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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Wednesday 28 October 2020

Mercredi 28 octobre 2020

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MAIN STREET RECOVERY ACT, 2020
LOI DE 2020 VISANT À REDONNER VIE
AUX RUES COMMERCANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 20, 2020, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 215, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to the economic recovery of Ontario and to make other amendments / Projet de loi 215, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la reprise économique de l'Ontario et apportant d'autres modifications.

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

Hon. Victor Fedeli: It is indeed an honour today to rise to speak about Bill 215. Speaker, there are some absolutely wonderful things happening in Ontario amidst this terrible pandemic, so today I want to talk to you about the things that are assisting our main street businesses. Everything we're doing is delivering on our commitment because we know that small businesses are—you've heard the expression a million times—the backbone of our economy and our communities.

Our efforts towards small business didn't just start at the pandemic; they started the day we were elected into office. We began very quickly with a complete turnaround of the business sector, the business community, this backbone that we talk about. We began by doing things like reforming and lowering WSIB payments. This is not a simple sentence. This is \$2.2 billion in relief that it has brought to the Ontario business community. It's a reduction of 47%, \$2.2 billion. That's part of our first-year changes, where we saw a reduction in the cost of doing business in Ontario of \$5 billion—\$5 billion that is now saved by the business community and reinvested in their business. We know it was reinvested in their business because in their first 18 months after we took office, they hired 307,000 new employees in the province of Ontario.

We know that all of these things that we've done to reduce the cost of doing business, things like reducing by 8.7% the corporate income tax for small businesses, things like reducing small business heating and fuel and energy costs—we allowed small businesses to write off their new equipment in year, in their first year. That's an almost

\$800-million savings to businesses that they took and put into their businesses. Again, we know they put it into their businesses because they hired 307,000 new employees.

We did not go ahead with the previous government's tax increases, supported by the NDP, that were scheduled to come in on January 1, 2019. We did not go ahead with those. We did not go ahead, although the federal government did, with the tax on the passive income of small businesses. This is the small business person's retirement fund, and the federal government went ahead with the taxing of it. The previous government had initiated the go-ahead to tax on January 1—supported by the NDP, I might add. We did not go ahead with that. Those savings that the business community had were put right back into their businesses. Some other items in the north, specifically: The northern aviation fuel costs were reduced to spur travel and to help our First Nations in the north.

This whole package did not just happen with COVID. And remember, just in February, pre-COVID, not only were 307,000 jobs created, but there were 250,000 unfilled jobs in the province of Ontario. So all of those business fundamentals that saw Ontario be returned as the economic engine of our country are all still in place. That's why we learned only a couple of weeks ago from Stats Canada that in the September job numbers, not only did we see 168,000 jobs be recovered—that brings us to 840,000 recovered jobs since the pandemic—but in the month of September alone, 50,000 of those jobs were in manufacturing.

A lot of small businesses throughout all of our communities in Ontario are small businesses who manufacture; 50,000 of those were brought back in the month of September. In fact, that makes it now 17,000 more men and women working in manufacturing today than worked in manufacturing pre-COVID. That is because all of those fundamentals that I went through at the beginning are still in place, but now we've got additional supports for small businesses and our main street businesses.

The main street recovery plan was designed in virtual meetings that were held with about 100 round tables and discussions with owners, with workers and with economists. This would with be on top of the hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of Zoom calls and team calls that we held worldwide, understanding what it would take for you to come into Ontario and open a small business, a medium-sized business, what it would take for your business to survive here in Ontario, what it takes for your business to grow.

With that information, we added to the \$10 billion in urgent economic relief that was provided through the

COVID-19 action plan. In the Main Street Recovery Act—this is the proposed legislation, and it is going to modernize some rules to help businesses, but it's also going to put things like \$1,000 into the main street recovery grant to fund PPE. This will be for about 60,000 businesses up and down your vital main streets and other streets in your communities right across, from one end of the province to the other. This is a vital tool.

0910

I want to add something, Speaker, because I want the people of Sudbury to know: I was in the Legislature last week listening to the member from Sudbury talk about the fact that there is nothing in the plan for northern Ontario, but I want his community to know there is a whole lot, specifically. Maybe the member is not aware of something called the Northern Ontario Recovery Program; we'll call it NORP for short. This is up to \$25,000 for each and every business in northern Ontario. Yes, maybe he didn't want to mention it because it was funded by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund and, of course, he voted against the budget that funded the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. Perhaps that's why he didn't want to let his businesses in his community know that \$25,000 is available to each and every business, each and every store, each and every small manufacturer. Every single business in Sudbury can apply for up to that amount. In fact, every business in northern Ontario can apply for up to that amount. I'm not quite certain why the member would suggest that there are no incentives to help northern Ontario businesses when this is a \$20-million program that started almost a month ago. I know in my own community last week I was aware of 50 businesses who have applied. Some have applied for the maximum. There are a couple of restaurants in North Bay that have applied for the maximum because they've put huge tents outside; they've leased these huge tents. They're being repaid for those, up to \$25,000 for monies that they spent on COVID-19, including PPE.

During that same discussion, I also heard the member from Scarborough–Guildwood talk about the fact that there is nothing being done in this recovery for the film sector. I'm thinking, "Wow, that's a really, really awkward sentence," because only the week before in North Bay I announced over \$5 million for film in the riding of Nipissing alone, never mind the films in Sudbury that are being funded, like Letterkenny and other popular films. There are tens of millions of dollars in just northern films. But, again, I can imagine that the Liberal member from Scarborough–Guildwood didn't want to acknowledge the support in the film sector because she voted against the budget that funded the tax credits. Those tax credits are employing tens of thousands of people in Toronto, Ottawa, and small communities all across Ontario that are involved in the film sector. Mississauga: I know the mayor of Mississauga and I were cutting the ribbon at a Star Trek filming function where the province of Ontario was supporting them through the tax credit. Perhaps the member from Scarborough–Guildwood did not want to acknowledge that the film sector is being helped because she voted against that very funding that today is now helping the film sector right across Ontario.

So, for my friends in northern Ontario, where I was born and raised and lived all my life, there are plenty of opportunities, through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp., in film, manufacturing, small business, so please continue to look for the new intake in the new year. But right now, get into that Northern Ontario Recovery Program. It's not time-limited, but it's first come, first served. There is \$20 million, and you're entitled to \$25,000 apiece. I'm really hoping that this message gets through to the people of Sudbury, whose own member, obviously, has not been telling them about it because he voted against that funding.

The main street plan, as I said, puts in \$1,000 for up to 60,000 businesses. There is also something called the small business COVID-19 recovery network and this offers, basically, direct support that's tailored to the business.

And there is a small business recovery website. Now, some people would say, "Ugh, that's it? You built a website? This is what you are doing?" Let me tell you: On the other side of the page, the Ontario Together Fund website that we built very quickly, within days, has had 28,000 people—not visitors who are clicking and looking at it; 28,000 people who have asked us for assistance, and we've helped them. Some 19,000 of those people who went on the website brought us leads so that we bought over \$800 million worth of PPE.

So when we say, "Yes, we built a website," you better get on the website. Get on the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund website and look for your \$25,000. Get on the small business recovery web page and learn about the things that you can receive, including the \$1,000 main street recovery grant. Go on the Ontario Together Fund website and see how you can get involved in the production or the supply of personal protective equipment to the province of Ontario; 28,000 other people have, and 19,000 have helped us with those contracts for \$800 million. So there is a tremendous amount.

But when you're looking at Bill 215, the main street bill, don't just look at it in isolation. This is a cumulative effort that you need to see. We've put it together with other programs and we worked with the federal government. We worked with them to make sure of two things: that there are no gaps in the services and that there is no duplication. We continue to talk. My ministry and other ministries are dealing with our federal counterparts to make sure that everybody is covered, and whoever is best positioned to offer that service is the one who is offering that service. From our side of it, we continue with the programs that we're presenting today, such as the \$1,000 main street recovery grant.

I would have to suggest to you, as well, that you should be talking to your small business enterprise centres all throughout Ontario. There are 47 of these. We call them SBECs: small business enterprise centres. It's all an important and integral part of the small business recovery network. These 47 centres have business experts who will help your company, particularly for support for small businesses with fewer than 10 employees. That's the focus

of the SBECs. They collaborate with the municipalities and they collaborate with the regional partners. But also, there are a dozen and a half regional innovation centres, the RICs, all over Ontario as well. These are the types of organizations that we want you to be working with, as well. Access these centres.

If you're a small business and affected by the pandemic, you can go on ontario.ca/smallbusiness and you can learn about all of the various things. There's advisory, there are consultation services and there's skills training. There's a whole networking program that is so important, the mentorship program that we have. There's a summer company, and there's starter tech. Think of all of these things that can be helping your small business.

There's another important program—again, I don't believe you should be looking at the small business bill, Bill 215, in isolation. It's part of a bigger package. Another part of that bigger package is the Digital Main Street Program. This is an opportunity for your business, especially those affected by the pandemic, to go online, to have professionals get your business put online. No matter if you're a small business on a main street that is selling games or books or puzzles or soaps—anything that you are selling, even whether you're making it or not—you can have trained professionals come into your business and guide you to getting your business up and online, so not only can you compete locally; you can compete globally. You can be selling your products worldwide, instead of just down your main street. This is a very important program, the \$2,500 Digital Main Street grant.

There's the ShopHERE program, powered by Google, and that will help you hire skilled students to guide you through this. There's Future Proof Main Street; as the name suggests, we're trying to make sure that you're still there. All of that is done by offering online services. There's the Recovery Activation Program. Again, all of those four programs are designed to help you digitize so that you don't just have to open your door and hope a customer comes in on your main street, that you've the whole world in front of you. Speaker, those are some of the things that directly affect our small and medium-sized businesses. Those are some of the things that affect the main street.

0920

But again, don't look at these in isolation; think of the bigger picture: \$5 billion in costs to business have been reduced in the first year of our government, and \$5.5 billion last year. It will be even larger this year because of some of the great red tape and regulation reductions that are being made. That will reduce it by even further.

Those savings are being put back into the economy by these businesses. We saw that with 168,000 new employees who were hired just in the month of September alone.

And those fundamentals I said earlier, they are still in place, the fundamentals that saw Ontario have 250,000 unfilled jobs in February. Those fundamentals are in place.

That's why Ford—one of the country's most storied companies; it has been here for almost 120 years—chose Ontario. When you talk to them, they tell you about why they are here.

Roche pharmaceutical: a \$500-million corporate investment by Roche, with 500 new employees, almost all scientists, all six-figure earners. Why did they come here? The president stood at the microphone on national television and said, "We're here because Premier Ford and this government reduced the cost of doing business. They have all of the programs in place to excite companies." There are no incentives there. All of those are just the business fundamentals. He said we absolutely shifted the fundamentals towards a business-friendly environment that allowed a company like Roche to invest \$500 million.

It's those fundamentals that are in place that allowed Greenfield in Johnstown to spend \$75 million they invested in a brand new ethanol plant, for it to make hand sanitizer. They will sell the medical-grade alcohol across Ontario, in fact, across Canada, and quite probably across the world.

It's the business climate that we created. That's why those companies have made those billions of dollars of investments, just in the last couple of months. They know that all the fundamentals that we've put in place are still there.

That's why, on this main street bill, the main street businesses know that this is the place to be. They know that Ontario is open for business. They know that they have a government standing behind them that is assisting where we can, and where they need. Those hundred consultations that we had with them—they told us what they need. Through this bill, we're delivering.

And through all of the other things that we've done cumulatively, they know that they're in the right place at the right time to be able to get through this pandemic and lead their company and provide for their families.

Thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity to speak for those 20 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It's now time for questions.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to thank the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade for his remarks. I know that he participated in those 800 hours of input that was provided to the finance committee in the summer, those 500 deputants who came to the committee.

I expect that during that time he heard concerns raised about insurance gouging. Many small businesses who spoke to the committee talked about the skyrocketing insurance rates, that if nothing else related to COVID was putting them out of business, the insurance costs were putting them out of business.

My question to the minister is, why did this government not use this opportunity of a Main Street Recovery Act to do something about skyrocketing insurance premiums?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Part of what I talked about in the last 20 minutes is not to look at the main street bill on its own, but to look at all of the pieces put together, all of the various supports, not only for business, but for their families.

Think about day 1: Just after the pandemic hit, a \$10-billion package was put together. Every family with a child 12 and under got a cheque for \$300 per child. Every

senior citizen had their Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement doubled automatically. Think of all of the funding that was out there to be able to help these businesses. Think of the NORP program, think of this main street recovery plan, think of \$1,000. Think of all the other pieces. Think of all the tax deferrals. Cumulatively, there's a massive package that's there to support our business community.

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Good morning, and thank you, Minister, for those wonderful remarks.

I know, Mr. Speaker, when the main street recovery plan was first announced, the first municipality in Ontario to call was the city of Markham. The commissioner from the department of economic development called me: "MPP, can we participate? Can you organize and launch with your businesses from your riding?" It was an exciting program.

My question to the minister: You talk passionately about so many things you are trying to do that are best for small businesses and reducing the costs of businesses. Tell me, why are you targeting these sectors and numbers of employees?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: The plan that we've put in place draws all across government. It builds on the more than \$10 billion in urgent economic relief that was provided through the COVID-19 action plan. Again, the Main Street Recovery Act, when passed, modernizes the rules to help small business. In this particular package, there is the \$1,000 program.

We urge your constituents, your small businesses to go in the Ontario Together Fund and look at how they can participate. There was one business just outside of your riding that, in April, had 10 employees; today, they have 310 employees because they got involved in the Ontario Together Fund.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: The minister has certainly painted a rosy picture of investments that have been made in various sectors, but the reality is that 97% of all COVID-19-related spending has come from the federal government, not from this provincial government.

Instead, the minister and his government, while they promised to support our communities and to support our small businesses, have left everyone hanging without the supports that they need and sat on \$9.3 billion of unspent, unallocated money like a dragon hoarding over a pile of treasure, all while the people of Ontario go without the supports that they need.

My question to the minister is, will he commit today in this House to support the NDP plan to save main street businesses, including commercial rent subsidies, utility payment freezes, paid sick days and safe, not-profit child care spots, so that the people of Ontario can get back to work?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much to the member from Toronto Centre. Again, we need you to look

at everything on a cumulative basis. As I said earlier, we meet constantly with the federal government to determine, making sure there are no gaps, making sure there are no duplications, and we work collectively and collaboratively as to who is best positioned to pay for that program and who is best positioned to implement that program.

Speaker, the fact of the matter is we have seen all of the gaps filled. We jump in and work to fill those gaps. We look at our share, as required by the federal government, whether it's in the rent relief program or any of the other programs. Yes, there are many national programs that we would fully expect a federal government to pay for, but in our case, we are right down on main street, where the rubber meets the road, supplementing the business community.

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

0930

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I wanted to thank the minister for his very informative speech this morning. I was really interested when he spoke about how they have invested so much in filming in northern Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, through you, I know that there's actually a lot of film developments happening in my riding of Carleton as well. A lot of Hallmark films are being filmed there. So I was wondering if the minister could maybe expand a little bit more about how much we've invested in filming, not just in northern Ontario but across the province, because we're definitely feeling the positive benefits of this in my riding of Carleton.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you for the question. It's fascinating to see the film sector. I recall, when I sat in opposition, my horror one day when the Liberals came out with their budget and were trashing the film tax credits. Myself and two other of our now-cabinet ministers rallied together different parts of Ontario and fought so hard to reverse that. We learned so much about the film sector in that period when the previous Liberal government was about to decimate the sector.

Not only have we put these film tax credits in place, we've expanded the types of tax credits. There are now approximately five different styles of tax credits that help modernize it to digital—all of those areas. I would encourage anybody looking to make a film that they really need to consider anywhere in Ontario because of those particularly large tax-credit incentives.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you to the minister for his comments. We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected women. In Thunder Bay, we have a vibrant women's entrepreneurial community, many with small businesses. I've had calls to the office where they are saying the lack of planning around any kind of child care support or the botched education start-up have made some of these entrepreneurs have to stay home, because our testing results take about eight to 14 days to get, and they're saying that this has a huge impact on small business. What is this government planning to do about that situation?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. We do know and acknowledge your points. We announced earlier funding of \$147 million through the one-year Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, the ELCC, to help license child care providers and EarlyON Child and Family Centres. But we do acknowledge and recognize the significant toll that COVID-19 has had on women right across Canada.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Unfortunately, I don't believe there's enough time for further questions. Therefore, we're going to go over to further debate.

Further debate?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I rise today to speak to G215, the Main Street Recovery Act. What I first want to say is that I've heard the government side say this is "part of our plan." But I don't know how many times you can plan or have such a flimsy response to what's going on. We've heard from small business across the province and we heard from larger business across the province all summer. I was part of listening to the problems that small businesses are facing, and nothing in this bill addresses that.

I heard the minister also speak about their former plans or things to support business in Ontario. One struck me as especially problematic, and that was they're heralding the cut to WSIB premiums. I meet weekly with injured workers who are victims of deeming and thrown into poverty because WSIB is saying that they have these phantom jobs that are out there that these folks can have. During the pandemic, that's even more insulting, because when there were no jobs and we were locked down, there was no recognition for those workers and no recognition by WSIB that those jobs don't exist. That was problematic.

We heard several things from small businesses across our region. I know the minister is from the north and has heard from many resorts, resort owners and the tourist industry. They were not looking for funds to build Plexiglas shields or those types of things; they were looking for direct help with their mortgages, direct help with their operations, because in many cases they had nothing. They had no business whatsoever. The borders were closed, and they told us that 98% of their business came from the US. Now, some of them advertised in Ontario and some Ontarian families came up and enjoyed northern Ontario, but they all report that their revenues have been impacted. Many of those businesses were very mom-and-pop kinds of operations that have been in operation for 20 years. We heard those stories. They were desperate for help. They spoke about something that hasn't been addressed by this government: a relief from the fees and regulatory regime of the government on those small resort owners. That has never been addressed, and it's not addressed in this bill.

The other small business piece is something that I alluded to in my question: the "she-recovery," that women were disproportionately affected. We haven't seen from this government a response about that. There are specific

occupations that are female-dominated that have been impacted by this pandemic, and the small businesses owned by women often have been things like hairdressers, who had to close for two or three months and now some of them are looking at closing again. Many of them have a small profit margin, and their workers work on commission. They were devastated.

CERB was there for them for a while, but now that their businesses are open, they are forced to go to work. But then those same small businesses, women-owned businesses, told me some of their workers couldn't come back to work because there was no child care for them. The child care seats in Thunder Bay alone were cut by 65 because of the pandemic. One of the major child care centres, a Montessori child care centre with 65 spots, had to close. We're talking about a situation where, in Thunder Bay, we have a huge wait-list—a huge wait-list—for up to two years for child care spots, and so that is a large barrier.

With the announcement of child care funding, I talked to child care owners, child care operators, and they said they were promised money in March from this government in that fund and hadn't seen it at the end of September. So they had to incur the costs of all of those things, and had no help from this government.

What we want to see is more help. We need to consider that jobs that are impacted by this pandemic often affect women, and because women often bear the brunt of the child care responsibilities, they also are affected by the schools. And so when we didn't go to small cohorts and we did get outbreaks in schools, small business owners were saying, "I can't go to work, because my child had to be tested, I needed to be tested and now I'm waiting for testing for eight to 14 days." Meanwhile, they can't go to work, so their employees can't go to work and they are calling my office and saying, "What is the government going to do about this?," because they don't qualify for any kind of wage subsidy. There is no program covering that. Because we don't have sufficient testing, it causes delays. Small businesses across my region have said that it is unconscionable that this government is not doing something about that, so that they can continue being in business.

The \$1,000 grant that the government has given to small business to retrofit or for PPE is a drop in the bucket. I mean, every drop in the bucket I guess is good, and any small business will tell you that \$1,000 is better than nothing, but I know in my office it took over \$1,000—and I have two employees—to retrofit my office and provide the PPE to make it a safe environment for them or for any member of the public to come in. So I don't think that's sufficient, and I think it's too late for a lot of people because they've already gone out of business.

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In northern Ontario, the money that the member said about getting tents together—North Bay is not really northern Ontario, in my estimation, but there is no real recognition that small businesses, like restaurants, in northern Ontario are struggling, and they have no patio option after Thanksgiving. No amount of blankets and

heaters and tents are going to be sufficient to have them run their businesses, so they need a different type of help. They need help that is not structural. They need help that is direct funding to keep them alive to maybe ensure that they can look at takeout, and maybe a wage subsidy. We heard that in the submissions over the summer, that maybe you can assist with just the deficit: “Just give me—I’m losing 40%; I need maybe 20% of that returned to me from the government in some form.” Not a loan, because most of them have enough debt, and we heard that time and again. There is nothing in this bill that addresses this.

So when we call things the Main Street Recovery Act, and people in my community say, “Well, what are with the kinds of pieces of legislation that are coming forward to help small business,” I tell them the things that are coming forward, and it has nothing to do with northern Ontario, or very little. They say, “That’s it? That’s the best they can do? We came there and told you what we needed, and we’re not seeing it in the government.” So that is extremely disturbing to our small business in northern Ontario, and probably in other parts of rural Ontario.

It’s disturbing that this government also is taking credit—I know during the election campaign they were busy dumping on the federal government, but now are very happy to be taking that money from the federal government, which we all need in Ontario. We’re not saying that that isn’t necessary and such an important part of why we are doing probably as well as we are, but we’re heading into the second wave and there is more uncertainty, and we need the provincial government—the provincial government takes care of those everyday types of things. They take care of our health, they take care of our education, and we need them to recognize that it’s not all sunshine and roses out there, that main street businesses are going under, and we need to support them in an individual sort of fashion. We need to be looking at people’s problems and not just, “Here’s some money,” and, “You can apply for it,” and, “It’s first come, first served.”

We heard from the aviation industry. The aviation industry is a very expensive operation. The aviation industry has received some money from the federal government as well to assist them, but we’re heading into winter, and what a lot of people don’t understand about the small businesses that are aviation companies in northern Ontario—and they’re part of our fabric—is that they are essential. They’re essential to providing health care and services to northern Ontario. They are saying, “In the wintertime we have increased costs. We have de-icing costs, we have increased costs for fuel, because when it’s colder, it takes—and we have a requirement that we get some kind of subsidy so we can keep running.” Because their passenger traffic has gone way down, and a large part of their profit margin is passenger traffic. The freight traffic is still going for the most part, and that’s what’s keeping them afloat, but the passenger traffic is down and so their revenue is way down, and nothing seems to be in—definitely not in this bill—to help those small businesses, those small aviation businesses in northern Ontario.

COVID-19 has affected each region of this province a bit differently, and I think that that is something that needs to be recognized. We need to recognize that we need an approach that listens to our small businesses and actually comes forward with some of the things that they need, like direct payroll assistance.

The Digital Main Street program is a great initiative. We hear a lot from this government about providing digital services, modernizing our services, and that we’ll have direct access to government records or plans or interfaces with different agencies. That’s all fine and good, but in many of our small towns in northern Ontario, our broadband is non-existent in some places. We don’t see a significant investment from this government in broadband services—not something that we’re going to put off for five years. We need it now. Kids can’t go to school; they’re sitting in parking lots. Actually, teachers are driving papers 60 kilometres to get some information out to children. They are doing their best, but we don’t have the broadband.

So when we have this investment, it’s like putting the cart—every time the government announces this, it means that we have less in-person services in our communities and we have a digital world that people can’t access. It’s frustrating. It’s frustrating to seniors. They say, “I want to talk to someone.” I don’t know if any of you have had the joy of trying to get hold of any kind of government agency during this pandemic.

People are phoning our offices and screaming, small businesses included. Recently, a small business had an issue with the Ministry of Transportation, a ministry that was gutted under this government, in northern Ontario. They could not get service. They were on hold for six hours. Then they were told, after they finally got a hold of someone, “Oh, well, that’s the wrong number; here’s another number,” and then that started again. The person was a small business owner and needed something handled so that they could put two people to work. They couldn’t do it because they couldn’t access government services. There is nothing digital. He tried everything, he said. He said he spent a week. He said, “I’m a small business. A week of my time is worth money.” He’s a very driven small business owner.

I went over to the government side and asked the associate minister to please help this person, because I feared that this person was at the end of their rope by just their tone. They did assist, and I want to recognize that, that there was assistance. But that’s not it. The thing is that we don’t have a system in place. When we talk about a digitalized system, and people can’t access that system, it doesn’t help us. It doesn’t help small business.

Some of this bill has no relevance to northern Ontario—it has relevance to southern Ontario—and so I find it a bit difficult to speak to the bill. But I will speak to more assistance for small businesses because I think that main street recovery is so important. It’s disheartening when you go—and what I have been doing is going to every small business in my riding and visiting, or virtually visiting. The minister’s suggestion that we talk to entrepreneurial centres and to small business initiative centres:

We've reached out. I've reached out to those folks and have had ongoing conversations.

I really want to do a shout-out to the small business community. They are so resilient, because they face challenges every day. Many of them have profit margins that are very small, and many of them do their work from a passion.

I spoke to a small business owner, a brave soul opening a new business during the pandemic. They had been working on it, obviously, for a year, him and his wife. They're new Canadians, and they are bringing their spices and food to Thunder Bay, because we have an increased international student community and professionals coming in. So I went into this lovely shop, and they had everything lined up on the shelves so neatly and were so proud of this initiative. My heart broke for them a bit, because I said, "How do you think you're going to do?" He says, "We've put in a large investment." And I said, "Well, let's keep in touch, and if there are any kinds of programs or services"—but it's him and his wife who run this small business.

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And there are others on this main street. Others are doing quite well. They're actually holding their own, and I'm really happy for them, because that makes me less depressed about this situation, because they're on a main street and they've been there for 20 years selling hockey jerseys or hockey trophies. There's one business—the computer repair people are doing really well, because everybody's breaking their computers and people are trying to refurbish equipment. But I think that we need to do more. We need to be mindful and we need to ensure that those businesses are there in six months' time.

We have some great family businesses, and I am very fearful that we are going to lose them through this pandemic. They need direct support. They need help with their mortgages. They need help with rent. They need assurances that they're not going to be evicted. They need us to recognize that they are the job creators in our province, and I've heard that from the other side, but now is a crisis. They need very, very specific assistance, and it's not contained in this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It's time for questions.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'll just get my mask off, here. Speaker, you will know that what we are discussing this morning, the Main Street Recovery Act and the associated strategies complementary to it—the Ontario Small Business Success Strategy—have a number of elements, and those elements have been informed by a robust consultation process all across the province, including northern Ontario.

I listened with interest to the presentation from the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. Turning back to the elements of the two strategies I discussed, the focus is on lowering costs, increasing exports, strengthening supply chains. I would have thought that those particular elements would be of interest, and we could have the support of the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. Can we hear this

morning from that member whether she supports lowering costs, increasing exports, developing talent—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Back to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan for her response.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you to the whip. I always enjoy listening to his comments.

The answer to that, obviously, is we're looking at a crisis, and this bill is to deal with that crisis. Generally, we can agree, but we need to ensure, similar to the assistance with WSIB that I mentioned in my comments, that no one is thrown into poverty with those initiatives, no citizen of Ontario.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I really want to thank the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan for her comments on the she-covary and the need for measures that will support women re-entering the labour market and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

I wondered if she could elaborate a little bit more about what kinds of supports would directly assist women, and whether this government has made any effort to address the reality of the she-cession and the need for measures to support a she-covary.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you to my colleague for the question. This is an area near and dear to my heart, because I used to work in women in trades and technology. I was an advisory person on a committee for our local college. I believe that there are many barriers to women to participating fully in the economy, and I've heard the other side speak to that, but we need supports that are concrete—supports like affordable child care. We need specific training for women and promotion for women in trades and technology, not just a statement that we believe in it. We need to ensure that they are able to engage in those jobs that will be there during and post this pandemic.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I talk to Ms. McKenna in my riding quite often. She's president of our downtown BIA. For her, in terms of empowering local small businesses, be they run by a male or a female or someone from the LGBTQ community, they're all in this together. All these supports, from what she's telling me from canvassing her various businesses—and some of them are allies—it's either the red tape that they have to overcome or it's bringing those downtown businesses back to digital. We saw that the curbside pickup, yes, helped them with cash flow a little bit, but it's retooling their business model—going to the bricks and mortars and putting them online—that was very helpful.

So my question to the member opposite: Do you think that Digital Main Street actually helps all businesses, no matter their background, succeed and have a business model that allows them to do not only the bricks and mortar but also online sales?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you for that question. Making a business online obviously was part of the strategy going forward. People needed to move their business that was a front-line store to online. Many of them did that very successfully or already had that in place but just put more resources in it. And so, I have to agree with you that that is part of a strategy, moving forward, because it was necessary. I look forward to seeing what the concrete plans are to assist businesses with doing that.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Good morning, Speaker. Meegwetch to the member from Thunder Bay for the comments on Bill 215, Main Street Recovery Act.

Being from the Far North of Ontario and representing an area that has a way where we try to do business over very long distances, I'm wondering if there's—I've got a question about racialized people, Indigenous people, lower-income communities in our area: What's the response been for this plan? Does it address our communities in the Far North?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you to the member from Kiiwetinoong for that question. I know he knows that I've had experience with Far North communities and the challenges they face, having represented the police officers who work up north in NAN territory. The challenges that they face are so different, and there is nothing in this bill that assists them, because they can't access Internet. Often, it's satellite or non-existent. Also, the types of small business, like trapping, those kinds of things, have been impacted by this pandemic but are unable to access any real assistance.

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the opposite member from Thunder Bay. I know Ontario's small businesses are struggling the most with their cash flow generally and thus are least able to handle increased costs due to the pandemic. I mentioned before, in my riding, it's not hundreds—I find out during this pandemic—but thousands of small businesses in my riding alone, Markham-Thornhill. I spoke about the main street recovery plan.

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My question to the member: Don't you agree with and recognize all the small things that we are trying to do to help stimulate the small businesses, not to try—to survive in the marketplace and in Ontario, and other things we are doing? Don't you recognize all these small, small things are going to help the small businesses and your small business owners? Could you elaborate on that, please?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you for that a question. It is very important to understand that, yes, as you have in your riding, many small businesses are looking for assistance. I would question if you brought them this piece of legislation, that they would say that it was sufficient for their most pressing need right now. That's what we're dealing with. We're dealing with this crisis. We're here. We're very privileged to be here in this

great place, trying to address the crisis that's happening right now.

This sort of piecemeal approach is interesting. We'd like to see more concrete rent relief. We'd like to see assurances that they won't be evicted and that we can work towards assisting them in paying their rent so that people are protected. We'd like to see a more robust response for small business rather than this piecemeal approach.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): There isn't enough time for further questions and responses; therefore, further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Good morning, Speaker. I rise to speak on Bill 215, the Main Street Recovery Act. When this bill was first introduced and I heard the title, I got pretty excited. I thought, "Finally we're going to have a rent relief program that works for small businesses. Maybe we're going to see a program that helps small businesses with the increased costs and challenges they are facing, or maybe to address insurance issues." Then I opened the bill and I started reading through it, and while there is nothing maybe highly objectionable in the bill, all the things that small businesses have been asking for to save main street, I didn't see in the bill.

It made me think: We've been meeting all summer at the finance committee, hearing from thousands and thousands of small businesses, telling us what they need to stay alive during this pandemic. I thought maybe some of that would be reflected in the bill, but I was really disappointed. It really wasn't in the bill.

I want to talk about a few things I feel government needs to do. The first one is that the commercial evictions ban expires on Friday. I can't tell you how many small businesses are reaching out to us right now saying they are worried they're going to be evicted starting on Saturday. Talk about a scary Halloween for small businesses, to receive that eviction notice on October 31.

We know the federal government is finally coming forward with a rent relief program that tenants can apply for. That's something we have all been advocating for. But do you know what? Until that program is in place, we need to extend the commercial eviction ban, and I'm willing to work with the government and every party in this House to do it before Friday. We have, what, today and tomorrow to get 'er done, Speaker. Let's do it.

Secondly, I thought there would be some details about a program to support small businesses in hot spots, who have been forced to go back to a modified stage 2, in this bill. I know the government has allocated, or they said they've allocated, \$300 million for it. We don't know what the details are. Small businesses don't even know how to apply for it. I thought maybe in this bill there would be something there for those small businesses. Quebec is offering grants of \$15,000 to businesses that have had to shut down again. Let's see that in a bill.

The next one is insurance. I can't tell you how many small businesses have said, "Hey, can we have the government come in?" I know that the province doesn't regulate commercial insurance, but can we at least bring in some temporary regulations to make sure that business

interruption insurance is honoured to ensure that small businesses can apply for insurance?

Finally, I want to say I was hoping we would see a program targeted to women-owned businesses, Black-owned businesses, and Indigenous- and people-of-colour-owned businesses that have been especially hard hit by this pandemic and need direct support right now.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Time for questions.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for your comments today. I've been involved with the small business association in Port Credit and the Clarkson BIA as well through this pandemic, and it has been difficult for them; I understand that. But our government, with the federal government, is investing \$900 million in urgent relief. That's for landlords and tenants. As well, we've put in a corporate tax rate of 8.7% reduction. What do you think of that tax relief that we're doing for businesses?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the question. First of all, on the rent relief program, this rent program has pretty much been a disaster from day one. So many small businesses have not been able to apply for it. Finally—finally—the province and the federal government are changing the program to make it tenant-driven, but that program is not in place yet, and so that's exactly why I'm asking the members opposite to work with us to extend the commercial eviction ban until the new program can be put in place.

In terms of taxes, I know the government has put in a lot of tax deferrals, but those tax deferrals have come to an end, and small businesses are saying, "We can't pay the bill yet." We need to extend those deferrals, and in some cases, convert those deferrals to just outright tax forgiveness to keep them alive.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to thank the member for Guelph for his comments. He had a very interesting observation about what he heard during the hearings of the finance committee over the summer, what he heard from small businesses about the kinds of supports that they needed from this government to help them survive the pandemic and remain in operation as we move forward through the recovery, and what is missing from this government's response.

I wondered if he would care to elaborate a little bit more about what other ideas, suggestions, recommendations were brought forward by small and medium-sized businesses about the kinds of supports that really would have been meaningful for them to recover from COVID-19.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the member's question. I should have brought the report in. It's a pretty heavy report—a lot of recommendations. I can't go through all of them in the few minutes I have.

First of all, rent relief was the number one ask, over and over again, and at the very least, let's extend the commercial eviction ban until the end of year. Businesses said, "We just need some time."

The second ask was PPE support. I recognize the government has offered \$1,000 to businesses with nine or

fewer employees. I can tell you, as a long-time small business owner, I think we had 12 or 15 employees. A small business like that wouldn't even qualify, and I can guarantee that's a small business. And I think most small businesses will tell you \$1,000 isn't going to be enough to meet the needs they have.

The third one that came up over and over again is insurance. Even if it's temporary regulations of insurance to help small businesses get through this pandemic, especially when it comes to business interruption insurance, insurance companies should honour their obligations to small businesses.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I wanted to thank the member from Guelph for his debate today. It was very informative. My question for the member is, you spoke a lot about, I guess, your concerns with some of the things in the legislation, but I'm sure that you heard from your constituents about a lot of the positive things as well that we're doing here.

I was wondering if maybe you had any stories to share about some of the positive things that your constituents have said about what our government is doing to protect them during this pandemic.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the member's question, but I think if the member was listening intently to my comments, the member would know that I actually wasn't that critical of the actual content of the bill. What I was critical of is what's not in the bill, because when I heard "main street recovery," I thought, "A rent program that works. An extension of the commercial eviction ban." I thought, "Let's finally just stop talking tough on insurance companies and actually deliver some real action." I thought maybe there would be some details about this \$300 million that businesses are waiting for, for the government to send them a lifeline. Those are what I want to hear in the bill, Speaker.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): We've run out of time for questions and responses. Therefore, we're now back to further debate.

Miss Monique Taylor: It's always a pleasure to have the ability to rise here in the House on behalf of the people of Hamilton Mountain and to be able to talk about small businesses and the legislation that's been put forward by this government in comparison to the legislation that we would have put forward as New Democrats.

We've heard very clearly, in 900 hours of submissions to the finance committee, from small businesses about the need in their business, in their community. We've heard from the Canadian national business institutions. We've heard from all sorts of business communities within the province. We've heard from businesses across Canada about the need that they need, and we heard regionally from businesses in different parts of Ontario and how the need differs compared to where you are. We have heard very clearly from the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan this morning the differences of the needs in her community

compared to the differences in the need in my community in southern Ontario.

What we have found is that the government's measures that they have put forward are not meeting those needs. We're seeing businesses close day after day. We know that the eviction program is ending at the end of this month, and that will put many small businesses in jeopardy. If the government had seen to ensuring that rent deferrals and rent subsidies went directly to the business owner, I think we could have seen a different story than what we're seeing today. By putting that program in the hands of landlords, we allowed them to decide whether businesses were going to decide or not.

These are small businesses that have put their lives into these businesses. They have put their hearts, their souls, given up their family time to put all of that effort into a small business. Nobody expected COVID to come upon us, so many were not prepared to be able to wait out months of closed doors or to have to supply PPE or to have to create new measures within their business to ensure that staff was safe. And so the measures that have come before them are just not near enough.

Now, we will be supporting this bill because the measures are necessary, but we know that—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I have to interrupt you. I have a very important announcement to make right now.

Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Looking at the time, it is now time for members' statements. Therefore, I will look to the Legislature and recognize the member for Timmins.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: There's still time on the clock to ask the government if they want to continue debate, but that's for another day.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to report to the House, the city of Timmins, like municipalities across Ontario and the rest of Canada, is struggling with an opioid crisis. We have far too many of our citizens, young people and old alike, who are dying as a result of the use of opioids. In one week alone, we had four people in the city of Timmins die. We're only a municipality of 44,000. Imagine what that means in relation to other cities of larger size.

I want you to know that there is hope, though. All of the agencies in the city of Timmins, under the leadership of the city of Timmins, with the support of myself and our federal member, Charlie Angus, have brought together all of the service providers that are in the addiction field and

the medical field and have started to put together how we can better coordinate and wrap services around individuals, so those individuals who are in crisis, be it at their home or on the street, are able to be properly dealt with when it comes to providing the support they need, first of all to deal with their medical condition, which is what's going on with the opioids, and then to support them towards the path of recovery.

I know it's a lot of tough work—we've had a number of meetings—but I want this House to know and I want the people of Timmins to know that people are working at this. We have an assurance by the minister that he will allow us to design our own local system so that it is a made-in-Timmins solution for the people of Timmins. I think that's a good way to go.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Roman Baber: Ontario is home to almost 230,000 people of the Jewish faith, and while we're blessed to live in the most welcoming and racially diverse country in the world, we know that anti-Semitism is on the rise.

The fact is, the Jewish community remains the most targeted community for hate crimes by almost any measure. In the last few years, we have witnessed an alarming increase in the number and viciousness of the evil that is anti-Semitism.

Make no mistake, this is not an academic debate. I often say that anti-Semitism is not limited to Twitter or graffiti; it grows through apathy. It grows through a chill in governments—but friends, not this government.

The time for talk is over. The only way to keep this evil in check is to call it out and fight against it. So I'm so very proud that this week, our government took decisive action. On Monday, October 26, 2020, our government adopted the working definition of anti-Semitism as adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the IHRA plenary, on May 26, 2016. Our government drew a line in the sand. We took a big step against anti-Semitism by calling it what it is. We defined it. We made it explicit so no one can miss it. Why? Because we refuse to accept it.

On behalf of Ontario's Jewish community, I thank you, colleagues, for standing up for me, for standing up for our friends and constituents, for standing up for everyday Canadians—for standing up for all of us. Thank you.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Today, we begin debate on the Time to Care Act. This is a bill that we put forward to ensure our loved ones receive a legislated minimum of four hours of hands-on care in long-term care. This is an important bill that will ensure that our seniors get the dignity they deserve, and it also respects the workers who care for them.

I've spoken with hundreds of families across Hamilton, Ancaster and Dundas, and many of them have been beside themselves with worry and with grief. To those of you who

lost loved ones, I know that it seems like your grief has no place to go. I know that because of COVID restrictions you were unable to host proper funerals, and many of you have expressed rage at being shut out of an inquiry that would have given you a chance to tell the story of your loved ones. I want to say to you, your pain matters; your loved ones matter.

To Laura, who says this about her aunt Kathy: “She was fierce, clever and practical. She died proud of what her son, Innis Ingram, did to protect her”; to Leslie—thank you for our wonderful conversation. Leslie shared that she lost her father recently, and because of COVID restrictions, her mother is alone for the first time in 77 years; to Susan—your fierce advocacy for your brother is remarkable; and to Margaret Wylie—you struggled valiantly to get your husband out of care, only to lose him—I am so sorry.

I, too, lost my father during this time. I know that our loved ones matter. They did, and they still do. We will continue to stand up for our seniors because it is way, way past time to act and it is way, way past time to care.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr. Lorne Coe: More good news for the region of Durham: The government is providing the region with \$3.634 million as part of phase 2 of the Social Services Relief Fund. This funding will help the region of Durham’s most vulnerable by helping them to isolate and recover from COVID-19.

Speaker, the region of Durham, including the town of Whitby, has been facing significant challenges. This extraordinary investment is critically important, as it will help protect our most vulnerable from COVID-19, including those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

1020

Speaker, the provincial funding is part of the government’s \$510-million investment to help protect the health and safety of the province’s most vulnerable people. The funding will be delivered through the Social Services Relief Fund and go towards protecting and supporting homeless shelter staff and residents, creating or renovating over 1,500 housing units, expanding rent support programs and creating longer-term housing solutions throughout the region of Durham.

Again, Speaker, it’s good news for the 700,000 residents in the region of Durham.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Michael Mantha: I would like to share the powerful words of Arla Luepkes and her experience about her mother who is in a long-term-care facility in Sault Ste. Marie. She says, “The workers are overworked, They cannot give enough one-on-one time to residents. They are struggling to get everyone dressed, bathed and fed ... let alone any fun time or stimulating time with the residents.

“I lost my mum during the last six months in her isolation. She no longer recognizes me or recognizes the way I make her feel.

“Long-term care needs more staff, staff to provide care such as PSWs and staff to provide activities.... Until you have experienced a loved one living in a long-term-care home, you have no idea how broken the system is. I am not criticizing the existing staff; they are wonderful and they are doing what they can, but there is just not enough of them.

“We need a standard of care and quality of homes to be set, and audits to be done, to ensure each and every one of them are meeting the standards. And if they are not, there needs to be repercussions.

“Make all the homes government-run, no outsourcing or leasing from private companies. These should be run as not-for profit. We need to protect our most vulnerable citizens and give them the dignity and enjoyment for what time they have left....”

This is the experience of her mom, Judy. Let’s show Arla and her mom, Judy, that we in the Legislature have the courage, and let’s pass Time to Care today.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Stephen Crawford: As always, I’m honoured to rise here today to discuss the contributions of some organizations that have been helping individuals within my community of Oakville and the significant milestones that they have achieved.

A few weeks ago, I attended the 85th anniversary of Goodwill, the Amity Group. For many decades, the Oakville location has provided employment services, skill development and training for job seekers. Last year alone, they placed 853 people in employment, supported a further 3,000 in their independent job searches and kept 3.1 million pounds of goods out of landfills through their retail and recycling operations.

I would also like to highlight another outstanding organization in my riding, which is Oakville Meals on Wheels. For over 40 years, Oakville’s Meals on Wheels has been delivering food to seniors, making around 2,100 meal deliveries per month. Their service has only grown, unfortunately, as a result of the pandemic. On October 13, through their dedicated work, they have hit an incredible milestone, which was delivering their one-millionth meal. I was moved when I discussed this service with Steve Kelly, a local businessman, who also sits on the board and makes deliveries to clients.

I want to congratulate both of these organizations for their amazing accomplishments. Goodwill and Meals on Wheels have exemplified the Ontario spirit by continuing to support the residents of Oakville. As we endure these unprecedented times, it is vital to come together as a community to support those in need.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Chris Glover: I’m rising today to ask the government to not only vote for the Time to Care Act, but actually

to enact it, to make sure that all seniors in Ontario get four hours of hands-on care in long-term-care homes.

The care of seniors in long-term-care homes has been a provincial disgrace for decades. In 2003, the former Conservative government eliminated the mandatory 2.25 hours of care, and they used public dollars to build private, for-profit long-term-care homes. After that, Mike Harris, the former Premier, made himself the chair of Chartwell, which is one of the largest private, for-profit long-term-care home corporations. His value is now estimated at \$7 million. That's what he has in long-term care.

The Liberals did no better. In 2014 and 2016, urged by the nurses' association, the Auditor General and the coroner, they supported—they voted for—a mandatory four hours of care per day, but they never enacted it, which just shows the way that the Liberals worked. They will make these gestures, but they won't actually do what's necessary to take care of our seniors.

Today, the Conservative government has an opportunity not just to vote for the Time to Care Act, but actually to make sure that every senior in long-term care in Ontario gets four hours of hands-on care per day.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, we are just a few weeks away from our Remembrance Day commemorations, where we honour the valour, the courage and the sacrifice of those who understood that life without freedom is no life at all, so much so that they travelled from the safety of our country to risk their lives to restore the rights and freedoms of the oppressed overseas. As JFK famously said, what is the point of surviving if our freedoms do not survive with us?

Yet this Remembrance Day, we find our freedoms to gather offend the law, our freedoms to travel are limited, our freedom to dissent stifled and our freedom to be with loved ones unlawful. This Remembrance Day, during that moment of silence or when the Last Post is being played, we must ask ourselves, what have we become?

Accountable, responsible, representative government is what they fought for—government that trusts the good judgment of its citizens and does the utmost to properly inform them of the risks. We owe those who served, who risked it all and paid the ultimate price, much better than this. We must do better, to honour them; we must be like them.

BEATRICE MOREIRA-LAIDLAW

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I rise this morning with a heavy heart to remember and pay tribute to my friend who passed away earlier this month after a courageous fight against a very aggressive form of cancer. Beatrice Moreira-Laidlaw, our Queen Bea, was a dedicated community leader and a true champion for Port Credit. She worked for the Port Credit BIA, most recently as the acting general manager for the past two decades, and she had a major role

in almost everything that we hosted, like the Southside Shuffle and the Mississauga Waterfront Festival.

A week before she passed, I was honoured to join the BIA staff and other local members and business owners for a ribbon-cutting ceremony as we renamed the landing of the Port Credit Lighthouse the Queen Bea Lookout. This was a fitting tribute for Beatrice, who had dedicated so much time and so many volunteer hours to better our community, our province, our country. In this, she was an inspiration to me and to so many in Mississauga-Lakeshore. Our lakefront village will never be the same without her voice or community spirit and the incredible energy that she brought wherever she went.

On behalf of all the members, I want to extend my sincere condolences to her family and to the Port Credit BIA. Farewell, my friend. Rest in peace.

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very, very excited that Ontario was the first province in Canada to adopt IHRA. It's the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism. It was passed by order in council and signed by the Lieutenant Governor just this week.

IHRA provides a framework that can help guide our government institutions interested in understanding contemporary forms of anti-Semitism such as Holocaust denial. Unfortunately, today's anti-Semites deny Israel's right to exist. They, of course, subject Jewish people to demonization, double standards and delegitimization.

So of course this news is welcomed by so many organizations. I'm going to list a few: CIJA, B'nai Brith Canada, Canadian Friends of Simon Wiesenthal, JSpaceCanada, StandWithUs, Hasbara Fellowships, Thornhill residents, all communities, all political stripes, all religions. It's a product of decades of research, study and deliberation by many experts, and it was adopted by consensus by the governments of more than 30 countries, including the US and the European Union.

I just want to say that Gloria Gaynor had a song, "I Will Survive." "The nation of Israel lives" is how the Jewish people say it: "Am Yisroel Chai." The colours of the Israeli flag are blue and white. There must be something subconscious about me. Whenever I talk about Israel and the Jewish community and religious holidays, I end up wearing blue and white.

Congrats to everybody, and thank you for all your support.

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QUESTION PERIOD

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is to the Premier. As the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated families and businesses, Ontarians have by and large done

their best to follow the rules set out by health experts. The Premier has been harsh with most people who ignore the rules. In fact, he said, they're two "fries short of a Happy Meal."

He has just fined a music teacher for failing to wear a mask, but the Premier has nothing but excuses for the assistant to his Minister of Education. So my question is, why does the Premier think Conservative MPPs can ignore the rules during this pandemic?

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

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I thank the member opposite for the question. The health and safety of every worker in this province is our government's top priority. My ministry has been inspecting workplaces every single day during this pandemic. In fact, we've now done 25,000 investigations related to COVID-19.

Regarding the situation and the example that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, I want to reiterate that our ministry met with every school board across the province, communicating the health and safety guidelines. We met with local health and safety committees, including worker representatives, at the local level.

Mr. Speaker, our health and safety inspectors visited St. Charles Catholic School on October 23, and I can confirm that a worker was charged with failing to comply with section 28(1)(b) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. I'll have more details in the supplemental.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, with all due respect, this isn't about the teacher being fined; this is about one of the members of the Conservative caucus being given a blessing to break the rules and not having any consequences whatsoever. It's a double standard, and people need to know why the Premier is protecting his member instead of being fair in terms of the way that this pandemic is being dealt with. It's just the latest example of the Premier's confused and chaotic response to COVID-19's second wave. Working people break the rules and get steep fines, which is okay, but when Conservative MPPs break the rules, the Premier defends their actions.

The Premier claims shutdowns will be based on science and the best health advice, but he ignores that advice and even encourages his own MPPs to challenge that advice. We are in the midst of a deadly second wave of COVID-19. Why does the Premier seem to be making his responses up as he goes along?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: All of us have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. That's why we've spared no expense to protect the health and safety of every worker across the province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I joined the Premier just three weeks ago to announce that we're hiring 100 more inspectors. It will be the highest number of inspectors that the province of Ontario has ever had.

We expect every employer and every worker to follow the rules that are in place. That's why we clearly laid out in our 200 guidelines, which are available at ontario.ca,

that workers, if they have COVID-19, have to let their employer know. They have to let public health know. Every workplace is to have a pre-screening measure in place. Every employee has to pre-screen before going into work every day.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of our inspectors; 25,000 investigations have been taking place during COVID-19 to protect the health and safety of everyone in Ontario.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families are looking for leadership in the midst of this pandemic. Ontario is facing now record high cases. Hospitals are already operating above capacity and hundreds of millions of dollars in deficit. Classes are overcrowded. Long-term-care homes are understaffed. The Premier has not only failed to prepare for the second wave but seems to change the rules of the pandemic response day by day, depending on who's lobbying him and when.

What is the Premier going to do to bring confidence back—or bring confidence, period—in the government's response to the second wave of this pandemic?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: What we're going to do is to continue protecting the health and safety and the health and well-being of everyone in this province. Like I've said, we've been doing it every single day at the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. We've been out on job sites, in workplaces ensuring that health and safety practices are followed.

Everyone in this province knows, every employer, that they have legal responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We expect those laws to be followed and we expect employees to also follow those rules.

As I said, our health and safety inspectors visited this local school in question that the member opposite raised. We have issued a fine to that worker. It is before the courts. But we have clear guidelines in place. We want every worker to pre-screen before going into their workplace every day, and if they have COVID-19, they have to let public health know and let their employer know.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. But I do have to say that it's quite interesting that working people are being held to task and being fined when they do the wrong thing, but that the MPP for Niagara West gets nothing. In fact, the Premier says, "He's doing a great job, I stand behind him," even though he was in an indoor space with more people than should have been, none of them wearing masks. So what is it? Do as we say but not as we do? This is what confuses people about the way that this government is handling this pandemic.

The government's failed response to the second wave has meant actually life and death consequences, in long-term care particularly. A few weeks ago, the minister of that ministry said that the COVID-19 impact was similar

to that of the flu, which is just wild. But since then, the number of residents with active cases in long-term care—in the last 24 hours, 11 dead; today, another five. The province has not seen 11 deaths in a 24-hour period since June.

After the horrors of the first wave, what the heck is going on? Why is the government—

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I wish to reiterate my position that our vulnerable people in long-term care have experienced tragedy in the past, and they are vulnerable. Our government is committed to high-quality care in long-term care, to the safety of residents and staff and caregivers. This is something that our government has demonstrated our commitment to from the very beginning.

Our ministry is a stand-alone ministry to shine the light and make sure that we address the issues that have been long-standing and neglected by the previous government, often times supported by the opposition, including the member opposite. This is something that we are taking active measures on, and I want to reiterate that COVID-19 is unlike anything we've ever seen before in the world and the impacts have been devastating. I want to be clear about that.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: History is repeating itself as we speak; history is repeating itself in long-term care. After the Canadian Forces exposed the horrors inside Ontario's long-term-care homes during the first wave, the Premier promised change. That's what he promised. And just like the promise of an iron ring back in the spring, that promise has meant nothing. It's meant nothing. The Premier simply has decided not to act.

Now we learn that the Armed Forces were at the ready for an entire month. For an entire month they were waiting to get the call from the Premier to protect our seniors in long-term care. So the question to the Premier is, how many people actually lost their lives? How many people died in long-term care while the Premier waited a month before calling in the Armed Forces that were at the ready to help us out?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you again to the member opposite for the question. Our government is a compassionate government. Our government understands the needs in long-term care, which is exactly why it has focused its efforts and made long-term care a priority.

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COVID-19 was ravaging the world in the first wave. Our long-term-care homes are faring substantially better with all the actions we've taken, including actions to address the IPAC, the staffing, the measures we put in place to address caregivers.

I want to thank the Canadian Armed Forces for coming in in our time of need. I have a quote from the brigadier-general, who told the commission that he believes the military arrived at the right time to make a difference. He

says, "We didn't come too early and weren't applied in incorrect locations, and we didn't come too late to actually not be of any value to be able to stabilize those homes.... We are quite honestly very proud to have been called to help Ontario and Ontarians in their time of need."

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I can guarantee the government, the minister and the Premier that those people who can't get a day in court, who can't get accountability, who can't get any kind of justice for their loved ones, do not see this government as a compassionate government. They do not.

The Premier's failure to plan for the second wave of COVID-19 has put seniors in long-term care in danger once again—shamefully. We're seeing that across the province today, with outbreaks in 88 homes. Let me just see if that's increased again today—actually, 87 homes today.

But the Premier's promise around the iron ring in long-term care—the people to whom he promised that that protection would be in place didn't get it. Instead, who he's protecting is the for-profit companies and his own government. If this government was sincere at all, remotely sincere about change, the minister responsible for the tragedy would have resigned by now; the Premier would have moved heaven and earth to shore up long-term care and get them the staff and resources they needed.

The question to the Premier is, why hasn't he done any of those things?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Attorney General to reply.

Hon. Doug Downey: I'm pleased to rise to talk about where we are focused. We are focused on the people of Ontario, the people who are struggling through very tough times through COVID, whether it be small businesses or individuals, whether it's people who are contributing to their community, people who want to contribute to their community but are not feeling comfortable and safe and secure. We're doing so many things to try and provide a level of comfort so that they will engage in the community and help Ontario recover and come back forward as Ontario recovers together, instead of taking individual speculative pot shots.

I think we should ask the opposition to come join us to help support the people who are supporting the rest of us in Ontario. We only have one direction to go, Mr. Speaker, and we have to move together.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Today, my Time to Care Act will be debated in this House and voted on tomorrow. This is now the fourth time the New Democrats have tabled this bill that calls for a minimum standard of four hours of direct, hands-on care. It is a practical, effective and immediate solution that would vastly improve the lives of those who work and live in long-term care, and it has been endorsed by all major

unions, prominent long-term-care academics, advocacy groups and families. It has also been called for by the government's own staffing report and long-term-care commission.

This government, the minister has said, is a compassionate government. Will the government dig deep, find their compassion, and will the Premier fast-track the bill and make a minimum standard of care law today?

Interjections.

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

To reply, the Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member, not only for the question but for the work she has done on this. As has been mentioned, for many years, previous efforts by the governing parties before did not result in any tangible difference, and I think that that really speaks to the neglect of the previous government on this.

The Time to Care Act aligns with the lessons we've learned from the experts, the data that we have. We understand the importance of what you've described, and I just want to say that proper staffing is absolutely critical to our ability to care for our loved ones, our residents, our most vulnerable people in long-term care, and that is something we've been actively working on to make sure we take the advisory panel's recommendations to heart. It is important that we continue to work across ministries, whether it's with the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Labour and others.

I will be voting in favour of this bill.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yesterday, when asked if she would support the Time to Care bill, the Minister of Long-Term Care said she would vote to support in favour, and now she's saying she'll vote to support in favour, but I also want to make sure that she votes and pushes her colleagues and the Premier to expedite this bill through the committee process and back into this Legislature for third reading to make it law.

As you know, in committee when we asked that question, of course—I'll read what the minister had said, as she said today: "You have to understand that in order to provide four hours of care per resident, you need the staff to provide that." If this government is truly compassionate and serious enough about this issue, implementing this bill, funding needs to be attached.

Will the Premier commit to significant investments in the upcoming budget to hire more staff with full-time hours, a livable wage and benefits, and pass my Time to Care bill to make quality of care happen for all our vulnerable seniors in long-term care?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Once again, thank you for your interest in this area and for the question. We've been very clear and, as I said yesterday publicly, I will be supporting this bill. I repeated that again today.

But I'd like to outline the dollars that have already been spent in this. Clearly, we need to understand what has been

spent and how we move forward. A \$540-million investment just a couple of weeks ago to protect seniors living in long-term care—specifically, \$405 million to help homes with operating pressures, including staffing supports. We're providing another \$461 million to give PSWs a \$3-an-hour wage increase, another \$14 million to the PSW training fund to continue training more PSWs and more staff, which is so badly needed to address increased levels of care, and an additional \$10.3 million for a new personal support worker return-of-service program.

We have the responsibility, as the Premier has said, to protect our most vulnerable while ensuring that they continue to have access to the best medical staff and their caregivers, and we will continue to do this.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Roman Baber: My question is to the Minister of Education. After the Liberals' disastrous record of 600 school closures and an enormous repair backlog, Ontarians expect better from their government. This government, led by Premier Ford, is committed to doing all we can to support students and staff, investing in our students and in learning environments. Last week, I was pleased to see the Premier and Minister of Education announce our government's historic investment in new schools, additions and child care spaces across the province.

Can the Minister of Education please tell the House why these investments are so important in reversing the disastrous Liberal legacy of cuts and closures and how this funding will help our students?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member from York Centre for his advocacy for public education in the province. Indeed, the Premier announced another investment in the midst of this pandemic. We've been dealing with the great consequences of COVID since, really, mid-March, and, since then, we have announced nearly a billion dollars in new investment to flow to rebuild schools, to renovate schools and to expand child care for working parents. In fact, this is part of our broader \$12-billion plan over the decade to enhance, improve and modernize public education and public schools in the province.

Last week, the Premier announced that 20 new schools will be funded, that eight major, permanent renovations would be funded, representing nearly 16,000 net new spaces for learning within our schools, as well as an additional 870 licensed child care spaces—affordable child care for working parents.

We know there is much more to do to improve the state of our schools following a decade of closures under the former Liberal government, but this Premier, and this government, is committed to improving our schools, modernizing our learning spaces and ensuring parents get the very best from their government.

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

Mr. Roman Baber: Thank you, Minister, for that response. These are great initiatives our government is

taking, and I know that parents who reside in my riding take supporting the next generations very seriously.

Can the minister please assure the Legislature that the government will not stop supporting our students with the important repairs and new school buildings as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic?

1050

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Obviously, the Premier and the government are fully committed to making sure our schools are modern, they're accessible and they're technologically connected. That's why, Speaker, we have ensured that funding is flowing. Twice now in this pandemic, we have announced capital rounds to rebuild and renovate schools and expand child care.

What we are committed to doing is ensuring that the learning spaces that house our children meet the standards of parents in this province—a high standard. We understand that the schools that we've inherited require major improvement. That's why we made a landmark investment, underscoring our commitment to ensure these spaces are improved.

Just last week, I joined the member from Eglinton–Lawrence to announce a significant investment in Loretto Abbey, an institution that educated women in this country before our country was founded. We are ensuring that that space, a historic space, can be preserved. We're taking action in urban and rural French and English schools across the province, and we are going to continue to do that to ensure students in this province learn in the very best spaces.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: My question is to the Premier. Last week, Neskantaga First Nation evacuated. They had to shut down the water plant when an oily sheen was found in the reservoir. Tests show it is hydrocarbon. I was in Neskantaga and saw this myself a couple of days ago.

With no running water, people have to use bottled water and lake water to flush toilets and wash their hands. Speaker, this is so wrong. Complacency and inaction equals apartheid to access clean drinking water. Water is such a basic human right.

Neskantaga is a signatory to Treaty 9. This government needs to provide direct funding and support to Neskantaga through this crisis. What has Ontario done for Neskantaga?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To the parliamentary assistant, the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you very much to the member for that question. It gives us the opportunity to talk about the great work that Minister Rickford has been doing on this file.

We know that the water treatment plant was built by the federal government and there are some deficiencies with it. But we have been working very closely with the federal government to make sure that they step up and actually do what they need to do to ensure that there is safe drinking water.

The federal government has made a commitment to end boil-water advisories, so Minister Rickford has been working directly with Minister Miller to make sure that they actually complete that.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: To this day, Minister Rickford has not reached out to Chief Moonias.

Playing jurisdictional ambiguity with the lives of the people in Neskantaga is not acceptable. All services are shut down in Neskantaga due to this crisis, due to this public health emergency.

Losing water to the whole community during COVID-19 is a disaster, Mr. Speaker. After 25-plus years without clean drinking water, Neskantaga has no running water at all.

There are 14 other Neskantagas across Kiiwetinoong and they need drinking water as well. This would not be allowed in a riding like Etobicoke North.

When will Ontario invest in infrastructure for clean drinking water for Neskantaga and other First Nations who need it?

Mr. Dave Smith: Again, thank you very much for the question. It gives us the opportunity to talk about what the Ontario government has been doing.

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' Indigenous drinking water projects office staff worked directly with Neskantaga with respect to the building of this treatment plant. The Minister of Indigenous Affairs has been working directly with Chief Archibald, the regional chief for the area, to make sure that we're doing what we need to do to get the federal government to step up and do what they are supposed to do. This is their responsibility, and we are working with the community to make sure that the federal government completes what they have started.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. John Fraser: My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. Today, there are 87 homes in outbreak in Ontario. Eleven of those have double-digit cases. In Prescott-Russell, double-digit resident cases; there are 37. At Starwood in Nepean, in the minister's backyard, there are 41. Twenty-one people have died at Ottawa's West End Villa.

The minister has failed to protect all residents in long-term care, failed to move residents out of four-bed ward rooms. At Fairview Nursing Home, they are separating COVID-19-positive patients from COVID-19-negative patients in the same room with wall dividers.

Given the minister's training, does she think that wall dividers are an effective way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Ontario's long-term-care homes?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member for the question. Really, the data is important, but we always have to keep in mind it is the residents, their families and the staff in our long-term-care homes who are the centre of our government's efforts to prevent and

contain COVID-19. This is the thing we've been active on since the very beginning.

The long-standing neglect of our long-term-care homes—some built in the 1970s, and very few spaces were built under the tenure of the previous government. The stage, unfortunately, was set by the previous government's inaction and supported by the opposition we have here today.

But looking at the numbers, our homes—and I reiterate this issue: An outbreak means one resident case or one staff case, and in 52 cases of our outbreaks, there are no resident cases. In the homes where there are outbreaks, there is an integrated response using Public Health Ontario, the public health units in the area, the hospitals, the IPAC teams, the rapid deployment teams. Our homes are faring much—

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

Mr. John Fraser: The minister mentioned inaction. The minister's delayed decision-making and failure to act quickly has caused unnecessary suffering and death. Last March, the minister waited more than a month to raise the wages of PSWs and prevent them from working in more than one home. We found out this morning that they waited a month. The Canadian Armed Forces were ready for a month before they were called in. It took three months to figure out the importance of the role of our central caregivers.

This summer, while BC and Quebec were aggressively hiring PSWs, this minister was doing not enough—not enough. No plans were made to move residents out of four-bed ward rooms or what the minister likes to describe as “decanting” residents—decanting.

Speaker, through you, speaking of inaction, why is the minister taking so long to make decisions that save lives?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I would like to emphasize to the member opposite that we have three highly respected individuals, eminent in their fields, who have used the terms “decanting” and “decant.” That is a term that is being used, and that is—

Mr. John Fraser: You don't need to use it.

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: It is a term that needs to be understood so that we can understand what the commission is asking for. I think that's the first thing.

The second thing is, our efforts to address a new virus that the world has never known before, affecting long-term-care homes across the world, were taken as an integrated approach with public health experts across ministries, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Long-Term Care—many, many ministries involved in this—Ontario Health, the public health units, the medical officers of health, the hospitals—an integrated response. All of this had to be measured because in health and the health care system, if you move one area, another area is affected. All of this had to be coordinated, and I'm grateful to all the—

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

The next question?

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Mr. Stephen Crawford: My question is to the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues. On Monday, I heard some deeply troubling allegations concerning women's issues here in the House. In her statement for Women's History Month, the member for Toronto–St. Paul's raised concern over unanswered letters, the lack of support for women across the province and, quite frankly, the allegations were very concerning.

The member said, and I quote, “I wrote to the minister about these women's plights. I wrote to the minister about more funding for sexual assault centres, more funding for pay equity, and I was told, ‘Try MAG. Try housing....’”

We heard that the minister stands “with a government that didn't supply enough PPE to essential workers on the front lines” and that she doesn't support female teachers of the province and has legislated dangerous schools. These are just some of the many things that were alleged.

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Can the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues please address these allegations?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for Oakville for that question. I know you're an advocate for women, not only in your home, as a father of four daughters, but also for the women in your riding.

Unfortunately, the member from Toronto–St. Paul's is mistaken in her assertions. I have said before and I will say it again: This government and the Premier are committed to ensuring that women and girls across Ontario have access to the opportunities they deserve.

We have provided \$405 million to help long-term care with operating pressures related to COVID-19, including additional PPE for front-line workers, who are predominantly female. In my own ministry, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies has been working with us to provide over 10 million pieces of PPE to those in residential settings, including in women's shelters to protect those fleeing from violence. Thanks to the work of the Minister of Education, we are investing \$550 million across the province as part of the 2021 capital priorities project.

I'll have more to say in my supplemental.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you for clarifying it. The member for Toronto–St. Paul's also raised the alarm and suggested that this government and the minister have left female small businesses “hanging ... by a thread.” She also stated that this government works in silos and doesn't know what each other's ministers are doing.

Finally, the member stated that girls need to see leaders today become leaders tomorrow, and that I certainly agree with. As the father of four daughters, it is important to me to see strong women in many different roles in their lives,

be they teachers, be they mothers, be they political leaders, be they business owners.

For the women in my riding and for the generation of girls in the wings, this minister needs to respond. Through you, Speaker, can the minister answer the question: What are you doing to make sure that women are not left behind?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thanks again to the member for raising this question. I am floored by these assertions. I speak to and work with my ministerial colleagues on a daily basis, whether it is with the Solicitor General and the Attorney General to combat human trafficking and support those fleeing domestic violence; or the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, working to support children and women in Ontario in residential settings; or the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Colleges and Universities, encouraging more and more young girls and women to get into the skilled trades and STEM sectors. I also work with the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction to support all job creators across Ontario, including our women-led and women-owned businesses.

I could go on and on, but I'll run out of time. What I will say, though, is that I strongly agree with both the member from Oakville and the member from Toronto—St. Paul's that girls need to see leaders and become leaders of tomorrow. I want to thank all the women in this House for being examples to girls in their ridings and across Ontario.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: My question is to the Premier. This week, the public found out that the Premier prioritizes backroom deals for his friend Charles McVety over helping people through this pandemic, and that's what he spent his summer planning. That's what his focus was on, and now our offices are receiving letters. At least 10 universities and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations have written to us. They said this Premier is undermining public education and the Ontario Human Rights Code. They said the Ontario government shouldn't be giving degree-granting privileges to institutions or any school that embeds hate in their "curriculum."

Why did the Premier make the time to help Charles McVety grow his platform for hate rather than helping the people of this province survive the pandemic?

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I thank the member opposite for her question. It's not the first time that we've heard the question in this Legislature. As I've said before, we respect all communities, all religious communities, all types of communities, whether they be LGBT or anybody else, whatever the community is in our ridings, but we also respect the process. There are political processes; there are government organizations and institutions that have processes. We understand that this is an independent review.

We are waiting for the ruling by this independent review, and then the ministry will be able to review the review.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: We will keep asking questions until we actually receive answers.

Back to the Premier: We all know that the hate Charles McVety spews—we know all about it. We know what the goals are for his college. It is shameful that while Muslim Ontarians are writing this government, demanding that they address Islamophobia, the Premier delivers a gift to an Islamophobe. It's shameful that the government let Charles McVety know that they'd be putting together new legislation specifically for him.

The government keeps claiming that this is a process, but it's clear from Mr. McVety's application that he knew that this was a done deal. And serious questions remain about why the Canada Christian College application mysteriously disappeared as soon as questions were raised.

So my question to the Premier: Will the Premier admit that this is simply not a transparent process?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Thornhill and parliamentary assistant.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I would like to remind the member opposite that this is the exact same process that OCAD and Algoma went through just last year and that it's unfortunate as well—since the NDP once supported these very institutions, especially when its own members David Winninger and Rosario Marchese brought forth similar bills for faith-based schools, such as Heritage Baptist College and Heritage Theological Seminary and the Institute for Christian Studies.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is for the Premier. In April, the FAO reported that in March over 1,000 sick and elderly patients in our hospitals had been transferred to our overcrowded and understaffed long-term-care facilities. This was at the direction of your government, under the advice and guidance of your unelected public health officials and the COVID command table. Two thirds of all COVID deaths, nearly 2,000 people, died in these overcrowded LTC homes. We are all witnesses to these horrible tragedies that happened in long-term care, but is anyone responsible?

Bill 218 will not only provide immunity for the consequences of these actions but also conceal these actions for all time. What is the Premier afraid of?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply for the government, the Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: What our government is doing is looking out for the people of Ontario in terms of making sure that those who have acted in good faith and those who have made an honest effort and have taken public health advice, that those people have a level of security to contribute to our communities, to engage in our communities. And I'm talking well beyond what the member is referencing. I'm talking about the Cobourg Soccer Club, who didn't operate this year because their board of

directors and their volunteers were too nervous to get on the field and get the kids on the field.

I have dozens and dozens—hundreds of examples, quite frankly, of that, mental health and addictions ramifications. You can touch on almost any area of society, Mr. Speaker, and there was nervousness. That is what our government is protecting and moving forward so that we can reinvigorate our communities and make sure that we come through COVID as a team.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Again to the Premier: We know that confinement and isolation is unhealthy and is reserved as a punishment for dangerous criminals, but the elderly in LTC have been subjected to this cruelty for eight months. Every day, we hear more stories from the elderly who would rather die than live anymore alone and in fear. We hear the tragic stories of families not permitted to visit.

The refusal to hold a public inquiry, and now Bill 218, ensures that the full extent of this tragedy will be hidden from public scrutiny. And why? Why did we not provide temporary transfers out of LTC? Why were our elderly denied health care in our hospitals? Why were doctors prevented from helping in LTC?—just to name a few.

Speaker, why is the Premier abdicating responsibility and hiding from accountability? Is he afraid that the truth will be his end?

Hon. Doug Downey: Again, we're supporting the communities, and we want to make sure that those bad actors are held to account. We are going to make sure that there is room in the system and focus so that some of these tragic situations will be dealt with accordingly.

There seems to be some misunderstanding by the member opposite of what exactly is happening. We've been investing. We are the first government to set up a long-term-care minister. We are the first government to invest record numbers in our systems to protect the people of Ontario. There are tragic situations, and those will be dealt with, but we want answers and we want them quick. That's why we've set up the commission: so that we can get answers and we can react to them.

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If we put in place an inquiry, which he keeps asking for, it would be years and years, and we don't have that kind of time, Mr. Speaker.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: My question is to the Associate Minister of Energy.

As everyone knows, the previous Liberal government drove up the price of electricity, crippling our economy and imposing unbearable costs on my constituents and on residential customers across our province. Could the minister please tell us how our government is cleaning up the hydro mess the Liberals left behind?

Hon. Bill Walker: Thank you to the member from Markham-Thornhill for the great question and the great work he does on behalf of all of his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, when our government was elected, we found that the previous Liberal government had signed over 1,300 expensive contracts for wind and solar power, with the Auditor General saying that their scheme had cost Ontario ratepayers over \$37 billion—absolutely shocking and deplorable.

We promised to clean up the hydro mess, and that's exactly what we're doing. You cannot undo 15 years of wild mismanagement overnight, but we have made significant progress. We took immediate action to cancel unnecessary contracts that had been given to Liberal insiders, which saved over \$800 million in system costs. We modernized the Ontario Energy Board and we undertook a systematic review to remove unnecessary costs from our energy system.

Mr. Speaker, we are also giving consumers choice in how they pay for their electricity to best suit their needs and save on cost, and there's more to come. I'll speak to that in my supplementary.

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Minister, for that response. I'm glad that our government is focused on putting ratepayers and the people first and making the electricity system more affordable.

Could the minister please assure my constituents that they can expect long-term stability and productivity in their electricity pricing under our government?

Hon. Bill Walker: Thank you again. Unlike the Liberals, supported most of the time by the NDP, our government will always put the people of Ontario first. I can assure the member and his constituents that we will never stop working for the people of Ontario, as we fix what was a broken, overpriced system under Liberal mismanagement for 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, every month when Ontario businesses and/or homeowners look at their electricity bills, they can thank the previous Liberal government for strapping them with the global adjustment fee, a fee designed by the Liberals to pay for unnecessary green projects. They made decisions about this province's energy future based on ideology and not what's in the best interests of Ontario people. Ontario's energy advantage is our clean, reliable and affordable nuclear and hydro assets.

Ontarians weren't part of the backroom deals that the Liberals gave to solar and wind generators that guaranteed 20-year contracts at sometimes up to 40% more than fair market price. Ontarians don't deserve to pay for Liberal mistakes. We will continue to work tirelessly to restore fairness and predictability to our energy system.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. This week, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board announced that it will be eliminating 200 teachers and collapsing classes. As cases of COVID-19 are once again on the rise in the province, class sizes in Hamilton's public school board are going to increase.

For months, families have been begging this government to take COVID-19 seriously and reduce class sizes. Instead, this government spent the summer declaring victory, while boards were scrambling to make sure that schools were safe. Now, we're seeing the consequences of the government's inaction.

Why is this government allowing Hamilton class sizes to increase during the rise in COVID-19 cases?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: On the contrary, Speaker, we've seen classroom sizes being reduced in Hamilton in the public and Catholic school boards, according to their own directors and the admission of their own school boards.

In fact, in Hamilton district school board, they've been provided with—when you look at unlocking the reserve fund, the provincial fund, the federal fund—\$21 million more to help them hire more nurses; 23 more nurses were hired in the public health unit to date as a consequence of provincial investment.

More educators were hired—87, as noted, according to the September Pulse survey. Overall in this province, there are 2,700 new educators hired because this Premier has been funding public education to ensure we have the most comprehensive plan to keep kids safe. We will continue to be there for our school boards. We will continue to build upon the national leading investment, the comprehensive guidance we've provided, to ensure all students and all staff remain safe in the province of Ontario.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: This government is sitting on \$9 billion of COVID-19 support money and \$500 million in federal dollars for return-to-school funding. But in Hamilton, our public school board is facing a deficit this year. Teaching positions are being eliminated and class sizes are going up.

This government has the power to ensure that Hamilton students have safer and smaller class sizes, but instead is choosing to save money on the backs of Hamilton students. Why won't the government support Hamilton's public education system?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Across the province of Ontario, including in Hamilton, likewise right across the GTHA, school boards have acknowledged that provincial funding, federal funding and reserve funding has enabled them to hire more educators than they had last year and hire more custodians, in both the public and Catholic school boards, than they did last year, according to their director, according to their chair. There is more hiring as a consequence of provincial investment.

Classroom sizes within your respective community, member, have actually been reduced as a consequence of provincial investment. That is the relevant element for a parent observing: Has the classroom size been reduced according to the provincial average? Are there more custodians? Are there more public health nurses? Are there more teachers? In each and every example, the answer is yes. That is because of our \$1.3-billion investment, notwithstanding we are spending more than any

other province. Above and beyond the financial investment, it's about ensuring we have a comprehensive guidance that protects kids, mitigates the risk and ensures that we do our part within our schools to flatten the curve in the province of Ontario.

SMALL BUSINESS

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Ma question s'adresse au ministre des Finances. My question is to the Minister of Finance. Since May, and repeatedly over the summer, I've been asking this government to address the price gouging that has been happening with food delivery services, something this government has been slow to address—as in, five months slow. Restaurant owners, small business owners have been pleading with this government for months to cap food delivery commission fees at max 15%.

Now the Premier's nephew, a Toronto city councillor, is asking the same question. So my question to the finance minister: Now that his boss's nephew is also asking, will he finally support small business owners by capping food delivery commission fees at 15% in next week's budget?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I want to thank the honourable member for that question. I followed that question as well. I think this government early on asked every Ontarian to support their small business owners in the restaurant business, as we know they're hanging on, as the Premier said, by the skin of their teeth.

What we've asked and what the Premier has asked is, would the food delivery businesses also put some skin in the game, help these restaurant owners who are trying to employ their employees, pay wages, pay rent and keep viable so that we can get through COVID-19? Whatever city council in Toronto decides, they've been told to talk to the mayor and the mayor will talk to the Premier and we'll see where that ends up.

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

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Thank you to the member. Again to the finance minister: This government continues with contradictory and confusing messages while we're in stage 2, and a clear lack of movement on important files. They continue to offer no support to restaurant owners and job creators who have been asking for it for almost six months.

Last week, a Ford family friend contacted the Premier directly to rush through approvals on a plan to extend patio dining. Yet again, we can see that the only way to get any movement on this file is to have someone with a personal relationship with the Premier to give him a call.

When will this government start respecting Ontario's business owners who don't have a personal relationship with the Premier and give all business owners the support they need during this time?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant, the member for Willowdale.

Mr. Stan Cho: Speaker, unlike the Liberals opposite, we don't define success on the government benches by

how quickly you spend money. That's why we've put aside the necessary resources, the largest contingency fund in history, the largest reserve fund in history, to be adaptive in an ever-changing environment that is COVID-19.

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We recognize that businesses are suffering across every corner of this province, and that was the case in March when we introduced our initial set of supports, that was the case in August when we increased those supports to \$30 billion, and that is the case today. That's why we recently announced \$300 million in direct support for those businesses affected by the revised stage 2. That's going to help these businesses with their fixed costs—like cutting additional taxes, like helping with property tax, and like keeping hydro rates low. We recognize that small businesses are counting on this government, and we will continue to provide those supports to weather the storm.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. Vermont Square is a long-term-care home in my riding where 62 residents and 47 staff have tested positive for COVID-19 and eight residents have died, making this the worst outbreak in the province.

I recently held a meeting to hear from staff and family members. I heard about long testing delays making it difficult to stay on top of the outbreak. I heard about the need to hire more staff and concerns about the aging HVAC system. I heard from Toronto Western, which has been tasked with supporting Vermont Square, about the need for more provincial funding to help cover the costs of helping this long-term-care home—funding that has been promised but hasn't arrived.

When are Vermont Square residents actually going to get the help that they need to control the largest outbreak in the province?

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you for the question.

Vermont Square is a high priority for us in the Ministry of Long-Term Care—working with all the various groups that are supporting this home right now and have been supporting it, including the hospital, including public health, including Ontario Health; making sure that there is PPE and staffing is made supportive.

Again, many, many homes that experienced outbreaks in wave 1 were experiencing critical staffing shortages. In wave 2, right now, there are no homes with critical staffing levels because we're getting them the help that they need—including the PPE and the six to eight weeks that our government announced a couple of weeks ago; to make sure that all our homes are equipped with that—so the staffing, the PPE, the infection prevention and control, making sure that our residents have our support and that all families get communications from their home.

Vermont Square has been getting the support that it needs, and we will continue to provide Vermont Square with the help that it needs.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Minister, I speak with Vermont Square regularly, and staff have made it very clear to me that they need more help than they're currently getting.

Back to the Premier: Before the outbreak at Vermont Square, surveillance testing was completed every 14 days, and then it took another 14 days for test results to be returned. Now staff and residents are tested weekly but still wait six days for results.

As COVID-19 cases rise, this government's testing strategy is very clearly putting seniors in long-term care at greater risk.

Staff at Vermont Square are telling me very clearly that these testing delays are making it difficult to manage the outbreak. Toronto Western is telling me that the backlog in important tests is too big. And then caregivers are telling me that—Tiago's mother is placed in the same room as someone who is COVID-19 positive, but they will not move his mother until her test results come back.

Why is a long-term-care home in Ontario with the worst COVID-19 outbreak waiting so long for test results?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant, the member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

We remain committed to ensuring that Ontarians can continue to get tested and receive their results in a very timely manner. I understand that Toronto Public Health reported this past Monday that 85% of tests are coming back in 24 to 48 hours, which is up near the high standard we had before August 26; I think we had 90% of tests coming back in 24 to 48 hours.

Our government has invested over a billion dollars recently to expand our provincial lab capacity, and we're processing those tests as fast as they come in. This investment includes hiring more lab staff, professional staff, improving data quality through digitizing requisition forms and other automated features. And I want to make it clear: Ontario Health has been certain that long-term-care homes have a priority at provincial labs and those tests will be returned.

We have tested almost five million Ontarians to date, which is about a third of the population, which is a very high record of testing, and we're going to keep working on it to make it better.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, it's become clear that Charles McVety knew that legislation would be introduced to give his college new degree-granting powers before he had even applied for them. We know this because he put it in writing for all of us to see.

What we don't know is how many meetings Mr. McVety had with the Premier, his minister or other government officials, because Mr. McVety has never

registered as a lobbyist. Ontarians deserve to know who Mr. McVety met with, when, and for how long.

It's appalling that the government is using the COVID-19 emergency to slip through legislation to benefit one of their friends and long-time supporters, certainly someone with a long track record of homophobia, Islamophobia and bigotry.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is who did Mr. McVety meet with and how did he know that the government's legislation was coming before it was produced?

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Enabling legislation for private, faith-based degree-granting institutions has happened under governments of all stripes here in Ontario.

All private post-secondary institutions in Ontario require a thorough and rigorous organizational review in order to change their names or expand degree-granting authority. This review is being undertaken by the independent, non-partisan Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board; we call it PEQAB. PEQAB is made up of independent experts and individuals with significant experience in post-secondary education experience.

I think the member opposite joins all of us here in the Legislature in waiting for the independent review process to take place and waiting for their ruling.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: My supplemental is also for the Premier. Why won't the government answer the question? Who did Mr. McVety meet with, and when? It's a simple question.

If the government won't stand up for transparency, hopefully someone on that side will not condone Islamophobia, Mr. Speaker. Let me quote Mr. McVety very quickly: "Islam is not just a religion, it's a political and cultural system as well and we know that Christians, Jews and Hindus don't have the same mandate for a hostile takeover. Here in Canada there is a real, clear and present danger."

Mr. Speaker, I've attended services at the masjid in Orléans and in Cumberland many times and I've never heard anyone discuss a hostile takeover of Canada. What I have heard them discuss is, "Love for all and hatred for none." Frankly, Mr. Speaker, that's the same thing taught at my church.

So, my question, Mr. Speaker: How can this government possibly allow a man with such a record of bigotry, Islamophobia and homophobia to grant degrees in the arts and the sciences?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Again, I thank the member opposite. Once again, I support, and I invite everybody in the Legislature to also say that they support, the independent review process. The independent review process is not going to be interfered by members of the Legislature on this side of the House. I think that we should respect them as professionals, not to be interfered by anybody. We will await their ruling. It's an independent ruling, as I have said

several times, and the ministry will then review and make their decision based on that independent review.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday, we saw another 144 new school-related cases of COVID-19, bringing the cumulative total to over 2,000. Over 12% of our schools have reported cases right now. As Ontario continues its record-breaking second wave of COVID-19, we're still hearing of class sizes that are increasing, despite the minister's spin, as students move between online and virtual learning.

Even after questioning the education minister at estimates committee for hours yesterday, we still don't know what changed following the Premier's June commitment to 15-student classes, and the announcement of the reopening plan which kept most class sizes status quo.

Speaker, my question to the finance minister: Will the November budget include additional funding to reduce class sizes to protect students, school staff and their families?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Indeed, in the last budget, the government announced a \$700-million increase in the \$25 billion in the Grants for Student Needs, which is the vehicle of funding—the most significant investment, at that point. We have then enhanced investments with provincial monies—\$300 million more in federal monies—and of course, reserve funding.

Speaker, just to respond to the issue of outbreak in the schools, according to the Chief Medical Officer of Health, he has noted that transmission has been low and a relative success: 87.7% of schools have had no reported active cases at all. All schools in the province of Ontario are open today. There's not a solitary example of a school closed today, knowing that this fluctuates according to public health data.

We have seen an incredible resolve from our educators, from our principals, from public health nurses and doctors working together to reduce the risk in our schools, and we should celebrate the hard work being done on the ground to keep these kids safe.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: The Premier said he was going to spare no expense to keep COVID out of Ontario schools, but when it came time to act, he held back. In the Toronto District School Board, 5,500 enrolled students are unaccounted for. They just never returned to school. Thousands more have left in-person learning because they are not confident in this government's plan. The TDSB estimates that if these enrolment changes hold, the corresponding reduction in funding through the funding formula is going to mean a loss of \$41 million, during a pandemic.

Will the minister commit today that no board will see a reduction in their provincial funding as a result of enrolment changes?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Well, every single board in the province of Ontario is receiving more money, because this government is committed to protecting kids and the staff in the province of Ontario. In fact, in Toronto, we have unlocked over \$110 million in provincial-federal reserve funding—\$110 million for a single school board, the Toronto District School Board, to ensure they can hire more teachers, which they have; to ensure they can reduce class sizes, which they are. In fact, within the average class size in Toronto, in kindergarten, it's below 18; in grades 1 to 3, it's below 17; between grades 4 and 8, it's around 20 kids. These are well below the provincial averages of last year, for example.

It underscores quite clearly that we are putting in place the funding to hire more teachers, to ensure distancing and to ensure every layer of prevention, according to the public health advice, knowing that this plan has been fully endorsed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health of this province, which I believe gives confidence to parents that doctors, not politicians, are in charge of keeping kids safe in Ontario.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We now have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 92, related to the allocation of time on Bill 218, An Act to enact the Supporting Ontario's Recovery Act, 2020 respecting certain proceedings relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19), to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and to revoke a regulation.

The bells will 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 1134 to 1204.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The vote has been held on government notice of motion number 92, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 218, An Act to enact the Supporting Ontario's Recovery Act, 2020 respecting certain proceedings relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19), to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and to revoke a regulation.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 34; the nays are 20.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business at this time, this House stands adjourned until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1205 to 1500.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting notice for private members' public business and the order of precedence for private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice with respect to private members' public business. Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that notice for ballot item number 30, standing in the name of Mr. Coteau; ballot item number 34, standing in the name of Mr. Anand; and ballot item number 40, standing in the name of Mr. Gill, be waived; and

That a change be made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Ms. Wynne assumes ballot item number 30 and Mr. Coteau assumes ballot item number 45.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that notice for ballot item number 30, standing in the name of Mr. Coteau—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have a very relevant petition today. It's called "Time to Care."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANTI-VAPING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Mr. Mike Harris: I wanted to thank the members of Ms. Farenholt's grade 10 civics class for providing me with hundreds of signatures that I have here with this petition.

"Whereas in 2018, flavoured vaping products were made legal, and the flavours have been attracting youth over Canada to start vaping; and

"Whereas vaping was intended to reduce cigarette smoking, instead more people than ever are getting addicted to nicotine through vaping. The colourful packaging and variety of flavours appeal to young people and the health effects of vaping are still largely unknown;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban the selling of any and all flavoured e-cigarettes, electronic nicotine delivery systems, vaporizer cigarettes, and vape pens."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll endorse this petition with my signature.

SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier Diane Généreux de Val Therese dans mon comté pour la pétition.

« Temps pour les soins.

« Alors que des soins de qualité pour les 78 000 résidents » et résidentes « des maisons de SLD est une priorité pour les familles de l'Ontario; et

« Alors que le gouvernement provincial ne fournit pas un financement adéquat pour assurer un niveau de soins et de personnels dans les foyers de SLD afin de répondre à l'augmentation de l'acuité des résidents » et résidentes « et du nombre croissant de résidents » et résidentes « ayant des comportements complexes; et

« Alors que plusieurs enquêtes du coroner de l'Ontario sur les décès dans les maisons de SLD ont recommandé une augmentation des soins pour les résidents » et résidentes « et des niveaux du personnel. Les études des normes minimales de soins recommandent 4,1 heures de soins directs par jour; »

Ils pétitionnent « l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de modifier la Loi sur les foyers de SLD (2007) pour un minimum de quatre heures par résident par jour, ajusté pour le niveau d'acuité et la répartition des cas. »

J'appuie cette pétition, je vais la signer et je l'amène aux greffiers.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Dave Smith: I have a petition entitled "Pass Bill 215, Main Street Recovery Act, 2020.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's downtown businesses have experienced much of the negative ... impact of COVID-19; and

"Whereas our downtown businesses are small mom-and-pop shops, employ local citizens and invest in our communities; and

"Whereas our main street businesses have faced unique challenges through the COVID-19 pandemic; and

"Whereas in that same vein, these businesses face particular challenges such as costs associated with acquiring personal protective equipment and expanding their e-commerce capabilities; and

"Whereas if passed, the Main Street Recovery Act, 2020 would offer them a grant of up to \$1,000 for eligible main street ... businesses, connect them with Ontario's 47 small business enterprise centres, help them grow their businesses online, and establish" a small business recovery web page "to provide single-window access to small business supports;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass Bill 215, the Main Street Recovery Act."

I agree with this petition, will sign my name to it and give it to the page to take to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to introduce this important petition. It's entitled "Time to Care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, will be affixing my signature and delivering it to the Clerks.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Mike Harris: I'm happy to bring everybody's favourite petition back to the Legislature today, and I believe this is the final copy of it.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

For the final time, Mr. Speaker, I will endorse this petition and will make sure the table gets it.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Jeff Burch: I am pleased to introduce this petition entitled “Time to Care.

“Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

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

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

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

“To amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day...”

I affix my signature and send it to the Clerk.

1510

FAMILY LAW

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: “Bill 207, Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act, 2020.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas family law disputes in Ontario are often time-consuming and onerous matters for families involved; and

“Whereas the Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act includes common-sense changes to simplify Ontario’s family law system, allowing parents and guardians to spend less time on paperwork and court appearances and more of their time making plans to support and care for their children; and

“Whereas, if passed, the Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act would simplify and modernize the system, making it easier for families and loved ones to resolve disputes; and

“Whereas, if passed, Bill 207 would:

“—make the family law appeals process clearer and easier to navigate;

“—harmonize Ontario’s family laws with federal legislation, to make it easier for Ontarians to navigate the system and understand their rights;

“—allow parents and caregivers to request certified copies of child support notices made by the online Child Support Service, so child support amounts can be more easily managed or enforced outside the province; and

“—remove the requirement for family arbitrators to file arbitration award reports with the ministry, saving time and money;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario vote on and pass the Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act.”

I proudly affix my signature to this petition and I will be submitting it to an usher.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: The petition I’m going to be reading today is entitled “Time to Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

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

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

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ...

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

I certainly support this, will be signing it and giving it to the Clerk.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

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

“Whereas the Ontario government is committed to collaborating with the private sector and our municipal partners to accelerate project delivery for the benefit of all individuals, families, and businesses at a lower cost to taxpayers; and

“Whereas Ontario is modernizing how key infrastructure projects are built, creating more efficient delivery of much-needed public services such as public transit, long-term-care beds and increased broadband coverage, while providing better value on our investments; and

“Whereas the Ontario government continues to build smarter and get shovels in the ground faster to build long-term-care homes in places like Mississauga, Ajax, and Toronto, and better-connected highway and public transit networks in transit oriented communities;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario vote and pass the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act, 2020, so that:

“(1) The delivery of transit-oriented communities is accelerated;

“(2) The province and its government agencies have a consistent legislative tool kit across the TOC programs that will be clear and easy to communicate to municipalities and development partners;

“(3) Ontario further modernizes how key infrastructure projects are built, creating more efficient delivery of much-needed public services such as public transit, long-term-care beds and increased broadband coverage, while providing better value on our investments.”

I endorse this petition, will sign my name to it when I find my pen, and give it to the page to take to the table.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Brenda Durling from Azilda in my riding for the petition.

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

I support this petition, will sign it and send it to the Clerk.

ANTI-VAPING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Anna Mott from Hanmer in my riding for these petitions called “Protect Kids from Vaping.”

“Whereas very little is known about the long-term effects of vaping on youth; and

“Whereas aggressive marketing of vaping products by the tobacco industry is causing more and more kids to become addicted to nicotine through the use of e-cigarettes; and

“Whereas the hard lessons learned about the health impacts of smoking, should not be repeated with vaping, and the precautionary principle must be applied to protect youth from vaping; and

“Whereas many health agencies and Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada fully endorse the concrete proposals aimed at reducing youth vaping included in Bill 151;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To call on the Ford government to immediately pass Bill 151, Vaping is Not for Kids Act, in order to protect the health of Ontario’s youth.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

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

“Whereas many Ontarians are looking to their government to demonstrate a real commitment to delivering transit faster for the people in the greater Toronto area, reducing congestion, and connecting people to places and jobs; and

“Whereas everyone can recognize that there is an increasing demand for safe and reliable transportation options; and

“Whereas the city of Toronto has agreed to partner with Ontario to remain committed to removing roadblocks, engage local residents and businesses, as well as Indigenous communities; and

“Whereas Ontario deserves public transit that is more attractive, safe, affordable, and low-stress;

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

“Help deliver Ontario’s four priority subway projects on time and on budget....”

I’ll sign my name to this petition and give it to the usher.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MAIN STREET RECOVERY ACT, 2020 LOI DE 2020 VISANT À REDONNER VIE AUX RUES COMMERCANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 28, 2020, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 215, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to the economic recovery of Ontario and to make other amendments / Projet de loi 215, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la reprise économique de l’Ontario et apportant d’autres modifications.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I’ll be sharing my time with the member from Markham–Thornhill.

It’s an honour to rise today to debate Bill 215, the Main Street Recovery Act, 2020. What I’ll be doing in my time is discussing the elements of the legislation, outlining how

those items we brought together will strengthen small business recovery, bolster strategic supply chains, and open new opportunities—yes, new opportunities—for businesses well into the future.

We'll also address the actions our government is taking to support the rebuilding of main streets like Brock Street in downtown Whitby and Baldwin Street in the north part of my riding and across the province through our main street recovery plan, for which this legislation is a cornerstone.

Let's step back a bit and give some context about the situation that we find ourselves in this afternoon—and prior to this afternoon.

1520

As we are too aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought devastating effects on the health of the people we have the privilege of representing, while posing serious threats to our economy. That's why, as we rebuild, our government is absolutely committed to doing so in a way that sharpens the viability and competitiveness of Ontario's businesses, while safeguarding people's health, safety and the environment.

Speaker, Ontario's small and main street businesses have borne the brunt of COVID-19's economic burden. Many of them are facing their greatest challenge in recent history, as the pandemic has temporarily undercut their business model and much of their value proposition. In this temporary paradigm, small is becoming a barrier, personal service is posing a liability and bricks and mortar are being seen as a weakness.

Yet despite these challenges, small businesses have persisted. They've persisted in Whitby. They're persisting in other parts of the region of Durham. They've shown their strength and true Ontario spirit at every turn, whether by temporarily closing their doors to flatten the curve, physically distancing to keep employees and customers safe, or transforming their business model overnight. Clearly, small businesses have gone above and beyond to serve the people of Ontario, often at great cost to themselves, their employees and, most importantly, their families. Our government wants them to know that we're grateful for their contributions and are inspired by their example.

Of course, Speaker, no amount of hard work or dedication can resist the effects of a global pandemic. While many small businesses across Ontario have safely reopened, none have gone back to business as usual. Main streets all over the province are losing traffic, and it's putting the livelihoods of our families and the vitality of our communities at risk. It's something our government takes very seriously, and we will not rest until we shore up our small businesses through this second wave and set them up for success beyond it.

Last Friday, I hosted a virtual round table with Minister Sarkaria, our minister of red tape reduction and small businesses. The virtual round table was populated, as you would expect, with our economic development staff from the town of Whitby, the economic development director from the region of Durham—because we have an upper-

tier government in the region of Durham—and also a cross-section of small businesses from up and down Brock Street and Baldwin Street as well. At that particular round table, we saw the type of spirit that I spoke of earlier, we saw the type of commitment that I spoke of earlier and the resolve to contribute to the rekindling of Ontario's economy.

In 2019, Ontario small businesses employed about 2.4 million people and accounted for 98% of all businesses in the province. That represents 36%, or more than a third, of our total employment, and it's why their recovery is absolutely critical to Ontario's recovery. As the backbone of our economy, these businesses strengthen productivity, link supply chains and give rise to countless innovations. Eventually, many of them grow into the game-changing companies—like the Brock Street brewery in my riding—we're known for worldwide.

Beyond their economic contributions, small and main street businesses are uniquely woven into the fabric of Ontario's communities. They anchor neighbourhoods, support sports and cultural activities, like the Station Gallery at the foot of the town of Whitby, and bring our friends and families together to eat, shop and play.

Our economy, our way of life and our communities are strengthened by the diversity and output of small businesses. Ontarians across the province count on them for reasons big and small. Today, these same businesses are counting on all of us here this afternoon and those who couldn't be with us this afternoon. As they take their next steps to recovery, our government is paving the way for all avenues to be open to them. That's what we talked about at the virtual round table I hosted last Friday. This includes the financial support we made available on first learning of the COVID-19 outbreak, and this new legislation we'll be discussing this afternoon.

The Main Street Recovery Act, in fact, builds on the \$10 billion of support and regulatory changes we swiftly made available from the outset of the pandemic. Since March 2020, Ontario's COVID-19 action plan has been delivering up to \$6 billion in relief by temporarily deferring taxes for 100,000 Ontario businesses; up to \$1.9 billion to allow employers to defer Workplace Safety and Insurance Board payment; and up to \$1.8 billion to defer municipal education property tax payments.

Speaker, to reinforce that support we also paused evictions for commercial tenants eligible for rent assistance through this program. And now that we've entered the second wave of the pandemic, the federal government recently announced plans to replace its assistance program with the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy. It's expected to provide rent and mortgage support until June 2021 for qualifying small businesses and organizations affected by COVID-19 so that they can maintain their physical premises now and into the future.

Since the beginning, we've made Ontarians' health and safety our top priority, while also supporting workers and business owners to survive through the worst of this crisis. And as wave 2 has descended on Ottawa, Peel and Toronto with great force, we've taken additional targeted measures

in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and his experts.

Speaker, I'm going to wrap up at this point as I transition to my colleague from Markham–Thornhill. He's going to talk a little bit more specifically about regulatory modernization and the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act and some of the qualities of that as it affects small businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, I'll recognize the member for Markham–Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to my colleague from Whitby for sharing the time with me on this important bill.

It is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill 215, Main Street Recovery Act. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected small business across the province. Many are struggling just to make ends meet—the local diners, the main street mom-and-pop shops, small service providers. Unfortunately, many of these businesses will simply not return. I could share many heart-wrenching stories from my riding—a broader Markham perspective.

In my riding of Markham–Thornhill, close to my constituency office, a favourite local Italian buffet restaurant—most people know that Frankie Tomatto's closed its doors two months ago, after 25 years of serving the community. It's not only that Frankie Tomatto's was serving people in Markham and York region and the GTA; when the doors finally closed, 137 people had to start looking elsewhere for work.

1530

Mr. Speaker, as our government is doing everything in its power to defeat this terrible pandemic and to protect the health and well-being of Ontarians, our small businesses need all the support they can get. They are the engine of our economy. They employ nearly two and a half million people and represent more than a third of total employment.

Despite the challenges this virus has thrown at our small and main street businesses, they have gone above and beyond the call to action to protect our health and safety and keep people working.

My riding of Markham–Thornhill is home to thousands of small businesses—I find I have close to 2,000 small businesses in my riding alone [*inaudible*]*—*in virtually every sector and industry of economic life. Whether it is mom-and-pop diners, small manufacturers or digital tech start-ups, I am amazed every day at the determination and resilience of these entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Many took immediate action and shut their doors to flatten the curve. They have consistently followed public health advice since the beginning, physically distancing employees and customers, regularly cleaning and sanitizing their stores, and radically altering the way they do business.

While the traditional business model has been turned upside down, I have seen in my riding example after example of how these small businesses are willing to show the Ontario spirit. Not too long ago, I spoke of a local

Taiwanese grocer in my riding who donated 60,000 masks to school boards across Ontario. I have worked with struggling restaurant owners to deliver food donations and PPE to front-line health care workers in my riding. Small manufacturers such as Microart and Exact Imaging continue to reach out to me asking how they can help encourage Ontarians to shop local and help keep our economy moving.

While it is truly inspirational to see the community coming together like this, we know these are incredibly challenging times and will be for some time to come. That is why our government has taken extensive measures to protect the stability of our small businesses. Since March 2020, Ontario's COVID-19 Action Plan has delivered \$10 billion in support to people and businesses. This includes providing relief to local restaurants and businesses impacted by the modified stage 2 restrictions. Our government is making \$300 million available to them to help offset fixed costs, including property taxes, hydro and natural gas bills.

Under the main street recovery plan, our government is taking the pressure off small businesses by providing grants to deal with the unexpected costs connected to personal protective equipment, doing away with unnecessary and costly red tape that is getting in the way of small businesses to focus on their recovery, understanding the challenges that small businesses face due to COVID-19 by bringing regulations into the 21st century, and ensuring that business owners and workers have the mental health supports they need during this time.

I have spoken with many small business owners in my riding who tell me of the mental and physical stress they are under just to keep the business going and their workers paid. Part of the challenge is the uncertainty and not knowing where to go for help. That is why we are building the digital tools so that businesses can find the information and support they need, and building the e-commerce tools for small businesses to grow their presence online.

The \$57-million Digital Main Street initiative, for example, brought together companies such as Google, Shopify, Mastercard and Microsoft to build and optimize online stores for small businesses in just a matter of days. The small business owners I consulted with in my riding tell me this is what they like to see. This is the type of action they need from the government—action that encourages a business environment focused on lower costs, leveraging modern technology, one that stimulates a more diverse and tech-savvy culture. That is exactly what we are doing as a government.

Mr. Speaker, the Main Street Recovery Act, if passed, will:

- explore options to permanently allow licensed restaurants and bars to include alcohol with food as part of takeout or delivery orders before the existing regulation expires;

- permanently allow 24/7 deliveries to businesses that include retail stores, restaurants and distribution facilities;

- support the distribution of local food and food products by increasing the range of products sold at the Ontario Food Terminal;

—enable community net metering demonstration projects to help support local communities to develop innovative community projects, like net-zero or community micro-grids;

—modernize the Assistive Devices Program; and

—support Ontario's taxi and limousine industry by increasing the fines for illegal operators.

Mr. Speaker, in my riding, I have heard from countless small businesses owners since the start of the pandemic. The pressures they are under to keep their workers and customers safe and to keep their cash flow steady are immense. They not only need our ongoing support; they need a smarter regulatory environment that reflects the realities and stresses of today's business environment. They need a modern regulator. They need a government that utilizes and takes advantage of the digital and technological world we live in so that businesses can focus on their recovery and keeping Ontario's workers and customers safe.

That is why when we announced this government's main street recovery plan, the city of Markham economic development department commissioner called me and asked me to participate. He asked me to line up some of the businesses from my riding. When I call, when they pick up the phone and I ask them to participate, they are amazed. Despite all the challenges, they participated and they got a good response from our plan. That is why I support the Main Street Recovery Act.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions and responses?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I'd like to thank my friends from Whitby and Markham-Thornhill for their presentations.

Through you, Speaker, to the member from Whitby: He spoke very well about businesses in his riding. I don't imagine Whitby is all that different from areas in the Niagara region. I've certainly heard from a lot of small businesses in my area that they need more direct relief for rent to make it through the second wave of the pandemic.

This bill that we're debating right now, there are some fairly—I would call it “tweaking” the Ontario Food Terminal Act and the Highway Traffic Act, and extending an existing noise issue.

How is this bill addressing the need that so many small businesses have brought forward—that they need direct rent relief to make it through the second wave of this pandemic?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Whitby to reply.

Mr. Lorne Coe: This particular bill is a compendium to another piece dealing with small business strategies as well, going forward. But what informed the development of this particular main street strategy was an ongoing consultation process of well over 200 engagements across the province. Those particular suggestions and advice that they provided continue to be developed and evolving as we sit and stand here today. My expectation, as we move forward in the weeks and months ahead, is that we can look forward to some particular announcements in that regard.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next we have the member for Kitchener-Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: For the member for Whitby, if he would be so kind as to indulge us—I've had a lot of folks, restaurant owners, people in the hospitality industry, get in touch with me and my office over the last while in regard to insurance rates. I think we've all heard that there have been a lot of challenges regarding insurance, especially commercial insurance, through the pandemic over the last—it's almost pushing a year now. I was hoping he might be able to provide a little bit more insight into this bill and what the Minister of Finance and Minister of Economic Development are doing to help address some of these issues.

1540

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to the member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

The Minister of Finance has been meeting with insurance industry leaders over the past few months to identify solutions. In the course of those discussions, he has been very clear to those insurance companies: “You should provide relief that reflects the financial hardships your customers are facing because of COVID-19.”

I know the members of the opposition have heard it, I've heard it, and other members have heard it. But what is really clear here is that our government remains committed to working with businesses and the insurance industry to help ensure that going forward we meet the needs of Ontario's small business community—make no mistake about that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: We know that COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting women, especially mothers. I've been through Bill 215, and I don't see anything that's addressing the mothers who are at home, trying to help their kids do school online while they're working from home. I don't see anything addressing permanent wage increases for the heroic PSWs who are on the front lines in our long-term-care homes. I don't see anything about supporting teachers and other education workers—the women who are not only trying to educate other kids in the province but their own. I don't see anything that's really helping women entrepreneurs who are trying to juggle family and their businesses as well.

As a former business owner myself, I'm wondering what exactly is in this bill. I don't see anything about more affordable, accessible child care spaces. I don't see anything about protected paid sick days for the workers in this province should they become ill with COVID-19. I don't see anything about capping class sizes or school bus capacity. What exactly has this government done for the working women in this province through this bill?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Markham-Thornhill to reply.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I'd like to talk from my personal experience. My wife is a small business owner. She has a solo practice—it's a medical office—and she employs dozens of people, full-time and part-time.

I deal with a lot of women entrepreneurs. A couple of weeks ago, it was Women Entrepreneurship Week, and I visited so many successful business owners in my riding. One of the owners is the owner of a Dairy Queen. She is doing very successful business, and is happy with what our government is doing in terms of parental leave and so many other tax breaks. We are working on insurance premiums, how we can bring the commercial and industrial insurance—to make it affordable. But all the plans we are offering—the main street business plan—when I had a stakeholders meeting, she was so excited.

We are engaging with women small business owners. I engage with them, and they are positively talking about our government and what we are doing.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I wanted to thank both the chief government whip and the member for their informative speeches today.

The chief government whip spoke a little bit about what our government is doing, through the main street recovery plan, to end outdated and duplicative rules for businesses as well as modernize regulations and provide mental health supports. So I wanted to ask the chief government whip if he could elaborate a little bit more about how the main street recovery plan is going to help small businesses in my riding and across the province of Ontario through these measures.

Mr. Lorne Coe: There are particular investments that we have put in place through the main street recovery plan and also really important supports in terms of small businesses.

I can use some examples. In downtown Whitby, there are a number of sectors of small businesses—but particularly a big business called Brock Street Brewing Co. They pivoted when COVID-19 came on the horizon. They pivoted in terms of making hand sanitizer. Our level of investment allowed them to do that. Yes, we did that in collaboration with the federal government, but we helped them not only with the monetary investment; we helped them with the marketing effort as well, and now they have a particular initiative that is really making a substantive difference across not only the town of Whitby but also the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm going to continue to rise, just like I've done all this week, on the issue, that's not in your bill, of gouging our small businesses. I sent a letter to the minister—

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like you guys to listen to it rather than talking. I sent a letter to the minister on the gouging. We have companies in Niagara Falls that aren't even open because the government told them to close, and their insurance rates have gone up double, and they're paying while they're closed. I have small businesses that have seen it go from \$6,000 to \$20,000.

I've been begging your government to do something for small businesses in my riding, but it's a crisis right across the province of Ontario. Wake up. Do something for our

small businesses. Go after these insurance companies. Telling me that you met with them and saying they're not nice guys—we already know that. We already know that they don't care about us. Do something about the gouging of insurance.

That's my question to you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind all members to make their remarks through the Chair.

I'll now invite the member for Whitby to reply.

Mr. Lorne Coe: The member from Niagara always brings a lot of passion to the Legislative Assembly, and I welcome that. It's a strong advocacy that you bring to the Legislative Assembly, and thank you for that.

I indicated earlier, in my response to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, that the Minister of Finance has been active, meeting with insurance leaders over the past months to identify solutions, and he's committed, and other members of our government are committed—including me, because I'm also hearing it in my riding and I know others are as well.

That's why the Minister of Finance, his parliamentary assistant and others are working so hard on our behalf, working with businesses and the insurance industry to better meet the needs of Ontario's small business community, whether it's in Niagara or whether it's in my riding, and I've had a few businesses come and speak to me as well.

Leave here this afternoon knowing that there's active engagement for the insurance industry. The finance minister has been very—

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak on behalf of the great constituents of London North Centre.

I've spoken with a number of different business owners and operators throughout this pandemic, and it's widely understood that when you enter business, you take on a certain amount of risk. Nobody plans for a global pandemic. People had to close their doors, but the rent didn't stop. People had to close their doors, but utility bills didn't stop. People waited for the province to throw them a lifeline. And here we meet today and we discuss the government's Bill 215. It makes me think, where's the meat? Where are the direct supports that businesses have been asking for?

Back in April, the NDP presented our Save Main Street plan. It was something that addressed the direct and immediate needs of businesses. It was a comprehensive plan. These businesses are so much more than a money-making place. They're community hubs. They're places where people gather, where they meet with their families and friends. They're the backbone of Ontario's economy. They're asking for the province's help.

We also look at our businesses as something that supports so many different families. By keeping their businesses open, we're keeping Ontarians employed; we're keeping the economy going. Within Bill 215, there's scarcely little about direct supports that will keep businesses open.

1550

When I speak to businesses that are on Richmond Row or in Old East Village, one of the biggest concerns that I hear is about predatory delivery fees. Some of these third-party companies charge up to 30%. If you own and operate a restaurant, your margins for profit are already so incredibly thin. It's time for this government to step in and make sure that third-party delivery apps can only charge so much and eat into that profit.

What's also missing from Bill 215 is a ban on evictions. We know that the ban on commercial evictions is going to expire on October 30, but so many industry leaders are calling for that ban to be extended until December 31, 2020. That's something that we support on this side of the House—if not more.

Throughout the pandemic, I spoke to Sue and Brian Forcey, who operate Cyclepath on Richmond Street in London. They were bounced around so much on this government's essential-business hotline. They got different advice every single time and eventually determined that they were an essential business. They were open only because they were able to repair bicycles, but they weren't able to sell them. Do you know what people did who wanted to buy a bicycle? They probably went down the road to the Walmart, because Walmart sold some apples and oranges. We have, during this pandemic, large multinational corporations benefiting enormously—the Walmarts of the world, the Amazons of the world. But all of these small businesses, these mom-and-pop shops, were left out in the cold.

I also spoke to Teresa Abele, and she is a real dynamo. When the pandemic hit, do you know what she did? She talked about donating. She put together care packages for a women's shelter in my riding, My Sisters' Place. She also regularly donates to the food bank, the humane society. The Red Cross came by her door one day and, before they left, she had given them a cheque for \$1,000, because that is the kind of person that she is. She's a person who gives back. She struggled throughout this pandemic because of curbside pickup limitations. She runs Beauty Supply Outlet. She had everything engineered such that she was able to deliver products in a safe and responsible way, but because of legislation that this government put forward and because of certain controls that they had placed, she wasn't able to do business. She also, unfortunately, wasn't able to qualify for the federal programs because her average sales were only down 54%, which was not enough. You can't operate a business, you can't survive if your revenue is down 54%, but she didn't qualify for any federal relief program.

I also spoke with Ken at Print Studio on Dundas Street. He tells me that direct supports are critical for the survival of his business at this time.

And Armand's Barber Shop—we know that beauty and personal care locations were closed even longer than most. Bill 215 doesn't address that.

I also spoke with some great people at Discount Appliances and Back to the Fuchsia antique store. When I went to speak to them, they didn't want to talk about

themselves. They wanted to talk about all the people in the arts community who have been let down by this government because of the pandemic—people who aren't able to pursue their passions; people who aren't able to pursue their careers as a result of the current situation with the pandemic.

I walked into Commonwealth Coffee along Richmond Street. It was strange because all of the tables were not full of people; they were full of delivery boxes. And the manager was not in the kitchen helping coordinate all the production of food; instead, they were there coordinating all the delivery of food boxes.

Also, Maymo's Fry: Roxanne operates a food truck, so she's pretty lucky, all things being equal, because she's not tied to a bricks-and-mortar location and was thus not forced to close.

You see, so many businesses, so many restaurants, were forced to close their doors. They still have bills. While this government says that it stands alongside of our businesses and it supports businesses, I don't see that here. I don't see direct supports within Bill 215.

There's also the Root Cellar in my riding, a fantastic organic local restaurant. They have an amazing mandate. Quite frankly, it is literally the best vegetarian burger I've ever had, or probably will ever have, in my entire life. They've had to close their doors because of the pandemic. They don't have an opportunity for a patio like most restaurants do. While we see extensions to patios, it's not always an option for folks. They simply have a sidewalk where it's just not possible.

Also throughout my riding is the London Food Incubator, a local grocery store that closed. Now it's been replaced—because there are some success stories—with Somerville 630. It's a great multi-use space for events. It has ample opportunity for distancing. It has an art gallery. It has a great fire-roasted coffee. They pivoted and they're roasting beans on-site to save costs.

There is also Bella at Bella's Acacia Catering, which has fantastic reviews—Korean food. It's vegan-friendly, gluten-free. It's amazing.

All of these businesses are not truly being supported within this bill. So much more is needed.

While there are some who have their doors open now, they still have debt. They still had to pay during that closure period. That is why the NDP has been calling for not only a utility-payment freeze but a 75% commercial-rent subsidy for these folks. They were hit dramatically hard. For the people who are still open, the bills have not stopped. The debt has not stopped.

We need to make sure that we have paid sick days and are also incentivizing women-run and women-owned businesses. We need more child care spaces.

We heard the government talk about their meeting with the insurance company, but we need a legislated halt to insurance-gouging for businesses. Quite frankly, what we see in Bill 215 is not enough.

There are other great success stories within this pandemic, though. There was 44 North, who I met with recently—Corey Shelton, Jackie Hougham and Scott

Wilkinson. They're on Canadian Business's Growth List for 2020. It's a prestigious award. But this business lends itself to operating remotely. In fact, they're expanding and hiring more people, whom they haven't actually met face to face.

By not providing direct supports, this government is saying that businesses should be responsible for the cost of the pandemic, and that's not right. The Premier said that he has the backs of businesses—so businesses have to take out a federal loan. “We stand with you,” the Premier says. He said he would be a “gorilla” on the backs of bad landlords. Well, I want to see the receipts. Where are the pictures? Where is the Premier on the back of any landlord across this province? I want this government to give me one example of the Premier taking an unfair corporate landlord to task. Where is an example of that? We all heard the words. We all saw the emotions. Where is the proof?

While we will be supporting this, it needs to be better.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions and responses?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member across for his great speech tonight.

Ontario's government reduced small business corporate income tax by 8.7%. That's approximately \$1,500 in annual savings for more than 275,000 businesses in Ontario. Do you agree it's a good idea that we did this as a government?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Through my remarks, I was not talking about tax incentives; I was talking about direct supports. We know that cutting tax rates does not help with rent. We know that cutting tax rates does not help with paying the utilities. It does not pay the bills.

We know that when businesses have capital, when businesses have money, they spend that within their community. Businesses are a lot like an ecosystem: one business supports another. That's why direct supports are something that would benefit everyone across Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll try to direct my responses to you. Sometimes I get carried away; it just happens.

I'm going to talk again about the gouging from insurance companies, because I do appreciate the member standing up and saying that the minister has been meeting for two months with the insurance companies. I appreciate that—but what did he do for two months? The people who are calling me in my riding are saying to me, “Gatesy, my insurance just went up \$13,000,” “Gatesy, I'm not even open and my insurance has gone up.”

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So you can't just meet with the insurance company. You've either got to tell them exactly what they can or can't do, through regulations in this House, or you have to force them to do it. We saw that with car insurance. The minister talked to car insurance. Guess what? Rates are still going up.

Do you think it's fair that insurance companies are gouging our small businesses as they go out of business?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls for his question. You are absolutely right. It is completely unfair that insurance companies are able to gouge small businesses that have already suffered enough, that have already been asked by this government to pay the cost of the pandemic. How can you possibly ask these folks to pay yet more money?

What we've seen, and it's similarly true with Bill 215—we see all talk from this government and no action on behalf of small businesses. They've been crying for direct supports. They've been begging for direct supports. So many folks who might have once voted Conservative said, “I know that the Conservative government will eventually step in.” Well, now they have turned. They realize that this government does not have their backs and will not support their interests and will not throw them the lifeline that they require.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: In your speech, you said that the government is not providing any direct support. We have a main street recovery grant that provides funding of up to \$1,000 for businesses to help cover the costs of PPE and to keep their employees safe. Would you not describe that as direct financial support for these main street businesses?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Providing the opportunity to receive money is not direct support. It's something they might be able to apply for. PPE is, generally speaking, something that's going to be required by everyone regardless of your profession. That should be something that the government should be providing immediately. What we're talking about is rent supports. What we're talking about is putting a halt on utility payments. Those are the direct supports; that is, the influx of capital which these businesses have not had, which has really crippled our economic system for the last short while.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and I'll direct my comments to you. I think I did pretty good last time.

I want to get this out—this is important, because I am getting phone calls every day on this issue. This is not an issue that's going away anytime soon. I'm getting it from the hotel owners. The hotel owners provide 40,000—think about this, 40,000—jobs in my riding and throughout Niagara. Their insurance is going up to \$150,000 to \$200,000 at a time when the hotels are empty. They're lucky to have 10% or 15% occupancy every night. What are we doing in this province?

When I get an opportunity to stand up again, I'll talk about the small businesses in my riding that have contacted me, as well.

So my question to you, again: Should we be putting pressure on this government to go after the insurance companies that are gouging small and medium and large businesses in the province of Ontario?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: You're absolutely right. What is required is solid regulations from this government.

We cannot have meetings that are talked about endlessly. We released our Save Main Street plan back in April, and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce endorsed our plan.

It's been 27 weeks, it's been 195 days, it's been more than half a year, and finally we see Bill 215. Really, what we need to see from this government is less talk and more action. We need some more meat on the bones. Bill 215 is nowhere near enough.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Oakville.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member opposite from London North Centre for your passion with small business. I think all the members in here agree that we need to do what we can for small business.

Where I would have some questions with what you said is that the government has done nothing for small business. We've invested \$10 billion to support businesses. We've made changes to WSIB. We've made changes to the way hydro is being charged, which I think is very important—rent relief, eviction moratorium, lower taxes for small businesses on the corporate side. So we've done quite a bit.

I know that the member from Peterborough also mentioned that there is direct support in this bill—direct support for PPE, which every single retail-facing business in this province needs. That's pretty direct.

So my question to you is: There may be some things that you would like to see added to this bill—that's fair—but will you and your team support Bill 215 in direct support for small businesses?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Thank you to the member from Oakville for the question.

The member brought up some reforms to WSIB. We know WSIB is a system that is completely gutted, and it needed absolute reform, not getting rid of unfunded liabilities. Hydro rates, which you also mentioned, recently went up. So I'm not sure that those are such good examples to use.

We absolutely support the \$1,000 for PPE. It's a good idea; make no mistake.

We will be supporting Bill 215, but I'm telling you, there's just not enough there.

From this side of the House, we heard some comments today—a government member was indicating that Ontarians should be proud that the government has “the largest contingency fund in history, the largest reserve fund in history to be adaptive in an ever-changing environment.” Those are shocking words to say. That's like the dragon sitting on its hoard of gold while everyone else suffers and starves and is dying in a community. To say, “Look at my bank account. I'm so wonderful”—come on.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I do appreciate getting the opportunity to talk about this. I will address the one issue around WSIB. I have a bill that's coming forward on deeming that they should be supporting. Injured workers today are living in poverty because of the deeming, and I put a bill forward. Support it. Help injured workers. If you care

about injured workers and their families in our community, support the deeming bill. Put it right in this bill. I'll support it tomorrow. If you want to talk about WSIB, let's talk.

I've got to get a question to him before I get back into the gouging. I'll do the gouging with somebody else.

Do you think that the deeming bill should be put into this main street bill to help injured workers who are living in poverty?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I absolutely agree that the process of deeming is completely wrong. It's immoral. The Liberal government allowed it to go on. They refused to act, and people have suffered as a result. When people are injured, it's not as though they've asked to be injured. Nobody wants to be on disability, and yet we see a system that was set up to support workers and it's one that actually limits workers' rights. By taking somebody and saying, “Okay, you cannot do this job. You're deemed to be able to do this job, at a lower rate of pay, at fewer hours”—it's absolutely ridiculous that anyone would think that this is something that would be okay.

I absolutely agree with the member from Niagara Falls that his deeming bill should be in Bill 215. I wish the government had its listening ears on. I wish that it had included that. It would make it so much easier for us to support this bill, because, quite frankly, workers deserve better.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): One quick question from the member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: I cannot guarantee how quick it will be, Mr. Speaker, but I think one thing that we really need to focus on here is that this isn't just about this bill. This is about the sum of all parts—and I think that's something that has really been lacking in the part of debate. When we're talking about partnerships with the federal government, when we're talking about the things that our government is doing, municipal governments, I'd like to hear some comments around some of the other things—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll allow the member a few seconds to reply.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: All that we've seen so far from this government is talking about its big brother who's going to come in and do all the heavy lifting. We've seen this government with the CECRA, the CEWS—all of these federal programs that you've ridden on the coattails of but done nothing to make sure that landlords actually adopt and enforce. It's really upsetting to see this sort of small dog, big dog thing: “You'd better not make me angry because my big dog friend is going to come and bite you.”

This government has not done enough. It's sitting on billions of dollars in money that is earmarked for supports—

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm honoured to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill 215, the Main Street Recovery Act, introduced by my friend the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. I'd like to thank him and the members of his team, including

the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, for all their great work on this very important bill. I understand that they have held hundreds of virtual round tables with some small businesses across Ontario.

Speaker, I joined a virtual round table just last week with members of the Port Credit BIA in my riding. I understand both the amount of work that goes into these consultations and also the knowledge that you can gain just from listening to our restaurant owners, our manufacturers and other main street businesses, and hearing the heartbreaking stories from people who have sacrificed so much to build their business.

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While COVID-19 has created an unprecedented challenge for them and main street small businesses all across Ontario, our government has taken action since the beginning of this crisis. Our main street recovery plan builds on more than \$10 billion in urgent relief and support provided through our government's COVID-19 action plan. Bill 215 will help us to build on both of these, because the reality is that there will be no recovery and there can be no recovery without our small and medium-sized businesses. These businesses are the backbone of our province and our economy. They account for about 98% of our businesses and employ close to 2.4 million people in Ontario. They also are very close to our heart in our communities.

Earlier this morning, Speaker, I had the opportunity to remember and to pay tribute to my friend Beatrice Moreira-Laidlow, who passed away earlier this month after a fight against cancer. The general manager of the Port Credit BIA, Beatrice was a true champion and an inspiration for our community, especially for our local small businesses. Last month, I joined my friends at the BIA as they presented a cheque for \$20,000 for our local businesses to the Compass food bank.

Our hospitality sector has been hardest hit by COVID-19, but our local restaurants and convention halls have also been amongst the most generous and the most creative in giving back and supporting our most vulnerable.

My friend Danny and his team at the Oasis Convention Centre in Lakeview have made thousands of meals and helped deliver them to the front-line health care workers at Mount Sinai Hospital and our seniors across Mississauga-Lakeshore.

The Angheloni brothers at Solstice Restaurant in Clarkson offered a great deal: For every lasagna dinner ordered for delivery or takeout, they would deliver a second meal to the Mississauga Compass food bank.

My friend Vince Molinaro, president of Molinaro's fine foods, who I've known for almost 40 years, gave us 1,500 pizzas for our local food bank.

Alessandro and his mother, Giovanna Girimonte, at Meaty Meats gave to our local food bank and to Haven on the Queensway in Etobicoke. Our Associate Minister of Transportation works with them to deliver food baskets to seniors and other vulnerable people across Etobicoke Centre.

Speaker, I could go on. These same small businesses which have shown us the Ontario spirit have now borne the full brunt of the economic burden of COVID-19, as we've had to move back to stage 2 in Peel region to stop the spread of this virus. I understand the frustration, but I also want them to know that we are determined to do everything we can to help them get through this difficult time.

One idea that many business owners have suggested to me is reimbursement for the cost of PPE, including Plexiglas, masks, gloves and other equipment to help keep staff and customers safe. It's great to see that we are moving forward with a one-time grant of up to \$1,000 per small business to help with some of their costs. The Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction is working on getting these grants out to up to 60,000 small businesses as soon as possible.

I would also like to join my colleagues in encouraging everyone to use this grant to purchase Ontario-made PPE. The Workplace PPE Supplier Directory has an up-to-date list of companies that are ready to supply PPE, including Ontario-made and Mississauga-made equipment.

I want to take a moment to thank Max and Sarah at the Como Foundation in my riding for providing us with an "access mask" for every MPP, which we mailed out last week. These masks were manufactured in Mississauga with a clear window, to help make life easier for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, who rely on lip-reading. And they're re-donating \$5 million from the purchase of these masks to the Trillium Health Partners Foundation to help get us a meaningful step closer to a new, modern hospital for Mississauga.

Val Dawson-Hale is sewing masks for sale at Im-pressionable Gifts in Port Credit, again to help raise funds for the Compass food bank. Local business owners like Ewan Mason at Bert's Sports volunteered to produce gowns for our hospitals. They're also selling T-shirts to raise funds for the Compass food bank. They've raised \$2,200 so far. Again, I could go on.

I know our members have stories like these from their own communities right across Ontario.

To help these businesses access information and clear advice on local, provincial and federal programs, our main street recovery plan includes a new COVID-19 recovery network, which links 47 Small Business Enterprise Centres and has the potential to reach between 50,000 and 75,000 main street small businesses right across Ontario.

To help more main street small businesses join the growing world of e-commerce, the \$57-million Digital Main Street program, in partnership with the federal government, is helping almost 23,000 small businesses improve their online presence, with grants of up to \$2,500. Digital Main Street squads are going live across Ontario, including in Mississauga, to provide one-on-one help with website creation, social media advertising and e-commerce platforms. As the President of the Treasury Board said, you can't afford to be off-line in an online world.

Our new recovery website for small businesses provides a one-window view into how our government is

supporting the recovery and where to find answers for their questions. This will make it easier to learn about, apply for and access COVID-19 recovery and relief programs and other supports. The Web page can be accessed through ontario.ca/smallbusiness.

Speaker, in closing, I'm confident that the Main Street Recovery Act, which is a cornerstone of Ontario's Main Street Recovery Plan, will deliver what main street businesses across Ontario have told us they need to survive through this second wave of COVID-19. The proposals outlined in Bill 215, combined with the existing support I've outlined, will help our struggling small businesses get back on their feet, so Ontario's main streets can reopen safer, rehire faster and rebuild better than ever before. I look forward to voting in support of this bill, and I urge all members to join me.

I want to thank again the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction from Brampton for all the hard work that he has put into this bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions related to the presentation that has just been made by the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to my friend from Mississauga–Lakeshore for the presentation. There's not a lot to disagree with in what he said.

Sometimes it's good to bring things back to the basics. When you look at this bill, what's really in it? There's the extension of the existing provision about noise bylaws. There's a section 39.1 amendment of the Highway Traffic Act. There's an amendment to the Ontario Food Terminal Act, which is fine. But, Speaker, we're not the ones who called it the Main Street Recovery Act. I fail to see—calling it “tweaking” is even generous—how this kind of tweaking actually contributes to a main street recovery.

Don't you think it would have been better, through you, Speaker, to my friend, to do something with respect to the main problem that businesses are struggling with, which is that with no revenues they can't pay their rent?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Being the son-in-law and grandson of business owners, I know how important it is to have our small businesses in our communities. I've lived in Port Credit all my life. I grew up there, and I've dealt with all these small businesses on the strip there.

I know that our government has committed to \$241 million in partnership with the federal government, which is a total of \$900 million, for urgent relief for our small businesses to help them get through this critical time of COVID-19. As well, we are allowing restaurants to serve alcohol with their takeout, which will help our restaurant owners to get through COVID-19.

I know it's difficult, but this is a start to what we have to continue doing for the recovery. And we have to look into the future, because COVID-19 is going to last more than another month, so we have to continue helping our businesses through this time. This is a start to rebuild our main streets in the community. Especially myself, being in Port Credit, which is—everybody knows where Port Credit is, by the Credit River there. We have a lot of local

businesses right there on the main streets that we have to support and help through this.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for York Centre.

Mr. Roman Baber: First of all, I am well familiar with Port Credit, and I'm familiar with some of the restaurants in Port Credit. I can tell you that I cannot wait to come and visit my friend from Mississauga–Lakeshore and dine in some of those wonderful establishments.

One of the elements I like most in this bill is that it encourages some businesses that never had an online presence to in fact create an online presence. If there was one positive to come out of this pandemic—except for seeing human spirit and our health care heroes at work—it's that it accelerated to some extent technological innovation. I'm wondering if perhaps the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore could comment on some of those elements of the bill.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you for that question.

I can't wait for you to come back to Port Credit. Let's enjoy some time there right by the waterfront.

Some of the provisions that have been put into this are about the \$57-million program to help nearly 23,000 Ontario businesses in grants of \$2,500 to support creating an enhanced online process, which a lot of these small businesses have never done before, and this is a good start for them. Like the President of the Treasury Board has said, you can't be off-line in an online world nowadays. These are great ideas that we have put in front of us for our small businesses.

As well, look at the \$1,000 eligible grant for PPE. Before COVID-19, we didn't need that, but right now, our government is doing that. They're putting \$1,000 in for PPE. This is something that our government has done, and I know that we're going to continue doing more and more for the small businesses in our community.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I thought it would be fair comment, Mr. Speaker, to just read something. I spoke to two local restaurants, the Queen's Guard Pub and Chip n Charlie's in Niagara Falls, who both give me permission to talk about them, about their increases—and rent increases: “Small businesses are facing double, triple, premium prices now for their liability insurance. On top of this, the decrease in business.”

Queen's Guard Pub called me yesterday, and I spoke with the owner. Their insurance went from \$7,000 to \$17,000 dollars. Come on, guys. What are you doing? I want to repeat that: It almost went up triple.

There is something else I want to ask a question on. I want you to address the insurance thing. I'm going to talk about it all afternoon until you guys finally agree to do it.

I'll give you credit: The \$1,000 PPE is a great idea—through the Speaker.

My question to you is: What do you think of having a travel tax credit?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you to the member from Niagara.

The insurance issue: Tomorrow, I'll be presenting my private member's bill on life settlements, and I hope that you will support that bill—especially about insurance companies, the multinationals that are taking advantage like you're saying there.

The Minister of Finance has been actively meeting with insurance industry leaders over the past few months to identify solutions. Our government remains committed to working with businesses and the insurance industry to help ensure that our province's insurance industry can better meet the needs of Ontario's small businesses and communities.

I want to thank you for that question.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Question?

Mr. Mike Harris: I'm a former small business owner myself. I think, again, one thing that's being overlooked here today—we talked a little bit about the sum of all parts earlier, when we look at all of the different things the government has done since the pandemic to where we are at now and where we're planning on going in the future. I know, as a former small business owner, that every little bit counts. Every little, incremental thing that the government can do to enable the private sector and our job creators to try to move forward and try to get a leg up makes sense.

We've got things in here like—obviously, the \$1,000 grant for PPE is fantastic. Everyone is going to need it.

There's also something in here that's being trivialized by the opposition, which is delivery hours. For a business to be able to take delivery of something later on in the day, where they don't have to disrupt their normal course of action during the day to be able to do that, is one of those little things that adds up. I was hoping maybe the member could touch a little bit more on that.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question.

Being the son-in-law of a small business owner, I know how difficult it was to get products. We were importers of Italian shoes, and it was hard for us to get products moving, especially with the hours that we could move the shoes around the province of Ontario, to get to our retail store.

Temporarily, we'll allow 24/7 deliveries of goods in every municipality across the province to keep shelves stocked, and that's great, especially with our grocery stores. People are going there more because they're not going out. So they're shopping more at the grocery stores, and having the shelves stacked with stock is much more important at this present time.

Temporary permits for 24-hour construction on critical infrastructure issues are very important too, to help get these infrastructure projects going.

I want to thank you again for that question. The 24/7 delivery is a great idea, and I'm thankful that the minister of small business has put that in this bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Humber River–Black Creek, briefly.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you to the member for his presentation.

I'll try to explain this as quickly as possible and give context. There is a multi-commercial strip mall in my community where a landlord has aggressively locked people out, even though there was a ban by this government on evictions. A person was unable to pay, said that they would pay at a later point, and they came the next day and were unable to access their place of work.

A second example: When people heard about that within that mall, some of the business owners were sleeping in their units to prevent this from happening. According to this government, that is something that would be completely illegal, if I understand correctly. But you're not providing any enforcement or any sort of protection, because what happens is that even though you deem it—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Question?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Okay. The question is: Did you consider that there's no enforcement that you're providing in term of this protection? And what are you prepared to do to help business owners in these situations?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I thank you very much for that question.

It's been difficult for our landlords and our tenants in these buildings as well, because both of them have bills to pay. I understand both of them have their own issues. That's why the government has committed to \$241 million to partner with the federal government—up to \$900 million—for urgent relief for some of these tenants in these strip malls, to help them get through these difficult times.

Like I said, it's difficult for both, because as a landlord, they have mortgages; as a tenant, they have bills. It's difficult at this present time. I know that, working together, they will get through this crisis.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: First off, I'd like to say that I'm going to be sharing my time with the member for Niagara Falls.

Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 215. As many of my colleagues on this side of the House have pointed out, the name of the bill, the Main Street Recovery Act, really does not reflect what is in the bill. There's very, very little in this bill that would actually help to save our mom-and-pop shops, our small and medium-sized businesses across the province.

One business in particular that I'd like to talk about right off the start is a martial arts business. They've been in business for over 40 years, and because this Conservative government failed to step up to actually help these businesses, he's on the verge of having to close his business and will lose his home.

There's really been nothing done directly by this government. They like to claim credit for a lot of things that come from the federal government, but there's very little that has been done, very little intervention on behalf of the provincial government in order to save these businesses.

There's another one, Jade cuisine, in my riding, a restaurant that had been in business for decades, which ended up being evicted and closed because this government did not step in to help businesses like theirs.

Speaker, I know my colleagues have spoken quite a bit about some of the other important issues—about the need for direct relief, directly to the businesses, so that it doesn't rely on landlords to apply for the support. They've talked about the insurance-gouging and how some of these businesses are seeing increases that are double, triple in some cases, even when the businesses are not able to be open at this time, under public health directives. This government hasn't done anything to address that.

1630

But I think for the little bit of time that I have, I'm going to focus on something I touched on earlier, which is the she-covey. I look around the room and out of all the men in the room, I now see three women—it was two women up until just a few minutes ago. I am the only woman elected at the provincial or federal level—out of six seats, I am the only woman in my riding. Our entire city council has one woman sitting on it. I think that's pretty indicative of what happens when you look at legislation that comes forward from this government.

As I pointed out earlier, Speaker, one in four women and children in Windsor, in my riding, live in poverty. There is nothing in this bill—nothing—that helps those women and their children. We're talking about the women this government likes to call heroes—the PSWs in the long-term-care homes, those who work in hospitals, the teachers and other education workers. We're talking about the grocery clerks. We're talking about those who work in other retail spaces. We're talking about the women entrepreneurs and women business owners. There is nothing in this bill that specifically addresses their needs.

There's nothing in this bill about creating affordable, accessible child care spaces so that these women have somewhere safe to leave their children so they can go to work. There's nothing in this bill that talks about child care workers, who are mostly women, in order to make sure that they have a job to go to, in order to be able to support other women to go to work. There's really nothing in here that talks about the fact that, largely, it's women who are caregivers for other people in their families—or the sandwich generation, where you're someone who's taking care of your own kids while also being the caregiver for your parents. There's nothing in this bill that helps them to ensure that their jobs are protected, that they have paid, protected sick days so that they can go out and run their businesses or work in those businesses and other work-places.

There's nothing about capping class sizes, making our class sizes smaller so that the education workers, largely women, are safe and protected from the virus, and those students are safe and protected from COVID-19 and, by extension, their parents are protected, so their mothers can send them to school because they've not chosen online learning and know that they can go out and make a living and keep a roof over the heads of their children and food on the table. There's nothing about this.

There's nothing about permanently raising the wages of PSWs in long-term care or those who work in developmental services with people with developmental or intellectual disabilities.

Speaker, as I started off by saying, there are very few women in this room—and I really have to wonder, when I look at this bill and they're talking about main street recovery, what exactly has this government done for the she-recovery? There is no economic recovery without a she-recovery. Women have to be supported, and in order to do that, you actually have to talk to them and listen to them.

With that, I'll turn my time over to the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Well, I learned a valuable lesson: Never go after a woman who's speaking, that's for sure. I want to make sure I talk about that. She took up most of my time. I had a wonderful speech, guys, about nine pages, just so you know. I'm going to go off the top of my head instead, so I apologize.

What I'm going to do is really concentrate on my riding, because they sent me here to represent them. And I'm going to say to my colleagues, I believe that what they're saying in my riding affects everybody right across the province of Ontario.

What do the small businesses, medium-sized businesses and big businesses need? They need relief on their property taxes because there's no business. When you're down 80% or 90%, how do you pay your property taxes? In a hotel in Niagara Falls, they pay \$4,000 per room, and those rooms are empty; 85%, 90% of those rooms are empty. So they need help on their property tax. I didn't see it in the bill. I would think most businesses right across the province are facing that problem. Your government has to do something about that.

I've already talked about the gouging—until I'm blue in the face—because that one really gets me. I saw what happened to car insurance, quite frankly, where we did nothing. They're still raising car insurance. You did absolutely nothing. You threatened the car insurance: “If you guys don't smarten up, we're going to come down hard on you. We're going to punch you in the nose. We're going to do all that stuff.” You did nothing. Car insurance has gone up, and now we've got the same thing with property taxes.

I listen to the Premier; I listen to him all the time. A week ago, do you know what he said? “This is my second warning to those insurance companies. If they keep gouging, I'm coming down on them hard.” Two weeks later—we're at the end of the week—they're still gouging us. He hasn't come down hard on them, but we need to. I don't want to hear that Minister Phillips—who, quite frankly, I like; I have a good rapport with him. I don't want to hear that he talked to them two months ago. What did you do about it? Why are we still being hurt? That's just not happening in my riding.

I want to talk about the travel tax credit. That came out of the commission that we had our meetings on during the summer. I put a bill forward—let's give everybody a

\$1,000 credit so they can travel in Ontario. I know up north is getting hit really bad with tourism. A lot of that stems from a lot of the Americans who would come up north and go to the cottage and stuff—they couldn't do that this year. I think a domestic tourist credit is something that we can do. It would help Niagara Falls. It would help Toronto. It would help up north. It would help Ottawa. That's something that I think your government should pass, although it's my bill.

The last one is—I brought this bill forward just a couple of weeks ago. The bill would eliminate the 6.1% basic tax on winery retail sales of VQA and 100% Ontario wines. Our grape and wine industry has been hit hard by the closure of restaurants and the impacts of COVID-19. This would be a simple fix to help many of our wineries throughout Ontario. I hope this is something we can work together to achieve in our grape and wine industry.

Overall, this bill is really the bare minimum of what this government could do to help businesses. We know they've been hit hard by something none of us could ever have expected in our lifetime.

Thank you very much for giving me three and a half minutes of the afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You're welcome. Questions?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I was listening intently to the members opposite and their statements.

The member spoke very eloquently about the need to support women—because ultimately, part of the recovery includes the she-covery, as it was coined. The member also claimed that within this particular legislation, there is nothing specifically to support women in business. Well, my response to the member is, what about the fact that on October 2, 2020, this government committed up to \$1 billion over the next five years to create up to 30,000 new child care spaces in schools, including up to 10,000 spaces in new schools? In the past three months alone in my riding, the minister has approved over 170 new licensed child care spaces.

My question to the member is, why are you taking such a narrow approach? Ultimately, everything this government does is done in a holistic fashion. Every legislation depends on each other and they work together. So on what basis are you claiming that our government does not support women?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'm thankful that the sister opposite asked me that question.

What we need is affordable, publicly owned, publicly run, not-for-profit child care; not the privately owned, for-profit child care that this government prefers.

Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Windsor West, take your seat.

The member for Carleton, come to order. The member for Kitchener–Conestoga, come to order.

The member for Windsor West has the floor.

1640

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker.

So I will ask, where are the permanent pay increases for the PSWs who are working in long-term care—the women? Where is that money? Where is the support for the education workers, the women in education, in order to ensure that they have access to safe and affordable, publicly owned, publicly delivered, publicly funded child care?

There is nothing in this bill that truly supports women. I didn't say this government doesn't support women; I said that there's nothing in this bill that truly supports women in this province, specifically, to ensure that they have child care, that they have paid, protected sick days in this province to stay home and look after the children if they need to, and supports for those who need to be home and doing—

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: My question is for my friend from Windsor West.

I was listening to Dr. Tam on the television today talking about how the pandemic has disproportionately affected not only women but minorities and people from cultural backgrounds. She wasn't talking about the government having some kind of holistic approach; she was talking about actually having targeted approaches to helping these populations, especially women—and my friend has talked eloquently about the she-covery.

Is the member from Windsor West aware of anything the government has done related to recovery from this pandemic that is specifically targeted to groups like women?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I appreciate the question from my colleague from Niagara Centre.

What I can tell you is that one of the first things this government did when they got elected was get rid of the Anti-Racism Directorate, which would help with examining data and ensuring that women, especially women of colour, racialized women, were able to bring forward to help contribute to plans that specifically speak to—

Interjection.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Maybe the member from Carleton could stop yelling and start listening.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Carleton must come to order. If you have the floor, you'll have an opportunity to speak to this again. But the member for Windsor West has the floor.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. I assure you that women are capable of having conversations without screaming at each other, unlike what's happening today.

Anyway, my point was, one of the first things this government did was to get rid of the Anti-Racism Directorate. To my knowledge, although we have called for them to collect data in health care, in education and in other sectors directly linked to racial data, specifically talking about gender-based data, this has not happened in this government yet. Dr. Tam is correct in saying that that information is incredibly important to be included in

legislation when we are talking about rebuilding the economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: It's a very exciting afternoon here in the Ontario Legislature.

To give an opportunity to the member from Niagara Falls to expand a little bit on his insurance comments that he was making earlier—let's have a real conversation for a second, of course through the Speaker; I know you and I both sometimes have a hard time doing that, but that's okay.

Rhetoric aside, you want to talk about doing better for small businesses, and insurance is a big part of that. Rather than just saying that we're not doing it right, what are some of the things that you think we could do as a government to—you say "listening"; I'm listening to you right now. You've got an opportunity.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate the question, and it's nice that you're listening, because for all the years I've known you, this might be the first time.

The issue that we have in insurance is the liability. The liability is going up two and three times when they don't even have—they're not even open, in some cases, or they're certainly open but they're not open as much. So the big issue is the liability. How can an insurance company, during a pandemic, when you're not open, when your business is down 40%, 50%, sometimes 80%, raise your insurance from \$6,000 to \$20,000? I'm asking you, Speaker: Do you think that's fair? Do you think that's reasonable? Do you think that's something that should happen to small or medium-sized—and in some cases, hotel owners? Do you think that's something that should happen in the province of Ontario? What I'm saying to you: Bring in regulation to make sure they can't do that, in the Legislature here. We have to stop it or you're going to have no business to support.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My question is for the member from Niagara Falls. He spoke very eloquently about auto insurance.

The government has been trying to play some PR for the auto insurance companies by saying that they in fact have been passing on lots of savings. In part, some of the savings that they're claiming is when an individual calls up an insurance company, their auto insurer, and says, "I'm not driving the car. I'm going to put it on comprehensive" or "I'm going to put it on fire and theft." The insurers are trying to play off those savings as actual pandemic savings. Do you think that this is a fair comment for these insurers to make, since this is something that you could do at any single time of the year? And some of those people who have put their cars on comprehensive or on fire and theft had their insurance policies go up when they went back to what their policies were, in some cases, by hundreds and hundreds of dollars. What do you think about that?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question.

The reality is, the insurance companies, quite frankly, were the first ones that started gouging consumers. When we were driving less than 80%, when this first hit and people were staying home—they weren't going out of the house; 80% of the people weren't driving. We had 80% less deaths at that time. And what happened? They didn't reduce your auto insurance and, to your point, they actually raised the insurance.

Since the pandemic, your insurance has gone up. There have been a few cases where you've called up the insurance people and they say, "If you do this and this, we'll reduce it by a little bit." But the reality is, when your insurance is down 80% to the insurers, why is it not that at least we'd be getting a 50% discount on our insurance? Car insurance is another one that was gouging and one that the Premier said that he fixed. Unfortunately, he never did.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): One quick question.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: My question is to my colleague from Niagara Falls. Insurance premiums: I know that you have been talking for decades about auto insurance and industrial and commercial insurance. But when you were with the Liberal Party, when you were supporting them for the last 15 years—the former government had a promise to bring down auto insurance in Ontario by 15%, but they failed. Our government is tired of talking about it. I've been talking about it; our caucus has been talking about it. The member is so passionate about it. Don't you agree that we are moving in the right direction in terms of bringing the insurance premiums down?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm going to apologize; I couldn't hear him that well, but I think I got it.

Let me be clear: I did not support the Liberals on their car insurance. As a matter of fact, I've taken the Liberals to task on a number of issues, whether it be car insurance, whether it be publicly funded hydro. Every time you guys stand up and talk about us supporting the Liberals, it's probably not completely accurate. I understand what you've got to do; it's a political game that you're doing there. But on that particular issue, I went after the Liberals as hard as I'm going after the PCs, as hard as I'm going after the insurance companies, because I've been saying for years that they've been gouging us in the auto insurance.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I greatly appreciate the opportunity, every time I get to stand in here. I've been the member for Peterborough–Kawartha for just over two years now. I think that as we're going through COVID-19, all of us need to recognize that we truly are blessed being here in this great chamber. We have opportunities to make differences in so many people's lives. With all that has gone on with COVID-19—I know that there's always some partisan talk that goes back and forth when we're having our debates. But I think if we take a step back for a moment and look at it, all of us are trying to do what we can to improve the situation for everybody in Ontario during this.

COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on not just the physical health of the people of Ontario, but it also poses

a very serious threat to our economy. Rebuilding our economy while safeguarding everyone's health, safety, the environment—those are all things that we're trying to do as we go through this.

1650

I realize it was said almost 105 years ago now, but I think the words of the Scottish planner and conservationist Patrick Geddes are as fitting today—especially right now, in our fight with COVID-19—as they have ever been in history: “Think global, act local.” Acting local is exactly what we are doing right now with this bill.

Ontario's small and main street businesses have borne the brunt of the COVID-19 economic burdens. In our lifetime, we have never faced the dual challenge of health and economic concerns. The last real comparable time was the Spanish flu in 1918. Businesses and health models were vastly different back then. There is no guidebook. There is no handbook for us to look at. There's nothing that we can draw upon from past experience to try to make the positive differences that we're trying to do. We all recognize, though, that COVID-19 will pass. This is a temporary situation. What we don't know, though, is how long it will take to pass and how much potential devastation it will create in its wake.

It's a temporary paradigm shift for businesses. Small, intimate, boutique and niche, at one time, were ways to differentiate yourself—it gave you a comparative advantage in business—but what we're seeing right now is that those are barriers for businesses to be successful. Providing personal service was something that was lauded as a great way of doing business; now it creates more liability for you.

It has been talked about a number of times in different iterations, but I'm going to refer to a quote from the early 2000s. It was a campaign that Oracle used, and I think it is very true today: “If you're not in e-business, you're out of business.” That was a campaign that they did in the early 2000s as the Internet became more prevalent. The Internet is here. It is something that is very, very prevalent. And we're seeing that with our small businesses now—if they are not in e-business, if they do not have a Web presence, in all likelihood, they are not surviving.

Despite these challenges, the entrepreneurial spirit of our small businesses has persisted. They have been transforming their business models overnight. They have made adjustments to how they deliver their services. They've been pivoting to new and different models. Small businesses have gone above and beyond to serve the people of Ontario, and our government wants them to know that we're grateful for their contributions and inspired by the examples of what they have done.

Of course, no amount of work or dedication can resist the effects of the global pandemic, so while many small businesses across Ontario have safely reopened and gone back to business, many have not. It reminds me of the lyrics from a song from my own childhood. It was on Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the USA* album, released in June 1984:

Now Main Street's whitewashed windows and vacant stores

Seems like there ain't nobody wants to come down here no more

They're closing down the textile mill across the railroad tracks

Foreman says these jobs are going, boys, and they ain't coming back

Mr. Speaker, we are doing everything we possibly can to make sure that that is not the reality in Ontario, and we will not rest until we shore up our small businesses through the second wave and help them succeed beyond it.

In 2019, Ontario's small businesses employed about 2.4 million people and accounted for 98% of all businesses in the province. That represents about 36%, approximately a third, of our total employment, and they are the backbone of our economy. These businesses strengthen productivity, link supply chains and give rise to countless innovations. Our economy, our way of life and our communities are strengthened by the diversity and the output of these small businesses. Ontarians across the province count on them for reasons big and small. They're the businesses that support our local sports. They sponsor kids' events, enrich our communities and donate to our local causes, and they're the ones we have always been able to count on when we reached out and wanted community help. Today, these same small businesses are counting on all of us, and we will be there for them just like they have always been there for us.

The financial support we made available on first learning about COVID-19, combined with this new legislation that we're discussing today, demonstrates that the Main Street Recovery Act will build on that \$10-billion support and the regulatory changes that we made.

Since March 2020, our COVID-19 action plan has delivered up to \$6 billion in relief by temporarily deferring taxes for 100,000 Ontario businesses. And since the beginning we have made Ontarians' health and safety our top priority, while supporting our workers and our business owners, to help them survive through the worst of this crisis.

As stage 2 has descended upon us in some regions—we've been forced back to a modified stage 2 in Ottawa, Peel and Toronto. These modified stage 2 restrictions will be in effect for a minimum of 28 days so that we have the opportunity to review what's working and what's not. But we'll work together with our doctors and our health experts, with the medical officers of health, to make sure that what we're doing helps.

We know the strain this puts on businesses, and that's why we're making \$300 million available to help those businesses offset their costs, including property taxes, hydro and natural gas bills. We want these businesses and others in Ontario to keep the lights on. We want them to have a bright future to look forward to.

We're proud that we've taken more than 200 actions to reduce red tape, and that saves businesses money and time.

It's not just the financial handout that makes the difference; it is making a difference by reducing the amount of time you have to spend on some of those government regulations. We know, in business, that time is money. If a business has to spend more time doing something, they have to pass that cost on. If it costs the business more money to get something, they have to pass that cost on, and then it's the people of Ontario who bear the brunt of that.

Already, we've had 50 temporary regulatory changes that have made a difference, and some of those are being made permanent as part of this bill. Not all regulations are bad; they are necessary to ensure safety. But removing unnecessary duplicative and outdated regulations helps address those challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be part of a government that's putting forward legislation that is trying to do so much for those small businesses that we've relied on throughout our own histories individually, those businesses that contributed back to our communities, those businesses that donated to the causes we asked them about. They're our neighbours, our friends and our family members. Bill 215 will help get them through this COVID-19 crisis.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I thank my friend from Peterborough for the speech.

I'm going to ask him the same question I asked the last speaker, basically, which is, does he think it's important that in a pandemic which is disproportionately affecting women, we have targeted approaches to the recovery so that women and other groups—those living in poverty and ethnic minorities—are taken into account when we're making recovery plans? And how does this bill accomplish that?

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you to the member for the question. I think that when the government does anything, they have to take a holistic approach to it, and you can't fix all of the ills in the province with one single bill. That would be a massive bill to put something forward like that.

What we're doing with this bill is we're targeting certain areas of the economy to make sure that we're doing what we need to do to get those businesses kick-started and moved forward. You'll see that there are multiple pieces of legislation that are being introduced by this government. That's the appropriate approach to it: Do it in multiple bills so that you can target where you're going to go with those effects.

1700

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: To the member from Peterborough—Kawartha: There is an aspect in the Main Street Recovery Act that deals with the Ontario Food Terminal, in particular the small businesses, independent shops and restaurants. But more broadly, it links to the agri-food business and the importance of that in our economy as well, particularly where I represent, in the region of Durham. It also straddles into the member from Peterborough—

Kawartha's riding as well. Could he please speak to the effect of the proposed changes that relate to the Ontario Food Terminal, particularly in the sector that I referred to, the agri-business economy?

Mr. Dave Smith: The agri-business in Ontario is one of the largest in the province. Approximately one in eight people work in some form of agriculture, but eight out of eight people in Ontario eat the food that is produced by farmers in Ontario.

The changes that we're making to the Ontario Food Terminal will allow more diverse types of product to be brought into it. One of the challenges that I've heard repeatedly in my riding from people is that they have difficulty getting their product to the food terminal. We have businesses, we have farm businesses, agricultural businesses who want to sell their wares to others, but it was not available to be sold at the food terminal. These changes open up an entirely different avenue for us for the supply chain for them. I see it as a very positive thing.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Peterborough for his presentation. I'd like to inquire, however—we know that with the restaurant industry, delivery has become a necessity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the government itself acknowledged the ability to deliver alcohol. Why has the government chosen to not place a limit on predatory third-party delivery apps within this bill?

Mr. Dave Smith: I greatly appreciate this. I actually owned a small business back in the 1990s; I owned a pizzeria. Typically, we were selling two medium pizzas with pepperoni for 10 bucks. With the delivery charge on it, it was—\$2.50 is what I paid my delivery drivers at the time per delivery, so it was roughly 25% of what the cost was of it.

The cost that those food delivery companies are charging has not increased during COVID. What has changed is that more people are using the services. Restaurants that previously were not doing very much with delivery are relying much more on delivery. This is something that does need to be addressed, and there are a lot of different ways it can be addressed. As I said to an earlier question, though, we can't have a single bill that encompasses everything. We have to be targeted in our approach to it. So I look forward to having further discussion on this.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I'd like to, first of all, commend the member for Peterborough—Kawartha on what I think has been one of the most well-rounded and thoughtful presentations on the reality of competing in today's world. There's no doubt that we are in times that none of us have ever seen before. Obviously, you referenced the Spanish flu and that, but whoever would predict that we would have a situation like this, where everything has been turned upside down and what worked yesterday does not work now?

We have to evolve; we have to change. The last thing we need is red tape and restrictions inhibiting us from being able to develop and grow. We have no room for those obstacles that stop our productivity. Moving forward, we have to be clean, we have to be—not mean, I suppose, but we have to be effective, and we have to embrace technology. Moving forward, what do you see for the technological advances that will help us go through to this next generation of prosperity?

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you to the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington for the question. I think that with Bill 215, we have an opportunity to bring a lot of those small mom-and-pop shops online and turn them into, essentially, a multinational company. They have an avenue through this bill to be able to sell their wares anywhere in the world, not just to the person who’s walking down the street.

We have an opportunity with this bill, then, to expand all of those businesses and put our small businesses in a position to succeed well after COVID has left us. I think this is one of the most exciting aspects of it. I said it as part of my speech, and I’ll repeat it again: If you’re not in e-business, you’re going to be out of business.

Giving all of our small mom-and-pop shops the tools, then, where they wouldn’t have otherwise—they don’t have those resources to have their own helpdesk. That’s something that Bill 215 will give to them. They will be able to move into not only the 20th or 21st century but even beyond, and that’s something that I think is very exciting as we look at it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was wondering if the member could reconcile what happens to communities like the 33 little communities of Nickel Belt that I represent, where basically none of us have access to broadband? I have many small businesses in my riding. I have some beautiful outfitters. We have a very healthy community. But for us to go online, there is no cell service where I live, unless I’m at the end of the dock and the wind is blowing from the west. I have very little email, WiFi or Internet. I could afford to buy it if it was there. Most of my constituents are in the same situation as I am.

What is the government going to do so that we, too, in northeastern Ontario can take part in this online selling and online pivoting that businesses need to do during COVID?

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Actually, I’d love the opportunity to talk about rural broadband and the fact that Ontario is significantly underserved.

Yes, I live in the riding of Peterborough–Kawartha. I am five minutes from the city of Peterborough, but I cannot connect to a Zoom meeting that we put on as government from my house because I do not have strong enough broadband. I live less than five minutes from Trent University, a major, major institution, a higher education institution, and five minutes away, we do not have high-speed broadband available to us.

My riding represents seven rural municipalities, and it’s the same thing. I hear the same thing constantly about it.

We do not have high-speed Internet available to us, and it is something that we are trying to address through the ICON program here with the provincial government, as well as working with the federal government through ICIP.

There is a number of different initiatives we could talk about, and I would be happy to talk about off-line. It is something that we have heard repeatedly. It’s a challenge that we inherited, and we’re doing what we can right now to make a difference.

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

Mr. Calandra has moved second reading of Bill 215, An Act to amend—

Hon. Paul Calandra: On a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Oh, just a second. Point of order, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Sorry about that, sir. I was asleep at the switch.

I’m sure if you seek it, Mr. Speaker, you’ll find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay. I’ll seek the consent of the House to see the clock at 6. Agreed? Okay.
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

TIME TO CARE ACT (LONG-TERM CARE HOMES AMENDMENT, MINIMUM STANDARD OF DAILY CARE), 2020 LOI DE 2020 SUR LE TEMPS ALLOUÉ AUX SOINS (MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE ET PRÉVOYANT UNE NORME MINIMALE EN MATIÈRE DE SOINS QUOTIDIENS)

Ms. Armstrong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to establish a minimum standard of daily care /
Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les foyers de soins de longue durée afin d’établir une norme minimale en matière de soins quotidiens.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member from London–Fanshawe.

1710

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Today, I rise on behalf of those who live and work in long-term care across this province. Everyone here is familiar with the contents of this bill, not only because it’s the fourth time the official opposition has presented it since 2016, but also because the government’s own staffing report and long-term-care commission also called for legislating a minimum of four hours of direct care per resident per day.

Four hours of care has been widely endorsed, and yet the fact that this government, and the Liberals before them, did nothing to pass it is at this point very disappointing. So let's stop playing political games and get serious about long-term care. Pass this bill and put investments behind it, because this is life-saving legislation.

I want to share a day in the life of a long-term-care worker. I received the following from a local PSW:

"We feel like we are working on an assembly line and not dealing with people who are vulnerable and fragile. We are spending on average about six to seven minutes per resident to provide them with their daily needs, such as grooming, dressing, toileting and eating.

"We are told continually to prioritize our work, so all the responsibility falls on us, and if we make the wrong choice, we are held accountable. How do you prioritize your work when you have one resident asking to go to the bathroom and a cognitive resident asking you to go to bed" because they need "physical help—or do you" put the "resident who has been sitting in a wheelchair for 12 hours and is unable to speak for themselves, so you have to become their voice?" This happens to us on a regular basis. "There are so many times my co-workers and I feel so overwhelmed that we feel like crying. We have cried.

"Our residents deserve better than to be told, 'I'm sorry, you have to wait to use the bathroom,' 'I'm sorry, you have to wait' to get up or 'lie down,' or 'I'm sorry, I don't have time to talk' right now, even though that's what the resident needs at that point in time. It feels like PSWs are apologizing their entire shift for the lack of time they have to spend with the residents. How can we be expected to deliver resident-centred care, when all we can do is hopefully just meet their basic needs for the shift, and more times than not, it comes at the expense of our" own "breaks? There are ministry standards for everything, but they mean nothing if we don't have the staff or the time to provide quality care with compassion and dignity" to our residents.

That was from a PSW who wrote me, Speaker. This PSW testified at a Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs pre-budget hearing under the Liberal government in 2016. Since then, it's only gotten worse.

Recently, a PSW in a London long-term-care home called me. He told me he's been a PSW for 14 years and, especially over the last four years, he's witnessed—and this is his statement—"the foundation of long-term care crumble." Over the course of the pandemic, he said he has routinely walked into his evening shift to find residents not even out of their bed for their meals, and often with pools under them. He told me it's not out of the norm for residents to go weeks without bathing. He recalls speaking with a colleague who told him they can't remember the last time they bathed a resident. He said sick calls are through the roof and many of his colleagues have indicated burnout. He said he's repeatedly called the ministry for help, to no avail. There was no help coming, there is no help coming, and from the actions that this government has taken so far, it's easy to feel that there will never be help coming, say the workers.

Speaker, it's not a surprise when we hear these testimonials from PSWs. The commission is now hearing those testimonials. We have heard them at committee on other occasions when we talked about long-term care or home care. There have been reports from workers' groups and unions talking about the understaffing, the lack of care—reports and study after study and academic papers. It certainly is no surprise, but it's very sad that workers are going into these kinds of conditions and feeling like they can't do the job that they are being asked to do, that they signed up for, to look after those residents. Workers develop a relationship with residents, so they feel like they're letting them down.

This morning I spoke to a constituent, Janice. Her dad is a resident at the Village of Glendale Crossing in London. He needs one-to-one care, and the home has told him that she needs to provide it, either by coming in herself or paying out of pocket for a private caregiver, because they are short-staffed. Why is Janice on the line physically and financially for this home and the government's lack of action on staffing? This Conservative government and the previous Liberal governments have let Janice down.

All of the folks I've mentioned here aren't alone. In my time as the critic for long-term care and home care, I've received countless calls and emails from family members, staff and residents in tears because there's just not enough time for the care. Clearly the status quo isn't working. We and the people of Ontario demand better than this. We demand better than this.

I'm proud that the New Democrats have laid out a vision of what seniors' care could look like with the right investments. Our plan would ensure that the long-term-care sector is properly staffed, resourced and modern. We want residents to feel joy, to be happy every single day in their home. We want them to be nurtured and cared for and treated with dignity. We want staff to go home from work and still have the mental and physical energy to spend time with their own family. We want staff to have full-time hours and benefits, and therefore have the time and the means to contribute to their communities. Make it a career for PSWs. It's attractive as a career when we talk about those things. We want them to do the job they went to school for and always dreamed about, to go to work every day knowing that they are appreciated and treated with respect. And we want them to leave work feeling fulfilled that they did their job, that they helped that vulnerable elderly person.

We want caregivers to be able to go about their lives secure in the knowledge that their mom or dad, sibling or child is receiving the best possible care. We know it will take significant investments to get us there, but there's no cost too high to protect Ontario seniors.

Ontarians have been quite clear: They are fed up with the broken system. But apart from green-lighting more beds for its profitable buddies, this government is not interested in actually changing things for the better. If this government respected workers, they wouldn't have passed Bill 195. Health care workers risk their own well-being and have been worked to the bone during the pandemic.

Rather than honouring their sacrifices, Bill 195 enables employers to deny or cancel vacation time, redeploy them to another unit or health care facility at any time, and have far too much authority that is unchecked by their collective agreements and, perhaps, indefinitely.

If this government respected the residents we lost during the pandemic, they wouldn't be tabling Bill 218. Families are grieving. Rather than supporting their calls for justice, Bill 218 would strip families of their right to sue the government or for-profit long-term-care homes where their loved ones died.

People are dying every day. Every day that we delay legislating a minimum standard of care, hiring thousands more long-term-care staff and injecting the sector with funding, Ontario seniors will continue to perish. These are Ontarians we are supposed to protect.

On Monday, when I asked the government to provide a timeline for when they would legislate a minimum of four hours of care, the House leader replied, "We'll talk about this on Wednesday." Well, it's Wednesday, so let's talk. So far this government has only committed to releasing a staff strategy by the end of the year. Meanwhile, the rates of COVID-19 infection are rising at an alarming pace and staff are exhausted from the first wave and continue to work without taking a break, while residents are still recovering from prolonged isolation. They don't have time to wait until the end of the year for a strategy. They need action now.

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Yesterday, the Minister of Long-Term Care promised to support the bill. I'm glad to hear it, considering how when she was questioned in the committee on estimates earlier this month, the minister said, "You have to understand that in order to provide four hours of care per resident, you need the staff to provide that." Yes, we do. It's literally your job to find that staff, and it's possible. It can be done. Quebec did it. They were able to hire 10,000 PSWs over the summer, because they paid for training and they guaranteed a livable wage. This government's failure to follow suit is not only an indication of its lack of leadership but also its lack of will.

The time for regarding reports and commission studies is over. The time to come up with a strategy is over. The time for stalling is over. We're well past the time to make this law. Residents in long-term-care homes are dying. We all know this. COVID-19 has exposed this. The Canadian Armed Forces report—just unimaginable circumstances. This government needs to expedite this bill through due process. It needs to bring it back into this House for third reading and, again, allocate investment to make it happen.

We are all involved and connected with someone in long-term care somehow, whether it's a worker, whether it's a neighbour, whether it's a loved one for ourselves.

This is the moment that we can show such leadership. This morning, the minister said that there's compassion in this government. If there's compassion in this government, I ask them to pass my bill, expedite it through the committee, and let's get it done. There is no more time left. Time is up. It is the time to care in this Legislature, protect

our seniors and give workers the tools they need to deliver that care to our most vulnerable.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: First off, I want to thank the member from London—Fanshawe for bringing this bill forward again, for the fourth time. It's my third opportunity to vote on it; I'll be supporting it again. I just want to comment on the member's genuine commitment to seniors and elders in Ontario. It's appropriate that she's bringing forward this bill. As I said, this is the fourth time we're going to be voting on this. We've all made commitments on either side of the House, so how are we going to get there? When are we going to get there?

Both of my in-laws were at the Perley and Rideau Veterans' long-term-care home. My father-in-law passed away last November; my mother-in-law the January before. I spent the last two nights with my mother-in-law at the Perley. I remember being kind of between asleep and awake and listening to what was going on. I knew how many people were working on the floor. I could hear bells and I could hear voices. I can remember thinking, "How much is too much? Because it feels like too much right now." That's concerning.

COVID-19 has been the great revealer. It has revealed the vulnerabilities in our long-term-care homes—and that's that people aren't getting enough care and we don't have enough people to do it. When the pressure was on, some really bad things happened.

So when are we going to get there? When are we going to make the commitment to get to four hours? When are we going to say this is the standard? We've got to do that, because there are so many other things that have to go into making that work. How are we going to recruit people if they don't feel valued, or if they don't have the time to do the work that they want to do? It's amazing how important that person is who is caring for your mom or your dad because you can't. How are we going to pay them enough? When are we going to do that? When are we going to give them stable jobs?

The message about four hours of care is actually about valuing the residents and the people who care for them. Like I said, we voted on this four times before. It has been supported in this House. We need to make a decision to make that commitment and make it stick, because I don't want to be back here in two years voting on this bill again.

I thank you for your time, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 13, the Time to Care Act. Some of the members will know that I've been in the House for a few other times that a bill like this has come before us, and the last time I spoke on a similar bill was in 2018. I'm proud to be part of a government that has prioritized long-term care since day one—a government that has been putting in the work to address the capacity and staffing issues that have been growing for decades.

Speaker, we're all aware of the shift in demographics in Ontario and the implications that has for long-term care,

but we saw that gap in capacity grow over decades, most notably between 2011 and 2018, when the number of long-term-care beds in Ontario increased by only 0.8% while the population of Ontarians aged 75 and over grew by 20%. That same neglect crept into staffing, too. Residents are now entering long-term care older, frailer and with more complex needs than ever before, and that increases each year. Then we saw the COVID-19 pandemic hit, which amplified the staffing challenges in long-term-care homes that were over capacity.

That was the context the Ministry of Long-Term Care staffing study was released in. During the first wave of the pandemic, the sector peaked at 38 homes reporting critical staffing shortages, with one home reporting as many as 60 vacant personal support worker shifts experienced daily. Another home, one with 128 beds, reported 10 registered nurses missing per day.

What's clear, Speaker, is that action is needed. Our government, before and during the pandemic, knew about the need to repair and rebuild the long-neglected long-term-care sector in our province. To address long-standing staffing issues, our government created a staffing study to inform a comprehensive staffing strategy that is part of our government's agenda to modernize long-term care. That will be delivered by the end of the year.

Along with the staffing study, we announced the launch of a \$10-million annual training fund for front-line staff, so they can stay flexible and resilient and continue to adapt to changing practices. These key actions are part of a broader modernization agenda that is moving full steam ahead to build new capacity and bring aging long-term-care homes up to modern standards.

One of the recommendations of the staffing study was a standard of four hours of care per resident per day. Despite what others may claim, I know the minister and her team are hard at work making the changes we need to see in long-term care happen, and that is under way. Finally, we have a government that is acting on, and not just talking about, long-term care.

At the end of the day, this is about the residents. It's about dignity. It's about respect. Our long-term-care staff foster and nurture these relationships every single day when they go into work; I know they do in the four that we operate in the region of Durham. They help create a warm, welcoming and caring environment for residents. For so many Ontarians, they help make long-term care a home. That's why I'll be voting in support of the bill brought forward by the member from London–Fanshawe.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today, we can take a huge step towards improving the quality of care for the 78,000 residents of our long-term-care system. We can legislate a minimum standard of four hours of hands-on care per resident per day. We can make sure their basic needs are met—things as simple as being fed, being washed, being dressed, having someone help you to the toilet rather than being forced into incontinence products. We can make sure they receive their medication and treatment as

prescribed. We can make sure that if they're anxious, troubled or sad, someone will be there to listen, to help. We can make sure that we treat them with dignity and respect. This is the least we can do to make sure they have quality care.

The government has seen multiple reports, including their own expert panel on staffing, the interim report from the long-term-care commission. They all say the same thing: Legislate a minimum standard of four hours of hands-on care. Voting "yes" to the Time to Care Act is the first step.

They have a majority government. They can add this to the November 5 budget and be done. They can add four hours of hands-on care to any one of the COVID-19 bills that they are tabling. People from all over Ontario are watching. They know the government can legislate four hours of care per resident per day.

We have to get this done. Time's up. It's time to care.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm pleased to rise to debate the Time to Care Act. I want to thank the member from London–Fanshawe for bringing this bill forward.

Speaker, it is our duty to pass this bill. We cannot wait any longer to begin fixing the conditions that have led to nearly 2,000 deaths. We owe it to our elders. We owe it to the workers who are caring for our elders.

Debates over long-term care can be pretty controversial and combative, when we debate whether it's public or private or we try to point fingers to which government is responsible for the negligence in our long-term care. But for goodness' sake, today—today—I hope we can all come together, everyone in this House, to stand up for our parents and grandparents, to stand up for our uncles and aunts, to stand up for the elders in long-term care and vote to pass the Time to Care Act.

Elders in long-term care deserve a minimum of four hours of hands-on care, and they deserve it now. We've all been touched by this tragedy personally. I've heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about losing her mom in long-term care. I've watched the Premier hold back tears talking about his mother-in-law. This bill speaks to our humanity. It speaks to our values. It speaks to the kind of province we want to live in. It speaks to the kind of people we want to be. I want to live in a province and be an MPP in a province that cares about our elders and provides them with the levels of care they need, with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Let's not only pass this bill today; in next week's budget, let's allocate the funds to make this bill a reality.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm honoured to rise in this House today to speak in support of Bill 13, the Time to Care Act, reintroduced by the member from London–Fanshawe and, of course, previously introduced by the member from Nickel Belt in 2016 and 2017 and by the Leader of the Opposition in 2018. I'd like to thank them all for their work on this bill.

I think we can all agree that the COVID-19 crisis has revealed many serious, long-standing problems in our

long-term-care system. That's why, earlier this summer, our government set up an independent, non-partisan commission on COVID-19 in long-term care, led by the Associate Chief Justice Frank Marrocco. You'll recall, Speaker, the opposition was very critical of the decision at the time. The Leader of the Opposition said that the commission "would only serve to keep information from the public and protect the interests of multinational companies." But just last week, the commission released some early recommendations, and at number 4, the commission recommends "a minimum daily average of four hours of direct care for residents." And, of course, that's exactly what Bill 13 would provide. I was wondering if the opposition might rethink their position on the commission.

But that aside, we can all agree that our seniors who helped build this province deserve a safe, comfortable place to live. When they don't have that, we all deserve answers. As some members know, two of the worst outbreaks in Peel region were in my riding of Mississauga-Lakeshore—there were 149 cases and 72 deaths at the Camilla Care Community, and 99 cases and 21 deaths at the Erin Mills Lodge nursing home—so I take this very personally.

While Bill 13 is one step in the right direction, I think we all can agree it is only addressing part of the problem. For example, we need to build capacity for the 37,000 seniors on a wait-list for long-term care, including over 4,500 in Mississauga alone, because it is time to care for them, too. This summer, on July 21, I was proud to join the Premier and Trillium Health Partners to announce the construction of two long-term-care homes in Sheridan Park in my riding, with 640 new long-term-care beds. Speaker, that's more than the previous government built for the entire province between 2011 and 2018. As the number of Ontarians over 75 grew by 75%, the number of long-term-care beds grew by less than 1%.

At Sheridan Park, we are using modern, friendly designs with private rooms and air conditioning. While a project of this size would normally take three years or more, these beds will be ready next year, in 2021. This is only one of over 100 new long-term-care projects in various stages right across Ontario. Every one of these projects represents a safe, modern and comfortable long-term-care community in the making, and it is one more step towards modernizing care for Ontario seniors.

Our government is also investing close to \$540 million to protect residents, caregivers and staff in our long-term-care homes during the second wave of COVID-19. This includes funding for repairs and renovations, including upgrades to allow physical distancing, water supply and HVAC upgrades and replacements to allow cleaning.

Once again, our seniors built this province, raised us and took care of us. We all want the very best for them. Working together, I know we can ensure that they have access to the care and comfort they deserve, now and in the future.

Again, I want to thank the member and the member for Nickel Belt for all their work on this bill. I will be supporting it.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour for me to rise today to speak to Bill 13, the Time to Care Act. I'd like to commend the member for London-Fanshawe for introducing this bill, as well as the member for Nickel Belt and the leader of the official opposition for introducing it in the past.

The pandemic has hit everyone hard, but no one has been hit harder than our seniors. But they've been suffering for years. The last government abdicated their responsibility by neglecting their duty of care. Again, this has been realized in a number of ways, but most notably through the lack of oversight, funding and maintenance of our long-term-care system. I think of so many families who have told me of rushed mornings, the wrong medication, waiting in soiled diapers, infections, bedsores, black eyes, vermin. These stories have contributed to the quick deterioration of loved ones, and at the heart of this was the amount of human care available to these folks while PSWs couldn't deliver the care they needed.

To the government: Do the right thing and pass this bill. People are waiting, and they're watching.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I'm pleased to rise today to speak about the important issue of direct care and staffing in long-term care at so critical a time in our province's history.

I would like to start off with something I believe everyone in this House can agree on: I would like to take a moment to offer my deepest gratitude to the health care professionals across this province and across the health and long-term-care sectors who do the critical work day in and day out to keep us all safe and healthy.

We all understand that proper staffing plays a crucial role in ensuring that the needs of all long-term-care residents are being met. We understand that a high-quality workplace environment for our health care staff is synonymous with a better place to live for residents. Resident-centred care requires the appropriate health professionals in place to ensure their needs are met. After all, any one of us could need long-term care one day. Many of us have direct experience of long-term care already. When I talk with my constituents, the people of Carleton, I oftentimes hear some heartbreaking stories that I'll never forget about the issues we see day in, day out, in long-term care.

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The pandemic has brought a massive burden to an already stressed long-term-care sector, and it makes me think. Part of our identity as Ontarians and Canadians is knowing that we have to step up and that we have to take care of the most vulnerable people in our society. We have to keep them safe. We have to protect them. We have to give them the care not just that they need, but that they deserve.

Our government has committed to addressing the long-standing issues of long-term care in Ontario. Shortly after the Ministry of Long-Term Care was created as a stand-alone ministry, the government received Justice Gillese's

long-term-care-homes public inquiry. In her report, she outlined 91 recommendations for the government, and I was pleased to hear that 80% of Justice Gillese's recommendations are complete or under way.

The one thing I want to focus on today is that our government conducted a staffing study, led by an expert advisory group. That advisory group made a number of recommendations surrounding staffing in Ontario, and it acknowledges that this problem has been a long time in the making. It takes into account that the staffing problems in long-term care will take more than just money to fix.

We know that the needs of those entering long-term care are different than 10 or 20 years ago. We know their medical conditions are much more complex. We know that those residents need significant care and attention to maintain a quality of life. That's why we have to remember that this debate is more than just about numbers; it's about people. It's about Ontarians. It's about our mothers, our fathers, our brothers, our sisters, our loved ones, our friends. It's also about the people working in long-term-care homes and the people they take care of.

The staffing study found that four hours of care per resident per day is an ideal worth pursuing, and I support this bill, because it aligns with that goal.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to speak to Bill 13, the Time to Care Act, brought forward by my colleague from London—Fanshawe.

Speaker, six minutes per day is the average amount of time workers in Ontario have to provide hands-on care to our loved ones living in long-term-care homes—six minutes a day to help your grandma get out of bed in the morning, to get your grandfather bathed, to help feed your mom breakfast, lunch or dinner; six minutes to help your dad change into clean clothes in the morning or get ready for bed at night; six minutes to make sure your loved one gets the medicine they need to stay healthy and address any other medical needs that they may have—six minutes a day to do all of those things and more.

Six minutes a day to provide the care and support we all expect for our loved ones is unacceptable. Ontarians living in long-term-care homes deserve care that truly supports their needs and maintains their dignity. They need a legislated standard of a minimum of four hours of hands-on care per day, and enough front-line workers to provide that critical care.

This bill has been tabled four times and supported each time by Conservative members. This government's own long-term-care commission reported that a minimum of four hours of direct hands-on care per day is needed for residents. Today, the Conservative government has the opportunity and the responsibility to not just support Bill 13 at second reading, but to fast-track it through third reading, as they have done with many of their own bills recently, and make a minimum of four hours of hands-on care per day for residents in long-term care the law in Ontario.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you to the many people who have called for this standard of four hours of hands-on care to reinvent our broken long-term-care system—something that puts people first.

This bill has the support of the hard-working front-line workers, many who had to leave the field because of injuries and mental stress.

I would like to thank labour unions and activists who have stuck with this file to make sure our most vulnerable are taken care of with dignity and respect. They, along with residents and families, have time and again tried to highlight the dire neglect that our loved ones faced in these facilities. They are looking to us to finally make this happen.

What does four hours of hands-on care look like? Well, it's not one worker for 35 people. That's ridiculous. It would mean that there was time for feeding, bathing, dental care, wound care, foot care, therapies. There would be time for nails to be cut, shaving, hair to be washed, hair to be combed. There would be time to assist with a walk for a breath of fresh air, and there would be time for a cup of tea or a glass of water, and time to comfort those who are alone, confused and afraid. Let's do what is required. No more delays. Let's pass this bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak to the Time to Care Act.

Very similarly to what you had said, I want to thank all the workers who have gone into a long-term-care facility over the course of the pandemic and before, and taken care of our loved ones to the best of their ability. The one thing I know about them is they love their patients as much as their families, so I want to say thank you to them on their incredible times.

I'm going to ask, why do we need the Time to Care Act? Quite frankly, this is one step, but we've got to get it into law. Here's why we need it—and we should all be ashamed, disgusted. It took the Canadian military to say what's going on in our long-term-care facilities. And it was going on before. It was raised by everybody.

I want you to listen to this, because it breaks my heart to read it: "Horrific conditions," cockroaches, rotten food, a lack of hygiene, patients crying out for help for hours. That could be one of our loved ones. This is what the Canadian military report said about long-term-care homes in Niagara and across Ontario. Whistle-blowers have been saying this for years, but it took military intervention to finally blow the lid off this scandal.

And listen to this, because we should all be saying it: To our country's greatest shame, Canada has the dubious distinction of having the most COVID-19 deaths in long-term care out of any nation on this planet. Make no mistake about it, COVID-19 did not cause this crisis in long-term care, but it shone a light on it for the world to see—what families have been raising alarm bells about for decades. Pass this bill. We did second reading; pass it into law next week. Thank you, I appreciate it.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Our parents, our grandparents are counting on us today. Heck, even our children and future selves are counting on the decision we are about to make. It is unconscionable that after our parents and grandparents gave us life, nurtured us and worked hard throughout their lives, they are left to struggle and suffer when they need us the most, when they can no longer live independently.

Speaker, once again an NDP member has tabled the Time to Care Act so that the people living in long-term care will get the direct attention and help they need every day so that they can live with dignity: a minimum of 4.1 hours daily. They deserve our respect, and they deserve our compassion. We have been demanding this for years, and we have been joined by countless experts, academics and families in our call for change. Now, the commission on long-term care has agreed with our position.

This isn't just the right thing to do; it's a moral imperative. It will save lives. For the love of the generation before ours and all others that follow, pass this bill. So many are counting on us today. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: It gives me great pleasure to be able to speak on behalf of the people of Hamilton Mountain to this time to care bill today, brought forward by the member from London–Fanshawe. I can tell you that the people of Hamilton Mountain contact my office. So many families have contacted my office with their families in distress, with their mothers and fathers and grandparents and loved ones who are in horrible conditions, who are dirty, who are not being changed properly, who are not getting out of bed on time, who have lost their dentures, who have lost their hearing aids, because workers are scrambling to be able to get our seniors to breakfast on time. We've heard from the member from Windsor West, who talked about the six minutes that they have to get the seniors to breakfast.

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I've heard stories from PSWs who have come to talk to me to tell me that they have to choose—there is a timetable set up: They get the seniors who are not able to express themselves, who are not able to talk, up first in the morning, and they start at 4 a.m. so they can get through the next 20 patients and seniors so that all of their people are to breakfast by 8 or 8:30. That's disgraceful. That's not the province that any of us choose to live in. That is not the system that I want to be in when I'm a senior. That is not the position I'm sure any of us want to live in as seniors.

This is something that has come before us four times—and brought forward from New Democrats—with the Liberal government, with the Conservative government. Now is the time. If there was ever a time that has raised the alarm of what is happening in our long-term-care homes, it is now. We have heard from the commission. We have heard from the Canadian army. We have heard from stakeholders and workers, for years, the need to get this done.

It's not just about saying “aye” today and passing it today. It's about making sure this gets to committee. It's about making sure that it gets back to this House for third reading. It's about making sure that we actually are making a difference and that we actually are making sure that no senior has to go through what we've seen in the last year.

So on behalf of the 1,900 seniors we've lost in long-term care, let's get this done. Let's do it for them. Let's do it for the families who have suffered way too much under this COVID time and truly do something in their memory and pass this legislation through.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London–Fanshawe has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: A little bit of history when it comes to the time to care bill and the fact that there are minimum hours of care in long-term care: Of course, we've said this is the fourth time the NDP has tabled the time to care bill. It's the Harris Conservative government that took out the legislated minimum of care, so that started there. The Liberals promised to replace it in 2013, but they failed to do so every time that the NDP presented the bill. All parties had supported the bill, but nobody actually went through and made it law.

Members on the Conservative side supported it at the time. They're going to support it again, now that they have the will—there is the will under COVID; there's the power to do this. They have the power to do this, so I implore them to expedite it. Make it law. Save all of us the anguish of worrying about our loved ones, and the families who need that peace of mind to know, when they've put their loved ones in long-term care, they're going to have that expectation of the level of care they're going to get. We don't want to turn back the clock. We don't ever want to go back there. Looking back at the rear-view mirror, it's just a very short distance that we can do that, and we can look forward to actually passing this bill and getting it done.

You know, voting in favour—that's great, but those are empty gestures. So I want to get actions to those gestures in this Legislature.

Speaker, in the remaining time, what I'd like to do is to dedicate the rest of my time to a moment of silence in remembrance of the 1,994 residents and nine staff who died while COVID-19 was on our watch. I would request a moment of silence for that, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London–Fanshawe is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to have a moment of silence. Agreed? Agreed.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Members can take their seats.

The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Ms. Armstrong has moved second reading of Bill 13, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to establish a minimum standard of daily care. 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.

Pursuant to standing order 101(d), the recorded division on this item of private members' public business will be deferred to the proceeding of deferred votes.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1756.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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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	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteuse générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (IND)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'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

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Wayne Gates, Randy Hillier
Andrea Khanjin, Jane McKenna
Judith Monteith-Farrell, Michael Parsa
Randy Pettapiece, Donna Skelly
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

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Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
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Sandy Shaw, Dave Smith
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Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
Mike Harris, Daryl Kramp
Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
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Marit Stiles, Nina Tangri
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Nina Tangri, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
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Terence Kernaghan, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin
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John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Lindsey Park
Tom Rakocevic, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell