of the recovery in my riding, and I've had the opportunity to visit many businesses and hear from many business owners that are opening their doors for the first time in months. The challenges are still very real, however.

It is important that we as legislators take steps to give residents and businesses a helping hand in recovering from the ongoing pandemic. I, therefore, have no problem with the stated purpose of a bill which seeks to encourage economic recovery across the province. However, I'm confused about why there are sections of this bill which have no obvious relationship with economic recovery.

For example, if passed, schedule 8 of Bill 197 will make substantial changes to the process by which we appoint justices of the peace. It will make all meeting notes and documents relating to the appointment process confidential, change the composition of the appointment committee

to provide less regional representation, and allow the Attorney General to reject the recommended short list of candidates.

A transparent and accountable justice system must be perceived by all Ontarians to be impartial and above politics. When we make the selection process of senior judicial officials less transparent and increase ministerial discretion in their selection, we undermine this perception of impartiality. We must be very careful when we make such changes. We can't simply bury them in an economic recovery bill where they won't be adequately scrutinized.

In addition, I'm also very concerned about the proposed changes in schedule 6, which are leaving many of the most important details about how the bill will change environmental assessments to be decided in regulations after the bill has already passed. While the ministry is seeking to make some common-sense reforms to the existing legislation, it is also seeking to replace class environmental assessments and categories of projects which will require environmental assessment with regulations that we have no details on.

We have been provided with no information on what the requirements of a new, streamlined environment assessment will be, and we don't know what projects will even need assessments moving forward. It is impossible to offer a comprehensive opinion on this schedule when it leaves many of its most important and potentially controversial elements to be decided in regulations after the bill has passed.

The ministry has mentioned that it will begin conducting consultations surrounding these regulations after the bill has passed, but this is putting the cart before the horse. These consultations are supposed to be conducted prior to the third reading vote so that we know exactly what we are voting on.

I would ask that the ministry provide immediate clarification about what the requirements of a streamlined environment assessment will be, and provide insight into the sorts of undertaking it expects will require assessment if this bill is passed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Before I continue with debate, I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 101(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Ms. Mitras assumes ballot item number 11 and Mr. Anand assumes ballot item number 32.

Further debate?

Ms. Lindsey Park: I am pleased to rise and join this debate today on Bill 197, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, and to join our Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and our Minister of Education in offering some remarks on this bill. I'll focus my remarks on the proposed changes to the Provincial Offences Act. For those who have a bill in front of them or those watching at home who maybe are following this closely, it's specifically schedule 18 of the bill that I'll be providing comment on.

When the pandemic began, our Attorney General and the Ministry of the Attorney General got to work right

away with justice partners, including the bar, the judiciary and many community justice organizations, to quickly make changes to keep people safe while enabling the most urgent and most important matters to continue with as little disruption as possible. For example, urgent family law matters and bail hearings in criminal cases: All of those we've made sure have continued on through this pandemic.

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As the Attorney General set out on this journey with justice-sector partners—many of whom, I might add, have families of their own who were adapting their personal and professional lives to the reality of COVID-19. As they set out on a journey together to keep the justice system moving however possible, they identified opportunities to modernize the system and improve the administration of justice in the province. Many of these changes are changes that would not only help Ontario's justice system respond to COVID-19 but also be more efficient and responsive post-COVID.

By everyone coming to the table in an unprecedented way to find solutions, as our Attorney General has said, in the early days of the pandemic alone, “we modernized the system 25 years in 25 days, and we're still going.” We moved quickly to allow for virtual or remote proceedings, which limited the need to transport accused persons to courthouses for bail hearings. I must say, I'm so proud of the success of the Ministry of the Attorney General in this endeavour. The ministry's original goal was to take 80% of bail hearings and hear them virtually, and we quickly had 100% of bail hearings being heard remotely in this province during the pandemic.

Our government made a \$1.3-million investment in technology to help courts and tribunals continue the transition to remote operations and to limit in-person appearances and transportation requirements. However, as we move now to some in-person court proceedings resuming again and as Ontario charts a path to recovery, the health and well-being of everyone who enters a courtroom in this province is a top priority.

In this legislation, our government is making key changes to the Provincial Offences Act to allow matters under the act to be heard virtually, because that's not currently allowed. This will allow municipalities to make arrangements as they see fit and appropriate in their community to move to virtual hearings. This is a way, if they're able, that they can return to operations while keeping members of their community safe by supporting social distancing. This is also in alignment with our government's broader objectives to continue to work with partners to build a justice system for the 21st century that is more responsive to Ontarians.

Speaker, I'll give some background on what I mean when I talk about the Provincial Offences Act and the cases that are heard under it. The courts that hear the Provincial Offences Act cases are actually the busiest courts in Ontario's justice system. Not including parking tickets, nearly 1.5 million Provincial Offences Act charges were laid in 2019 under provincial statutes, regulations

and municipal bylaws. I'll outline some examples because I think it will help us all wrap our heads around what we're talking about here today and why this is so important. Examples of such cases are:

—we all know of Highway Traffic Act charges such as speeding tickets or traffic violations;

—municipal bylaw charges relating to excessive noise, animal control or even garbage disposal; and

—charges laid under provincial legislation, so many of which we debate here every day, such as the Environmental Protection Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Dog Owners' Liability Act and the Trespass to Property Act. These are all pieces of legislation we've debated changes to in the last two years here in the Legislature.

Municipalities are the ones that administer these courts. I think that's an important detail here in why we, as the Legislature, who really create municipalities and allow them to do things or not do things, have to give them permission to operate remotely. If we don't give them that permission, they will not be able to adapt in that way. Municipalities are the ones that administer these courts where most provincial offences cases are tried, and they also prosecute most of these cases. This is the court that most people are likely to interact with if they do have some sort of matter before the court system in their lifetime. In Ontario, the Provincial Offences Act is the procedural code for prosecuting certain types of offences created by these provincial statutes, regulations and municipal bylaws. For example, we may debate changes to the Trespass to Property Act here and set out what the actual law is and what the charges would be, but the actual procedure for then how that's prosecuted is set out under the Provincial Offences Act. That's specifically what we're talking about today: the procedure by which these offences are prosecuted.

So what is Bill 197 changing specifically? The Provincial Offences Act requires certain procedural steps to be done in person, such as requesting a trial date for ticketable offences in some courts. As I stated earlier, since the COVID-19 outbreak began it has been a collective effort to keep Ontarians safe and maintain the administration of justice during this time. In an unprecedented time, the Attorney General, the ministry and our justice partners have made unprecedented progress in establishing new and innovative ways of delivering justice remotely and online, and the aspect we are debating today is one of the many changes we've made during this time.

Provincial offences courts administered by municipalities should be no exception to these goals of moving justice to be more remote and online. These legislative amendments would remove barriers that currently courts hearing Provincial Offences Act cases have that prevent them from offering remote appearances. By allowing them to hear matters virtually, we are giving these courts additional tools to return to operations and address the significant backlog of cases we know they'll have while supporting social distancing.

Some of the statutory amendments included—I'll go through some of the specific items here and I'll try not to

bore everyone, but they can all be found specifically in schedule 18 if you have it in front of you. One of the changes is removing requirements for defendants to attend court in person to meet with a prosecutor. People will come in person to meet with a prosecutor to try to reach an early resolution or plea agreement, or to request a trial to fight a ticket.

Through this bill, we're also allowing any participant, including a judge or justice of the peace, who are often hearing these cases, to attend any proceeding remotely by audio or video, unless of course a judicial official orders otherwise. It's important to keep that power.

Allowing the judiciary to order in-person attendance where defendants or other participants have difficulty participating remotely: It's important that that's maintained, that there is still the ability for judges to order in-person appearances, particularly where the interest of justice or a fair trial require it.

We're also permitting officers to seek search warrants remotely in all cases.

Another change is allowing defendants to provide credible and trustworthy information upon applying for a reopening without the need to attend court to have that affidavit commissioned.

Speaker, these are good changes, but we didn't come up with them on our own. Our government consulted with a broad range of stakeholders, who have been supportive of our objectives to establish new and innovative ways of delivering justice remotely and online while also increasing efficiencies in the longer term. In addition to the Ontario Court of Justice and municipal court administrators, the Ministry of the Attorney General consulted with the Law Society of Ontario, the enforcement community, prosecutor and defence associations, and municipalities, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the city of Toronto specifically, and groups of municipal chief administrative officers. These stakeholders were selected for consultation as they have direct and regular interactions with the Provincial Offences Act system and would be able to provide meaningful input on potential legislative amendments.

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Our justice partners have joined our Attorney General, calling for the justice system to continue to press forward boldly towards a more modern and responsive system that continues to evolve long after the pandemic is over.

Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks by saying that I hope that all parties in this Legislature will support this bill and will support the modernization of our justice system. You never know when it will be your friend or your family member who will be depending on it.

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

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I'm going to focus my remarks very quickly on comments from the Minister of Education. It's interesting; I was listening to his debate and I kept hearing my dad, who is in his eighties, who used to always say to me, "Hurry brings worry and worry wears you out." I'd like everybody to think about that as I tell you a story.

I have been at Queen's Park this entire week, and what people don't know is that I've been trying to fix a problem that's a consequence of us pushing through legislation without actually thinking about what needs to be in place to make sure that everything rolls out as it's supposed to. My eldest daughter is in grade 9. She took one of the TVO ILC courses, a grade 9 English class. She was very excited. I think it was just a couple of days ago that she sent me a message while I was in the chamber, and she said, "Mummy, I got 88% on this course," and I was very, very excited for her. But I also had just received her report card, and her report card from the Waterloo Region District School Board did not record her grade 9 English class. So I was busy in the chamber doing what I needed to do and also reaching out to the principal and the vice-principals and the support system around my daughter, trying to find out why this class wasn't actually recorded on her transcript. I got told by the Waterloo Region District School Board that they would actually need proof that she had finished the course. Granted, the class was set up through her grade 8 school, but it's still part of the board and it was an online course that's being offered. As we heard from the Minister of Education, the TVO ILC courses are the ones that are supposed to provide equity and more choice options—all of the good stuff that we know that children need.

I reached back out to my daughter. I said, "Send me proof that you have gotten the course done." She took a screenshot of the portal that showed that she had completed the course. She forwarded me an e-mail that said, "Congratulations; you've completed all the requirements. You have passed grade 9 English with 88%." I sent all of that over to the support team at her high school and received a message back saying that if the TVO ILC course does not provide her with a report card, they can't in fact include that course in the courses that she has achieved because, without the report card, they're worried that if they get audited—which they may—they won't have what's needed on record.

So listen when my daddy says, "Hurry brings worry and worry wears you out." It should not be the student who is advocating for equity. It should not be the students that we celebrate in this chamber and say, "Thank you so much for fighting for equity." It should be the grown-ups who are the ministers in this chamber who ensure that every process allows this online portal to work. Where did that thinking go wrong? Why would we offer online courses to students and then not make sure that those online providers give the boards what they need so that those courses count? At this point, now my daughter, who just earlier this week was celebrating that she had received 88% on her English class, is now worried that she'll have to redo grade 9 English.

That's a moment where my dad and his wisdom is reminding us: Do not push through legislation without thinking about the consequences of what you're doing. Do not push through legislation, claim that you are providing equity to students and more options to students, and not make sure that the processes are in place and that the

providers that you have gotten to do the work are giving the school boards exactly what they need so that that work counts. It is not up to students in Ontario to fight for equity and access to everything that they're supposed to have; it is up to the Minister of Education to ensure that nothing goes into the legislation that has not been thought out properly. If this is happening to my daughter, who is in grade 9, with a mom who has a master's in education and a PhD in education and understands the system—and I'm still trying to fight to find a way to get this credit recognized, this big opportunity for students across the province—what happens to the people who don't understand how the system works, who do rely on the Minister of Education to do the right thing, to make sure all of the t's are crossed and the i's are dotted so that the system works without a hitch? I'm very concerned, as we walk into a second wave and more courses are going online, that all of these different providers that are being offered as options and opportunity for students will not count towards their actual degrees and towards their actual report cards. And then what's going to happen? We'll never know because all of the decisions are going to be made behind closed doors because we're not coming back until September.

With that, I'm asking from a place of gratitude that everybody on the government side listen to my dad. He is 80 and filled with the wisdom that we should be listening to. "Hurry brings worry and worry wears you out."

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise to continue the debate on Bill 197 by focusing my comments on changes to the Environmental Assessment Act in schedule 6.

Bill 197 is the government's so-called economic recovery plan. It says so much about this government that they equate a strong economy with weaker environmental protections, especially at a time when there's a growing global consensus that now is the time for a green economic recovery from COVID-19. We're in this once-in-a-generation opportunity, when billions of dollars are going to be invested in supporting job creation and infrastructure and stimulating the economy. If you listen to the experts and the economists, they are saying that we need to align our COVID-19 recovery with climate action. This is a chance to build back better—to flatten the curve on climate pollution like we're working so hard to flatten the curve on COVID-19.

New Zealand is planning to create 11,000 nature-based jobs by investing in protected areas. Europe is setting aside a quarter of their \$850-billion COVID-19 recovery fund to address climate action. South Korea is adopting a carbon tax and a bold green new deal. Mainstream institutions like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the International Energy Agency are all urging governments to use the opportunity to recover from COVID-19 to invest in climate action. But the Ford government is choosing to ignore this growing global consensus, choosing to ignore the sectors where the greatest job growth is happening, choosing to ignore the sectors where global capital is investing. Instead, the government's plan is to build faster,

not better, by paving over the places we love in this province, by reducing environmental oversight.

Whenever the government is questioned about changes to the EAA, the members opposite say it's all about modernization. Usually, when you modernize something, you work to improve it, you want to make it better, you want it to actually deliver on its intended purposes—and in the case of the EAA, that is to understand and minimize the negative health and environmental impacts from development projects before you cause permanent damage. It's like calling before you dig or looking before you leap. So the government's modernization argument is a Trojan Horse. The changes to the Environmental Assessment Act are about allowing financial interests to trump environmental and public health protections, full stop.

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Speaker, I know the government will say that they're going to consult on the project list for the EAA, that EAs will continue to take place and they're not going to abuse their powers. They kind of say, "Trust us." Well, I trust science and evidence. I wouldn't even want a Green Party environment minister to have the kinds of discretionary powers that the government is proposing for how they choose and pick which projects are subject to an EA and which are not.

There is no way I would ever vote for a bill that gives this government's cabinet that kind of discretionary power—not when the minister was caught by the courts fudging the science on the cancellation of the Nation Rise wind project; not when they made changes to the Endangered Species Act in Bill 108 that allow developers to do harm to at-risk wildlife if they put money into a pay-to-slay fund; not when they took away municipalities' ability to do restrictions on below-the-water-table aggregate extraction; and not when they cut funding for flood prevention in the middle of flood season.

Speaker, I will say that the government is right: There are times when you want to give a refresh to a piece of legislation that was written 50 years ago and then updated in the 1990s. So why not update it to protect the places we love in this province? I'll let the government know that the Canadian Environmental Law Association has given them some suggestions for Bill 197. Why don't we talk about updating the EAA to include climate pollution? Because that was an issue we barely talked about 50 years ago. Why don't we incorporate actions around addressing environmental racism, which is something we failed to do 50 years ago? And what about learning the lessons from private sector projects that have gone wrong by requiring an EA for private sector projects, as the Auditor General recommended when she pointed out the \$3.1-billion price tag we face to clean up abandoned mines in this province? If we were like other jurisdictions across the country and required EAs for these private sector projects, we could actually protect taxpayers.

I don't know what the government's problem is with environmental oversight. Did they forget about Walkerton? Have they forgotten about Grassy Narrows? In fact, thinking of Grassy Narrows, Grassy Narrows First

Nation just put out a statement expressing their concern about something else that the government has exempted from the EAA. The crown forests will now be exempt from the EA process, which is leading them to be worried about more mercury poisoning on their lands.

Ontario needs a vision for a green and caring economic recovery from COVID-19. Why aren't we making Ontario the global leader in EV manufacturing and building out charging stations along all provincial highways so we can help people save money by going electric? Why aren't we creating thousands of jobs retrofitting homes and buildings to make them more energy efficient, helping people and businesses to save money by saving energy? Why aren't we planting a billion trees and setting aside more green space instead of paving over green space, so we can protect our communities from the floods that we know are coming?

There is so much we could be doing in an economic recovery plan to create jobs, to generate prosperity in the fastest-growing markets, to attract global capital and, most importantly, to create a future for our children—a future they can be proud of as we recover from the COVID pandemic. But none of that is in Bill 197, which is exactly why I will be voting against it.

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

Mr. Ian Arthur: It's a pleasure to rise today to contribute to this debate. I'm going to touch on a few different things, both in response to what ministers have said and then about schedule 6, which I care about very much.

But I do want to actually start with schedule 5, which the Minister of Education was speaking to. He made the argument that we had to remove the requirement that directors of education have teaching experience, because we needed to expand diversity. But frankly, that's a bit of a false dilemma. It's a bit of an either/or fallacy, because in the last teaching year in Ontario, there were 128,091 full-time teachers in Ontario. The requirement is that they have teaching experience, period—not that they're even currently teaching. So you actually can also access anyone who has been a qualified teacher in Ontario, and has a wealth of life and teaching experience, to be a director of education.

What the minister is saying is that of those well over 125,000—well over 125,000—teachers in Ontario, they can't find sufficiently diverse people to be directors of education. It's a fallacy. It's a hollow argument. It just doesn't work.

Then he went on to talk about some of the other ones. There were a few times where members of the opposition rose on points of order, asking the minister to come back to what is in the legislation. I actually have schedule 5 here to make sure that I am speaking to it, because a significant portion of what he spoke to is not in this legislation—or in my reading of this.

There's a paragraph in schedule 5 that allows for the creation of demonstration schools for exceptional pupils in either a residential or non-residential setting. Even that is not aimed at the breadth of pupils we have in Ontario;

it's not even aimed at those who are struggling with the limitations imposed on them by COVID. It is aimed at students who are already doing exceptionally well, and yes, they should have all the supports they need to succeed. Of course they should. We need to give those to them. But this legislation isn't about all pupils. It's about those who are already doing well, not those who are struggling with online learning or don't have access to Internet that's fast enough for them to actually take the courses that have been moved online. It's not about them; it's about “exceptional” students. It says it in the legislation. It is actually what is in the legislation, in stark contrast to what the minister was speaking about.

Then the next paragraph, which is really quite interesting when you think about it: It allows for “persons, other than parents or guardians of pupils or prescribed persons, to be prescribed for the purpose of providing written notice to a board that a pupil or prescribed person intends to attend a prescribed school under section 185.” Now, why would we need someone who is not a parent or guardian of a pupil to be able to notify a school board about where that student is going to school? Recruitment: so that people at schools have the right to recruit pupils—exceptional students, students who are already doing very well—and bring them to their school. You don't even have to worry about it, as a parent. We're going to take care of everything. We will notify the people we have to notify. We will take care of that for you. No parent or guardian needs to be part of this process.

It's recruitment. It is to shift students from one section of the education system into another. This is what is actually in the legislation. This is what this is actually trying to do in Ontario—not talk about the sideshow, not talk about the other changes to education that were made, but to talk about what is actually in this piece of legislation and what its intent is.

But we're going to move on. We're going to talk a little bit about schedule 6, which are the changes to the environmental act. Now, a bit of history: This act was introduced by Bill Davis in 1974. When they introduced it, they had an initial idea that they were going to have a project list. It sounds familiar; it's exactly what this government is doing right now. But in those days, PCs, Progressive Conservatives in Ontario, respected the process of the Legislature. My, how times have changed. We have a new party. We have a new party that has no respect for the process of this Legislature.

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I was shocked the other day when the member from Brantford—Brant stood up during questions and comments on this bill to proclaim that, “Well, this is the first time I've looked at this, but I have a great question.” The first time you've looked at this bill? I think that's something you shouldn't be particularly proud of. It's a piece of government legislation. You should read that, and you should understand what it's actually doing.

But Bill Davis came to the Legislature—they wanted a project list. It went to committee, which this has not been allowed to do. It went to committee and it had amendments

introduced in committee, which is how that process is supposed to work. That is public input on the direction of this province. That is what you should be doing with your time, and that is where your priorities should be. They amended it so that unless they are specifically exempted, public projects have to have an environmental assessment. They amended it. They listened to experts. They took input from the other parties and they shifted direction because what they were doing was wrong.

Harris didn't try to change that. Former Premier Harris didn't try to change it when he opened the act back up in 1996. He abided by it because it made sense, and it made sense until we got here with this government, which doesn't want public input, which has an agenda that they will pursue at all costs to the environment, to communities, to whatever, because they know best. They don't need to hear about it in committee. They don't need input. They know better than that. They're going to put it through with two hours of debate on third reading—period. Time allocation motions truncate debate to make sure the opposition to this isn't allowed to build, because they learned that lesson the last time they tried to open the greenbelt. They released legislation just before they recessed for a period of time. That allowed people in this province to realize how damaging the legislation was going to be, and they withdrew schedule 10 of Bill 66, which was really, really important. Yes, you have learned your lessons: Do not allow enough time for the public to give meaningful input on legislation, because then members of this government would be forced to hear about the dramatic mistakes they are making—the dramatic mistakes they are making—when it comes to their continuous attacks on the environment.

The environment is more pressing than ever. There has been a global response to the COVID pandemic that is, frankly, unprecedented. It was treated as a crisis, but we are seeing more and more how inadequate the response to the climate crisis is, because it's not even on the same playing field as the global response to COVID. That's not saying we should do less on COVID; it's saying that we need to dramatically increase what we are doing on the climate crisis. Time and time again, this government has introduced pieces of legislation that gut environmental regulation in Ontario. They do not build it. They do not modernize it. Stripping away and calling it red tape is not modernization.

I want to finish with a quote from the Canadian Environmental Law Association because previously, in second reading debate, the member for Oshawa, I guess you could say, got into it with the minister a little bit on this particular piece of legislation. The minister interjected into the debate, claiming that the statements of the member from Oshawa—and I'm quoting here—were “utterly false,” “untrue” and “obtuse,” and then he went on to withdraw those because you're not allowed to say that here.

I want to read very quickly the response from CELA to that particular part of debate, because they wrote a letter to the minister. They say:

“We note that you subsequently withdrew these pejorative comments at the direction of the Speaker. However, we can only assume that you originally made these erroneous statements because you may not have had the opportunity to obtain or read CELA's preliminary analysis. Accordingly, we have attached a copy of CELA's analysis for your immediate review.

“For the past 50 years, CELA has been extensively involved in the development and implementation of Ontario's EA program and we were at the forefront of legislative debates when the Environmental Assessment Act was first introduced. Since that time, CELA has represented low-income individuals, disadvantaged or vulnerable communities in numerous precedent and court cases, public hearings and other administrative proceedings under the EAA.

“Given our EA knowledge and experience, CELA was appointed by the former environment minister to be on an expert advisory committee established by Ontario to obtain advice on EA reform”—and this is telling. “Unfortunately, none of the committee's recommendations were addressed in schedule 6.

“In light of CELA's half-century of EA expertise, we fully stand by our preliminary analysis of schedule 6 of Bill 197, and we further note the statements quoted by Ms. French are, in fact, clearly reflected not only in schedule 6 in the government's own explanatory note that accompanies Bill 197, but they are also confirmed by the information bulletin that has been posted on the Environmental Registry.”

Speaker, I will conclude. Not only do the backbench members not read their own legislation, but by all appearances, with schedule 6 of this piece of legislation, the minister himself does not know what they are talking about. It's a damaging piece of legislation. I will be happy to vote against it, and I wish the government would withdraw it.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It is an honour to rise in this House on behalf of the people of Scarborough–Guildwood, who elected me on August 1, 2013, just seven years ago. Throughout that time, I've had the opportunity to see this province and to experience many aspects of it. But since this government has been elected, I have never seen a government that has been so relentless to attack our democracy in so many ways. Yet again, we are back in this House to debate a bill that goes against that very spirit of our democratic process.

Just today, we rammed through Bill 195, legislation that removes legislative oversight for the mandating of emergency orders and threatens charter rights in several ways. And now the government is pushing through Bill 197 without referral to committee or time for public or legislative scrutiny. This piece of omnibus legislation is 84 pages long yet has little to do with the many pressing issues that Ontarians are facing today. They didn't even take the time to give the bill a proper name. It could have been called the “how to further dismantle our public

education act,” or the “how to cut corners on the environment act.”

This bill opens the way to sidestep important environmental assessment and public consultation. Ontarians want transit to be developed more quickly and they want our economy to recover. This is especially important in ridings and communities like mine in Scarborough–Guildwood, which relies on infrequent and crowded bus services. However, removing environmental protections is not the answer. We are in the midst of a global pandemic, but we’re also in the throes of another global event: climate change, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity. This affects communities like mine, which is located on the shores of Lake Ontario and surrounded by many parks and wetlands.

The changes to the Environmental Assessment Act included in this bill would water down and effectively remove the requirement for environmental assessments for development projects and silence the voices from communities that these projects will impact. While communities like my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood want investment in public transit and other developments, people want to see land, water and biodiversity preserved for future generations.

Speaker, I must address the Minister of Education’s claim that this bill is promoting equity. I think the priorities of this government are just not correct. In fact, it surprises me that, during a pandemic, this government has chosen to invest \$500 million in jails—a very big number—yet they have only invested \$1.5 million in response to the concerns of Black youth and families to address inequities. You would think that this government would understand that Black, Indigenous and other people of colour are far overrepresented in the criminal justice system and in jails and they would be doing something specifically to support that if they are concerned about equity. But that is not the case.

1800

This bill goes further. It removes the requirement that a director of education in our province’s school boards be a certified teacher, further removing external oversight—as directors of education who are certified teachers are also governed by the Ontario College of Teachers, their ethical standards and standards of practice. This bill removes that additional oversight that students, parents and the entire school community understand and rely on.

Speaker, there’s more that I can say on this 84-page bill that’s being tabled during a global pandemic. It does not speak to the pressing needs of long-term care—hiring more personal support workers and all of those concerns that we hear, day in and day out—but rather dismantles those things that we treasure: public education and our environment.

I will be voting against Bill 197.

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

Mr. Jamie West: I’m very pleased to debate this government bill, Bill 197, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act.

It’s a long, long omnibus bill. You look through it and you look for all the stuff that people told us they need to recover from COVID-19—we had many discussions with business owners, long-term care, students, educators—and I’m sure the bill would be full of it, but technically, the bill is “full of it.”

Long-term care: We talked to staff and families. They said that they need increases to staffing levels. They need better pay. They need full-time jobs for PSWs. They need air conditioning in the homes. Do you remember how the Premier kept talking about how important air conditioning was and that he wished he could do something? He could do something. A better plan to reunite families—that’s not in this bill. You keep talking about the iron ring around long-term care. I think a better expression than “iron ring” would be “SpaghettiO.” You put a SpaghettiO around long-term care.

Small businesses: Very simply, small businesses said, “I need rent money to make ends meet. You shut me down. If I had rent money, I’d get back on my feet.” That’s not in this bill.

Parents are asking for child care, for a workable plan for schools—not in this bill.

Municipalities need emergency funding. We heard that on those Zoom calls again and again. It didn’t matter what municipality was talking to us—it could be my riding of Sudbury or any other riding—they all said they needed money. That’s not in here.

Support for public health isn’t in here.

Support for child care isn’t in here.

Non-profits, which have been carrying on the important work they do, continuing with less and less money, at a loss—they need funding and support. That’s not in this bill.

The government is continually out of touch with workers and with the people of Ontario. They passed a bill capping public sector wages at 1%. Meanwhile, every member on the government side got promotions that came with massive wage increases.

In 2018, we all came here for the weekend sitting because we were going to connect with the working guy. I work shift work. I work Christmases. I work 12-hour shifts. I’ve got to tell you, falling out of bed at noon and coming here for an hour on a Saturday is not connecting with the working guy. The graveyard sitting that we had—we came in at midnight and left at 6—means nothing to people who work 12-hour shifts on a regular basis, especially when you consider that we rose for the rest of the week after that.

Speaking of rising—we rose for five months in the summer. I don’t know anyone who has five months of vacation, despite what collective agreement they have.

Then, this year, the government proudly said, “We’re going to sit for the summer.” As New Democrats, we said, “Yes, let’s sit here all week.” You guys said, “No, three days a week is enough. We’re going to sit in June and in three weeks of July, just like the working guy does, for three days a week. And this week, we’re going to stop after two days, because we’re done. We’ll come back in September.” The government is out of touch.

So what's in the bill? Well, the name is clever, but it really has nothing to do with post-pandemic recovery. It's another omnibus bill. There are 20 schedules. We're back to the old days of the Doug Ford government—sorry, the Premier's government, the Conservative government. It's the gravy train: choo, choo, choo; chugga, chugga, choo, choo.

We've decided now that, for the Education Act—this bill is rammed through in about an hour—you don't need the director of education to have qualifications, and that reminds me of other appointments you guys had where you said, "Well, the guy doesn't have the qualifications, so I'll change it so he can get in." And that was challenged as well.

The Liberal member who was speaking ahead of me talked about the charter challenges you'll face, and I'm reminded of the Liberals with their Bill 115 and their charter challenges. I'm reminded of the Liberals when they were in government and their time allocations.

The Minister of Education said that the importance of this was for diversity. But the Urban Alliance on Race Relations disagreed in writing. I have to say, really, that this "trust us" attitude you have with education workers—you've burnt that capital with workers, with students, with parents. They don't believe you anymore. The sex-ed curriculum: You burnt it there. The Peel board systemic racism to look into: You burnt it there. The larger class sizes and the negotiations where you had people on rotating strikes: You've burnt it there. They don't trust you anymore.

The Environmental Assessment Act I'll skip over because, frankly, my colleague from Kingston and the Islands said it better, but I want to quote him by saying, "The government guts environmental legislation. That will be your legacy."

The justices of the peace: chugga, chugga, choo, choo. The Attorney General can make partisan appointments. I want to be clear for the people at home that the Attorney General is not non-partisan; it's not a third party; it's a title that one of the MPPs on the Conservative side has. And they'll be able to make partisan appointments.

I want to get into labour because the Occupational Health and Safety Act—there are some concerns with it. The OFL, the Ontario Federation of Labour, wrote to the Minister of Labour. I don't want to share it without permission from them, but I'm just going to read one small part: "I'm writing to you to emphasize in the strongest way possible the importance of the Ministry of Labour maintaining its own independent authority to investigate working conditions, including infectious diseases, and use the precautionary principle in protecting worker health and safety." This bill has gone through so quickly that there hasn't been a response yet.

This bill is not going to committee. This bill will not have deputations. Nobody will speak or give feedback to this bill. This bill will have two hours of debate and then it will be rammed through as quickly as possible. There is not enough time to discuss the 84 pages, and that's by design. As my colleagues said earlier, that's by design.

The government doesn't care what people think of the bill. They have an agenda. They're driving it through. It's built in a backroom, and they're doing what they want with it.

I know I have colleagues who want to speak, and I'm going to wrap up just primarily by saying that most of this bill has nothing to do with COVID-19. Most of it is a power grab again. It's not going to help people or the economy during the pandemic. It won't help with the aftermath. It's not going to help us with long-term care, with small business. It's not going to help parents or educators. It's not going to help municipalities or non-profits. Those will be ignored so that Conservative wealthy and well-connected friends can get on board the gravy train. Chugga, chugga, choo, choo.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: It's an honour to rise and speak to this legislation. Now, this legislation won't have questions and answers. I've gotten used to that. In fact, a lot of the legislation we see here gets rammed through at the speed of sound; this one is going at the speed of light. I understand that the government members want to go to vacation. Maybe auto insurance execs are inviting them out to the golf course. Maybe some well-connected developers—and I'm not saying for all of you; I'm saying maybe some well-connected developers are inviting them out to a cottage. They want to get out of here. I get that.

Now, look, because we don't get questions and answers, and I usually get the kind of question like, "What in here is okay?"; I'm actually going to do that. I'm actually going to make that available to you.

1810

There are a couple of things within my critic portfolio that are okay. Changes to the Marriage Act? Sure, we can all agree that if you got your marriage licence and all of a sudden a pandemic hit, you probably would appreciate not having to renew the licence at a later point and pay the money. Let's extend it. Cool. We all agree with that, right? Okay.

How about payday loans? Are there some marginal improvements there? I want to say that it's a step in the right direction, but it's more of a step in the left direction. We know that the right does a great job in doing a number on poor people, and certainly it's Conservative policies that often cause people to have to go to predatory lenders in the first place. But is there something okay? Yes, there are some improvements along that. Does it go far enough? No.

But what this amounts to—I'm going to use an analogy, because we all love analogies, right? Let's pretend that all of these slight marginal improvements are a chocolate bar. You say, "Here, guys. Here's a chocolate bar." But do you know what Conservatives do? They take the chocolate bar and throw it in a dumpster, and then they look at the opposition benches and they say, "Go ahead. Eat it." Then, when you act like, "No, I'm certainly not eating a chocolate bar out of a dumpster," what do they do? They shame you for it. Come on.

So let's talk about the proverbial or archetypal tossed banana peel—perhaps even the hot mess you might find in

the dumpster in this legislation. What is it? Major revisions to the environmental assessment process: “Of course developers don’t like to be stopped because we’re protecting the environment. Let’s toss that.” Increasing the powers of the minister to override local planning decisions—I mean, we already know that communities have a tough time fighting developers, because when developers want to build, this government will let them do anything. Now the minister is able to override local decisions. Come on; that’s not good.

Okay, here we go: privatization. This is something they absolutely love, and so they’re adding it, potentially to government services, perhaps education, perhaps even transit. More of that? Oh, my gosh, right? These are some of the things that we are seeing, that we’re facing here.

Oh, here we go: eliminating hearings of necessity for expropriations. When the government wants to come and take your land to help a developer, too bad; no hearing. Even worse: This government wants to make it harder for you to ever sue them. They won’t even allow that. That’s not helpful.

The Education Act: We heard the minister speaking about the fact that they wanted to remove requirements of actually being a teacher to lead teaching as a good thing because they want to open the doors. I would posit that I’m thinking they’re going to have a hard time finding any educator who would want to take on a directorship under them, because that director will have a hard time pushing education policies under a Conservative government. I think that’s what that’s about.

Look, I’m not going to get into all this stuff that—

Interjection: Oh, go ahead.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: No, no.

Interjection: Go ahead.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: It’s out there, okay? But I’d like to add some of the stuff that’s missing. Since this is called the COVID recovery act, what’s missing? Improvements to long-term care? No. Helping PSWs, increasing their wages with pandemic pay? No.

Interjections.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Right? All right, how about helping small businesses who are struggling during this pandemic? No. How about helping with some clarity about what’s going to happen in September? How about some help in terms of child care and what’s going to happen there? No. Food security? No.

Help to First Nations communities? I mean, we live in a province where there are people who don’t even have access to clean drinking water. How is this even possible? Any help there? No.

How about paid sick days? We’re in the midst of a pandemic. We’re supposed to be encouraging people to stay home if they’re sick, but the government doesn’t believe in sick days. No.

Oh, how about auto insurance relief? No. We already heard about the phone calls they’re getting to be invited to golf courses. This pandemic has helped auto insurers, because they’re not even returning the savings they’ve

been making here, and rather than take them on, this government is helping them continue down that path.

I’m going to end with saying: Please don’t follow the path of the auto insurers. We hear from medical experts that COVID might be around for a long time, a potential second wave, and so I’m asking you: Please don’t use COVID to ram through legislation that’s only going to damage this province. Nobody appreciates that; certainly we in the opposition don’t.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: I rise to speak to Bill 197. This afternoon, we—well, this government, with a majority government—passed second reading, and now we’re going into third reading. My constituents of Scarborough Southwest won’t have an opportunity to speak to this, and all the organizations won’t get a chance to speak to this.

First, I want to say thank you to everyone who reached out to me. It is so unfortunate that they won’t be able to say what they need to say and have government members hear all the concerns that these people have. This bill covers—the sad part is, I don’t even have enough time to speak to this bill on behalf of my constituents. That’s what we are facing in this Legislature right now.

It has the Building Code Act. It has development and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Act. We’re talking about environment. We’re talking about education. We’re talking about transit. It impacts the City of Toronto Act. It impacts provincial offences and justices of the peace. It even goes into the Marriage Act, payday loans, and modernizing Ontario for people and businesses. These are just some of the things in this bill. The government just decided to ram through, in the last few days, and have this bill passed without giving the public an opportunity to speak to this.

There are so many components in this bill that are so problematic. I just want to point out one section of it because that’s all the time I have: section 6 of Bill 197, which essentially attacks the environment. We are at a time right now, with this pandemic, where we have seen what this crisis has done to us. We should be doing everything possible to save this planet, to save everything that we have, and right now we are seeing this government bring forward legislation that will take away environmental assessment.

A lot of these—10 environmental assessments are there to make sure that we involve the local communities. It ensures that all ecological, socio-economic and cultural impacts are examined before proceeding with any project. But this bill will actually give the government the power to personally select which projects are subject to this act. It will give the government, the minister, the power to speed up approval processes, to decide which projects will even have environmental assessment processes go through or not.

There have been so many organizations that have spoken against it. CELA spoke against it. They pointed out the fact that EA requirements will be removed for forest management planning, and it will be removed for parks

and conservation reserves. There are so many things that I wish I had more time to speak to, Mr. Speaker.

My staff, as they were looking into this bill, reminded me of the Walkerton tragedy, which is essentially thanks to the former Premier Mike Harris for what people had to deal with during the Walkerton tragedy, and the fact that there are so many communities that were impacted. We might face another crisis, another tragedy, if we allow this bill to go forward.

So I plead with this government to think again; think again, and do not pass this bill, because we are facing a crisis right now. We cannot do the same thing over again with our environment.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question. Mr. Clark has moved third reading of Bill 197, An Act to amend various statutes in response to COVID-19 and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, the bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes.

At this time, there is a phrase that I normally say, but in honour of the former Speaker of the House of Commons in the UK, the Honourable John Bercow, he'd say, "Division. Clear the lobbies."

The division bells rang from 1820 to 1850.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 197, An Act to amend various statutes in response to COVID-19 and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes, has been held.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 62; the nays are 25.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Orders of the day?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, Her Honour awaits.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took her seat upon the throne.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the province has, at its present meetings thereof, passed certain bills to which,

in the name of and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the Housing Services Act, 2011 and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 and to enact the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Corporation Repeal Act, 2020 / Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment, la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation et édictant la Loi de 2020 abrogeant la Loi sur la Société ontarienne d'hypothèques et de logement.

An Act to enact the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020 / Loi édictant la Loi de 2020 sur la réouverture de l'Ontario (mesures adaptables en réponse à la COVID-19).

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor assents to these bills.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, Son Honneur la lieutenant-gouverneure sanctionne ces projets de loi.

Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell (Lieutenant Governor): Mr. Speaker, if I may just say a word of thank you on behalf of the people of Ontario to all of you who have given so generously and importantly of your time and attention over the last weeks, if not months; one day sort of slides into the other and you can't remember.

Thank you for the service that all of you in this chamber have done in the past time to get us to the next phase of what we're facing ahead. I hope that you take some time to enjoy family and friends in the next few weeks, as well as your constituents, of course, and most of all that you keep safe and well. Thank you.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope you will grant me a moment just to congratulate all members on both sides of the House for what has been an exceptional number of months. All members have really gone above and beyond the call of duty. I can say that I'm extremely proud of the members that are behind me, but I am also honoured to serve with the members on both sides of the House, who have really done an extraordinary job. Thank you for all that you've done and thank you for your co-operation the last couple of months. Have a great summer.

With that, Mr. Speaker: no further business.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I adjourn the House, I want to say a word of appreciation to the staff of

the assembly. Whether working remotely or still coming in, it has been their dedication, professionalism, integrity and creative innovation that have allowed this House and standing committees to safely fulfill our mission in these challenging times, upholding parliamentary democracy in service to the people of Ontario. Please join me in thanking the staff of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To all the members of this House: Keep well, stay safe, take care and enjoy your summer.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, September 14, at 10:15 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1903.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioic Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
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	
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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
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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	
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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 AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX 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

Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight / Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations d'urgence

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vacant, Vacant
Vacant, Vacant
Vacant, Vacant
Vacant, Vacant
Vacant, Vacant
Vacant
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell