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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 27 April 2021

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 27 avril 2021

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOVING ONTARIANS MORE SAFELY ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 VISANT À ASSURER À LA POPULATION ONTARIENNE DES DÉPLACEMENTS PLUS SÛRS

Ms. Mulroney moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 282, An Act in respect of various road safety matters / Projet de loi 282, Loi concernant diverses questions de sécurité routière.

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

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'll be sharing my time this morning with the Associate Minister of Transportation.

It's my pleasure to begin debate on the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, the MOMS Act, which, if passed by this assembly, would take strong action to protect road users against unsafe and aggressive driving and establish oversight for the provincial towing and vehicle storage industry. Specifically, this act proposes measures to combat stunt driving, aggressive driving and street racing and to update the way collision data is collected to enable tracking of dooring incidents.

The act also contains a proposal for a new stand-alone statute, the Towing and Storage Safety and Enforcement Act, which is intended to result in improved customer protection and a level playing field for operators to reduce crime and fraud in the sector.

Mr. Speaker, all of us in this House understand the importance of transportation to our communities' physical and economic health. Every aspect of our lives depends on an efficient transportation network. Transportation is so ubiquitous that it fades into the background, and the daily struggles—crowded trains, clogged highways, late shipments—start to seem like forces of nature. You can do as much about a traffic jam as you can about a thunderstorm. It's no coincidence that new stations across the province report traffic and weather together on the 1s.

The reality is that the conditions that lead to traffic jams, overcrowded subway platforms, missed or late trains

are the result of the decisions that we make as a society or as governments: decisions to advance a public transit project or not, decisions to build a new highway or not. Those decisions have a very real and tangible effect on our lives.

Ils peuvent déterminer si vous allez être coincés dans un embouteillage ou si vous allez pouvoir arriver à la maison à temps pour souper avec votre famille. Ils peuvent déterminer si vous allez avoir le temps ou non de lire une histoire à vos enfants et les border le soir. Et même si nous nous limitons aujourd'hui aux déplacements essentiels, nous dépendons toujours d'un réseau de transport sûr et fiable. Les travailleurs de première ligne et les travailleurs essentiels en dépendent pour se rendre au travail et rentrer chez eux en toute sécurité.

We rely on it so goods can get to market and so that we can send and receive the deliveries that are so important to the survival of so many local retailers and restaurants. You can see that transportation and a smooth-running transportation system are fundamental to a well-functioning and productive society. And the choices that we make today will have a lasting impact for the generations to come. Those choices aren't just about the infrastructure that we build; those choices also involve how we manage behaviour on the roads and highways to ensure that they are as safe as they can be.

Make no mistake, Ontario's roads are among the safest in North America. Let me give you an example: In an average year, approximately 10.6 million licensed drivers in this province travel more than 150 billion kilometres on our roads. On an average day, more than \$785 million in goods are moved on Ontario's highways. And despite all that traffic, between 2009 and 2018, the motor vehicle fatality rate dropped by 7%, ranking Ontario as the safest highway jurisdiction in all of North America. This occurred while the number of licensed drivers in the province increased by nearly 15% over the same period.

En fait, monsieur le Président, depuis deux décennies, l'Ontario se classe régulièrement parmi les cinq premiers endroits en matière de sécurité routière en Amérique du Nord. Et bien que nous devons être fiers de nos réalisations en matière de sécurité routière, nous ne pouvons pas être complaisants. En matière de sécurité routière, il est toujours possible d'en faire plus. C'est d'autant plus vrai comme nous prévoyons des taux de croissance incroyables dans cette province au cours des prochaines décennies.

People and businesses from around the world are moving to Ontario and the greater Golden Horseshoe for new opportunities. The GGH will attract one million new

people every five years, reaching a population of nearly 15 million people by 2051. To put that in context, that's about equal to the population of the entire province in 2019.

So, we need two things to accommodate this growth. First, we need new infrastructure, and we will build it. Second, we need new and improved measures to keep our roads safe, because the fact is that even though our roads are among the safest, we are starting to see incidents of unsafe and aggressive driving increase, and the consequences are extremely dangerous and, too often, deadly.

The increase in these incidents requires that we take a look at our current road safety measures and that we make the necessary adjustments to ensure that they remain effective. That's what this legislation intends to do. The Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, if passed, introduces measures to take strong action to stop the rise in unsafe and aggressive driving and street racing, and bolsters protections for the province's vulnerable road users.

Over the course of the pandemic, we have witnessed disturbing trends on our roads as it relates to dangerous and aggressive driving. Between March 1 and December 31 of last year, police laid a total of 796 stunt driving charges in the city of Toronto alone. That's an increase of 222% over the same period in 2019—222%, Mr. Speaker. It's astonishing.

And this isn't just a Toronto problem; it's a problem right across the province. York Regional Police report a 60% increase in stunt driving charges. In communities across the province, police are catching drivers who seem to think that the province's roads and highways are their personal racetrack. Here are some examples: In Napanee in March of last year, the OPP caught someone travelling more than 200 kilometres per hour on the 401. In Ottawa around the same time, police impounded seven vehicles over the course of 7.5 hours, all for stunt driving. Then there's the example of the person caught speeding at 308 kilometres an hour on the QEW last spring. That's more than 200 kilometres above the speed limit. To be travelling that fast means that a car is covering nearly the length of a football field every second. There is no excuse to be travelling this fast under any circumstance in any place in this province—none whatsoever.

0910

These are just a handful of examples, and it's important to remember that for every case that makes the news, there are others that we don't hear about. The reality is that while we have seen an incredible spike in incidents of dangerous driving in the last year, these incidents have been on the rise since 2009.

Monsieur le Président, il ne fait aucun doute que la vitesse tue. Selon le rapport annuel de la sécurité routière de l'Ontario, en 2017, 42 % de toutes les personnes tuées sur les routes de la province sont décédées dans des collisions où la vitesse a été un facteur clé. Le mois dernier, la Police provinciale de l'Ontario a signalé que malgré la baisse de la circulation sur les routes de l'Ontario et la diminution du nombre d'accidents, les accidents qui se sont produits étaient plus meurtriers et la vitesse était un facteur. Et lorsque la vitesse est un facteur, trop souvent, l'âge l'est également.

Between March and June last year, young drivers between the ages of 16 and 25 were involved in more than 40% of all collisions that occurred at speeds 50 kilometres per hour above the posted speed limit. Drivers in this age group make up only 19% of all drivers involved in collisions in that period.

What drives people to engage in this kind of reckless behaviour? Why would they risk life and limb? Why do they so willingly endanger the lives of those around them? One potential answer to this question can be found in a book called *The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults* by Dr. Frances Jensen. The book was recommended to me by a friend a few years ago when my children were approaching adolescence. Dr. Jensen writes, "The chief predictor of adolescent behaviour ... is not the perception of risk, but the anticipation of the reward despite the risk. In other words, gratification is at the heart of an adolescent's impulsivity, and adolescents who engage in risky behaviour and who have never, or rarely, experienced negative consequences are more likely to keep repeating that reckless behaviour in search of further gratification."

I am the parent of driving-age teenagers. Being the parent of teenagers on the cusp of driving is challenging at the best of times. It's even more so when you're the Minister of Transportation, because not only are you bombarded with the regular questions about when they can get their licence, but they also want to know if you can speed up the process for them. And, no, I cannot. But one thing I can do is everything in my power to make the roads safer, not just for my kids but for all of us.

Je ne suis pas la seule à vouloir rendre nos routes plus sûres. C'est un objectif partagé par tous les membres de cette Chambre et par d'autres à travers la province, et c'est l'intention de la Loi visant à assurer à la population ontarienne des déplacements plus sûrs. Ce projet de loi a été élaboré en réponse aux appels lancés par les intervenants de toute la province, y compris des députés de tous les partis, qui nous demandent d'en faire plus pour réduire les risques sur les routes.

If passed, this act would strengthen penalties for stunt driving, street racing and other high-risk driving behaviours. It would also enhance protections for vulnerable road users, improve commercial vehicle and highway worker safety and strengthen the province's oversight of the towing sector.

We are proposing a series of escalating sanctions for aggressive driving behaviours that focus the serious repercussions on the worst offenders. These are people who regularly disregard the law and put the lives and safety of other road users in jeopardy. We're sending a clear message to the province's bad drivers: Driving is a privilege, and those who threaten the safety of others have no place on our roads.

Mr. Speaker, this new legislation proposes meaningful steps to curb unsafe and aggressive driving, but don't take my word for it. Bonnie Crombie, mayor of Mississauga, said, "This new legislation sends a strong signal that dangerous driving simply won't be tolerated."

Scott Butler, executive director of the Ontario Good Roads Association, calls this legislation “an important first step toward realizing a future where Ontarians are no longer fatally injured or seriously hurt on our” highways.

And Thomas Carrique, commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, said, “The Moving Ontarians More Safely Act ... is an important step towards addressing the serious road safety issues created by aggressive drivers.”

Les propositions contenues dans la loi visant à assurer à la population ontarienne des déplacements plus sûrs, si elles sont adoptées, auront un impact important sur la réduction des comportements de conduite agressive et à haut risque, qui affectent tous les usagers de la route. Cela comprend les usagers de la route vulnérables, comme les piétons, les travailleurs sur les routes ou à proximité et les passagers des tramways.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to go into more detail about the measures contained in this act that, if passed, would target the bad actors on Ontario’s roads who put everyone’s safety at risk. First off, the bill contains measures to combat stunt driving, aggressive driving and street racing. My colleague the Associate Minister of Transportation will be discussing these measures in more detail, but I did also want to spend some time discussing them, given their importance.

We unfortunately do not have to look very far to see that stunt driving and street racing continue to be a major issue in this province. Just this past weekend, police in Ottawa pulled over a driver and charged him for stunt driving. It was his fourth such charge. That same day, police also pulled over someone on a motorcycle who was driving 143 kilometres per hour in an 80-kilometre-per-hour zone. Again, this is just one weekend in one location of the province, a snapshot of something that happens nearly every day.

With the proposed measures in this act, we are saying that enough is enough. We recognize that the current measures are not having the impact to deal with these rising incidents, and we need to get stronger. Recognizing this fact, we have worked with many stakeholders on this issue, including road safety organizations, municipalities and enforcement agencies, to make sure that we get it right and achieve the outcomes that we are seeking. These stronger proposed measures would target those engaged in these behaviours immediately.

First, drivers caught speeding will face a 30-day roadside driver’s licence suspension and a 14-day vehicle impoundment. This is an increase to the current penalties of seven days for both a driver’s licence suspension and vehicle impoundment. We are also proposing escalating post-conviction driver’s licence suspensions for individuals convicted of street racing to align them more closely with those imposed for impaired driving.

As the case I mentioned in Ottawa demonstrates, the current system is not acting as enough of a deterrent for those repeatedly engaging in this behaviour. By introducing escalating suspensions, we are letting those bad actors and the public know that stunt driving and street racing are as serious as impaired driving, and we will continue to

tackle this issue with the same energy and vigour as we have dedicated to that issue.

We are also proposing a lower speed threshold for stunt driving offences on municipal roads. While stunt driving and street racing are reprehensible no matter where they occur, lowering the threshold on municipal roads will ensure that it is treated with the appropriate seriousness, given the increased danger that is present when driving so recklessly in our communities.

0920

Bien que nous soyons convaincus que ces mesures proposées auront des répercussions réelles et immédiates, je tiens également à vous faire savoir que nous ne nous arrêterons pas là. Tout comme ces mesures répondent aux dernières tendances, mon ministère continuera de travailler avec nos partenaires en sécurité routière pour évaluer la situation et s’assurer que nous avons le bon système en place pour la combattre.

Nous poursuivrons les consultations avec nos partenaires et avec le public, y compris les jeunes, pour nous assurer que nous entendons le point de vue de ceux qui sont touchés par ces comportements. Nous continuerons à éduquer le public afin qu’il soit conscient de ce problème et de ses conséquences.

We will continue to explore further measures aimed at reducing and preventing unsafe driving, including potential fine increases for speeding. We need to keep evolving to address these issues and keep our roads as safe as possible. In speaking with the Premier, my colleagues and our stakeholders, I know that all of us are committed to that responsibility.

Second, we are proposing measures to strengthen protections for vulnerable road users in the province. Anyone who frequently takes the streetcar in Toronto can tell you that it’s not uncommon for cars to speed past the doors when they’re trying to exit. Whether the driver is distracted or trying to make the green light, passing a streetcar at a stop is illegal and dangerous. These actions are carelessly dangerous and put people’s lives at risk. We’ve all heard of these horribly unsafe incidents, and I think that members on all sides of this House can agree that greater measures are needed.

According to Stuart Green, senior communications specialist for the TTC, between 2016 and 2018 they had at least 31 incidents where someone has been injured by a passing car while boarding or exiting a streetcar: 25 while exiting, six while boarding. We can put up all the decals, all the signs, all the flashing lights on streetcars, but we need to have the necessary tools in place to enforce consequences and hold people accountable for their dangerous choices.

In response to requests from the city of Toronto and others, the bill would allow municipalities to use traditional methods and cameras to enforce illegally passing streetcars with doors open to pick up or drop off passengers, creating new vehicle-based offences. These cameras will allow municipalities to quickly identify and fine drivers who drive past stopped streetcars. We’re taking action to support the province’s municipal transit systems to ensure

that people can have confidence in their safety when riding streetcars.

Partout en Ontario, le cyclisme, tant pour les loisirs que pour le transport quotidien, est devenu de plus en plus populaire. Au cours de la dernière année, les magasins de vélos continuent de signaler des ventes en plein essor. Le vélo est pratique, abordable et constitue un excellent moyen d'améliorer notre santé et notre bien-être général, tout en réduisant les effets de la congestion urbaine. C'est aussi une activité familiale amusante que j'apprécie personnellement, aux côtés de mon mari et de mes enfants.

Sadly, with this growth comes the all-too-real possibility of cyclists being doored; that is, you're biking along and minding your own business when a car door opens directly in front of you, knocking you to the ground. It's dangerous and it can result in serious injuries. That's why we're proposing amendments to the Highway Traffic Act that, if passed, will enable changes to how we collect collision data so that we can track dooring incidents involving cyclists and stationary cars. This will improve the quality and integrity of the data that the province relies upon to develop and evaluate our road safety policies and programs. It also means that cyclists involved in a dooring collision will be able to receive a collision report at the scene, the same as drivers who are involved in a motor vehicle collision. Through our measures to specifically address dooring, we can reduce serious cycling injuries in communities across the province and help drivers learn how important it is to share the road with vulnerable road users.

We also propose to take measures to improve the safety of road workers through the proposed authorization of the use of automated flagger assistance devices. Mr. Speaker, roadside construction sites can be dangerous places, with heavy machinery taking place feet from passing traffic. We need to take every opportunity to make them as safe as possible to reduce injuries and death. The automated flagging devices will do just that, by making it so that fewer workers have to interact directly with traffic. As a result, if permitted, these devices will mean fewer workers are put in harm's way in construction zones, which means fewer fatalities and serious injuries for workers on job sites.

The province's construction industry and its workers are instrumental to building up Ontario and its critical infrastructure. This proposal will go a long way to ensuring the safety of road workers in Ontario. As Bryan Hocking, chief executive officer of the Ontario Road Builders' Association put it, "Initiatives that crack down on stunt driving, that allow for the use of automated flagger devices are important tools that will make construction zones safer for workers and make our roadways safer for all Ontarians." This proposal is an important step forward in creating a safer work environment for the men and women who build, maintain and repair Ontario's roads.

Monsieur le Président, j'aimerais attirer l'attention de la Chambre vers l'annexe 3 du projet de loi. Les conducteurs de dépanneuses de l'Ontario jouent un rôle

essentiel en assurant la sécurité de nos routes et en favorisant la circulation sur nos autoroutes. Chaque jour, ils aident les gens qui sont dans le besoin, et les efforts qu'ils déploient pour répondre aux incidents sur nos routes et les dégager sont essentiels pour assurer la fluidité de la circulation.

Many of Ontario's tow operators are safe and reliable and provide good customer service. But in recent years, we've seen some alarming instances of violence, fraud and criminal activity in the towing industry. We have all seen the headlines, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure everyone here shares my opinion that these types of violent incidents are abhorrent and wholly unacceptable. Our government is committed to stamping out this criminal behaviour and restoring people's trust in the industry. And that's why we have acted to address this alarming issue.

Last June, we struck a provincial Towing Task Force to find ways to make the industry safer. The task force included representatives from the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of the Solicitor General, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, the Ministry of Finance, the Ontario Provincial Police and municipal police.

The task force was asked to develop recommendations on ways to increase safety and enforcement, clarify protections for customers, improve industry standards and consider tougher penalties for violators, in response to concerns about violent and criminal activity in the industry. They consulted closely with stakeholders in the towing, consumer, automobile insurance, municipal and law enforcement sectors. In the winter, we launched a public consultation to get feedback from the public on their experiences with the towing industry.

Last month, the task force released their report, a series of recommendations to:

- promote road user and tow operator safety to prevent death and injuries on Ontario roads;
- ensure drivers are protected and treated fairly after they experience a collision or a breakdown;
- create a level playing field with clear requirements that allow legitimate operators to prosper;
- enhance intelligence gathering and enforcement and take action against violators; and
- prevent crime and fraud throughout the towing experience.

We have already moved quickly to adopt several of their recommendations. For example, the OPP and municipal police services are forming a Joint Forces Operations team to investigate criminal activity in the towing industry, with the goal of enhancing consumer protection and public safety. The Joint Forces Operations team will shut down criminal activity in the towing industry that puts Ontarians in danger on our roadsides. It will root out criminals and ensure that decisive actions can take place to address incidents of violence in the towing industry.

We are forming a new technical advisory group made up of representatives from towing companies, consumer

advisory groups, automobile insurance companies, municipalities and law enforcement organizations. This group will make sure that we are making informed decisions every step of the way and that our trusted partners are part of that decision-making process.

0930

Of course, this summer, we will be launching the first phase of a pilot that will introduce restricted tow zones on designated sections of provincial highways that will help clear highways faster and more safely. During the first phase of the pilot, we will be designating four restricted tow zones on sections of the highways in the greater Toronto area:

—Highway 401 from Highway 400 east to Morningside;

—Highway 400 from Highway 401 to Highway 9;

—the QEW from Highway 27 to Brant Street; and

—a fourth zone that includes Highway 401 from Highway 400 west to Regional Road 25, Highway 427 from the QEW to Highway 409, and Highway 409 from Highway 427 to the 401.

Chaque emplacement pilote a été soigneusement choisi en fonction du volume de trafic et des données sur les collisions. Chaque zone sera restreinte, ce qui signifie qu'une seule entreprise de remorquage sera engagée par contrat pour chaque zone de remorquage et autorisée à retirer les véhicules nécessitant un remorquage. Cela veut dire qu'aucune autre entreprise de remorquage ne pourra solliciter le remorquage de véhicules dans une zone de remorquage restreinte.

Le projet pilote durera deux ans, avec la possibilité de deux prolongations d'un an. Nous procéderons à une évaluation continue tout au long du projet pilote pour nous assurer de son efficacité.

The goal of the pilot is to ensure tow operators have the training, the experience and proper equipment to clear highways safely and efficiently, to reduce congestion and delays on provincial highways by clearing the highway more quickly, and to help ensure reasonable tow rates for drivers by providing standard pricing and invoicing for towing services in the restricted tow zone.

One of the key recommendations from the towing task force was to bring forward legislation that would strengthen oversight and enhance standards in the industry. I am very pleased to say that we are taking that step today.

This bill contains a proposal for a new stand-alone statute, the Towing and Storage Safety and Enforcement Act, by amending the following statutes: the Consumer Protection Act, the Highway 407 Act, the Highway Traffic Act and the Repair and Storage Liens Act. This proposal will help make our roads safer, by introducing improved customer protection and a level playing field for operators to reduce crime and fraud. It proposes requiring certification for tow operators, tow truck operators and vehicle storage operators. This will require them to meet a set of prescribed requirements and standards to practise in Ontario, including standards for customer protection and roadside behaviours. There will be penalties for failing to meet those standards. And we have proposed to establish

a director of towing and vehicle and storage standards to help us strengthen provincial oversight.

These proposed actions will improve customer protection for all drivers of passenger cars and commercial vehicles. The proposed legislation would mean drivers can have confidence when they break down or are involved in a collision. They'll know that the tow truck driver helping them has been properly trained, that the tow truck has been properly inspected and is suitable for the job, and that they will be treated fairly. Increased oversight, combined with the other actions our government is taking to reform the towing and vehicle storage sectors, will result in safer roads, reduced delays resulting from accidents and breakdowns, and improved customer and driver confidence.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I'd like to acknowledge the work done by members on all sides of the House to improve the safety of Ontario's roads: first, my predecessor, whose work this legislation builds on, the current Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. I also want to thank the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, who introduced a motion in this House last month urging us to take action to address stunt driving. That motion was adopted unanimously by this House. This bill is partially a response to that.

In that spirit, I want to thank my friend and colleague the Associate Minister of Transportation for her hard work in helping to develop this legislation, and her work on the stunt driving file in particular.

When the House debated the motion from the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, many members expressed their support for renaming the Highway Traffic Act offence of stunt driving to something that better conveys the risks of the behaviour. To try and find a consensus on a new name, the Associate Minister of Transportation will undertake consultations on the best way to move forward.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge all members of this House who have expressed a desire to improve the safety of Ontario's roads and highways. Road safety is not a partisan issue; it's a concern that we all share and something that we can all agree upon. That's why, in developing this bill, we have listened to the concerns as they have been raised on all sides of the House.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to let the House know that we will support the measures in this legislation with a public education campaign. Specifically, we will be launching a social media campaign to educate the public on distracted driving next month. Distracted driving is something that really concerns me as a mother and as a minister. There are prohibitions against distracted driving, but I believe that this needs to be supported with a public education campaign to try and change attitudes.

We know that distracted driving is dangerous. This is especially true for teenagers and young drivers. In *The Teenage Brain*, Dr. Jensen cited a statistic that has stuck with me: Distracted driving is a factor in 87% of incidents where adolescents die in automobile accidents.

Here in Ontario, we have been tracking behaviours and attitudes towards distracted driving since 2011, and we are undertaking a survey that is also set to be complete next

month. This survey will inform our further work on this issue as we continue to find more ways to improve the safety of our roads.

Mr. Speaker, the work of road safety is never finished. It must evolve to address new behaviours, new technologies and changing attitudes. Because of this, we will continue to work with our road safety partners in communities across the province to find new and effective deterrents to high-risk and aggressive driving, including potential increases to speeding fines.

We will not tolerate high-risk and irresponsible driving, nor will we tolerate criminal activity. There is no place on our roads for this kind of behaviour, and we will continue to target these drivers with increased suspensions and penalties rigorously.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The minister did say she would be sharing her time. We turn to the Associate Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you very much for Minister Mulroney's leadership on this file. I am pleased to rise today and say a few words about the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, also known as the MOMS Act.

Our government is determined to keep Ontario's roads among the safest in North America, and the MOMS Act is a vital continuation of the work we are already doing to strengthen road safety. Road safety is fundamental to not only a well-functioning transportation network, but to a well-functioning society.

It's a credit to our network and the many people who have a role to play in its operation that, for many, road safety is at the back of their minds. Millions of cars travel the province's roads and highways every year, and for most of those millions of trips, they pass without incident.

Whether it's driving to an appointment or a truck delivering essential goods, we are lucky to have a system and a network where you can feel safe while travelling. But that does not mean we can ever stop being vigilant in our pursuit of the safest roads and highways possible. That's why we introduced the MOMS Act yesterday, as part of that endless pursuit.

The unfortunate truth of the matter is that there has never been a better time to bring forward this act. Among the countless impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen a disturbing increase in incidents of high-risk driving. The statistics cannot be ignored, and they paint a troubling picture. Driver's licence suspensions issued at roadside for stunt driving and street racing increased by 52% between March and August of last year compared to that same time frame in 2019. Between March and June 2020, a driver involved in a collision was 65% more likely to exceed the speed limit compared to the year prior.

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When you look at this data as it relates to young drivers, the picture becomes even more problematic. Between March and June of last year, nearly one in five drivers involved in a collision was between the ages of 16 and 25, yet young drivers are involved in 42% of collisions where the recorded speed is 50 kilometres per hour or more

above the posted speed limit. Just think about that for a moment: 50 kilometres per hour or more above the posted speed limit is alarmingly fast. Imagine going 150 kilometres per hour on the 401 or 90 kilometres per hour in your local school zone. The dangers of such reckless behaviour are devastatingly real and life-altering. The risk of fatality or serious injury is approximately 11 times greater when vehicles are involved in a collision at 50 kilometres per hour or more above the speed limit—11 times greater of a chance lives will be forever changed.

To be clear, this isn't just a COVID problem. The pandemic has only accelerated an alarming trend that we were already seeing within this province. For instance, between 2013 and 2019, street racing or stunt driving caused the number of licence suspensions issued at roadside to spike 130%. There was also a 46% increase in the number of repeat suspensions for stunt driving or street racing between 2014 and 2019. These statistics, inflamed by the pandemic, demonstrate that existing penalties and sanctions are no longer effective in deterring stunt driving, street racing and other high-risk driving practices from taking place on our roads and our highways. Since day one, we have been vocal. Like the Premier said himself last June, we will not sit back and do nothing while drivers are found speeding well over the limit and being reckless on our roads.

As I speak in the House today, I am thinking about 37-year-old Karolina Ciasullo and her three beautiful daughters, six-year-old Klara, three-year-old Lilianna and one-year-old Mila, all killed on the afternoon of June 18 last year. Four lives filled with hope and possibility ended when their SUV was struck at such a high rate of speed in Brampton that it was forced into a light pole. I think of Michael Ciasullo, who has been robbed of his family. He won't get to see his daughters graduate and follow their passions. He won't get to send them off on their first dates or walk them down the aisle or watch as they become parents themselves. He won't get to celebrate becoming grandparents with his wife—no more anniversaries, no more holidays, no more growing old together.

Drivers who put lives at risk are on our radar. We will not stand for their careless disregard for the general public. That's why the MOMS Act contains a series of severe sanctions to address these behaviours in order to protect the lives of Ontarians. Through these proposed measures, we are sending a strong, clear message that stunt driving and street racing should be treated with the same severity as alcohol- and drug-impaired driving. We as a society need to confront the dangers of these behaviours in the same ways that we have tackled and stigmatized impaired driving. Through this act, we will ensure that the penalties will make no mistake about the seriousness with which we hold these actions.

For starters, we are proposing to increase the period of roadside driver's licence suspensions from seven days to 30 days. The duration of vehicle impoundments would be extended as well from seven days to 14 days. These swift punishments ensure that those caught engaging in these behaviours will immediately feel the consequence of losing a vehicle or a licence for longer.

One of the trends that has been observed during the pandemic is an increase in the number of people getting caught street racing and stunt driving who had previously received suspensions for the same actions. This is a worrying trend, Mr. Speaker, because it demonstrates that we are seeing this activity persist even after someone has been caught and has had to face the consequences of their actions. Again, this has made it abundantly clear that the penalties and sanctions are not having the desired impact of deterring these reckless drivers on our roads. The penalties for these behaviours cannot be considered a slap on the wrist. That's why we are targeting repeat offenders by introducing post-conviction licence suspensions for drivers convicted of street racing and stunt driving, ranging from a minimum of one to three years for a first conviction all the way to a lifetime suspension. The message is clear: If you are careless enough to repeatedly engage in this behaviour, we will take away your ability to make that mistake again. And it's not just a matter of taking away your car or your ability to drive; you may also face up to six months in jail.

Furthermore, we are also proposing to lower the speed threshold for stunt driving charges. Because stunt driving and speeding are not the same across the board, we need to ensure that we are combatting this behaviour where it is most dangerous to the public and other road users and pedestrians. As part of our proposals, drivers caught going 40 kilometres per hour or more above the posted speed limit of less than 80 kilometres per hour will be penalized. This means that those who are speeding on our roads within our towns, cities and neighbourhoods, where the public is most at risk, are held to a tougher threshold for their irresponsible behaviour. These are substantial increases to the existing penalties that send a strong message to reckless drivers: Your behaviour will not be tolerated.

As I mentioned earlier, we recognize that street racing and stunt driving offences are often committed by young and novice drivers. The measures and penalties I've just described complement existing sanctions and conditions imposed on these drivers under MTO's graduated licensing system as well as other programs. This is particularly important, as behaviours learned at an early age of driving can become habitual or regular practices. We need to take action early and often so that young drivers who are engaging in these reckless behaviours quickly learn that there is no tolerance for that type of driving. To help get this message across, young or novice drivers who consistently commit dangerous driving offences, including street racing and stunt driving, are subject to the ministry's Novice Driver Escalating Sanctions Program. Under this program, they risk their licence being cancelled for repeatedly engaging in street racing, stunt driving and other threatening behaviours that put the public at risk. This program applies in addition to the new penalties proposed under the MOMS Act.

But all of us here know, addressing these types of issues is not just about punishment. It's also about public education and making sure that everyone, especially young people, understand the risks and consequences of their

actions. That's why, in conjunction with the measures proposed in this act, our government will continue to work with impacted stakeholders on public education and communications to further deter and denounce high-risk and aggressive driving behaviours. We will not only be communicating the dangers, but we will also be implementing a mandatory drivers education course for those who have been convicted of stunt driving or street racing. This training will include educating individuals on the risks and consequences of these behaviours so that those who have been caught face the hard reality of the destruction their actions could cause.

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We also know that we are not alone as a government on this issue. I consider it a reflection of the strength of our province that we have so many hard-working people and organizations that are dedicated to the important issue of road safety. We enlisted the help of that valuable network when we were developing the measures within the MOMS Act. Municipalities, road safety stakeholders and enforcement officials were all consulted to ensure that the measures being proposed struck the right balance to address these issues and effect change.

We were happy to hear that stakeholders were supportive of the proposals to enhance penalties for stunt driving, street racing and high-risk offences. Those supportive stakeholder organizations included the Ontario Safety League, Teens Learn to Drive and Mothers Against Drunk Driving. It included municipal partners, like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Traffic Council and the city of Toronto, and, importantly, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. We thank those groups for their feedback and support to date, and we will continue to engage this network and utilize their many valuable perspectives, experiences and resources.

We will be launching further consultations on stunt driving and street racing to ensure that we are reaching these stakeholders and the public, especially young people, to make sure we are taking the right approach and putting the brakes on these unacceptable behaviours. I will personally be holding these consultations to ensure we are taking a strong, meaningful and smart approach to reduce both incidents and impacts. We all have the right to feel safe while driving to see loved ones or when we're heading to work or running some errands. Driving is a privilege, and those who don't respect that privilege will be shown the error of their ways.

While my remarks have focused primarily on stunt driving and street racing, we know there are other unsafe driving habits that need to be addressed. As Minister Mulroney has described today, we are also dedicated to fighting distracted driving. The measures included in the MOMS Act target these bad actors on Ontario roads who put everyone's safety at risk and help protect vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and highway construction workers.

We know that responsible driving makes roads safer for everyone. However, even with all the good that is in this

act, we cannot stop there. We must never stop pursuing ways to combat reckless and unsafe driving. That is why MTO monitors trends and driving behaviours so that when we see concerning patterns, we can make decisive changes to the rules and penalties based on evidence.

Again, we do not undertake this work in isolation. We work closely with stakeholders, municipalities, enforcement agencies and other jurisdictions to better understand the data and trends to ensure that we are utilizing all of the best available research and tools to help combat this issue. We will use this research and data to continue to explore further measures aimed at reducing and preventing unsafe driving. One death or serious injury on our roads is one too many, and we will never stop in our pursuit to make Ontario's roads the safest in North America.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close with one final statistic, if I may: Every three and a half hours, someone is injured in a speed-related crash in Ontario. That means that by the end of today, at least six people will have been injured due to reckless driving. They could be your son, your daughter, your parent, your wife or your husband. It doesn't have to be that way, though. Together, we can work towards a safer future. The stronger initiatives put forward in this act and the actions we will continue to take around it will help put us in a better position to achieve that outcome.

Mr. Speaker, I am very much looking forward to the debate this week, and I want to thank Minister Mulroney for her leadership.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We have time for questions and comments.

Mr. Jamie West: I want to thank the Minister of Transportation and the parliamentary assistant for the debate. It's an interesting conversation about safety because one of the best safety controls is an engineering control: For example, changing a two-lane highway to a four-lane highway will reduce injuries. For example, Highway 69 is the main artery from the GTA to Sudbury and back, so it's important to the economy of Sudbury but also important to saving lives.

They started the four-lane project more than 10 years ago because of the number of people who have died on that highway. There are currently 68 kilometres untendered. It was untendered during the Liberals and remains untendered under the Conservatives. I'm wondering if the Minister of Transportation can commit to finally tendering those last 68 kilometres, so we can finally finalize the four-laning of Highway 69.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I thank the member opposite for the question. He's absolutely right that looking at ways to improve the engineering around our highways is a key element to improving safety, which is why we've approved a pilot project in the north for just that, looking at some methods that have been used in other parts of the world: the GEMS project. We've approved a pilot project there to see if there are other engineering approaches we should be looking at in Ontario to do that.

With respect to Highway 69, I know it's a project of importance to the member opposite, as it is to members of our caucus as well. We have been continuing to work to

widen Highway 69 between Parry Sound and Sudbury to four lanes to improve safety.

We are continuing to work. The widening of a 14-kilometre section of Highway 69 is continuing. It's a \$200-million investment in Highway 69 that we are undertaking—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. The member for Scarborough–Rouge Park has a question.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: In the past year, members on both sides have risen in this House to propose solutions to the stunt and dangerous driving that we have seen on our roads. The member for Mississauga–Streetsville received all-party support for her private member's motion calling for higher penalties for stunt driving offences.

Can the Minister of Transportation detail to the House why the MOMS Act demonstrates the government and the Legislative Assembly see eye to eye on the dangerous risks posed by this high-risk driving?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Back to the associate minister for a response.

Hon. Kinga Surma: I certainly thank the member for that very important question. As Minister Mulroney and myself have elaborated in our remarks, we have seen this trend unfortunately growing within the province of Ontario since 2013. What has made this situation much worse are lower traffic levels as a result of the pandemic, because people are listening to the health protocols and the advice given by the Minister of Health, our Premier and our caucus.

Because of lower traffic volumes, as well as things like nicer weather, unfortunately there have been bad actors that have taken advantage of that and have participated in stunt driving and street racing. The fact that it has been truly exacerbated right now—we are still dealing with a pandemic situation. The warmer weather is coming, and so we have to be proactive to address and curb this trend moving forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, I can tell you that everybody wants our roads to be safer. I represent a northern, rural riding where speeding doesn't happen very often—not because we are better than anybody else. It's simply because our roads are so bad—they are so poorly maintained and full of potholes—that it is impossible to even do the speed limit.

But there are special areas in Nickel Belt that are especially dangerous, and that's Marina Road on Highway 144. I have written to the minister on a number of occasions. Most of the time, they wait until a fatality before they actually do the work that we all know needs to be done. Another area: Highway 17 and Highway 537 in Wahnapiatae is also very dangerous.

I'm all for safe roads. I want to make sure that the roads in the north are safe for the people of the north.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Back to the minister to respond.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: As I said in my remarks, Ontario's roads are among the safest in North America, but we cannot rest on our laurels. We still have to continue to invest in the upgrade of our current road system, as well as the expansion.

We have several projects under way to expand our northern highway corridors. The member opposite has written to me on a number of occasions about some of the roads in her riding. We're certainly looking to improve and upgrade the quality of our roads across the north.

We have an ambitious highway program where we're investing \$2.3 billion in highways this year. We're committing, in this fiscal year, \$625 million to expand and to repair our highways in the north. Those investments will also bring more than 4,300 jobs to northern Ontario.

We are deeply committed to getting these dollars invested across our highway system. Not only do they improve road safety, but they also create jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you to both the minister and the associate minister for their remarks this morning, talking about this incredibly important topic of making our highways safer. Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have been doing the weekly commute down the 401 from Ottawa to Toronto, and I'm always struck by how many dangerous drivers there are, who go speeding by you much too fast and, certainly during the winter, make it all the more risky for everyone else on the roads.

The associate minister highlighted in her leadoff remarks that every three and a half hours in Ontario, there is a speed-related crash that results in an injury to a road user. I'm wondering if the minister could explain how the MOMS Act proposes changes to address these types of crashes and why it's important to reduce these types of incidents.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you to the member. Hearing that statistic certainly opens our eyes. I just want to encourage everyone in the House to reference that statistic as much as possible.

Minister Mulroney and myself have provided harsher penalties to really deter and curb this behaviour, certainly amongst repeat offenders. But part of presenting the legislation in the House today is so that we can start having this conversation, so that we can raise awareness, so that we can educate especially our young drivers who, unfortunately, are participating in this type of behaviour. We don't want this to become a regular pattern, a regular habit.

I just want to encourage everyone in the House to please speak about this as much as possible. Certainly, the penalties are very, very strong in terms of discouraging this behaviour on our highways and roads.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question?

Mr. Guratan Singh: The legislation put forward addresses reforms for tow truck drivers but, once again, leaves dump truck drivers out. Dump truck drivers have been struggling with new regulations put forward by SPIF,

which are forcing them to take on a huge financial burden. Many dump truck drivers have expressed to me their inability now to even drive. They may have to pull the trucks off the road.

My question to the minister is, why is the Conservative government continually leaving dump truck drivers behind? Why aren't they giving them the support they need so they continue to contribute to our province?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: For decades, we have known that heavy vehicles put stress on our roads and on our highways, especially our municipal roadways. Prior to the implementation of the SPIF regulations, extensive consultations were held with industry stakeholders, including the Ontario Dump Truck Association, for at least the last 10 years. The majority of the industry supports the SPIF model.

I take issue with what the member opposite said. These are not new regulations. These have been in place—they were implemented back in July 2011, signed by the former Premier when she was Minister of Transportation.

So let me be clear: This regulation will remain in place. But carriers who have been unable to comply with the regulation will not be pulled off the road. They will be permitted to operate at lower capacity, at reduced weights.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working closely with stakeholders on this for the last decade, but this regulation will remain in place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We have time for further debate.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House, and today do the lead on Bill 282, An Act in respect of various road safety matters. I'd like to first make it known that I am not the critic on this issue, but because of the pandemic and because we are doing cohorts, the critic couldn't be here today. The critic is the member from Oshawa. I would also like to make the House aware that, although we just got the bill yesterday, I got some briefing notes at 2 o'clock this morning from the member from Oshawa. There are not too many people in this House who are as serious about their responsibilities to their constituents and to their colleagues as the member from Oshawa, and I would like to commend her for that. I hope I do her justice by actually using some of her briefing notes, because I'm not famous for that.

But before I get into the bill, I would like to say—I don't know how to start—we've all been affected by COVID, and this place as well. One of the things about COVID that has changed this place as well is there's less personal interaction. When people watch on TV, all they see, most of the time, is the—and there's much more to this place than that.

I would like to tell a personal story about the Minister of Transportation. She's grimacing, Speaker, but she doesn't need to. Before COVID—one of our issues in northern Ontario is winter road maintenance, and we make regular attacks on the minister regarding the lack of winter road maintenance. One day after question period, I was in the cafeteria, and the minister was right behind me. I turned and I said, "Minister, Highway 11 was closed on

the weekend again.” And she replied, “Yes, I know.” I don’t remember the exact numbers, but I remember her saying, “It was closed two lanes from 11 till 11:45, and then one lane from”—and she knew how many times the sand truck had gone by. She knew how many times the salt truck had gone by.

That personal interaction showed that we were both doing our jobs. She knew I was going to come after her, and she was prepared for it. There were a bunch of people in that line who, I’m sure, thought, “Whoa, that was pretty cool.” I give credit where credit is due. We’ve had a couple of interactions, the minister and I, and I give credit where credit is due. I don’t agree philosophically. We don’t agree, and that’s pretty obvious. But when she was ready, she knew it was coming in that lunch line.

That’s what we’re missing now. That’s what all workplaces are missing. But I’d really like to put on the record that I hope that when COVID is over—and we all need COVID to be over at some point—we can return to that type of interaction, because we’re losing that. We really are. I just want to get that on the record.

Road safety is something that we are all concerned about. We have different views on some of those issues, but it is something that unites us—and divides us.

I will talk about the bill, but as they were talking about stunt driving—and I have to say one other thing with COVID that has changed for me: I don’t think we’ve ever been at a more serious time, at least in my life, for the province, but when things are most serious, sometimes you have to laugh because if you don’t laugh, you’ll cry, and if you cry all the time, you’re not effective, either. At least I’m not. So sometimes I have to laugh, and sometimes it’s inappropriate, and I hope no one is offended. But that’s the way many of us operate.

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So, when I heard the minister and the associate minister talk about stunt driving, and we will get into it after—which is a very serious issue and I’m not discounting the issue—and I listened to the minister talk about The Teenage Brain, which I am going to put on my reading list, I was thinking when I was a teenager—I’m going to date myself, but I look pretty dated anyway. When I was 16, 17, the car that I had was a 1976 Ford Pinto, and in a 1976 Ford Pinto, if you could reach the speed limit, you were doing extremely well.

I had to think, the teenage brain back then, we were just happy to get going. You know what I mean? If I had had the wherewithal and the ability to have a car that went a lot faster, I would have needed better regulations too, but in 1976, the biggest thing you had to worry about—and I’m still a Ford owner, although I almost changed after the last election. Ford is not going to like this comment, but the biggest thing you had to worry about with a Ford Pinto was getting rear-ended, because as you will recall, they exploded because of where the gas tank was, and there were some very serious accidents. And that’s also a part of road safety if you think about it, right: making sure the vehicles that are on the road are safe.

Just in my last couple of minutes, an issue that we used to hear a lot about, and we don’t hear as much anymore

thankfully, is wheels flying off trucks. We don’t hear it, or maybe I’m just not hearing it anymore, but we used to have that issue a lot. We have lost people in my constituency being hit by transport wheels, and that has changed, and that’s a good thing. I’m sure something was changed to make that part of the industry safer. So regulations and work do make things better.

Road safety is a constant issue. It’s an issue that always needs improvement, an issue there are aspects of in this bill that all members of this House have spoken to and are in favour of.

The one part of this bill, or the one issue—and it gets back to the Legislature running the way it used to, the way it should—is the government has had time to consult on this bill because they knew it was coming. We saw it yesterday, so a lot of my comments this afternoon and from our colleagues will be without—we’re talking to stakeholders now and we’ve talked to stakeholders before, but not specifically about the regs in the bill or about the bill, because we didn’t know what was in the bill. Hopefully, we can get back to the point where a bill is introduced and the opposition actually has the time to do its job to bring forward voices who may not agree or who may not be comfortable telling the government that they don’t agree. That is much better done if you have longer than 26—it was introduced yesterday at 1 o’clock, so 28 hours—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pardon me. I am so sorry to interrupt the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, but the clock is such that the time for debate on this matter is now over for the moment. You will have an opportunity to continue your debate the next time this is called.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY UNIVERSITÉ LAURENTIENNE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today I’m asking the government to restore all courses and jobs cut from Laurentian University and to put in place a moratorium on any further cuts. This is in order to ensure that all students are able to continue their education and graduate as planned.

I’m also calling on the government to make sure that the current students in all of the programs affected by the restructuring of Laurentian University are able to obtain a diploma or degree in the same program or major in which they were registered as of April 9, 2021, without additional courses, without additional costs or having to transfer out of our area. There is an urgent need to act now to stop students from being forced to leave our region and to ensure that they can build the life and career they chose for themselves in Sudbury and in the north.

La communauté francophone a exprimé le désir, qui date des années 1960, de rapatrier les programmes francophones de la Laurentienne dans une université pour,

par et avec les francophones. J'appuie la communauté francophone.

The CCAA process closed the Indigenous program, Speaker—one of the best of its kind in Canada. It is a real blow to reconciliation.

I am calling on the government for unconditional support for Laurentian University. We, the people of Sudbury and the northeast, deserve equity of access to university education.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mrs. Daisy Wai: The COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges for businesses, especially small businesses. Our government has taken actions to help, but we also know how powerful local support can be in helping businesses get through these challenging times.

I am thankful for the support provided by the Richmond Hill Board of Trade, the Richmond Hill BIA, the Richmond Hill Chinese business association and the Richmond Hill economic development office of the city. Together they form the Recover Richmond Hill Task Force. Because of their efforts, we witnessed the success of businesses in Richmond Hill.

The 30th Richmond Hill business achievement awards held last week clearly demonstrated that this success will continue, even during hard times. Having received this award myself in 1998, I know how helpful it is in uplifting small businesses. With a positive outlook, and through the support of the local BOT, BIA and CBA, we will surely have a speedy economic recovery once the pandemic is under control.

Please join me to congratulate and recognize the successful businesses and award recipients, including Carcone's Auto Works, Canada China Trade Innovation Alliance, Sweetwater Gourmet Catering, Richmond Hill Soccer Club, United Canada, C17media, Bamboo Dental, Rudner Law, Quality Meats and Poppa G's Wings.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I rise today to give voice to the members of our community of York South–Weston who are deeply concerned about their lack of access to COVID vaccines. Essential workers and their families want to know why their community has zero mobile pop-up clinics and not one permanent vaccine facility.

It is well recognized by Toronto Public Health and the province that York South–Weston is a hot spot and one of high risk of COVID transmission. How can this government acknowledge that alarming fact and not provide the vaccines to those that need them the most?

Essential workers in my community need the vaccines and they need the paid sick days this government has voted against over 25 times and have, late to the game, finally promised but not delivered on. Every day that goes by that an individual in high risk has to go to work sick and every day they haven't yet received their vaccine puts an entire community at risk.

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How is it we can have 1,500 cases per 100,000 people and, still, nothing is done to help our community? When will the government acknowledge the risk our community faces and provide us with what other communities have: mobile clinics and a permanent COVID vaccine facility? We need the government to step up to the plate, take aggressive action and stop the vaccine inequities and disparities that exist, and make real plans to provide for hard-hit communities like York South–Weston.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Last week, I was pleased to make an announcement that was great news for our community of Oakville North–Burlington: The governments of Ontario and Canada have jointly invested \$3.7 million in 32 schools in my community through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. This funding will help to protect students and staff from COVID-19 by improving ventilation and upgrading IT, outdoor learning and other safety measures. It will also support building retrofit and upgrades to local schools and child care facilities located in schools. Other upgrades include installing water bottle refilling stations and new walls and doors to enhance physical distancing.

This funding builds on the more than \$1 billion the Ontario government has invested since 2019 in new schools and child care spaces. As well, every year, the Ontario government invests \$1.4 billion in maintenance and improvements to school facilities.

I'm pleased that 32 of our schools are getting the funding and attention they need to improve safety for students and staff. Ours is a fast-growing community with young families, and our government is funding three new schools and a major addition. I want to thank the Minister of Education for his work to ensure that schools in Oakville North–Burlington get the vital support they need.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Jamie West: Speaker, the Ontario Small Business Support Grant is failing many small business owners in my riding of Sudbury.

Here's what has been happening: They apply for the grant, they're denied, and they don't understand why. They apply, they're told they are approved, yet never receive a dime. They apply, they make a small error and have been trying to rectify it, with literally no response from the ministry at all.

A local salon owner told me, "Since February, I have received emails stating my banking information is incorrect. I had it rectified with an approval email."

However, "six weeks later, I" still "have not received any grant money. I have called several times." I've "emailed them. I have not gotten any response."

Mark Browning has four businesses in Sudbury: Tucos Tacos Lounge, Beards, Flurple's and the Vinyl Emporium. His four businesses run under one umbrella company, so Mark can only apply for the small business support grant

once, even though he has four businesses. Mark made a small error in his initial grant application in January. The ministry said that they would help him resolve this. However, nearly three months later, Mark is still waiting for details.

As Mark said, “I’m currently floating on \$60K of borrowed money so, knowing I’ve got roughly half of that coming later this year would help me sleep at night.”

New Democrats believe that small businesses have suffered enough. I am hearing similar stories from small businesses across my riding and from the small businesses in my colleagues’ ridings. The government must take a look at this program immediately so that business owners can access the support they were promised.

Frankly, it’s not too much to expect that the ministry answer their phone when small businesses call.

ASSOCIATIONS COMMUNAUTAIRES

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Au courant de la dernière année, nous avons tous été témoins de la résilience de nos communautés dans ce combat contre la pandémie. Nos associations communautaires jouent un rôle important dans nos communautés et font un travail exceptionnel, qui mérite d’être souligné. Les membres de ces associations communautaires sont des bénévoles très dévoués, qui concentrent leurs efforts afin d’aider leurs voisins et leurs quartiers.

Since elected, I have continued to appreciate the essential role that community associations play in politics. The added value of community associations is the proximity they have with our constituents. Working with them allows us to better understand the needs and interests of the residents, and we draw great benefits from working with them on local issues.

Given their important work, I believe that giving the community association a more formalized role in our political system would be beneficial. We all know that these associations suffer from a lack of resources and depend entirely on their volunteers and the civic duty of the community. While I am impressed and grateful for all they manage to accomplish, I believe that they need more support from the different levels of government.

Providing the community associations with the ability to more effectively accomplish the work they already do for the residents of all our ridings would in fact assist us in doing our job as elected officials. I certainly hope we can make some progress on that front soon, which will require, of course, a great deal of collaboration.

WASTE REDUCTION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: It’s always a pleasure to rise here. Today, I’m rising to commend a young man who has invested time and effort into raising awareness of litter in one of our most beautiful resources: Humber Bay, in Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Mark Turezki became a certified scuba diver a year ago and decided to use his skills as a diver and a photographer to record images of the floor of Lake Ontario around Humber Bay. Unfortunately, what Mark saw was alarming and disappointing. He found a tremendous amount of litter scattered on the floor of the lake. Alongside the flora and fauna, Mark found brand names and logos, coffee cups and COVID masks, cans, bottles and bags.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we can all do better. I am proud to see Ontario is working to keep our neighbourhoods, parks and waterways clean and free of litter and waste by reducing and diverting waste from landfills, looking for opportunities to recover waste and resources and finding new purposes for packaging and products.

We are working on a draft blue box regulation that makes recycling easier for Ontarians by standardizing what goes into the blue box and expanding services to more communities across the province.

The proposed changes would make the producers of products and packaging fully responsible for the waste they create, starting in 2023. The new goal of this new regulation is to improve recycling and address the pollution and litter, while saving taxpayers money.

On Tuesday, May 11, as we observe Ontario’s Provincial Day of Action on Litter, I hope that everybody will pause and think of Mark’s video of litter on the floor of Lake Ontario and thank him for reminding us that to reduce, reuse and recycle is not just a phrase, but a way of life.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Kevin Yarde: In Brampton North, my riding, and in Brampton we continue to see increasing cases of positivity. Recently, Brampton’s positivity rate was 22.2%. In Mississauga, it was 14.5%. What does this mean? It means that one in five COVID-19 tests are coming back as positive. Peel regional health mentioned that if you’re out shopping, just assume that the person next to you may have COVID.

The government must immediately upgrade Brampton to a hot-spot category for vaccine supply and open up more pop-up clinics for those 18 to 49, as this age group is in need of it. The urgency and intentionality with which we’ve seen Toronto Public Health working is incredible. We see it on TV every day: lines of people, 18-plus, going to get vaccinated.

My question to the government is: Why is Brampton not getting its fair share of vaccine allocation? Why is Brampton not included in the 18-plus pop-up clinics like they’re seeing in Toronto and Durham and in other regions? We need this government to stop hiding behind accusations of supply and start doing better for our region. Our community and organizations are willing and ready for pop-up clinics.

DAVE KALIL

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Dave Kalil has been known as Ottawa’s piano man for over 44 years now. Born and

raised in Ottawa, attending the old Laurentian High School in Ottawa West–Nepean, he started playing at Jay’s Steakhouse on Wellington Street in 1976. Kalil has played all over Ottawa and across Canada at The Nozzle, Whispers, The Saucy Noodle, Down and Under, to name just a few.

For the past 19 years, he has been part of Ottawa’s original duelling piano show with Tyler Kealey and Todd Huckabone. They’ve wowed crowds at Fat Tuesdays, The Marshes, Sens House, as well as many weddings and festivals.

When the pandemic hit, we know that musicians were hit hard. Mr. Kalil decided to play a few songs on a Facebook livestream on March 14, 2020. Thirty people watched. From then on, he’s played a show called Take a Break every Saturday and sometimes twice a week. They recently celebrated their 50th show and are still going strong.

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“My shows typically draw between 100 and 150 people now,” Mr. Kalil said. “One night, someone offered \$1 a person to my favourite charity.” Since then, they have raised over \$56,000 to go to support local charities, like the Ottawa Food Bank, the Ottawa Mission and the Perley and Rideau veterans’ home. Mr. Kalil summed it up as a “beautiful, organic movement of generosity.”

Speaker, Take a Break is online every Saturday at 7:30 p.m. on Dave Kalil’s Facebook page. Please log on, enjoy and consider making a donation.

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Billy Pang: This month, I was delighted to host my first consultation for my private member’s bill, Bill 270, Senior Volunteer Appreciation Week Act, 2021. The level of support I received on this bill was remarkable, and it was wonderful to connect with the residents of Markham–Unionville to hear their personal experience with volunteering.

There’s one I want to share in this House today. Mr. Arun Prasad has been an active volunteer for more than 10 years. Throughout these years, he has been involved in a wide range of activities, from modifying homes and teaching students how to manage money to currently volunteering for the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Mr. Prasad expressed the personal satisfaction that comes with volunteering and stressed his belief that it’s a beautiful way to open new opportunities. His strong desire to give back to the community began before his retirement and continues to this day.

Bill 270, if passed, will proclaim the first seven days of June as Senior Volunteer Appreciation Week and encourage Ontarians to wear a yellow-coloured item to display their appreciation. I want to thank members from all sides who support and spoke on this bill during the second reading.

Ontario is home to a vibrant community of seniors, and Bill 270 is another step forward for Ontario to recognize our older adults who selflessly continue to serve their communities.

Speaker, I look forward to speaking more about this bill as it goes to third reading.

QUESTION PERIOD

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question this morning is to the Deputy Premier.

Our ICUs remain overrun with patients who are struggling to breathe. Hospitals are preparing triage protocols that mean that they are going to need to ration life-support services, and they have to then tell families when their loved one is not going to be able to get life-support services.

The question to the Deputy Premier is, does she agree that we are currently in a serious and urgent crisis here in our province?

Hon. Christine Elliott: There’s no question that the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has been very hard on our hospitals. They are very hard-hit right now. There are a record number of people in ICUs. However, it is also very important to note that no triage protocol has been authorized by the ministry. Instead, what we are doing is building capacity to make sure that anyone in Ontario who requires an intensive care bed, whether it’s by reason of COVID or for another reason, will receive one.

We have been building capacity since the beginning of this pandemic with the beds we’ve created, increasing our acute-care capacity by over 14%. We’re also opening mobile hospitals at Sunnybrook and in Hamilton, and we are obtaining the health human resources we need in order to manage them. The people of Ontario can rest certain in knowing that if they need to be admitted to an Ontario hospital, they will receive the excellent care and treatment that they expect and deserve.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It has been about five days since the Premier of this province promised the best paid sick days program in all of North America. Today, we find out from reports in the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail that rather than pass legislation here in this chamber that would actually bring paid sick days to Ontario workers, this government wants to piggyback on a broken federal system that is not working for working people.

My question is, why would this government throw money at a failed federal program instead of stepping up and providing paid sick days to workers in this province and saving their lives?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: We don’t want workers to choose between their health and their job, Mr. Speaker. That’s why we’ve approached the federal government. We’re calling on the federal government to double the payments from \$500 to \$1,000 for four weeks of paid sick days. The province of Ontario will cover 100% of the cost

of doubling this program. We joined with other provinces, like British Columbia, to call on the federal government to be our partner to ensure that workers, not only in Ontario but across the country, are paid more than minimum wage. Mr. Speaker, this will ensure that workers in Ontario who are sick will be paid \$1,000 per week.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, workers are dying. People are dying in this province, and paid sick days can save lives. We all know that. We also know that the federal program simply does not work. In fact, the feds are rebuffing the Premier's advances when it comes to their failed benefit program. We know that paid sick days would work, and this government, instead of supporting that, instead of doing the right thing here and stepping up, has voted 25 times in this Legislature against paid sick days.

The question is: Those paid sick days could be passed today. We have bills that we could pass today. Will the government do that? Will they support paid sick days today and start saving the lives of Ontario workers?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: We support the health and well-being of every single worker in this province. That's why we have worked with the federal government since day one, since the pandemic came to Canada, to ensure that the benefits are paid out to workers much more quickly. In fact, now over 80% of the federal program is directly deposited into workers' bank accounts between three and five days because of our advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, we advocated months ago to the federal government to ensure that workers could apply more than once. That is now happening, and because of Ontario's leadership; we ensured that there are now four weeks of paid sick days in Ontario. We're asking the federal government to double that today. Ontario will pay 100% of the doubling.

We join with British Columbia to ensure that we have a federal partner to ensure that workers are kept safe in Ontario.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Deputy Premier, but I have to say, doubling down on a broken system, a broken program is not going to help Ontario workers.

Since the government defeated the NDP paid sick days bill back on March 1, about two months ago, 126,905 people have been infected with COVID-19. Since March 1, when they defeated our bill, 955 people have died.

In fact, Dr. Gaibrie Stephen, an ER doc at Credit Valley Hospital, says this: "955 people have died since the last paid sick days bill was voted down on March 1st.

"How many lives is this government willing to sacrifice?"

Will this government answer the doctor's question: How many lives are they willing to sacrifice?

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

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Mr. Speaker, the very first action our government took when the pandemic hit Ontario, supported by all parties in this Legislature, was to bring in job-protected leave. If any worker in the province is in self-isolation, in quarantine, if they have to stay home and look after a son or a daughter because of the disruptions to the school system, they can't be fired for that. Mr. Speaker, we eliminated the need for sick notes during COVID-19. And we went further, Mr. Speaker: We were the very first jurisdiction to bring in job-protected leave for those workers to get vaccinated.

But we're calling on the federal government to ensure that workers in the province of Ontario are not paid below minimum wage. We want \$1,000 a week for four weeks. Ontario will pay the full cost of doubling this program.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, there are 875 people right now struggling to breathe in intensive care units in our province. The government should be doing what the science table recommended, and what they've been recommending for a year, Speaker. We need paid sick days in this province. We need to rush vaccines to the hot spots, to the most affected parts of our province. We need to make sure that the government is closing non-essential businesses and providing them and their workers with the support they need to get through these next several weeks. Instead, what we get from this government is delay, deny, deflect, but not doing the right thing. On all of those counts, they are not doing the right thing.

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Ontarians don't want any more excuses. They don't want any more delays. They want a government that will step up and do the right thing: provide paid sick days, save lives, save our province from the crisis that we're in.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: We know that the biggest gap in the program today is that workers in Ontario and, quite frankly, across the country are being paid below minimum wage. That is an injustice of the federal program. That's why last week we went to the federal government to tell them that we want to double the program to \$1,000 a week for four weeks.

But, Mr. Speaker, we talk about the gaps in the federal program. The Leader of the Opposition said that "the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit pays less than minimum wage." The member from London West said, "The federal benefit pays less than minimum wage, and every worker in this province, even the lowest-wage, should be working at minimum wage."

Mr. Speaker, our plan would pay \$25 an hour, \$1,000 a week, for four weeks. That's how we're going to support workers in this province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, maybe the government hasn't noticed, but we are in a crisis here in Ontario. We have ICUs that have almost 900 people struggling to breathe. We have hospitals that are preparing to triage patients and trying to figure out how they're going to

explain that to family members of people who won't be able to get life-saving supports. We have parents in this province right now who are literally planning the funeral of their children, and this government continues to not act.

My question is back to the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Health for this province: How can this government justify even one more second of delay? Bring paid sick days to our province. We know it will save lives. We know it will stop the spread of COVID-19. Why can the Premier and this Minister of Health not bring themselves to do the right thing by Ontario?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Mr. Speaker, we want a paid sick day program that's paying \$1,000 per week to every worker who needs to stay home because of COVID-19. But we also want to go further. We want to make this program retroactive for 60 days to ensure that workers have the money in their bank accounts to pay their rent, to ensure that they can put food on the table.

But let's be clear: The federal government, with the flip of a switch, can ensure that workers in Ontario are paid \$1,000 a week, and our government will pay 100% of the doubling.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Gurratan Singh: My question is to the Deputy Premier. COVID-19 is devastating Brampton right now. Countless people are getting sick and countless more are dying. We have a COVID-19 positivity rate of 22%, and it's ravaging our community.

Brampton has been a COVID-19 hot spot since the beginning of this pandemic, but let's look at the Conservative government's track record for Brampton. When this pandemic first started, we weren't getting the testing support that we needed. We were then not given the COVID-19 resources we needed to fight this virus. Then during the vaccine rollout, initially, not one single vaccine was located in Brampton. Now, per capita, Brampton has some of the fewest pharmacies in Ontario giving out vaccines. And when we look at COVID-19 vaccine pop-ups, for the entire city of Brampton there is only one pop-up—which is not located in Brampton and doesn't even service our entire community.

Why is the Conservative government not giving Brampton the support we need to fight COVID-19?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I would vigorously disagree with what the member has just stated, because Brampton has been treated fairly throughout this pandemic. Recognizing now that Peel and Toronto are the hot spot areas, we have allocated more resources there for a long period of time. In fact, in the month of May alone, speaking forward, because we are going to be receiving many more doses of Pfizer, we will be allocating 432,960 doses of vaccine to Peel region, which will make Peel the public health unit region with the second-highest doses per capita in the province, second only to the city of Toronto.

There are 25 postal codes that have been identified as part of our hot-spot strategy in Peel, and there are a number of locations that I would be happy to discuss in my

supplementary that are responding to the need in Brampton and Peel.

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Back to the Deputy Premier: Yesterday I spoke with Radhika Gandhi. Her father, Kanaiya Gandhi, died earlier this year from COVID-19. He was from Brampton. Last year, Kanaiya Gandhi started to exhibit COVID-19 symptoms. He later then tested positive for COVID-19.

Kanaiya Gandhi worked at a factory. It turned out that many of the workers at that factory tested positive for COVID-19. When Kanaiya's condition began to worsen, he was admitted into Brampton Civic, but because of surging COVID-19 patients there, he was then transferred to Newmarket. It was in Newmarket where Kanaiya Gandhi died from COVID-19. The last words that he said to his daughter Radhika were, "I want to come home." He was never able to go home.

Radhika told me that she thought paid sick days would have saved her dad's life, because it would have prevented workers from having to make that terrible decision between going to work sick, spreading COVID-19, and paying the bills. When will the Conservative government finally listen to the experts, listen to people like Radhika who have lost family members, and bring in paid sick days and save lives?

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

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Certainly, our condolences go out to that family that the member opposite raised, and of course to everyone across the province and, quite frankly, across the country who has been impacted by COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, the very first initiative our government brought in was job-protected leave so that if any worker is in self-isolation and quarantine, they can't be fired for that. We eliminated the need for sick notes. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to have a federal partner to ensure that we have paid sick days for all workers in the province. That's why we're calling on the federal government to double their program to \$1,000 per week, \$25 an hour, and make it retroactive for 60 days.

Mr. Speaker, the other reason why it's so important—the federal government has that infrastructure already set up. As well, we need to ensure that self-employed people and gig workers are covered as well. So \$1,000 a week for four weeks, and Ontario will pay the doubling of that program.

TOWING INDUSTRY

Ms. Christine Hogarth: There's no place for crime in Ontario. While the majority of tow operators play by the rules, for years the towing industry, especially here in the GTA, has been riddled with violence and corruption.

This is a public safety issue. It's troubling to know that this problem has existed in the industry for years, long before this government came into office. Cracking down on bad actors in the towing industry is another opportunity the previous Liberal government missed.

In light of yesterday's introduction, could the Minister of Transportation explain why the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, perhaps better known as the MOMS Act, is an important step in overhauling the towing industry?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you very much to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for the question. The Moving Ontarians More Safely Act is a step towards creating a comprehensive provincial oversight system for towing. This will be the first of its kind in Canada. We're bringing this forward as a direct response to the recommendations that we received from the task force our government established last year. If passed, this legislation will support legitimate tow operators, protect consumers and keep our roads safe.

The need for government action on this file is not news, Mr. Speaker. As the Steven Del Duca Liberals know, industry stakeholders have been calling for this provincial action for years. Despite these calls, Del Duca as Minister of Transportation never introduced a provincial oversight regime for the towing industry and left public safety in jeopardy as a result. It's a shame, Speaker, but I'm proud that this government recognizes the urgency on this issue and is committed to doing things differently.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. I'm also proud that we're taking the actions necessary today.

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This legislation is just one of the many steps that this government has taken over the last year. From the task force established last June to announcing a joint forces operation team and tow zone pilot just last month, Ontario's commitment to improving the towing industry and safeguarding public safety measures has never been more clear.

Could the minister please share why she's confident the MOMS Act is the right course of action?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: There is no doubt that Ontario needs to step in to overhaul the industry and to curb the criminality within it. As reported by the Globe and Mail just yesterday, Justice David Rose believed that solving this issue is the role of the Legislature, and he hopes that we will take this on with the urgency that is required. We agree with Justice Rose, which is why we've taken another step towards the creation of a provincial oversight regime through the introduction of the MOMS Act.

Here's what CAA had to say about yesterday's introduction: "By working ... with the province of Ontario, CAA is optimistic the provincial legislation to govern the towing industry will address the most pressing issues related to safety and consumer confidence."

Speaker, we're going to continue consulting with industry and policing stakeholders as we move forward with this critical legislation that would, if passed, protect the public and enhance the industry.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Ontarians were quite rightfully shocked when on April 16, we saw the Premier's office, the Premier himself and his cabinet reject the federal government's offer to send in help from the Red Cross to relieve tired and overworked health care staff in Ontario. Then yesterday, the PCs flip-flopped and are now desperate to get any help they can find. In those 10 days, 175 more Ontarians ended up in overcrowded ICUs, and we lost nearly 300 Ontarians to the virus.

Why was it this government's first instinct to refuse help when it was clear that the health care system and our front-line heroes could use all the help they could get?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much to the member for the question. In fact, we have been working with the federal government to receive assistance. We have sent a letter to Minister Blair asking for assistance from some of the other provinces, to help coordinate that assistance; help from the Canadian Armed Forces and from the Red Cross to do things such as the CAF transportation of health human resources support from other provinces; the redeployment of medical personnel, including nurses and other applicable health care professionals from the Canadian Red Cross and other federal departments, because it is necessary for us to continue to build capacity to make sure that we have those intensive care resources that we need across the province. We also need health human resources, so we're very grateful that the federal government has offered to assist us and we are receiving help.

We are receiving, actually, a contingent of physicians—three doctors, six nurses—from Newfoundland today, including Premier Furey's spouse, who is a critical care doctor herself. So, we are asking for assistance, and other provinces, the Canadian Red Cross and the Armed Forces are also helping us in that respect.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Ontarians are tired of reliving the same mistakes from this Premier and his government over and over again as we face wave after wave of this pandemic, but that is exactly the pattern of behaviour we saw exactly one year ago in the pandemic's first wave. On April 17, 2020, the Minister of Long-Term Care wrote in her notes that she desperately needed military support. It then took the government 11 more days to bring in the Canadian Forces, and we all know now the shocking scenes that they found when they arrived.

But the PCs refused and have refused to learn from their mistakes. On April 16, they should have taken the offer from the federal government for help. Why did they wait another 10 days to admit that they're flailing and accept any and all help to get Ontarians through this disaster?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Our government has not hesitated to request help from a number of sources. We have been working throughout this pandemic to build up not just the physical hospital resources, the intensive care units and making sure that we have the physical space, but we've been working to intensify the health human resources as well. That's why we have expanded the nursing

extern program, the student extern program that has brought 900 students in to assist in our hospitals. We can build that up to 3,200. We have helped with the nursing first program. We are working with other provinces directly, Newfoundland being an example. We're also working with Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, PEI and Manitoba as well for assistance.

We have worked and are working with the federal government on getting further resources from the Armed Forces and with the Red Cross. We are not hesitating to accept help if it's necessary, and we've been working on this throughout. There has been no hesitation and no delay in this matter.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, 55 government members voted against Bill 247, guaranteeing 10 paid sick days to every Ontario worker, something the COVID-19 science table, Ontario's doctors, nurses, medical officers of health and public health experts have repeatedly said will curb the spread of COVID-19.

In 2018, the Premier took away two paid sick days from every Ontario worker—paid sick days that would have saved lives. Last Thursday, the Premier said that paid sick days would be coming imminently. He also said, "We will have the best program ... in North America." Well, it's five days later and there's still no plan. That's not a surprise. We've already been waiting for more than 400 days.

Speaker, through you: Can the Premier tell Ontarians when they can finally expect to see the government's paid sick day plan?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Let's be clear on what the Ontario Liberals want to do. They want to make every small business pay out paid sick days. We need to ensure that workers have jobs to go to and small businesses survive through COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, we have stepped up. Last week, we approached the federal Liberal government, which is currently paying \$12.50 an hour to Ontario workers. That is not good enough from Justin Trudeau. We want to double that program to \$1,000 per week, \$25 per hour, make it retroactive for 60 days and ensure every worker in the province of Ontario, including those who are self-employed, those in the gig economy, is covered. The federal government needs to flip that switch and increase that to \$1,000 today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: Let's be clear: Ontario's Liberals, Ontario's NDP, Ontario's Greens, Ontario's doctors, Ontario's nurses—just about every Ontarian except the people on the other side of the aisle—want to protect Ontario workers. So let's be clear about that.

Throughout this pandemic, the government has ignored the advice of the COVID science table, including on paid sick days. Whatever the government comes forward with

this week, here's the bottom line: It's too late for too many Ontario families, and the damage has been done.

Any program that they introduce now has to make sure that every worker has access, no matter where they live or work, and at a minimum it must be in effect until the science table says that the pandemic is over. The payments must be easy for people to access. It must not fall on the backs of small businesses and, most importantly—most importantly—any plan that comes forward from this government must be approved by the science table.

Through you, Speaker: Will the government commit to having their paid sick day plan approved through the COVID-19 science table?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Let's be clear on what the Ontario Liberals want to do. They want to place the burden entirely on small businesses across this province. We want to ensure that small businesses survive COVID-19, that they prosper and come out of this stronger than ever, that workers have jobs to go back to.

We contacted the federal government last week and told them \$1,000 per week. Let's double that program to \$25 an hour for four weeks. Ontario will pay the costs so every worker qualifies.

But Mr. Speaker, let me tell you what—

Interjection.

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

Minister of Labour, conclude your answer.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: The member's bill from Don Valley East squarely put the burden on small businesses. We are doing better than that—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries must come to order.

The next question.

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have seen a concerning rise in high-risk driving with traffic volumes on roads more and more often. Every evening from my back deck in Mimico, I can hear the cars racing down the Gardiner, and I have received so many phone calls of concerned parents, grandparents and citizens, worried about the increased traffic and noise. Stunt driving poses a great risk to everyone on our roads, including the most vulnerable, like pedestrians, cyclists and construction workers. Yesterday, the government introduced the Moving Ontario More Safely Act, also known as the MOMS Act.

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Will the Minister of Transportation please tell us more about the MOMS Act and why it was introduced now?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore for the question. She's right. This trend in stunt driving that we've seen during this pandemic is unsettling, and it's one that our government takes seriously.

Just this past weekend in Ottawa, a driver with three stunt driving charges was pulled over and given his fourth. This is unacceptable. It's clear that we need to do more to deter high-risk driving behaviours, and that's why we've introduced the MOMS Act, which, if passed, will help us crack down on bad actors and protect all road users through tougher penalties.

Scott Butler, the executive director at the Ontario Good Roads Association, said the MOMS Act is "an important first step towards realizing a future where Ontarians are no longer fatally injured or seriously hurt on our roadways."

Mr. Speaker, road safety is a priority we all share in this House, especially during the pandemic. I hope that the opposition supports this important legislation.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you, Minister. I also hope the opposition would help protect our loved ones and our drivers on the roads.

I want to thank the minister for that response. I know I speak for many when we say this is extremely welcomed news.

I know that stunt driving is not the only item that is in this piece of legislation. Through this legislation, we talk about collision reporting, the reporting that is used to evaluate road safety policies. I understand that that is being updated. Can the Minister of Transportation address why this update is being made?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you to the member for the question. It has been 30 years since the motor vehicle collision reporting system was last updated, and we think it's time to change that. The driving landscape has changed, with distracted driving on the rise in the last decade. Collision reporting as it stands now does not allow police to record if a driver was using a hand-held device at the time of a collision. We need to change that.

What we are proposing would allow the most accurate data to be collected so that we can better understand road safety trends and ensure that we make the most informed decisions about policy. It would even help us with infrastructure planning. We're working closely with our policing and road safety partners, and we will continue to do so as this bill moves forward.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Deputy Premier. The M6K postal code in my riding is a designated hot spot. Its vaccination rate is well below the provincial average. The closest clinic for M6K's 18-plus residents is at West Park Healthcare Centre. That means taking the Queen Street streetcar, then the Dufferin bus, walking five minutes to catch the Eglinton West bus and then walking another 10 minutes: a round trip of getting on and off crowded buses for two hours.

We need a vaccine clinic in the M6K. Will the minister provide the resources to open this clinic to serve people of south Parkdale?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much to the member for the question. One of the reasons why we haven't been able to expand our clinics is because of supply. However, that is changing. Next week, we are going to be receiving much larger quantities of the Pfizer vaccine, and that is going to continue throughout the month of May.

We have already expanded our clinics into pharmacies, as you know. They have been supplying AstraZeneca vaccines, but we are running a pilot program for delivery of Pfizer vaccines to pharmacies so that they will also be able to administer those vaccines from there, because we're not aware of the quantities and delivery times as yet for AstraZeneca, but we know that people need to have more convenient locations in which to receive their vaccines.

As we receive these increased quantities, we will also be increasing the number of pharmacies where people will be able to receive them. So, in addition to the mass vaccination clinics, primary care sites and pharmacies, there will be many options for people across the province, including in the hot-spot region that you are discussing.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Getting to a vaccine clinic is a challenge. Trying to book an appointment is even worse. People are trying to book through multiple systems as early as they can, and are put in a queue for hours only to be told there are no more appointments available. Hot spots like M6K simply aren't getting the vaccines we need. The government's own science table has advised prioritizing vaccine supply to hot spots.

Will the minister commit that hot spots, like M6K in south Parkdale, will get the vaccine supply we need, or will the minister continue to ignore expert advice?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I can assure the member that we are following the advice of the medical experts, who did recommend that we vaccinate based on age and risk and addressing the needs of the hot-spot areas, 114 of which have been identified in the province of Ontario. We have followed the advice of the medical experts in taking off 25% of all the vaccines that we receive in the future, sending them to the hot-spot areas in Peel and Toronto, and making sure that we can then divide the remaining 75% based on population among the remaining 34 public health unit regions. We will continue to do that.

A recommendation has also been made that we increase the number in vaccine hot spots from 25% to 50%. We're also studying that right now and expect to have made a determination in the next very short while, because we know that if we are able to deal with the levels of transmission and getting them down in hot-spot regions, that benefits the people across the province of Ontario, because 80% of the transmission is happening in 20% of those communities. So we are very well aware of that, and we are addressing those vaccines to those areas of concern—

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

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

M^{me} Lucille Collard: My question is for the Minister of Health. The vaccine rollout has been confusing, chaotic and inequitable. One resident in my riding has called the pharmacy booking system “a bad version of The Hunger Games.” We have very little accessibility to vaccines in the hardest-hit areas of Ottawa–Vanier. For those who can actually figure out that you have to add your name to different lists, appointments seem to take forever. Meanwhile, essential workers in marginalized communities and hot-spot regions are having to sacrifice entire days to vaccine lineups that begin before sunrise. What’s worse is that many can’t take time off work or away from family to do that.

What is the minister doing to make vaccines more accessible by reducing the confusion and inequity that the current system has created?

Hon. Christine Elliott: In fact, there is very little confusion out there with respect to how to move forward to book a vaccine appointment, because we have already administered over 4,791,000 vaccines. So clearly, there is something working out there. We have the central booking tool that is very easy to use. If people are still having trouble with that, because some people don’t have the ability to book online, there is a phone number that’s available for customer service.

As you are aware, the pharmacies are also booking separately. Some pharmacies have also introduced walk-in appointments—not all of them. And there are 20 Shoppers Drug Marts now are offering 24/7 appointments for people.

We anticipate that, as the volumes increase in terms of the numbers of vaccines that we’re receiving from Pfizer next week, we will be able to increase the number of pharmacies and increase the number of pharmacies offering 24/7 vaccines. We want to make it as easy as possible for anyone who wants to receive a vaccine in Ontario to get one, and with the supplies coming in, it will be that much easier for people.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Again to the Minister of Health: Mr. Speaker, I’ve been hearing from residents in my riding who feel abandoned by the government and frustrated by the pharmacy vaccine rollout, and all the different ways you’ve described are actually contributing to the confusion.

A 43-year-old essential worker living in my riding has been out working in the community since the beginning of the pandemic. Like many others that I’ve heard from, he has felt completely neglected by the lack of urgency around vaccinating essential workers. At this point, he has waited long enough that he’s eligible due to his age, and not because he has been putting himself at risk every day as an essential worker.

The science table has made clear that we need to accelerate the vaccination of essential workers and those who live in hot spots. Will the minister finally adjust the

vaccine rollout to urgently and effectively prioritize essential workers in hot spots?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Our government is accelerating the vaccination of people living in hot spots. We have already indicated that we’re accelerating by adding 25% of the doses that are coming in next week in order to deal with the hot-spot areas. We know that we need to do that. We are looking at increasing the level from 25% to 50%.

But I can also advise that in Ottawa, as of April 11, almost 98% of those 80 or older had received a vaccine and over 22% have received their second dose in the Ottawa area. It also should be noted that Ottawa, last year, was one of the first public health units to receive a shipment of the Pfizer vaccine in this province. So we are tending to the needs of Ottawa, as we are tending to the needs of everyone across Ontario.

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Part of the problem in the past has been the supply of the vaccines. We are receiving more vaccines now, and we will be expanding that across the province to pharmacies, to primary care centres, to the mass vaccination clinics, as well as mobile units and pop-up units.

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Mr. Speaker, many Torontonians use streetcars in their daily commute—for example, my mother takes the 509 along Queens Quay every day when she goes to work; she’s one of those commuters—and we know that the numbers will only increase when the pandemic is beyond us. Unfortunately, we’ve heard many heartbreaking stories of accidents where pedestrians have been struck by a vehicle when entering or exiting a streetcar.

I was pleased to see that the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, or the MOMS Act, will give the TTC more tools to enforce the law when drivers fail to stop before open streetcar doors. And I want to give a shout-out to all our TTC workers and thank you for what you do every day.

Could the minister please elaborate on the proposed measure within the MOMS Act that will protect streetcar riders, including my mom?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for her question.

Our government has heard loud and clear from the TTC that customers are anxious about boarding streetcars. The Moving Ontarians More Safely Act will help protect streetcar commuters.

If adopted by the House, the MOMS Act will allow the TTC to use images that are captured by streetcar cameras to prosecute drivers who fail to stop when a streetcar is in the process of boarding. Actions have consequences, and this is a long-overdue measure that will help us get rid of bad actors and create safer roads.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you very much, Minister, for that answer. I know that will encourage more

people to get on transit as the pandemic moves along and we get back to work.

While I thank the minister for this measure, streetcars have had cameras installed since at least 2017. Can the minister elaborate a little bit on why the last government did not take this important action when they had the opportunity for 15 years to help protect these riders?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you again to the member for the question.

My colleague is right that this measure is long overdue. In fact, the TTC has asked for this measure since 2017, exactly when they decided to install the cameras on streetcars. In fact, the former TTC chair, Josh Colle, wrote to my predecessor as Minister of Transportation, Steven Del Duca, in 2017 demanding this measure. That letter went unanswered.

It took leadership from this government to recognize the issue and to take action when the last government took a pass. Our government will not leave any stones unturned when it comes to road safety.

LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY UNIVERSITÉ LAURENTIENNE

Mr. Jamie West: My question is to the Deputy Premier. I've stood in this Legislature on a regular basis since February 1 explaining that the CCAA process isn't appropriate for a public institution like Laurentian University. However, instead of halting the process, the Premier and the minister allowed it to move forward. I don't know what outcomes the Conservatives were expecting, but the first wave of CCAA cuts have resulted in the elimination of one third of the courses, the termination of over 100 employees, and an estimated negative economic impact of \$100 million annually. It's time to admit that this does not make any sense.

Citizens from my city of Sudbury and across Ontario want the Premier to halt the secretive process of CCAA, cancel the cuts, and allow the students, the families and the workers affected to have a voice in the outcome so that, together, we can save Laurentian.

Will the Premier stand with the students, the families and workers to save Laurentian, or will he choose to stand with the wealthy and well-connected as it's destroyed?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South and parliamentary assistant.

Mr. David Piccini: Mr. Speaker, I'll again reiterate that the government understands this is a very difficult time for staff, for faculty, for students and their families. That's why this government moved quickly to work with the institution to ensure pathways for graduation.

We know the CCAA proceedings do not have an effect on 90% of students. For the 10% of students who are affected, we're working with the institution, which is in turn working with the students to ensure pathways to graduation.

What that member opposite seems to fail to understand is that our institutions are autonomous governing bodies,

Mr. Speaker. They don't respect the independent process of the courts, and that's deeply troubling.

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

Mr. Jamie West: Back to the Deputy Premier: This has become world news. Le Monde in France covered the damage to the francophone and bilingual programs. The CCAA cuts have eliminated programs like economics, math, physics, political science, philosophy, engineering, environmental science and midwifery.

Art McDonald, the 2015 physics Nobel Prize winner, said Sudbury has been "intellectually and educationally ... cut off from attracting students."

Darius Garneau, a fourth-year computer science major, described it this way: "Laurentian University can now only be described as hollow ... our blue and gold gowns are now covered in the blood of all the cuts Laurentian has endured.

"It didn't have to be like this. This is not progress, and this is not saving Laurentian."

Again, to the Deputy Premier: Will the Premier halt the secretive process of CCAA, cancel the cuts, and allow the students, families and workers affected to have a voice in the outcome so that, together, we can save Laurentian and protect the students being directly affected?

Mr. David Piccini: Again, Mr. Speaker, this government has introduced legislation that, if passed, will expand the presence of NOSM and Hearst in the north to support students. We've increased capital funding for our institutions. We've expanded supports for francophones in this province.

My message for francophone students is simple:

L'Ontario fait des investissements importants et continus dans l'éducation postsecondaire en français. L'Ontario investira 74 millions de dollars en 2021. Cette somme s'ajoute aux 14 millions de dollars fournis par le gouvernement fédéral.

In addition, Mr. Speaker: Si le gouvernement fédéral veut sérieusement soutenir l'enseignement postsecondaire francophone en tant que minorité en langue seconde, il peut commencer par fournir annuellement plus d'un cinquième de ce que le gouvernement provincial fournit.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Premier. One reason that so many Ontarians are frustrated with the government's pandemic response is that the Premier will say he's following the science, and then scientists and public health experts will say he's not following their advice. The best example of this is paid sick days. Every day this government delays listening to the scientists prolongs the pandemic.

Speaker, the science table has called for easily accessible, immediately available paid sick days and paid time off for tests and vaccines. Will the government commit to legislating paid sick leave that follows the advice of the scientists, is easily accessible and immediately available to essential workers?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Mr. Speaker, the very first action we took when COVID-19 hit the province was to bring in job-protected leave. Any worker in self-isolation or in quarantine impacted at all by COVID-19 can't be fired for that.

We went further. We eliminated the need for sick notes, and we were the first jurisdiction to ensure that people could take time off to get vaccinated and their jobs would be protected.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has said that they want to help. We have two requests. Number one, double the program and Ontario will pay: \$1,000 a week for four weeks; that's \$25 an hour. It is an injustice that the Prime Minister and the federal Liberal government are paying Ontario workers \$12.50 an hour. And second, we need the federal government to tighten border restrictions to ensure that the variants of concern are not getting into Ontario.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, respectfully, I don't think the minister fully understands the challenges that essential workers face. More funds are welcome, no doubt about that. But adding more funds to the flawed federal program will not solve all of the challenges that workers face in easily accessing paid sick leave.

Speaker, the science table has called for "easily accessible, immediately available" paid sick days. The federal program is neither easy nor immediately available.

So, I'm asking the government, will you please listen to the science advisory table and legislate paid sick leave that is easily accessible and immediately available for workers?

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Hon. Monte McNaughton: We've been working together with the federal government since the start of this pandemic. In fact, it was because of Ontario's advocacy that there have been improvements to the program. In fact, because of us urging the federal government to take action, payments are now around the three-day mark, directly deposited into workers' bank accounts. Secondly, we needed workers to be able to apply more than once. That has been improved. And it was because of Ontario's leadership that there are now four weeks of paid sick days for workers.

The federal government has said that they want to work with Ontario, work with the provinces. We're asking for their help. We want them to double the paid sick pay to \$1,000 per week. That's \$25 an hour. Ontario will pay 100% of the doubling.

YOUTH SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Deputy Premier. On Friday, the government is forcing the closure of the Syl Apps Youth Centre in Oakville, which provides mental health treatment for youth with complex needs in the justice system. These youth struggle with severe emotional and psychological challenges, and they are sent

to the Syl Apps Youth Centre for treatment when they have nowhere else to go. Without the intensive mental health treatment this centre provides, these youth are at greater risk of hurting themselves and reoffending.

Why is this government abandoning these vulnerable youth and closing the Syl Apps Youth Centre?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Of course, protecting youth in care is one of our most pressing responsibilities. We want a system, obviously, that better helps the youth who are in care. We've seen throughout this pandemic that there is a lot of work that needs to be done with respect to youth mental health. It's one of the reasons why we were so aggressive in wanting to keep our schools open for as long as possible, Mr. Speaker. But a number of investments have been made, both with the Minister of Health and the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Obviously, I think the member would agree, that ensuring that children and youth in care continue to receive top priority—not only of this government, but all members of this Legislature.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: That is a very disappointing answer. Obviously, nobody on that side of the bench has any idea what's happening to these most vulnerable youth, and it's shameful.

The Syl Apps Youth Centre treats young people during their most vulnerable time. Over half have attempted suicide, and they have high rates of self-harm and aggression towards others. The majority of these youth are racialized, and a third of them are crown wards, not all of them.

These youth need support and treatment, and this government is taking it away. Many experts, including the CEO of SickKids, have asked this government to keep this centre open instead of abandoning these young people.

Will the Premier stop trying to save money on the backs of our most vulnerable youth and stop the cruel closure of the Syl Apps Youth Centre?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa West–Nepean.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Our government inherited a number of significantly underused youth justice facilities, a problem that the previous government was made aware of in 2012 when it received the Auditor General's report, which raised concerns about low utilization rates. In 2014, they set a target of 70% utilization for these facilities but continued to allow facilities to remain significantly underused. The utilization rate was only 20% on average for open custody and detention facilities last year.

With higher utilization rates, our facilities will be better positioned to provide supports for youth in conflict with the law.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mr. Roman Baber: My question is to the Solicitor General. On September 19, her ministry sent a memo to

all Ontario municipalities advising that a person who refuses to leave premises under the Reopening Ontario Act can be charged either under the ROA or with obstruction of justice under the Criminal Code.

A recent article in the Lawyer's Daily calls into question the ability to charge with obstruction, when trying to enforce a provincial offence and failure to comply is punishable by the same provincial legislation. This goes back to a well-established principle established by the Supreme Court in a case named Sharma in 1993. When the refusal is prescribed by the provincial legislation, refusal to comply with the same provincial legislation cannot form the basis for an obstruction charge. The appropriate procedure is to charge under the provincial law.

Speaker, refusing to comply with a police officer's order to close or vacate is an offence punishable by section 10 of the Reopening Ontario Act. So why did the Solicitor General tell municipalities to press criminal charges for violations punishable by the Reopening Ontario Act?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It is truly unfortunate that this member continues to not understand how important this health emergency is. We have been working as a government to make sure that every ministry, every municipal partner, every police service—everyone who had any part to play to keep people safe—knew what the rules were and had the enforcement pieces necessary to make sure that they were adhered to.

At the end of the day, we as legislators—and you, frankly, as a legislator—should be talking about how to keep people safe, how to make sure that your neighbours, your friends and your communities are not getting COVID-19. That's what our responsibility is. It is incredibly unfortunate to have this member stand up, day after day, and pretend that COVID-19 isn't a thing.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will remind the members to make their comments through the Chair. The member for York Centre: supplementary.

Mr. Roman Baber: I have suggested to the Solicitor General that it's her job to keep the rules and that it's her job to keep the rule of law. We're still a Western democracy, COVID or not. COVID is a very serious infection. It affects a segment of the population and a lot of people, but that doesn't mean that the rule of law is out the window.

Speaker, I don't think that the Solicitor General came close to answering my question, so I'll follow up with the Attorney General. This is a serious legal and law enforcement issue. COVID doesn't change the fact that as legislators we still have to abide by the rule of law.

So, to the Attorney General: Suppose a provincial law officer gave an order pursuant to a provincial law and a refusal to obey such order was punishable by the provincial law itself. Every level of court in the land said that refusal to obey would be punishable by the provincial legislation, not by the criminal code of Canada. My question to the Attorney General: Was it appropriate for the Solicitor General to tell the municipalities they have an option to arrest and charge with obstruction of justice under the Criminal Code, when the conduct alleged is punishable by the Reopening Ontario Act? Yes or no?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think it's very clear that we're going to continue to disagree with the member opposite with respect to how we should react to the current global health and economic pandemic in the province of Ontario.

We believe that, as the Solicitor General has said and as this government has said on a number of occasions—and, quite frankly, as this member has voted on for over a year, in support of measures that keep the people of the province of Ontario safe. We're certainly not going to apologize for taking those measures and the steps that are needed to do that, Mr. Speaker.

At the same time, we have had to ensure that, as the government, we responded to challenges with respect to borders. The federal government was not willing to close down those borders, which has caused variants of concern to flood into the province of Ontario. We've had to increase ICU capacity that was left so devastatingly low by the previous Liberal government. We've had to deal with issues in long-term care, which the previous government did not invest in.

Ultimately, we will continue to disagree with the members opposite who believe that we should reduce our guard when it comes to fighting COVID-19. We're not going to do that, Mr. Speaker.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Deputy Premier. It's been almost a week since the Premier promised the best sick leave program in the country. Now the government is saying, "We are offering to double the amount paid." But you're missing one of the big flaws that has plagued this program from the start.

So, a worker has a cough. He's not going to apply for a week-long program and stay home. He's going to go to work with a cough—he or she. They're going to get tested. Hopefully, they're negative. But if they're not negative, they too are still spreading the virus—because you don't have paid sick days; you have a week-long program. You know that.

Why do you continue to promote a program that actually doesn't help people to stay home when they need to get tested? Why are you so philosophically opposed to doing that?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair. Minister of Labour.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Mr. Speaker, the biggest gap in the federal program is that they're paying Ontario workers \$12.50 an hour. In fact, that's why we're calling on the federal government to double that to \$1,000 per week for four weeks. This would cover every single worker in this province. It would cover the almost one million workers in the gig economy, for example. We're also planning to make this retroactive. We just need the federal government to partner with us. They've said they want to help us. We want them to double that program and

also to step up when it comes to enhancing border restrictions.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's been the party opposite that has highlighted the gap. In fact, it was the Leader of the Opposition who said, "The Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit pays less than minimum wage." The member from London West said, "The federal benefit pays less than minimum wage, and every worker in this province, even the lowest-wage, should be working at minimum wage." We agree.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, there are several major gaps with the federal program, and that is one, that it paid less than minimum wage. But as big of a gap—and probably more important right now to stop the spread—is that it isn't that accessible and you need to stay home for a week after the fact. People who are needing to get tested and are waiting for the test are not prone to stay home. We all know that, and we all know that COVID-19 is spreading through workplaces like wildfire.

Fixing part of the federal program, or attempting to fix part of the federal program and getting a no from the feds, is not going to help stop the spread. When are you going to quit playing politics and actually look at programs that are going to help stop the spread of COVID-19 through Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): One more time, I'm going to invite the members to make their comments through the Chair.

Minister of Labour.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I would remind the member opposite that the very first piece of legislation we brought forward was job-protected leave. Any worker impacted by COVID-19 can stay home and not lose their job. We went further, Mr. Speaker. We eliminated the need for sick notes. We were also the first jurisdiction to bring in job-protected leave for vaccinations. We actually worked with the British Columbia NDP government to ensure that they could follow in our footsteps and have that protection for their workers as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, the federal government said that they want to help. Double the program to \$1,000 per week for four weeks. Make it retroactive for 60 days. Ensure that workers are getting paid \$25 an hour instead of \$12.50, because our workers here in Ontario and, quite frankly, across Canada deserve a lot better.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our question period.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Essex has a point of order.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: On a point of order, I just want to correct my record. Yesterday, during morning debate, I stated that the PC government had voted against paid sick days 21 times. In fact, it is 23 times that they voted against paid sick days.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Hamilton Mountain has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the government House leader concerning the Syl Apps Youth Centre. This matter will be debated today following private members' public business.

Seeing no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1134 to 1500.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

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

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to proclaim Occupational Safety and Health Day / Loi proclamant la Journée de la sécurité et de la santé au travail;

An Act to proclaim Ontario Day / Loi proclamant le Jour de l'Ontario;

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated April 27, 2021, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 111(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Ms. Jane McKenna: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates on the estimates selected and not selected by the standing committee for consideration.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Ms. McKenna from the Standing Committee on Estimates presents the committee's report as follows:

Pursuant to standing order 63, your committee has selected the estimates 2021-22 of the following ministries for consideration: Ministry of Health, 15 hours; Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, 15 hours; Ministry of

Long-Term Care, seven hours; Ministry of Education, eight hours; Ministry of Infrastructure, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, 15 hours; Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, 10 hours; Ministry of Indigenous Affairs, five hours—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Pursuant to standing order 64(b), the report of the committee is deemed to be received, and the estimates of the ministries and offices named therein as not being selected for consideration by the committee are deemed to be concurred in.

Report deemed received.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ADVANCING OVERSIGHT AND PLANNING IN ONTARIO'S HEALTH SYSTEM ACT, 2021 LOI DE 2021 VISANT À FAIRE PROGRESSER LA SURVEILLANCE ET LA PLANIFICATION DANS LE CADRE DU SYSTÈME DE SANTÉ DE L'ONTARIO

Ms. Elliott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 283, An Act to amend and enact various Acts with respect to the health system / Projet de loi 283, Loi visant à modifier et à édicter diverses lois en ce qui concerne le système de santé.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the Minister of Health, if she wishes, to briefly explain her bill.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Today, it is my pleasure to introduce the Advancing Oversight and Planning in Ontario's Health System Act, 2021.

The health and well-being of Ontarians is our government's top priority, and we continue to work with all our partners in health care to strengthen our health care workforce.

The proposed legislation recognizes the valuable role that personal support workers, physician assistants and behaviour analysts play in delivering high-quality care to Ontarians, as well as the importance of using data to ensure vaccines are being rolled out equitably and efficiently.

If passed, the proposed legislation would help to bring greater uniformity of education and training standards applicable to personal support workers and would build on their capacity to provide care services to the most vulnerable Ontarians, including children, older adults and people with disabilities.

A new oversight body, called the Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority, would be established for the registration of personal support workers and would have defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

Speaker, there are more than 100,000 personal support workers in Ontario, and they are vital members of our health care system entrusted with the needs of some of Ontario's most vulnerable residents. As we have seen throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, personal support workers have worked tirelessly to keep Ontarians safe and healthy.

The act also proposes legislative amendments to regulate physician assistants, as new members of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, to improve their integration within Ontario's health care system and to facilitate quality of care and patient safety. Physician assistants would then be able to provide certain health care services based on an order from an authorized physician or surgeon.

In addition, the legislation proposes to regulate behaviour analysts, as a new profession under the College of Psychologists of Ontario, to sustain the quality and safety of care provided to Ontarians.

Finally, this proposed legislation would also support the province's response to the COVID-19 pandemic by helping to equitably and efficiently roll out COVID-19 vaccines by collecting data from individuals who consent to the disclosure of their information.

Speaker, our government is firmly committed to supporting our health care workers.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to personal support workers and to all of our heroic front-line health care workers for the care that they provide each and every day, and for the tremendous commitment and contributions they have made as we face unprecedented challenges resulting from the global COVID-19 pandemic.

PETITIONS

ÉDUCATION POSTSECONDAIRE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier le RÉFO, le Regroupement étudiant franco-ontarien, l'ACFO de Sudbury, le Regroupement des professeur(e)s francophones de l'Université Laurentienne et le regroupement de Sudbury pour une université pour et par les francophones.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Alors que l'Université Laurentienne a annoncé, le 12 avril 2021, son plan de restructuration, qui incluait la fermeture de 69 programmes (dont 28 programmes francophones), la dissolution de la Fédération laurentienne, et la mise à pied de plus de 100 professeur(e)s, et que ces annonces ont un effet dévastateur aux niveaux social, économique, et humain pour la communauté francophone du Moyen-Nord;

« Alors que la communauté franco-ontarienne exige des institutions postsecondaires de langue française depuis les années 1960, et que les manifestations du 1^{er} décembre 2018 ont montré l'engagement et la volonté d'avoir des institutions postsecondaires gérées par, pour, et avec la communauté francophone;

« Alors que le 12 mars 2021, l'Université de Sudbury et l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario ont annoncé le souhait que l'Université de Sudbury devienne une université de langue française et laïque; »

Ils pétitionnent « l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario...qu'elle entreprenne les actions suivantes :

« —assurer dans les plus brefs délais le rapatriement à l'Université de Sudbury de tous les programmes et les cours offerts en français, et le transfert de toutes les ressources matérielles, physiques, humaines et financières...en lien avec l'offre de services en français et la programmation francophone de l'Université Laurentienne, disponibles et offerts » le « 9 avril 2021;

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« —mettre en place un moratoire d'un an, renouvelable, sur tous les programmes francophones de l'Université Laurentienne et de ses universités fédérées offerts en date du 9 avril ... afin d'assurer qu'ils puissent être offerts dans leur intégralité d'ici la fin de la transition des ressources et programmes francophones vers l'Université de Sudbury;

« —établir une commission de mise en oeuvre qui sera chargée d'assurer le transfert des programmes vers l'Université de Sudbury et d'appuyer cette dernière dans son développement, dans un contexte de pérennité de l'enseignement postsecondaire en français dans le nord de l'Ontario; laquelle considérera en priorité les besoins des étudiant(e)s francophones actuel(le)s et futur(e)s;

« —s'assurer, par tous les moyens, que les étudiant(e)s actuel(le)s des programmes francophones touchés par la restructuration de l'Université Laurentienne puissent obtenir un diplôme dans le programme au sein duquel ils/elles étaient inscrit(e)s en date du 9 avril ... sans cours ou coûts supplémentaires à ceux déjà prévus initialement. »

J'appuie cette pétition, je vais la signer et je l'envoie à la table des greffiers.

Le Président (L'hon. Ted Arnott): Merci.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Jamie West: This petition is entitled "Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

"Whereas optometrists now subsidize the delivery of OHIP-covered eye care by \$173 million a year; and

"Whereas COVID-19 forced optometrists to close their doors, resulting in a 75%-plus drop in revenue; and

"Whereas optometrists will see patient volumes reduced between 40% and 60%, resulting in more than two million comprehensive eye exams being wiped out over the next 12 months; and

"Whereas communities across Ontario are in danger of losing access to optometric care;

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

"To instruct the Ontario government to immediately establish a timetable and a process for renewed negotiations concerning optometry fees."

I support this petition. I'll affix my signature and provide it to the Clerk.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Jill Andrew: This petition is called "Prevent Overdoses in the North.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 510 emergency department visits and 105 deaths in northern Ontario were attributed to opioid-related incidents in 2017;

"Whereas northern Ontario has some of the highest rates of opioid-related deaths in the province and this number continues to grow; and

"Whereas we need urgent action from the provincial government to save lives in the north;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare the opioid overdose crisis in northern Ontario a public health emergency, and commit funding for comprehensive, evidence-based local health and community initiatives such as harm reduction strategies, awareness programs, anti-stigma training, residential treatment, and overdose prevention services."

I completely support this petition, will affix my signature and take it down to the table.

FRONT-LINE WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Tania McCaffrey for this petition.

"Make PSW a Career.

"Whereas there has been a shortage of personal support workers (PSWs) in long-term care and home care in Ontario for many years;

"Whereas Ontario's personal support workers are overworked, underpaid and underappreciated, leading to many of them leaving the profession;

"Whereas the lack of PSWs has created a crisis in LTC, a broken home care system, and poor-quality care for LTC home residents and home care clients;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Tell Premier Ford to act now to make PSW jobs a career, with full-time employment, good wages, paid sick days, benefits, a pension plan and a manageable workload in order to respect the important work of PSWs and improve patient care."

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

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Jamie West: I want to thank Sean Staddon from the riding of Sudbury for collecting these petitions. It is entitled "Support Ontario Families with Autism."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas every child with autism deserves access to sufficient treatment and support so that they can live to their fullest potential;

"Whereas the Ontario Autism Program was badly broken under the Liberals, and the changes introduced by the Conservatives have made it worse;

"Whereas the new funding caps are based on age and income, and not the clinical needs of the child;

"Whereas Ontario needs a true investment in evidence-based autism services that meets the needs of autistic children and their families;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to invest in equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them."

I support this petition. I'll affix my signature and provide it to the Clerk.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Joanne Larocque from Val Caron in my riding for these petitions.

"Ban Retirement Home PPE Charges.

"Whereas Ontario's retirement homes are largely privately owned corporations; and

"Whereas these businesses have a responsibility to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to their employees; and

"Whereas many retirement homes are adding PPE charges to the residents' monthly bill, but the PPE is not for the residents but for the employees of the retirement home; and

"Whereas residents of some Sudbury retirement homes have effectively organized letter-writing campaigns and actions to have the PPE charges to residents cancelled and recognized as a retirement home's cost of doing business;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Treat our province's seniors with respect and ban any additional COVID-related fees, including PPE, to retirement home residents."

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

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Jamie West: I want to thank Julia Ritchie for collecting these petitions. This petition is called "Support for Autistic Children in Ontario."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to ensure access to an equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them."

I support this petition. I'll affix my signature and provide it to the Clerk.

ANTI-VAPING INITIATIVES
FOR YOUTH

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank David Reilly from Hanmer in my riding for these petitions.

"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. I will affix my name to it and send it to the table.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Fern Frappier from Hanmer in my riding for these petitions.

"MS Specialized Clinic in Sudbury.

"Whereas northeastern Ontario has one of the highest rates of multiple sclerosis (MS) in Ontario; and

"Whereas specialized MS clinics provide essential health care services to those living with multiple sclerosis, their caregiver and their family; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is recognized as a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Immediately set up a specialized MS clinic in the Sudbury area that is staffed by a neurologist who specializes in the treatment of multiple sclerosis, a physiotherapist and a social worker at a minimum."

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

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Kathleen Moynigan from Val Caron in my riding for these petitions.

“Improving Broadband in Northern Ontario....”

“Whereas people and businesses in northern Ontario need reliable and affordable broadband Internet now to work, learn and connect with friends and family; and

“Whereas too many people can only access unreliable Internet and cellular or don’t have any connectivity at all especially in northern Ontario; and

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“Whereas the current provincial Broadband and Cellular Action Plan has failed to provide northern communities with the same opportunities for economic growth, recovery and participation;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To call on the Ford government to immediately provide a plan with dates and actions to be taken for every area of northern Ontario to have access to reliable and affordable broadband Internet.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOVING ONTARIANS MORE SAFELY ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 VISANT À ASSURER À LA POPULATION ONTARIENNE DES DÉPLACEMENTS PLUS SÛRS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 27, 2021, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 282, An Act in respect of various road safety matters / Projet de loi 282, Loi concernant diverses questions de sécurité routière.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): When debate broke off earlier today, Mr. Vanthof from Timiskaming–Cochrane had the floor. We return to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: It’s always an honour to rise in this House.

I briefly described it this morning, but I will repeat: I am not the transportation critic, but because of cohorting, our transportation critic is not here this week. I would like to give my acknowledgement to the member for Oshawa, who is our transportation critic and who has provided us with quite an overview, and also the critic of northern transportation, the member for Sudbury.

Before I get into the meat of the bill, I would like to—usually, when we get a bill, particularly from this government—I’m not trying to be partisan, but the first thing we look for is the poison pill. I would like to commend the Minister of Transportation for not including a poison pill. That’s not to say that there will be no debate on this bill. That’s not to say that we won’t disagree with some issues in this bill. But there is no poison pill.

For members who have only been here for one session: It helps when you have bills that talk about issues within one ministry, if possible. You can get into much deeper discussions and actually fight less and make better legislation for the people of Ontario.

For people who are asking what a poison pill is, I’m just going to say—in the broadband bill, Bill 257, the first two things are solid broadband. The third thing is how to break planning laws. That was a poison pill. As a result, that whole bill was diminished. We would have done a better job on the legislation without that poison pill.

This bill—I commend the Ministry of Transportation—is about transportation issues. Sometimes we’re able to say, “Well, this is a hodgepodge bill. They’ve got everything but the kitchen sink, and they’re hiding a couple of rusty pipes somewhere.” This one is not doing that.

Again, we haven’t had time to talk to all of the stakeholders, so there might be some things that people don’t agree with, that we, that I as fill-in critic spokesman today, might miss. That’s because we haven’t had much time to actually look at the bill. But the bill does talk about transportation issues, and that is a good thing.

I’m going to go through parts of the bill, what we have seen, and also—because it’s not often we have the opportunity to talk about transportation issues—probably relay some of the issues that we think could have been added to make roads even safer in Ontario.

I listened intently to the Minister of Transportation and the associate minister this morning. I believe the minister said that we have—and I’m sure she has the stats to back it up—the safest roads in North America. I’m not here to dispute that statistics show we might have the safest roads in North America, but I would be remiss if I didn’t mention that not everyone thinks that. There are stretches of provincial highway in this province that no one believes are contributing to that stat, I would say.

I’m now going to concentrate on my own part of the world for a second—Highway 11 north of North Bay. When you go over Thibeault Hill, you leave the four lanes, and you’re on the Trans-Canada Highway that is two-lane. People are afraid of the trucks, and the truck drivers are afraid of the road. I kid you not, this winter has been a very easy winter in our part of the world. Most winters—and I talked about it this morning with the Minister of Transportation—I spend a lot of time, in a normal year, going after whoever is the Minister of Transportation because of winter road maintenance. Even though we weren’t here very much because of the cohorts and COVID-19—that wouldn’t have been the case this year, because we had a pretty easy winter. But every time it snowed, Highway 11 was closed, because there would be transports jackknifed, transports in the ditch. It was almost like clockwork. You’d look out the window and see snow, and you just knew that at some point the highway was going to be closed that day. That tells you that something is wrong. This is the Trans-Canada Highway. People sometimes joke that every one of my speeches has cows. This is not a cow path; it is the Trans-Canada Highway—and I’ve seen

my share of cow paths. There is a problem, and we have to address that problem.

There is a local group, the GEMS committee, in our area, and they've been pushing a long time for a pilot project on a two-plus-one highway system. The ideal would be a fully divided four-lane for the Trans-Canada Highway. I don't think anyone is disputing that. We don't know how long it's going to take to get the ideal. But our people continue to die. Also, from an economic point of view, each time the Trans-Canada Highway is closed, there are miles of trucks waiting and millions of dollars lost. I don't think any amount of money equates to a life, but from a strictly monetary point of view, having Highway 11 closed in the wintertime costs the country bundles of money—and it's Ontario costing the country the bundles of money. There are several people involved, but I think the person who definitely deserves to be mentioned here is Mark Wilson, who has pushed this. Mark, tragically, lost a child on Highway 11. Mark and his family have taken that grief and channelled it to push for a two-plus-one system.

Basically, a two-plus-one is a three-lane highway with a passing lane, and then a passing lane on the other side and a passing lane—when the one side has a passing lane, there is a barrier so that the side without the passing lane can't pass. That's used in Nordic countries, and it could be tried here. It should be tried here.

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Initially, the ministry refused it. There was a study done, and the study said that it should be looked at; the ministry refused it. To the minister's credit, the ministry changed their mind. As far as I knew, they had said that they were going to fund a study, and everyone was excited because they were going to fund a study. Well, I wasn't quite as excited as everyone else, because I wasn't born yesterday and, often, studies lead to not much.

This morning, I heard the minister say that she was going to fund the project. I was happy when I heard that this morning. I look forward to working with the minister and with the GEMS committee and with Mark to get that project off the ground. Until this morning, I thought it was just on paper, because I haven't seen anything that said that it wasn't just on paper. This morning—I take the minister at her word—she said that the project was going ahead. It's not in this bill. I looked for it in the budget too; it wasn't in the budget. But that is a step in the right direction.

On a personal note, I think anyone who drives—everyone's got their story of a close call. For this job, in a normal year, I drive about 100,000 kilometres. That's because I live far from here and far from an airport. By the time I get to the airport, I might as well just keep going. That's a simple way to put it. By the time you drive two hours to the airport and you have to wait at the airport for an hour, you might as well just drive the five and a half hours. My riding is seven hours by five hours wide at 100 kilometres an hour, so I do a lot of driving.

Fortunately, I don't mind driving—lots of time to think. But because I do a lot of driving, I've had my fair share of

close calls—one moose, one bear, several skunks. Skunks aren't lethal, but skunks are not fun. I hit the bear at about 50 clicks, and he just kept right on going; he was doing 60 or 70. The moose was very fortunate.

I'm going to tell the moose story. I've got to tell the moose story.

I went to one of my towns, Iroquois Falls, a former pulp-and-paper town. Now it has become, basically, a bedroom community for several other bigger cities. I was at a public meeting, and someone wanted to talk to me about something, so we met at Tim Hortons. It was October.

If you walk into a Tim Hortons in northern Ontario, all the people there—and they know who you are. Do you know what the number one issue is in Tim Hortons in October in Iroquois Falls? "I haven't had a moose tag in at least 20 or 25 years. What are these politicians doing about"—and it's good-natured, but they go after you.

M^{me} France Gélinas: But everyone is wearing NDP orange.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's why I joined the NDP in October. I thought it was a sure bet. Anyway—that's not actually true; I just have to qualify that.

So I met with the lady, and we talked. I don't really like driving out of that part at night because there are moose. It was dark. It was about 10 o'clock. I was going down Highway 11, and I was doing 80 clicks. All of a sudden, my windshield was full of—the moose was in the same lane as I was and going the same direction. It went over my windshield. I pulled to the side. Luckily, the airbags didn't go off or anything. I went to open my door, but the door didn't open. So I called 911. In that part of my riding, there is 911. The first question the police dispatcher asked was, "Is the moose still on the road?"—because that's a hazard to other people. "No, a couple of cars have gone by me at full speed and, obviously, they didn't encounter the moose." So the police came and the tow truck came—we can talk about tow trucks. In Iroquois Falls, there is not a war over who can control that stretch of highway; we're just happy if we can find a tow truck.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: The member for Sudbury is laughing, because he knows.

Anyway, the tow truck came. And then the OPP officer came up to me and said, "John, we found the moose and, under Ontario law, it's yours." I didn't have a car, but I was a proud owner of a moose. The officer said, "It's not deceased yet. The back legs are broken; it's stunned. It's not feeling anything, but it's not dead yet. So you have the first choice." I said, "Well, can I do anything I want with that moose?" "Yes, it's your moose."

I had the phone number for one of my buddies at Tim Hortons. I called him. "You might not have had a moose tag in 20 years, but if you show up at Meadow Creek in the next couple of minutes, I've got you a moose." Sure enough, the police waited till he came. He and his wife came and field dressed the moose. The car—there are people in the insurance industry here—because the airbags

didn't go off and the car was relatively new, I think I spent \$12,000 fixing it. But, luckily, I was okay.

A couple of days later, the couple I had given the moose to called to ask how I was feeling. "I have a bit of a sore neck, but I'm fine." She said, "Well, we field dressed the moose." I said, "I know. I was there when you field dressed the moose." She said, "Well, then we took the—"

M^{me} France Gélinas: Quarters?

Mr. John Vanthof: Carcass. What's a nice word for—

M^{me} France Gélinas: Guts?

Mr. John Vanthof: No, the sides.

"We took the sides of the moose to the local Valu-mart, and they butchered them, cut them into pieces of meat."

Her name is Evelyn. She's a wonderful lady. She's probably going to be embarrassed when I tell you this story. I never thought I'd tell this story in the Legislature.

Anyway, she called and she said, "John, we're just making some meat pies, and we're wondering if you would like some moose hamburger for your meat pies." I said, "Well, Evelyn, for Dutch people, meat pies aren't in our culture. Tourtière is a big thing in the francophone culture." She said, "What?" I said, "Yes, really, tourtière is a very francophone thing." I could hear Evelyn yell back to her husband, Frank, "Frank, John says that only French people eat meat pies." Frank said, "That stupid politician. Everyone we know eats meat pies." So Evelyn said, "John, Frank says that all of our friends make meat pies." I said, "And are all your friends French?" She said, "Except you."

Laughter.

Mr. John Vanthof: Then she said, "What about your spaghetti?" Before I had a chance to say anything, she said, "Don't tell me the Dutch don't eat spaghetti." And I had to admit that it's not of our culture to cook spaghetti or to cook tourtière, but we would gladly eat spaghetti. So Evelyn baked us some meat pies, and they were fantastic.

1540

So that is my moose story.

We have a lot of people dying on Highway 11. We need to be doing everything that we can to make Highway 11, the Trans-Canada Highway and the highways that adjoin it safer.

Getting back to the actual bill: We're going to go through some of the schedules.

Schedule 1—I see another story coming up; I've got an hour, folks: Schedule 1 is about power-assisted bikes and e-bikes and changing the regulations for the age. It's a safety thing.

Do you know what? Bicycles are becoming a much bigger part of the landscape, especially here in the GTA and cities.

I've got to put a shout-out to Temiskaming Shores, a town in my riding, probably one of the most bike-friendly places in northern Ontario. Because of the STATO Trail and the group who supports the STATO Trail, it's a very bike-friendly place.

I think it's something that we need to look at, and I'm glad that the schedule is in here.

You probably know this—but I like to tell stories. Dutch people love bikes. There are more bikes in Holland

than anything. They have a problem with dooring in Holland. I'm married to a wonderful Dutch lady. The first time I went to Holland as an adult—Ria's parents live on a suburban street. Everything in Holland is very compact. You open the front door, and there's the sidewalk and the bike lane and then the street. I'm a country guy, used to wide-open spaces. I didn't see any difference between the sidewalk and the bike lane. So I'm walking—and anyone who has seen me walk knows I'm not the fastest walker in the world. I'm ambling down the sidewalk. What I thought was a sidewalk was a bike lane. I heard "driing, driing, driing," and I expected to see a three-year-old on a tricycle. It was an 80-year-old Dutch lady about to take me out. She was not impressed that I was in the bike lane.

That's something we could learn from Dutch culture. Bicycles in Holland are very well respected. They have the right-of-way. It's because they've done it so long and it has been part of their culture so long. It's something that we could learn here. People on bikes also respect the rules of the road. They have a culture of having bikes and cars work together—and we need to do that, too.

We will have a long discussion, hopefully, in committee about that. There are, I'm sure, bicycle advocates who will have comments in committee on this bill, and we're looking forward to that. I am not going to claim to be a bicycle advocate or expert, other than getting near-death experiences from Dutch ladies, but I'm sure that there are people who can add to this bill.

I'd like to go to schedule 1. There's something about making regulations stricter for passing streetcars. I've been on a streetcar once in my life, so I'm not an expert in this, but I think it's a good idea. We think it's a good idea. Jess Bell, our member from University–Rosedale, called for the government to put cameras on streetcars, in 2019. That's something, I think, that we are together on. It's something that we've both called for. I think it's something that makes sense, and I think it's something that we're glad is in this bill. We can disagree on whether it goes far enough or too far, but the fact is that the issue has been identified, and we are happy that it's there.

Another issue that the members opposite, on the government side, talk about a lot, and it is a very relevant issue—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, I'm going to get to that. I need all the help I can get. I actually enjoy being heckled most of the time. I'm coming to that. Actually, I should talk about that right away.

The member from St. Paul's was heckling me politely about how I should talk about dooring. That is also in this bill. Dooring gets back to bicycles. If a bike is coming and you open the door, bad things happen to the person on the bicycle. Dooring was also brought up by the member from University–Rosedale in her private member's bill, the Doored But Not Ignored Act, which, again, was brought up in 2019. That's something that we have all identified as an issue, something that's not partisan. It's something that we can all look at.

Another issue: Our member from Davenport also brought a private member's bill regarding bicycling,

regarding the Dutch reach. The Dutch reach is, if you grab the door with this hand to open the door, you actually naturally look behind you to see if there's a bicycle coming. That makes sense. Not everybody in Holland uses the Dutch reach, because they have quite a few dooring accidents, because they have so many bicycles. But again, it's something that needs to be—we have been on this, particularly our more urban members.

Getting back to electric bikes: There are a lot of electric bikes in Holland—here too. One of the issues they have now is that when you look behind to see if there's a bicycle coming, and because everything is so close together—you look behind to see if there's a bicycle coming, and then you open the door and get out, because you're judging the bicycle is going to be a while. But now, with electric bikes, that bike could be doing 45 clicks. You think you've got time, and you're judging based on who is riding the bike. But it doesn't matter who is riding the bike; if it's electrically powered, it's coming fast, and that's a big issue.

1550

One more short Dutch story: The first time I went bicycling in Holland with my wife—the bicycles are really weird in Holland. Here, you're taught—and correct me if I'm wrong; I'm sure no one is going to be afraid to correct me—that your feet have to touch the ground when the bicycle stops, or close to it, at least tippy toes. In Holland, it's nowhere close; your feet are this far off anywhere. The reason for that is, the bicycle moves much easier if you can extend your legs a full extension. But if you extend your legs a full extension on the pedals, then you're this far off the ground when you stop. I had a hard time bicycling in Holland at the start. I finally got the hang of it, and we were bicycling along the canal. I was quite proud of myself that I was on the bicycle. My wife was born and raised in Holland. She's a pro biker—no problem. But I was pretty proud of myself—breaking a bit of a sweat. An older couple—that was maybe 10 years ago—in their 70s, I guess, breezed by me like I was going in reverse. When we got to where we were going, I said to Ria, “These people are really fit.” That was the first time I had ever seen an electric bicycle. It looks like they're biking. That's probably one of the reasons why these regulations are coming in—because these things are really fast.

So I think we've covered bicycles.

One of the parts that the government side focused on was stunt driving, and that is a serious issue. What struck me most this morning, listening to the minister and to the assistant minister, was the stat that every three and a half hours, someone is injured in Ontario from reckless driving. That is a sobering stat. What I was thinking of this morning, as I was listening to that, is that now that our ICUs are at over 100% capacity across the province because of COVID-19, those people are in an even more perilous position, and I can't overstate that.

I think I was remiss at the start of my comments today—this is important stuff we're talking about here, but it is completely overshadowed by COVID-19. If I had my choice, and I think if our caucus had our choice, we would

be debating actual paid sick days that work for people. If we had our choice, that's what we would be debating.

Ms. Catherine Fife: As a priority.

Mr. John Vanthof: As a priority, what the Premier promised five days ago. We don't control the agenda, and I'm not trying to downplay what we're discussing here.

Every three and a half hours, someone is hurt by reckless driving. I think the stats are higher for COVID-19 right now, and I think that's something that we need to recognize.

Having said that, I think we have brought this forward—I believe the member from Oshawa has brought forward the issue of stunt driving several times. The member from Oshawa has actually brought forward the issue, and the Minister of Transportation echoed it this morning. The member from Oshawa was one of the first persons I heard say that it shouldn't be called stunt driving; it should be called something else. I can't remember the word. A stunt is almost something—it doesn't have a positive connotation, but it's not that negative.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It implies a talent.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes.

This morning, when the Minister of Transportation was talking about the book *The Teenage Brain*—“stunt” wouldn't tell the teenage brain that that's a bad thing to do.

When I was a teenager, I pulled lots of stunts—like I said, I had a Pinto; it didn't go very fast, so it wasn't when driving.

So the member from Oshawa was the first person who I had heard brought that issue up. She brought it up in this House. I was sitting here and thought, “I never thought of that.” I was glad that the Minister of Transportation echoed it. Again, that's a way of working—we have our philosophical differences and we will have our fights, but where we can, we should take the time to actually try to get things right.

Another issue that was talked about quite a bit is the change to regulations for tow trucks and storage. As I said in my story about the moose, that is not a northern Ontario issue, really—at least, not a country northern Ontario issue. We're happy if we can find any kind of tow truck.

I'm proud to be a CAA member, and they have given my family excellent service. I have a very intelligent daughter who is very good at losing keys and locking them in her car, and they have bailed me out a couple of times. I give a shout-out, too—CAA has filled a pretty big void in our part of the world and for its members.

I don't pretend to be an expert on this issue. I see in the news that obviously there are issues. There are going to be pilot projects created to see how they can control this on the major highways—and more enforcement created.

That brings up an important question. There are several facets to enforcement—giving the power to enforce, and the actual act of enforcement. I think we saw that a few weeks ago, when the government tried to give police more power to enforce something, and the police, because they're on the ground, said, “No. Sorry, that's not going to fly.” That's what happened, in our view. I give the police forces full credit. They are on the ground. I am somewhat

surprised that the government didn't ask them first, but that's the way it went. With this issue, the government is going to create more enforcement powers. I believe a director of towing—have I got the term? The question is, who is going to do the enforcement? The government has a hard time keeping transportation enforcement officers now, because they're paid less than equivalent enforcement officers in other agencies and they do a very stressful job. When you're out enforcing commercial vehicles, it's not like policing playgrounds. Oh, no, they quit that. All right. But when it's you and the truck and you're alongside the road, I don't think it's a pretty job.

The Auditor General, in her report of 2019, identified the issue that there is already a lack of enforcement and a lack of inspections. It's mainly because there's a lack of people—you're having a hard time recruiting people to do a tough job for less money than the same qualifications can do in other areas.

So now you're going to create more enforcement—at least talk about more enforcement. You can create the legislation, but you have to deal with whether you are actually going to be able to carry out the legislation, because legislation that can't be carried out—we're kidding ourselves. We have to be very careful with what we enable enforcement agencies to do. It's very critical. We also have to ensure, once we create the enforcement capabilities, that those agencies are actually able to do the job they've been tasked with. That's not happening now with transportation enforcement officers, because if it was, you wouldn't be trying constantly to recruit more. I appreciate that we have the ability to talk about that today.

What I said at the start of my remarks was that it's good we are talking about an issue—that we actually have the time in this House to bring up issues that need to be discussed, that need to be worked out on behalf of all of us and on behalf of the people who are on the roads.

1600

The bill is affectionately known by the government as the MOMS Act. Well, on behalf of the moms, and that goes for every minister—it's one thing to talk here about what's right and what we say is not right, but we have to be able to make sure that what we talk about here and what government wants to improve, or what we want to help with or want to stop, can actually translate to people on the roads. I think that's a very, very tough one. We need to discuss how that happens.

The Auditor General had numbers on how many trucks were pulled off the road—and then the number of enforcement officers and the number of inspections was reduced, and so the number of trucks pulled off the road was reduced. It's not my business—I'm not trying to pull truckers off the road. We want all trucks to be safe, both for the trucker and for the people who are sharing the road with the trucker. I think all truckers want to be safe.

That brings me to something else that isn't in this bill, and it's an issue that comes up frequently in my riding. It's an issue that I've talked about with the Minister of Transportation privately and told her that—and I don't mind saying it in the House—if there was something I

could do to help, I'd be happy to; I remember telling her, "as long as you don't throw some kind of poison pill in it." Well, there's no poison pill in this bill, but there is something missing.

We have a lot of people operating trucks in this country who are not adequately trained. At the start of my speech, I talked about how every time it snows, there are trucks in the ditch, and that's because they're not adequately trained.

There's a shortage of truck drivers in this country, in this province. Truck driving is not an easy job. You're away from your family.

When you're barrelling down the highway with 40 tonnes and a trailer, you have to know how long it takes to stop. I can see, when they come over Thibeault Hill in North Bay, and all of a sudden you're down to two lanes, and there's a bit of snow on the road—your world changes.

I say it's a lack of training or a lack of understanding of the conditions in all parts of the province and all parts of the country—because I drive around here, and I don't see trucks in the ditch everywhere, but at home, on rural roads, we see it a lot.

I've had a couple of really, really close calls, and my wife has. And those people driving the trucks—I'm sure their heart was in their throat, too, after it happened.

There's something we need to look at—better training, stricter enforcement, stricter licences.

I would like to read something from the Auditor General's report from 2019—something that could have been addressed in this bill. I think it might explain part of the problem. "The ministry allows some carriers with a poor history of collisions to test their own employees for commercial vehicle driver licences. The ministry approves colleges, government organizations, safety organizations and private businesses, including carriers, to train and test drivers under the Driver Certification Program. Carriers approved under the program can deliver and grade knowledge and road tests for their own drivers. We analyzed carriers that test their own drivers and found that drivers who took their road test with carriers between 2014-15 and 2018-19 had a pass rate of 95% compared with just 69% at DriveTest centres. However, the ministry has not analyzed this difference to assess whether it is reasonable. We found that 25% of the 106 carriers testing their own drivers under the program ranked among the worst 1% of all carriers for at-fault collision performance. A jurisdictional scan by the ministry found that with the exception of a handful of carriers in two provinces, other Canadian provinces do not allow carriers to test their employees for commercial driver's licences."

Maybe we should have discussed that in the bill, because people, certainly across northern Ontario, are frightened. I'm sure the drivers are frightened, as well—because some of the situations I see those trucks in, I ask, "How did you get there?" They don't want to go there. They want to do their job. We all want to do our jobs. That's something that's missing. Hopefully, the minister is going to come up with something. That's one that we need to address, because each time the highway is closed,

it costs millions of dollars, and each time there's an accident—and sometimes when they're fatal—that costs people their future.

We know what's happening. So if it means that we have to have better testing, better training—better something.

A stunt driver is someone who takes a car and willingly goes 50 or 100 kilometres—some of these speeds are just unfathomable.

What do you call someone who puts an untrained driver in a 50-tonne vehicle and sends them on an ice-covered road in northern Ontario, where they have never been before in their lives? What do you call that person—and who does it over and over and over again? It's not the person in the truck. The person in the truck—some of them are immigrants. My family were immigrants. When my father came over, he did anything that he could to make his life better. That's what those people are doing on those trucks, and I don't blame them a bit. But the people who are letting them drive those trucks without the training, and the fact that we're letting them drive those trucks without the testing—that's something that should have been in this bill if you were really—and we can always make things better; I'm not saying that we can't. That could be coming in the next one, and I hope it does, because we've driven past too many of those accidents.

1610

So are there good things in this bill? Yes. Should there have been more? Definitely. Is it good that we're having the opportunity to speak about it? Yes. Should we have been talking about something else today? I'd say so.

I still say, if it was my job to pick, we would have been discussing how to get paid sick days to people who are going to work. Just like those people in those trucks, they're risking everything to feed their family, to make their lives better, and I commend them for it. We know what they're risking—just like those people in those trucks. They're risking everything. And yet, to date, this government is not addressing either one of those problems. That is a serious philosophical difference with the two of us.

With that, I will conclude my remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I want to thank the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for getting us to the meat of the debate, or the moose meat part of the debate, for sure. He has opened the door, which we can't ignore—because he has exercised his Dutch reach to get us to the questions and comments section of the debate this afternoon.

The first person with a question is the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to the member opposite: It's great to see this sign of support. I think both sides of the House enjoyed the stories shared by the member, as well.

As you know, the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act was developed to respond to calls from stakeholders across the province, including members on both sides of this House, for us to do more to reduce the risks on our roads across the province.

Does the member opposite agree that road safety is a non-partisan issue?

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to thank the member for that question.

I'm going to give a direct answer: Road safety in itself should be a non-partisan issue. How we make that happen sometimes has partisan overtones. I'll give you an example. Winter road maintenance—we believe that should be publicly managed. That's a partisan issue. We believe that the public does a better job managing it than the private sector. The last two governments disagreed with that. So on that part, we're partisan. But as for the road safety itself—we all want to make our roads safer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Nickel Belt has a question.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I agree with the member that we should be talking about how to protect people and get us out of this pandemic, and certainly paid sick days would be part of it. But we're talking about road safety.

We all agree that we want to be safe on our roads. The member represents a huge rural riding very similar to what I represent. When they say, "We consulted throughout the province"—if anybody comes to northern Ontario and asks, "What is the number one issue to make roads safer?" we all agree: winter road maintenance. This is when, every year, many, many Ontarians die on our roads. And yet, there are lots of things that apply in the bill that I recognize are important for southern Ontario.

Does the member agree that winter road maintenance is very important to make roads safe in northern Ontario?

Mr. John Vanthof: I would like to thank the member for Nickel Belt for her comments and questions.

I know, in my office, in our offices, winter road maintenance is the number one issue every winter. When I was first elected, we started the Northern Road Report, because we went to the MTO, and the MTO told us, "No. We're meeting our standards 95% of the time," and we didn't have anything to disprove that. We started a Northern Road Report, and when we had anecdotes—the worst one was, I had a young girl who sent me an email every half hour on the road conditions from her home in Charlton to Toronto. It was incredible. So we knew what the roads were like. Someone died on the road that day. Then, I went to the MTO and said, "Were you making your 95% that day?" After that, the MTO became much more respectful. Winter road maintenance is the number one issue in northern Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Oakville North–Burlington.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Thank you to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for his very interesting and entertaining remarks.

A key pillar of the MOMS Act is the introduction of stiffer post-conviction penalties for those convicted acts of stunt and street racing on our roadways.

I think the member also mentioned that he used to drive a Pinto when he was young. That probably wouldn't have been the kind of vehicle that would have been able to manage these stunts.

Does the member opposite agree with these increased penalties to deter drivers from engaging in reckless acts of street racing and stunt driving?

Mr. John Vanthof: I thank the member for the question. She was listening to the speech; I appreciate that.

Just for the record: A Mustang was the Ford car that could do the stunt driving. A Pinto—you were lucky if you hit the speed limit.

On stunt driving and, particularly, repeated stunt driving: There should be measures that are equivalent to the danger you're causing to others. I think that's the most direct way to answer that question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member from Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. He can consistently get a cow or a moose into a story, which is sometimes very refreshing for many of us here in this place.

You've mentioned that this bill, particularly, does not have a poison pill per se, but it does have a missed opportunity here around the winter road maintenance. We also know in the province of Ontario that the same contractors keep getting these contracts with the Ministry of Transportation even though they're not clearing the roads. This goes back to procurement. It goes back to accountability.

What say you to the government about this missed opportunity?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you to the member for Waterloo for talking about winter road maintenance and how the contracts are issued. I think it's part of the issue.

I mentioned to another member, we believe that the contracts should be managed by the MTO, and the contracts themselves should be smaller, and you should bid on the trucks, bid on the sand. But the decisions on when and what is applied should be made—the first thought should be safety, and it should be a member working for the public. These overall contracts are in themselves a conflict of interest, and we see it over and over and over again. These big, big contracts also exclude local contractors from actually bidding on the contracts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Mississauga–Erin Mills.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I have to say that I enjoyed the stories and the moose story in your speech today. It's always very interesting to hear your speeches. Thank you very much.

But despite that, I quote something in your speech which I liked a lot. Like you said, "It's not a poison pill; it's missing something."

1620

Would you at least agree that whatever is included in the MOMS bill, you agreed on?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, I thank the member for the question. The things that are brought up in Moving Ontarians More Safely are valid points, and we're glad that they were brought forward to the Legislature and we look forward to this bill going to committee.

But again, there are missed opportunities. There are always missed opportunities, but there are huge missed opportunities that I hope the government chooses to fill for more people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Next question?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you very, very much to our colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane for your very flamboyant presentation. I enjoyed it. I know here in Toronto–St. Paul's, and of course in other Toronto ridings, we've had issues with construction: lots of construction, lots of trucks, and construction that's not necessarily affordable housing. We've certainly called for things like traffic management plans to help save lives, because people have died rolled over by cement trucks and whatnot.

This bill does have some good aspects to it, but I guess my question to you is, how important will the regulations of the bill be to actually creating an efficient and an effective bill?

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to thank my colleague for that very relevant question. It's a part of the bill that I didn't cover, that I ran out of time for. As all legislation, this provides the—it's enabling legislation. It provides the framework, but the devil is always in the details and the regulations. The regulations are always very important, because it's the small things that save people's lives: It's where the traffic barrier is put; it's how many seconds you have to cross the road. It's always those things that hurt people or save people's lives.

So it's very important that the regulations are well thought out, but also that the framework of the bill is well thought out so we can actually put in proper regulations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 101(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Nicholls assumes ballot item number 79 and Mr. Sabawy assumes ballot item number 92.

Further debate?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to add to the debate on the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, also known as the MOMS Act.

Ontario roads are already among the safest in North America, and our government is proud that when Ontarians get into their car, take the bus or ride their bike, they can be confident that the rules and laws of the road are helping to keep them and their families safe. As Minister Mulroney said during her opening remarks, while we should champion our road safety record, it is also vital that we act swiftly to address concerning incidents and trends that threaten these roads and the record that we've seen appear in the last year.

Whenever we witness an act of aggressive driving or street racing on roads, or hear a news report about another act of violence in the towing industry, we always think that more must be done. The MOMS Act will help address these recent changes and ensure that our province continues to meet the highest of safety standards for both road users as well as for those who work on Ontario roads.

As we have been discussing here today, a key part of this MOMS Act is the introduction of new measures targeting the dangerous acts of street racing, stunt driving, and aggressive and unsafe driving. It is unfortunate that we have seen an increase in aggressive driving like street racing or stunt driving over the past five years, and especially during COVID-19. In her opening remarks, Minister Surma shared some of the shocking statistics and examples of stunt driving and street racing that we have recently seen in Ontario. It is hard to imagine that someone would choose to drive a car at such extreme speeds, sometimes more than double the speed limit, just for their entertainment. We know that speed kills. Accidents where speed is a factor are more likely to cause serious harm, which is why these selfish acts of street racing and stunt driving are more dangerous.

It is frightening to imagine how you or a family member could witness or be a victim to an act of extreme speeding that could result in a dangerous and completely avoidable accident. Oftentimes, we witness these brazen acts of dangerous driving on social media or on the news, hoping that we or our loved ones will never have to witness it in person. These aggressive and selfish actions have no place on the roads that Ontarians use to drive to work, go to essential appointments, take their children to and from work or daycare. Mr. Speaker, every preventable road accident where someone gets injured or, worse, is killed is a tragedy.

Through the changes proposed in the MOMS Act, we are acting so that there are more serious consequences to aggressive driving acts, especially for those who take part in street racing or stunt driving. The proposed changes in the MOMS Act introduce escalating post-conviction driver's licence suspensions for those convicted of street racing or stunt driving. An individual would have their licence suspended for at least one year on their first conviction. The individual would see it increase to a minimum of a three-year suspension, should it be their second conviction. A lifetime suspension that may be reduced follows a third conviction. If a driving individual gets caught for a fourth time, there will be a non-reducible lifetime suspension—and, of course, for subsequent conviction.

Currently, drivers who are caught street racing or stunt driving can have their licence suspended and the vehicle impounded for seven days on the spot. This act proposes that this would increase the licence suspension to 30 days and a 14-day vehicle impoundment. These more serious, on-the-spot consequences reflect the severe and deliberate disregard for other people's safety that those who engage in street racing or stunt driving show. With these changes, our government is sending a clear message that Ontario will not tolerate dangerous driving behaviour that puts road users at risk.

Our government greatly values the safety of those who work on Ontario's highways, including those who work in construction zones. They are the people that keep our highway system working, whether it is repaving the road, building new lanes or filling potholes. They are the people

we often see as we pass through the construction zones, no matter the weather or the time of day. Without them, our highways would grind to a halt, and due to their importance and due to this particular reason, we need to take action to ensure that they are protected on our highways.

For instance, with the MOMS Act, we are proposing a change that would permit the use of an automated traffic device that could be used to control traffic. We have all passed a construction zone where someone who works on the job site is standing on the side of the road, holding a sign to direct traffic to stop while work is going on in the construction zone. This can lead to unsafe situations that can be mitigated through the use of an automated solution.

In response to this proposed change, Bryan Hocking, chief executive officer of the Ontario Road Builders' Association, said:

“Although sometimes considered as an inconvenience by drivers, construction zones are workplaces first. Our members have noticed increased incidents of stunt driving, speeding and distracted driving. Initiatives that crack down on stunt driving, that allow for the use of automated flagger devices are important tools that will make construction zones safer for workers and make our roadways safer for all Ontarians.”

1630

Mr. Speaker, tow truck drivers also work on our roads and highways, providing an essential service for Ontarians. We rely on their services to clear accidents and vehicles from our network to ensure traffic can keep moving as soon as possible. But unfortunately, we have seen that there are some within the tow truck industry who are operating illegally and immorally, with dangerous consequences for both the public and tow truck drivers.

When a tow truck driver goes to work, they should not have to worry about being assaulted for a job or whether or not they will make it safely back home. In addition, Ontarians who have been in car accidents or who are stuck somewhere with a broken-down car should not feel fearful about calling a tow truck driver for help because of the very unfortunate stories they are hearing on the news. I think we can all agree that being in a car accident or dealing with car troubles is already stressful enough. When someone is in a trying situation and needs to make a call for help, they should be confident the tow truck driver arriving on the scene has their best interests in mind.

However, a study by CAA South Central Ontario done in April 2020 found that only one out of five drivers feels “very protected” under the current system. The survey also found that more than 90% of drivers agree with tow truck licensing certification and provincial regulations, and that half of Ontario drivers believe that tow trucks in Ontario are licensed. However, that is not the case in Ontario. Tow truck drivers are not currently licensed to tow.

In addition, our government surveyed Ontarians on their experiences with the tow truck industry. The survey took place from December to January and found that some common issues people have experiences with tow truck drivers included being unsure about their rights and responsibilities in a towing scenario; being charged what

they thought were unreasonably high fees; and experiencing predatory sales tactics.

Mr. Speaker, while there are many tow truck drivers and operators who provide trustworthy and reliable services, our government will not tolerate the ongoing violence and criminal activity that we've seen from the bad actors in Ontario's towing industry. That is why we created the Towing Task Force last summer. Some of the goals of the task force were to promote road user and tow operator safety, to prevent deaths and injuries on Ontario's roads, and to ensure drivers are protected and treated fairly after they experience a collision or a breakdown.

The task force also looked at ways to prevent crime and fraud throughout the towing experience and ways to create level playing fields, with clear requirements that allow legitimate operators in the towing industry to prosper. With the MOMS Act, we are using the findings that came out of the Towing Task Force to propose much-needed change in Ontario's towing industry. These changes are supported by experts who know Ontario's towing industry well, including the Provincial Towing Association of Ontario, the Insurance Bureau of Canada and CAA South Central Ontario.

The MOMS Act would establish a director of towing and vehicle and storage standards to oversee the certification process and to appoint towing inspectors to enforce the legislation and investigate complaints. That means tow operators, tow truck drivers and vehicle storage operators would be held to a higher standard and need a provincial certificate to operate. This will help ensure a more level playing field between our tow truck operators and ensure tow truck drivers are trained.

These changes will help to protect customers, to give people the confidence that, when they are waiting by the side of the road for a tow, a capable and reputable tow truck driver will be there to help them and get them to a safer place. Ontarians deserve to have the confidence that they are in good hands no matter which tow truck driver arrives on the scene to help them or their loved ones.

With summer approaching, more Ontarians will be using bikes and e-bikes to get around. Last year, with the onset of this pandemic, many people sought a distanced and reliable way to get around outside. Like many essential items at that time, bikes and e-bikes flew off the shelves and, to this day, remain in demand. Some industry experts are saying this level of demand will continue until 2023.

Bike-sharing services also saw increased usage throughout last year. For example, right here in the city of Toronto, Bike Share Toronto said that 2020 was its busiest year in its 10-year history, with Torontonians taking 2.9 million trips across its network. My constituents in Scarborough—Rouge Park benefited from this, as Bike Share added bikes and docking stations to Highland Creek Trail and Waterfront Trail to the Rouge Hill GO station. Bike Share Toronto also saw the addition of its e-bike pilot program, which added 300 pedal-assist e-bikes and 10 charging stations to the Bike Share network.

In addition, earlier this year, our government introduced a pilot program for cargo e-bikes. Cargo e-bikes

offer businesses another environmentally friendly option for transporting goods, and we are looking forward to seeing how municipalities introduce these cargo e-bikes on their roads.

For individuals, e-bikes offer the public a green transportation alternative for those who don't drive or who prefer not to drive. Whether commuting, riding for fun or using an e-bike to make those first- and last-mile connections to transit, e-bikes offer a convenient, active and green way to travel while also helping to reduce congestion on roads. E-bikes are also more affordable than a car or motorcycle and can often be easier for people to store and park at home or at their destination.

As the popularity of bikes continues to grow, the safety of cyclists, including e-bike riders, is a top priority for our government. That's why we are proposing changes through the MOMS Act that will update the definition of an e-bike.

There are a variety of different kinds of e-bikes on the road. Some e-bikes look like a regular bike and some look more like a moped or some look more like a motorcycle. By updating the definition of an e-bike to create three distinct classes—bicycle style, moped style, or motorcycle style—municipalities will be able to choose which class of e-bike to allow on their transportation infrastructure and where. This is intended to ensure e-bikes are used in a safe manner. Different cities have different cycling infrastructure, and what works and supports the safe use of e-bikes in one city may not make sense in another city. By defining e-bikes into three distinct classes, we are putting the safety of e-bike users first.

In addition, we are making changes that will improve how the province collects data on collisions involving bicycles. Anyone who has ridden a bike on the road will know that, unfortunately, car doors being opened into a bike lane are a hazard. Car doors opening in the path of a cyclist can result in serious injuries. The proposed changes will better track collisions involving car doors hitting bicycles or e-scooters. These are avoidable accidents that we want to try to reduce. The information gathered would provide more insight into how our government could reduce dooring incidents, like those involving bikes. With this information, we'll be better able to identify where and how dooring is happening and consider what could be done to try to reduce it.

1640

Another kind of incident that Ontarians, especially those in Toronto, may be familiar with is when a driver illegally passes a streetcar with its doors open. When someone is exiting a streetcar, Mr. Speaker, they shouldn't have to worry about a car driving near the open door of a streetcar. The changes we are proposing would allow automated camera enforcement to be used as evidence against a driver who illegally passes a streetcar on the left or passes a streetcar with its doors open to pick up or drop off passengers. As a transit rider myself, I think this is a change that Toronto transit riders will appreciate.

Whether in a car, on a bike or working on Ontario's roads or highways, anyone who uses Ontario's roads

deserves to be safe. Our government is proud of Ontario's road safety record, but there's always more we can do. Through the MOMS Act, we are targeting those who engage in unacceptable, aggressive and dangerous acts of driving. We are proposing changes to Ontario's towing industry that would improve safety for customers, improve safety for tow truck drivers and, of course, improve safety for tow operators and vehicle storage operators. We are considering the safety of those who do vital work on Ontario roads and highways, and we are taking action to make bikes and e-bikes safer to use on our roads. These are measures that will help protect people and families who use Ontario roads every day.

On a final note, I would like to thank the Minister of Transportation and the Associate Minister of Transportation for their strong leadership on road safety. Their work will ensure that Ontario's transportation network will continue to be a safe and reliable method for our people and goods to move around our province. I look forward to hearing the rest of the debate on the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act in the coming days.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Now it's time for questions and comments.

Mr. Jamie West: Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for the debate on Bill 282. One of the things that's been talked about a lot here, and the member said it as well, is the increased risk of street racing and stunt driving. In fact, earlier this morning, one of the members opposite had said that every 3.5 hours a person is injured in a speed-related crash.

I'm a big advocate of health and safety and I think it's important we discuss these things. I'm trying to understand how on the one hand in this bill we have the focus on speeding and the importance of preventing speeding, and earlier in 2019 there was a bill to increase the speed limits on the 400-QEW series of highways. Can the member help elaborate on that?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: As you know, after the consultation with stakeholders and, of course, concerns raised from both sides of the government, the government came up with the MOMS Act. As the member opposite said, based on the current data, yes, every 3.5 hours someone is injured in a speed-related crash in Ontario, while drivers between the ages of 16 and 25 are the significant age groups who are involved in these accidents.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that at this point, whenever you see an accident on the news or when you hear something or see a video on social media, one thing that we all worry about is that our loved ones should not be part of this. That's why our government wants to keep the roads safe. According to all the data collected from the stakeholders as well as both sides of the government, our Minister of Transportation and our associate minister came up with this—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. The next question?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: As the Minister of Transportation highlighted this morning, a significant amount of consultation went into the measures that are part of the

MOMS Act. Could the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park highlight for the House the support that has been said about the MOMS Act from the transportation industry?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thanks to my colleague from Brampton for his advocacy for road safety. In his riding and across Brampton—and, of course, across Ontario—the Ministry of Transportation has consulted with various stakeholders, including law enforcement, consumer representatives and municipalities—and, of course, the automobile insurance bureau as well. According to the consultation, over 80% of the participants supported the creation of new rules and regulations to make sure that Ontario roads are safe, and we continue to do more to make sure that we prevent such aggressive and dangerous driving so that we can prevent these avoidable accidents.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): To the member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for your comments. I'm really glad to see that the Ontario NDP official opposition members from Davenport, from University–Rosedale, and other members from our party have been so influential and that the government has been inspired by our legislative asks around the Dutch reach, around dooring incidents.

But I am wondering, in a city like Toronto, where there's so much non-essential construction still happening, which essentially just makes our streets unlivable, what is the government willing to do to ensure that our streets are livable and that people can actually walk and move safely, as this bill suggests?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite: Thanks for that question. As I mentioned in the speech, this bill not only protects the road users, all the vulnerable road users who are pedestrians, but also workers who are working in construction zones, either on the road or near the road. This bill would protect those road users.

I'm sure that many of you have seen there is always—when you pass by a construction zone, there will be one construction employee who would be showing signage to slow down and all that. What this proposed bill would do is to have an automated device so that we can avoid these avoidable accidents, because in recent times, the CAA south chapter mentioned that because of stunt driving, there are a lot of accidents happening in essential and non-essential construction sites.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: It's really comforting and encouraging to hear the minister and the associate minister share how we can move Ontarians more safely. Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for sharing more details about this.

Can the member share with us a little bit more on the government's commitment to ensure that Ontario roads remain among some of the safest in North America?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I would first of all like to commend the work the member from Richmond Hill is doing for her constituents.

Our government is proposing strong action to protect young drivers and vulnerable road users by introducing the MOMS Act. I'm sure that many members here, either as parents or as loved ones—when they send their kids or their parents out, always worry about all the accidents that are happening. But in particular, during COVID-19, there is a high, increased number of stunt driving and dangerous driving happening, and that's why this bill would introduce serious measures that will protect family members by implementing more fines and penalties for these dangerous drivers so that we can reduce the accidents and keep Ontarians safe.

1650

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thanks to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for his 20 minutes. He did mention that there were extensive consultations province-wide before this bill was brought forward. The idea that we want our roads to be safe is shared no matter where you are in Ontario.

We made it clear that the number one issue for road safety for people who live in northern Ontario is winter road maintenance, yet there isn't one step in that bill that will make the number one issue to make northerners safer—things like opening up the contracts, reclassifying our highways higher so that we don't have to wait a day and a half before they get plowed. How about we look at some of the MTO operations, to give them oversight of when the plows should go out? Because right now, when you're leaving it to the people who have the contracts, there's a conflict of interest. The less they go out, the more money they make.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite: Thank you for that important question. As you know, our government recognizes that highways are not just in one part, but across the province. Especially when it comes to northern highways, I just want to mention I personally went driving from Thunder Bay all the way to North Bay just to make sure we met with Indigenous groups, municipalities and stakeholders—and during the wintertime to see the winter maintenance on those northern highways.

Our government recognizes that winter months pose significant challenges for drivers. That's why we have some of the highest winter maintenance safety standards for northern Ontario.

When it comes to the contracts, or when it comes to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Conclude, please, if you want another question.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: The government, again, has committed to make sure we keep northern highways and all the highways across the province safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): You have time for a quick question and answer.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you to the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park for his speech today. As I drive into Toronto on the 401 from Ottawa, when I reach Morningside and hit Scarborough, it's a moment of relief;

the journey's almost done. But over the past number of months, specifically during the pandemic, when I reach Scarborough, I'm suddenly surrounded by stunt drivers and keep getting passed by all these people driving dangerously. I'm wondering if the member could talk a little about how this bill is going to help target the stunt drivers and make our roads safer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): A little bit—it's 10 seconds you left him.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: First off, I would like to thank the member from Ottawa for his advocacy for road safety. We want to make sure that all roads in Ontario—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you very much.

Further debate?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I want to start off by saying that there's a lot of important issues in this piece of legislation with respect to making sure we have safer roads, and issues like stunt driving are real issues. I agree with the member from Oshawa in saying that we should probably reflect on how we name and categorize something like stunt driving, and give it something that really reflects the devastating nature of people who partake in that very dangerous kind of action.

There is no denying that there are real issues here, and I will be talking about a variety of those issues throughout my comments today, but as we are here in this House, my job is, as a member of the official opposition, to demonstrate what I think could be done better by this government.

As a bill, although it has important aspects, there are probably things that we need to be doing which are far more important right now in our province. Over the past few days, Ontarians have been reeling from the knowledge of a crisis that has been ripping through our entire province, a crisis that has a particular and distinct and disproportionate impact on the city that I represent, Brampton, where we have a positivity rate of over 22%. What does this mean? It means that there are countless people right now in Brampton who are getting sick and who are dying.

I just pulled up the most recent figures: In Brampton, we have 55,000 people who have been sick with COVID-19; almost 300 people have died; and we have more than 150 outbreaks in our workplaces. It is truly a pandemic in every sense of the word right now in Brampton, and the sense, the feeling in Brampton is one of a lot of anguish right now. People are concerned; they're worried; they're upset. We're learning more and more about how this sickness has just been ripping through workplaces and households.

I always describe to folks the unique nature of Brampton. Brampton is a city full of essential workers who don't have the choice to work from home because they go to work in factories and logistics. Others can work from home because of the role that they play in our economy. When these workers, who subject themselves to COVID-19 because they often go to work at workplaces where others might have COVID-19 and it spreads, when

they go home to their intergenerational households—that means households where parents with their children might live with their parents as well; so parents, children and children of those children, or grandparents, parents and children in one household. That’s the makeup of Brampton. So when we look at the impact of COVID-19, it has a disproportionate impact in a community like Brampton.

When we have something like a 22% positivity rate in our community that is ripping through households and workplaces and is creating so much devastation across our province, people from Brampton look to the Conservative government and they say, “Do something for us now in our time of need. If you won’t do something for us now when we need it the most, then when will you?” That is the moment that we’re in right now in Brampton. So when we see this piece of legislation come forward, it really does beg the question: What are the priorities of the Conservative government?

There are certain aspects of transportation that I want to discuss as well, particularly. When we talk about transportation in Brampton, when we talk about these essential workers, these people who are risking their lives every single day, they’re truly in a Catch-22, because they have two issues that are really impacting them when you look at it: They have health concerns and economic concerns. The health concerns are that they are put in precarious situations. They don’t have paid sick days. They have to choose between going to work sick or paying the bills and spreading the COVID-19 sickness across their communities and their intergenerational households. This is then also compounded with the fact that, in Brampton, we have these huge economic issues as well. What are these economic issues?

Let’s talk about specific issues around auto insurance, and the fact that Brampton pays some of the highest auto insurance rates in this country. Earlier today, the Minister of Transportation said that we have some of the safest roads in Canada, in Ontario. Well, if we have some of the safest roads in Ontario, then why are Ontarians paying some of the highest rates of car insurance in this country, and in the context of COVID-19, when we know that there are fewer people on the road, that there are fewer cars on the road? These are the exact comments that were said by the minister today. She acknowledged the fact that statistically—and you can’t debate these kinds of stats. We know there are fewer cars on the road. We know there are fewer accidents happening because of that. My commute from Brampton to Toronto is a fraction of what it was pre-COVID. The data supports that there are fewer cars.

The Conservative government is telling folks to stay home—and rightly so—to stop the spread of COVID-19. But the Conservative government has nothing—an opportunity that they could have put into this piece of legislation—to address the fact that Bramptonians—and not just Bramptonians; largely racialized communities, racialized neighbourhoods, neighbourhoods full of marginalized communities pay some of the highest car insurance rates in this country.

I want to say this very clearly for the viewers right now: Whenever your car insurance rates go up, it’s because the Conservative government has approved the increases to your car insurance rates. That means that at a time when you are staying at home, when your car is parked on your driveway or your car is parked on the street, and you’re doing the right thing by staying home and stopping the spread of COVID-19—at the same time—when these billion-dollar car insurance companies petition and go forward to the Conservative government and say, “We’re increasing rates,” the Conservative government says, “Yes, we’re going to increase your rates,” despite the fact that people right now are staying at home and despite the fact that people are struggling right now with so many economic issues.

1700

Let’s look further at the economic issues that we see people are dealing with throughout Brampton. When we look at issues around car insurance, when we look at issues around automobile insurance, which is something that’s not mentioned at all in this piece of legislation, though our government had an opportunity to do so—

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I’m sorry for the interruption. I understand the member from Mississauga—Erin Mills has a point of order.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Point of order: I think the discussion now is going far beyond the bill. All the points about insurance and COVID do not relate to the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I recognize what you’re saying. I also recognize that transportation has an insurance component. If the member could stick to and tie it back to the bill as often as possible, I will allow him to continue.

Back to the member from Brampton East.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Thank you so much, Speaker. This is, quite frankly, what you see from the government all the time. I am quoting directly from the minister’s testimony this morning, from what she said. The minister herself said that there are fewer cars on the road. The minister herself said that we have some of the safest roads in Ontario. But the government has the audacity to bring forward—I’m going to call them frivolous and vexatious points of order, just to disrupt a speech. When you have a minister herself stating that there are fewer cars on the roads, that there are fewer accidents happening, and the government then puts forward these points of order, it’s actually indicative of the fact that this government is completely tone-deaf when it comes to the issues of Ontarians, disconnected from not only Ontarians, but quite frankly from the comments from their own minister.

If we cannot make mention of the fact that there are fewer cars on the road, that there is a piece of legislation put before us right now dealing with transportation, and I can’t make mention of the fact that auto insurance is not mentioned in this, then that is completely, completely, I would say, a frivolous point of order and inappropriate in this—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Order, please.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Frankly, what happens is when the government has their back against the wall, when they know that they're being criticized, and rightly so, then they try to find these loopholes in this Legislative Assembly. They try to say, "Okay, we're going to put up a point of order instead." It is completely inappropriate. Unless the Speaker rules otherwise, I will continue with this questioning, because it is so founded in the conversation right now, it's so founded in the debate right now, because you have a piece of legislation that should be aiming to make Ontario drivers safer, better and also cheaper. It should be something that helps Ontario drivers right now.

You have an opportunity right now, but you're not doing that, despite the fact that your evidence points to the contrary: fewer cars on the road, fewer accidents happening, fewer individuals who are even commuting to work, because they are rightly staying home. The government had an opportunity to address this and, instead, the government left it. The government totally disregarded the ability to help people.

So I understand and I recognize there are aspects of this bill that address important points, points around safety of our roads. You need to look at the opportunity right now. And frankly, anything in this House that's about COVID-19 is not irrelevant, and I will challenge the government to say otherwise. At a time in crisis, if you're telling me that I can't stand up in this House and talk about the fact that the number one issue that is gripping the world is a pandemic that impacts every single aspect of our life, be it cars, the roads we drive on, be it the health care system we interact with, if you're telling me that is something that we are unable to talk about right now in this Legislative Assembly, I find that completely inaccurate. That is completely inappropriate, and it's tone-deaf. It's tone-deaf to the position that we're in, because we have something that across the world—every aspect of what we do right now should be coloured and motivated, every aspect of what we do right now should have one single North Star: How do we help people when they are at their worst?

When we talk about Brampton and the positivity rate of over 22%, for me, as an elected official of Brampton, you would be quite well sure that every moment I get up, I will be talking about it, because that's what I owe my constituents, that's what I owe the people I represent. And if I see the government slipping, if I see the government not doing what they should be doing and helping people, I'm going to call it out, because that's my job, and that's what I was sent here to do.

When we look at what other issues people are dealing with right now, when we talk about car insurance, there's two facets to car insurance. One facet to car insurance is this personal car insurance that people are dealing with, some of the highest rates in this country. The second issue that people are dealing with is commercial car insurance rates. Taxi drivers, airport limousine drivers, truck drivers are being devastated right now economically.

It goes back to my earlier point, that when we talk about the issues that people are dealing with right now, it's

twofold: People are dealing with their health issues and their corresponding economic issues, and, quite frankly, how they're connected. So the health issues—what are people dealing with? The spread of COVID-19 and the lack of paid sick days, that they're contracting and getting sick with COVID-19 at their workplaces because they have to choose between going to work sick, spreading COVID-19, or paying the bills, something that, quite frankly, they shouldn't have to choose between. And the economic issues: the fact that the government is not actually providing relief to them.

When we talk about the pressing economic issue in Brampton, it is auto insurance, the fact that people in Brampton pay some of the highest car insurance rates in this country. In some households, they're paying more for their car insurance rates than for their household mortgage.

Then, when you look at it from a commercial car insurance context, taxi drivers, airport limousine drivers, truck drivers and dump truck drivers are struggling right now with commercial car insurance rates that are jeopardizing their ability to provide for their families, jeopardizing their very livelihoods. Instead of providing relief to these drivers, the Conservative government has done nothing. The Conservative government has left airport limousine drivers, taxi drivers, dump truck drivers and truck drivers out to dry. They've sent a clear message to airport limousine drivers, truck drivers, dump truck drivers and taxi drivers: They have said, "You have to deal with this pandemic on your own." Instead of providing these essential workers with the support they need, the Conservative government has turned their back on them.

The government had an opportunity right now to address this point. They had the opportunity to address the fact that people, right now, are struggling and they need more support. It is astounding and, supported by the evidence provided by—I keep on saying "evidence"; it's the lawyer in me—the Minister of Transportation from this morning, by her comments earlier, where she said, self-admittedly, "Fewer cars on the road; the safest roads in Ontario." To me, that sounds like the perfect scenario to reduce car insurance rates.

Instead, what have we seen from the Conservative government? Approving billion-dollar car insurance companies who are making record profits—the Conservative government is approving increases to everyday Ontarians' car insurance rates. At a time when the evidence displays fewer cars on the road, less accidents, the safest roads in Ontario, the safest roads in Canada, we should be dropping rates for folks. The Conservative government has the power to reduce these rates, but they choose not to. Instead, they continue on a track record of supporting the haves over the have-nots.

There's another particular issue that I want to talk about that is really missing from this piece of legislation. It's something that I asked the minister about this morning, and I'll continue to make comments about it, because it's something that is truly devastating a really vibrant part of our economy and a really important part of Brampton, and it's the issue around dump truck drivers.

Dump truck drivers are essential workers in our province. They provide an essential and important role, but they are struggling right now because of the SPIF regulations, which are forcing many dump truck drivers to take on a really undue financial burden, so much so that some of these dump truck drivers might actually have to pull their trucks off the road. It is something that is devastating a huge part of the community that I represent in Brampton. That's why we're calling on the Conservative government—and we had been calling on the Conservative government—to stand up for dump truck drivers. Dump truck drivers put their lives at risk every day because it's essential work. They're going to work, exposing themselves potentially to COVID-19. At least, right now, we should be doing what ensures that they continue to provide for our province economically and provide for their families. We're going to continue to call on the Conservative government to do the right thing and stand up for dump truck drivers because that's what they deserve. They provide such an important role in our province, and the fact that these SPIF regulations are coming forward and putting some of them potentially out of a job, having to have their trucks parked because they can no longer drive them, is something which is unjust and is wrong.

1710

I stand with these dump truck drivers, and I think every single one of us need to stand with dump truck drivers, just like every single one of us need to stand right now with taxi drivers and limousine drivers. These taxi and airport limousine drivers risk their lives at a rate throughout this entire pandemic—these taxi drivers and airport limousine drivers have been risking their lives since day one of this pandemic, because when folks have been flying in through the airports—folks who often have been sick with COVID-19—often their immediate point of contact has been a taxi driver or an airport limousine driver. It has been tragic to see the amount of deaths that have happened at these areas of work, the amount of deaths that have happened to taxi drivers and airport limousine drivers.

Instead of providing them with the relief and support that they needed, the Conservative government has turned their backs on airport and limousine drivers. How? They turned their backs by not providing them the relief they needed for commercial auto insurance. They turned their backs by not providing them with the support they needed to protect themselves when they go to work every day. That's something that the Conservatives had the opportunity to address right now in this piece of legislation, but they didn't. They didn't do the right thing to those who are marginalized.

There are some aspects of this bill, for sure, that are addressing important parts: things like stunt driving, things like ensuring that we have safe roads. I get it. That's not a bone of contention amongst myself or any of the other speakers from the opposition. What we're saying is do better for those who need it the most, and have a COVID-19 lens on every single thing you do. When every single piece of legislation comes forward, the Conservative government should say, "Is this going to help the

maximum amount of people? Is this going to help fight the pandemic?" If it's "yes," we continue with it. If it's "no," maybe we do it later—not to disregard its importance, but instead to prioritize its importance, prioritize the things that help people the most.

When we look right now at the position we're in across Ontario, it is looking very grim. We are in a third wave that, quite frankly, we didn't have to be in. We're here because the Conservative government chose not to listen to the experts and chose to lead us dead on into a third wave, because they didn't bring in paid sick days, because they didn't bring in the support that people needed. They opened up the province at a time they should have continued to keep restrictions in place, and now we're in this moment—a moment where in the community that I represent, Brampton, people at an unfathomable rate are getting sick and dying every single day.

That's why we in the NDP are calling you out in the Conservative government. We're calling out the Conservative government and we're saying, "If you are not putting forth a piece of legislation that directly impacts or addresses the COVID-19 pandemic, then rethink what you're doing, rethink how you're helping people, and instead do the right thing and bring in the supports people need to get through one of the darkest times this province has ever seen."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Now, we have time for questions and comments. The first question? Going once, going twice—the first question goes to the member from Sudbury.

Mr. Jamie West: Thank you very much, Speaker. Thank you as well to the member from Brampton East for reminding us that we're in the midst of COVID-19 and we've walked into the third wave of COVID-19, and also how it's affecting workers in Brampton with 22% positivity—it's shocking. We should be talking about important debates—not that this one isn't important, but the house is on fire, as they say. Yesterday, we were surprised that we were debating safety day, we were surprised by Ontario Day, and today, we're surprised by Bill 282.

I'm just wondering, to the member from Brampton East, what bill would you like to be surprised by?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Fantastic question. What we would want to see right now: Five days ago, the Premier said that we would have the best piece of legislation for paid sick days in the entire North America. Five days later, we have nothing. We have nothing for Ontarians. The Conservative government has once again turned their backs on Ontarians. When their own Premier made a promise and said, "We're going to bring in support for paid sick days for Ontarians," we see nothing. When all of the experts, all of the Ontario science table, everyone is saying we need paid sick days, instead the Conservative government has turned their backs on Ontarians and turned their backs on workers who are continually risking their lives and not getting the support they need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thanks to the member opposite. If we were all listening to what you said, you would think that Ontario is the only one who has faced COVID. It's actually a pandemic all around the world. It is not an Ontario problem; it is a world pandemic. We want people to be safe.

The question about this legislation—and I appreciate what the minister was saying this morning. I asked a question in question period to her with regard to safety. You know, I live in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, and you can hear the cars just whizzing down the Gardiner—whizzing down the Gardiner. What does the member opposite—do you support maybe putting some fines in place and looking at these drivers who are whizzing down the Gardiner with no thought or care for pedestrians, vulnerable people, cyclists? What does the member opposite think of protections for people, vulnerable populations such as seniors, on our highways? I'd like to hear your comments on that.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: The Conservative member starts her comments by saying there's a pandemic happening across the world; why are we talking about it right now? Ontario is eighth-lowest in per capita vaccinations in Canada. In Canada, we are eighth-lowest, and the Conservative government is somehow saying, "Oh, you know, the whole world is in a COVID-19 pandemic." That somehow, what, excuses you for your failure, for the fact that you have a slow and sloppy vaccine rollout? It excuses the fact that you refuse to bring in paid sick days? It excuses the fact that you refuse to give people the support they need when they need it the most?

No, it doesn't excuse you. It actually should put you to compare yourself to other jurisdictions across the world and say, "We should be at the top. We should be number one. We should be providing the most supports to Ontarians," instead of being eighth-lowest in this country. It is shameful, the fact that Ontarians are in such a tough position, and we need to do better by them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you very much to our member from Brampton for that impassioned presentation. I'm thinking about the taxi drivers, many of whom work odd hours, many of whom, as you've mentioned, do not have paid sick days, many of whom are juggling through very congested streets, quite frankly, because of a lot of the non-essential construction that's going on. So I'm just wondering—and I should say, non-essential construction going on during a pandemic when the government has said that they have put clamps on construction that's non-essential, but exactly what is "essential"? That's the question many folks are asking me.

My question to the member from Brampton is, what supports do taxi drivers and their families require now, during a pandemic? What is the government missing?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I really want to thank the member for that question. That, frankly, is the question we should all be asking ourselves every single day for every single industry. When we talk about taxi drivers, they've been very clear on the supports. They needed money and

support economically for more PPE to make sure their workplaces are more secure. We needed to support those who are small businesses, those that have their own plates and are in that position; we need to make sure they get economic support to get through these tough times. The Conservative government needed to reduce commercial car insurance for taxi drivers.

There is so much more we could have been doing for these folks who put themselves at risk every single day, risking their lives. Often, when you hear the news reports, people who are getting their vaccines or are in those positions sometimes take taxis as their way to get to their location. So we need to do better by taxi drivers by giving them supports across the board.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Northumberland–Peterborough South.

Mr. David Piccini: Thank you very much to the member opposite for his speech. The member opposite quoted a few stats, I note, on our vaccine tracker. The report for today is still in progress. We're actually one of the highest in Canada in vaccines per 100,000.

We could also talk about mortality, an awful statistic that no one should talk about—but if we want to start cherry-picking statistics: For deaths per 100,000, Ontario is below Quebec, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Texas, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Ohio, New Jersey and California. I could go on, but I don't want to focus on that.

1720

I want to focus on the work the Minister of Transportation has done to protect mothers, fathers, grandparents and children in ridings all across this province against stunt drivers and dangerous drivers—because when you're in the pandemic or whether you're on your way out of it, protecting Ontarians on the street matters.

Does this member support stiffer penalties for dangerous drivers, for stunt drivers? Yes or no?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: The member started his comments talking about how great the situation is in Ontario right now and how we're saying that somehow we're not in a crisis.

Well, in Brampton, we have a positivity rate of over 22%. In Brampton, countless people are getting sick and they are dying every day from the sickness.

I challenge the member to go to Brampton and say, "Things are going okay." They will say to you, "They are not going okay. We are in a crisis—not just in Brampton, but throughout this entire province."

That is what the government should be having in their minds when they put forth legislation. They should be thinking, "We are in a crisis, and we need to act every single moment to address this crisis." Frankly, the government is not doing that. The government is turning their backs on Ontarians. They're not giving us the access to vaccines we need.

Brampton, despite being such a devastating hot spot, only has one COVID-19 pop-up, which is not even located in our city and doesn't even service our entire city. That is shameful.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Waterloo has a question.

Ms. Catherine Fife: The member from Brampton East addressed some of the vulnerabilities with regard to this piece of legislation. The Premier, thus far, has ignored repeated demands from Ontario's own science advisory table, the local public health units, mayors, health experts, labour groups and opposition parties to create a program that would make it easier for workers to stay home if they're ill.

We just learned today that there will be no true paid sick day program coming from this government, no "best in North America" program coming forward from this government.

My question to the member from Brampton East: If the Premier is not listening to all of these informed, intelligent people and sources, who is the Premier listening to in the province of Ontario?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I really want to thank the member for that question. This is the question we've been asking since day one.

If the Ontario science table is saying it's so clear that we need paid sick days, we need to ensure that vaccines are going to our hot spots—50% of our vaccines need to be going to our hot spots—when all the evidence is saying that these are the policies that we need to bring forward to fight COVID-19, and the Conservative government and the Premier are not listening, who are they listening to?

I'll say it: They're not listening to the science. They're not listening to those who are providing suggestions to our province based on the evidence and the data before us, and the result is that people are losing their lives and getting sick at a rate which is unfathomable.

In February, I believe, the health experts said we were walking into a third wave. At that moment, the Conservative government had an opportunity to do the right thing and bring in paid sick days and supports for individuals to stop the third wave, but they didn't, and this is the moment we see ourselves in because of that.

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

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I would like to thank the Minister of Transportation, the Associate Minister of Transportation and, of course, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation for their remarks—and all the remarks of the people opposite that we've heard today on this legislation.

I'm proud to be here today to support the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, 2021. We all know that we are in a devastating pandemic right now, but that doesn't mean we don't take strong action to protect young drivers and vulnerable road users by introducing new measures to target street racing, stunt driving, and aggressive and unsafe driving. This act contains a series of proposed measures that will, if passed, help keep Ontario roads amongst the safest in North America by targeting those who engage in unsafe, high-risk driving.

Driving is a privilege, not a right, and those who threaten the safety of others should not be on our roads or highways.

The issue of stunt driving and other dangerous offences is one that I know well. As someone from the insurance industry, I understand the devastating motor vehicle injuries or deaths caused by these illegal and dangerous behaviours. It's not just through the news, but also through the industry channel, where we hear about many accidents, convictions etc. that really change whole families. I also know that this type of driving and behaviour makes our roadways more dangerous and leads to an increase in insurance premiums.

Members of this House may remember that in February, I tabled my second piece of private member's business. My motion 138 read, "I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should take action to keep our roads and communities safe by increasing penalties for stunt driving and other dangerous offences under the Highway Traffic Act." After a vigorous but constructive debate, the motion was passed unanimously. To those members on all sides of this House who were present, I'd like to thank you for your support.

I'm pleased to see that the legislation before us today, brought forward by the honourable minister, addresses the concerns that I raised and more.

I recounted several instances of this dangerous behaviour in my community. For example, in 2018, when I moved into my constituency office in Streetsville, a driver, just up the street from me, on Britannia Road, was caught at 142 kilometres per hour in a 50-kilometre zone—nearly three times the speed limit. Last August, a stunt-driving charge was laid against a driver travelling 119 kilometres per hour in a 60-kilometre zone, nearly twice the limit, also on Britannia Road. This was not the driver's first stunt driving charge, nor was it his second; it was his third in just five months.

I said: "The current penalties for stunt driving, at least at the roadside, are not a strong enough deterrent..."

"While the courts should—and must—have to convict individuals before the full penalties allowed under statute, such as fines or imprisonment, can be applied, administrative or roadside penalties immediately reduce the risks these drivers pose on our highways and further deter individuals from committing the offence.

"The government should consult with stakeholders and others across the province to determine what an appropriate roadside penalty, both in terms of licence suspensions and vehicle impoundments, should look like. Additionally, escalating penalties, increasing each time the offence is committed, should be taken into consideration to prevent repeat offences from occurring."

Well, Speaker, this is exactly what is being proposed. Currently, the roadside penalties for any occurrence of street racing or stunt driving is a seven-day driver's licence suspension and a seven-day vehicle impoundment. We are proposing to increase this to a 30-day driver's licence suspension and a 14-day vehicle impoundment.

We're also significantly increasing the post-conviction penalties, especially for repeat offenders, because as we've seen, some people are simply not getting the message. Currently, the post-conviction penalties for a

first offence of stunting or street racing include a fine between \$2,000 to \$10,000, a jail term of up to six months, six demerit points and a post-conviction suspension of up to two years. To a first offence, we are proposing to add a mandatory driver education course to educate drivers on the risks and consequences of aggressive driving behaviour.

The current post-conviction penalties for a second offence are similar to the first offence, except the post-conviction suspension can be up to 10 years, no matter how many times the offence has occurred. This will change. In addition to adding the mandatory driver education course to educate drivers on the risks and consequences of aggressive driving behaviour, we will be strengthening the penalty of licence suspension. We are proposing that, for a second offence, a driver's licence be suspended for a minimum of three years to a maximum of 10 years. For a third offence, a lifetime suspension can be imposed, which may be reduced only if certain conditions are met—and for a fourth offence, a lifetime suspension.

The act would also create a lower speed threshold for stunt driving, of 40 kilometres per hour over the limit on roads where the speed limit is under 80 kilometres per hour, and would introduce a default speed limit of 80 kilometres per hour on a highway not located within a local municipality and built-up area.

1730

Speaker, these actions make Ontario's position clear: We will not tolerate this type of dangerous behaviour on our roadways. Drivers not following the law place our communities and other motorists at risk, and they will face stiff penalties. These actions will benefit our whole province, but they will be especially welcome in Peel region, where we have so many 400-series highways and large arterial roads.

I would like to share with you a quote from my local mayor, Bonnie Crombie: "Stunt driving has become a major issue of concern in Mississauga and across all of Peel Region. I strongly believe that this new legislation sends a strong signal that dangerous driving simply won't be tolerated. This is a significant step forward in making our highways safer for all Ontarians."

Thank you for your support, Madam Mayor.

Another area that this will make significant changes to is the tow truck industry. Our province's tow truck owners and operators play a crucial role in supporting our motorists. However, we are all aware of the instances of crime and violence in both the towing and vehicle storage sectors. We cannot stand by and let this continue, and we have not stood by and let this continue.

In June 2020, the Solicitor General and Minister of Transportation announced the establishment of a towing industry task force mandated with reviewing a number of topics related to the towing industry. This included provincial oversight of safety, consumer protection, and improved industry standards, training and background checks.

In December, the government launched a survey to gather feedback from the public on their experiences within the towing industry.

Last month, we announced the establishment of a Joint Forces Operations team led by the OPP and municipal police services to investigate criminal activity within the industry.

We also launched a tow zone pilot. This pilot helps to reduce the time it takes to clear major incidents on our highways and ensures the tow company that responds has the right training, experience and equipment to clear the incident safely and quickly. The pilot also helps ensure reasonable tow rates for drivers by providing standard pricing and invoicing.

Today, we are building on this work.

The current patchwork of requirements found across various other acts has created regulatory gaps that bad actors have exploited, made requirements confusing for legitimate operators and regulators, left many Ontario drivers and commercial vehicle drivers without meaningful recourse when they have been treated unfairly, and resulted in safety concerns for road users and tow operators. Extensive consultations with over 70 stakeholders in the towing, consumer, automobile insurance, municipal and law enforcement sectors have resulted in a strong recommendation from all stakeholder groups that a new provincial oversight regime is required for the towing industry.

Through this legislation, we are proposing the Towing and Storage Safety and Enforcement Act, or TSSEA. The TSSEA will, if passed, benefit Ontarians and legitimate tow and vehicle storage operators by increasing provincial oversight and transparency and providing support for legitimate towing operators, thereby mitigating behaviours such as fraudulent billing practices, collision chasing and high-pressure sales tactics. The TSSEA will:

- promote road user and tow operator safety, with the objective of helping to reduce deaths and injuries on Ontario's roads;

- improve customer protections to help ensure drivers are treated fairly after they experience a collision or a breakdown;

- create a level playing field with clear requirements that allow legitimate operators to prosper;

- enhance intelligence-gathering and enforcement by taking action against unethical practices; and

- reduce crime and fraud throughout the towing cycle.

The act will establish a certification system that will require tow operators, tow truck drivers and vehicle storage operators to have a provincial certificate to operate. Rather than the patchwork system in place now that varies by municipality, this will improve consistency and, ultimately, standards across the industry. The act will also outright outline vehicle and equipment requirements for tow trucks.

The act also acts on feedback received from the consultation process to appoint a director of towing and vehicle storage standards to oversee the certification process and appoint towing inspectors to enforce the act and investigate complaints.

Legitimate tow and storage operators will benefit from the creation of a level playing field with clear require-

ments, consistency of standards across municipal boundaries, and a reduction in intimidation and other unfair practices currently being employed by bad actors in the sector.

The act may also reduce administrative and financial burdens—for example, multiple municipal licence registrations—for tow and storage operators and tow truck drivers.

Ontario's drivers will benefit from stronger, clearer and more consistent requirements for towing operators across the province. Thanks to stronger oversight, Ontarians would be less likely to encounter a towing operator or storage provider who attempts to treat them unfairly, provides them with inadequate service, or attempts to overcharge them for services.

The proposed legislation may also help reduce insurance fraud. The high cost of auto insurance is something that has been an issue in this province for years and certainly is something I've heard about often from my community. Insurance fraud significantly affects premiums for all motorists. By combatting insurance fraud, we'll reduce costs to providers—savings which in turn can be passed back to Ontarians.

If a customer is treated unfairly by a towing operator, tow truck driver or storage provider who breaks the rules, they would have recourse with a government oversight office to investigate their concerns and help enforce the law. This is an issue people have come to my office with countless times, and I'm glad that this action is being taken.

The work of our road and highway personnel is critical, and this legislation introduces further measures to keep them safe from the risks they face on the job each and every day.

The proposed legislation will, if passed, authorize Ministry of Transportation enforcement officers to close a road, drive along closed roads, and direct traffic as part of their duties when responding to emergencies or assisting in collision investigations. This change aligns with our government's goal to align ourselves with other jurisdictions. The amendment aligns with authorities of transportation enforcement agencies across Canada, in addition to the authorities of municipal and provincial enforcement partners in Ontario. This was temporarily permitted during the pandemic by emergency order and is supported by our policing partners. The legislation now will make this permanent.

It will also permit the use of automated flagger assistance devices operated by a traffic control person as an additional traffic control tool in construction zones, to reduce the need for construction workers to physically stop traffic themselves.

We're also taking steps to protect our vulnerable road users, including cyclists and those disembarking streetcars.

We've heard many members on both sides of the aisle talk passionately about the issues of dooring: a stationary vehicle opening their car door, resulting in a collision with a cyclist.

In the current system in the province, the data we collect is not able to capture collisions involving car doors hitting bicycles or e-scooters, so the Highway Traffic Act is being amended to clarify that this type of collision is in fact a collision, and better enable the tracking and retrieval of this data. Better and more accurate data will lead to more effective road safety policies and programs being developed and implemented. Cyclists involved in a dooring collision would be able to receive a police report at the scene, just as they would have if they were involved in a motor vehicle collision.

Streetcar users face unique challenges when embarking and disembarking these vehicles in that they have to cross a lane of traffic between the vehicle and the sidewalk. Despite the signs and flashing lights, some drivers are not getting the message that they must stop when streetcar doors open. We must do what we can to protect riders' safety, which is why the act will introduce an automated camera enforcement framework to allow photo evidence of vehicles that illegally pass streetcars on the left or streetcars with doors open to pick up or drop off passengers. This automated camera enforcement will be similar to red-light cameras, automated speed enforcement cameras, or stop-arm cameras on school buses. Municipalities will be able to opt into this program—just as they currently do with red-light cameras and ASEs. Recognizing the need to protect people's privacy, municipalities that opt into the program will be required to work with Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner and ensure that the rigorous standards under our privacy laws are met and adhered to. Like other cameras—the offence would be owner-based, based on the vehicle's licence plate, rather than driver-based, if the evidence of the charge was obtained through the use of these cameras.

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Today's legislation will improve truck safety and industry standards, too. Specifically, it will introduce additional tools to address commercial vehicle drivers who violate hours-of-service rules, clarify dimensional limits for trailers, and permit technical standards to be incorporated in the Highway Traffic Act by reference to ensure that the most updated version of standards will be automatically incorporated into the Highway Traffic Act and its regulations. Currently, each new version of a standard would have to be applied through an amendment to the act or through a regulation. This change will ensure that our laws and regulations are always up to date, with the newest standards applied.

Currently, sections 190 and 191 of the Highway Traffic Act govern hours of service for commercial drivers. Amendments are being made to add new provisions to sections 190 and 191 to create an out-of-service declaration, to be issued by police and transportation enforcement officers to commercial drivers who violate the hours-of-service requirements. Our truck drivers fulfill critical roles in supporting our province's supply chain, but they must abide by the rules and regulations in place. Hours-of-service requirements are in place for everyone's safety, including the drivers, and violations cannot be tolerated.

I'm proud to see that the government recognizes road safety as an issue, and I commend the minister and associate minister for bringing this legislation forward.

I said, during my private member's motion debate, that while it is true that Ontario has some of the toughest penalties in North America when it comes to street racing and stunt driving, the dangerous trend we have seen means that we have more work to do. Today's legislation makes these penalties even stronger.

The other measures regarding the tow truck industry, dooring, streetcars, hours of service and safety of road and highway personnel make our roads and highways safer for everyone.

These changes—specifically, the stunt driving and street racing penalties—will go a long way in deterring these types of behaviour, and those who still choose to disregard the law and endanger others will face stiff consequences.

I'm sure the opposition parties will have comments on this bill, some of which we've heard already. But I do hope that they support this bill, because it really does address many issues that are long overdue and it will make our roads and highways safer for everyone. Most of all, it will save lives.

I listened intently to the member opposite talking about moose and other areas, and I want to thank him for taking a very difficult topic and a very difficult time and lightening us up during this time in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I'd like to thank the member for Mississauga–Streetsville for her presentation. I thank all members for being on their best behaviour during her presentation to us.

It's time for questions and comments.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to mention, as someone who brought forward vulnerable road user legislation in 2018, that we are supportive, in principle, of the direction that this legislation is going in.

The member from Mississauga–Streetsville talked very passionately about the risks associated with stunt driving and speed.

But what we're still struggling with on this side of the aisle is, why has the government failed to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19? It's not something that you can't necessarily compare. Your government, to date, has treated COVID-19 as if it was a political crisis instead of a public health crisis.

So while we share your views on the safety of road users—why such a profound disconnect between the response to COVID-19 and this piece of legislation?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to thank the member from Waterloo for the question.

No doubt, we all recognize on all sides of the House that we are going through a very dire pandemic right now globally. We've seen the situation in many, many countries right now, and it is very difficult to see.

However, the fact that we are going through a pandemic does not stop the fact that right now people are on our roads.

The member from Brampton East mentioned earlier that his drive from Brampton is a fraction of the time it was, as is mine. What used to be an hour and 15 minutes—it takes me barely 50 minutes to get here now.

What I am seeing, which is very, very difficult, is speeding at high rates. We've seen many times on the news doughnuts being performed on roads, and we've seen lots of stunt driving. It has devastating effects.

So while, yes, we are going through a very difficult pandemic now, that doesn't mean our roads are safer. We are seeing very, very bad speeding and other areas—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. The next question.

Mr. Billy Pang: I appreciate that the member from the opposition kept mentioning vaccination during his debate on the MOMS Act.

For the record, vaccines distributed to Ontario are 5.6 million, and we have administered 4.8 million already, with an average vaccination speed of 110,000 doses per day. This is a stunning speed of vaccination. This stunning speed is welcomed by all Ontarians and, I assume, by the opposition, but stunt driving is not. Stunt driving shouldn't be welcome.

Can the member detail to the House why the MOMS Act demonstrates that the government and the Legislative Assembly see eye to eye on the dangers posed by high-risk driving?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to thank the member for clarifying some of the—do you know what? Vaccination is one of our ways out of this pandemic; it's only one of many.

It's absolutely critical that we do get vaccinations in as many people's arms as soon as we possibly can, to try to return to some kind of normalcy.

However, as I mentioned earlier, with less vehicles on the road, we are seeing much more speeding. Lives are not only at risk; people are dying of crashes from high speeds. We've seen how some people, many of them very young, are committing doughnuts and stunt driving, with large crowds around them. They're turning their wheels and almost hitting people. I saw one that actually hit somebody. They think this is great, and they think this is fun. The worst part about it is that the name "stunt driving" is something they almost strive to achieve.

That's why the Associate Minister of Transportation will be doing many consultations—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. The next question.

Mr. Jamie West: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for her debate.

A lot of the debate has talked about speeding, which I think is very important. However, using fees and fines as deterrents—I'm going on what the Minister of Transportation said this morning, which is that the teenage brain doesn't see that as a deterrent. They see it as exciting.

And maybe afterwards, but as a deterrent ahead of time—I think if you're going to focus on speeding and risk factors like that, you have to focus on speeding in the snow and protecting people during the snow.

I just want to know, will your government commit to improving snowplow removal in northern Ontario to really reduce the risk of injury and death in northern Ontario?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the member from Sudbury for the question.

I've had the pleasure of visiting the north. I haven't driven up that way, but I have visited Timmins and Cochrane and Temiskaming in the wintertime, and I have seen how dangerous the roads can be.

This morning, the minister mentioned some pilot projects that they're doing about highway maintenance and making sure that the roads are clean—and I think we've heard discussions about the contracting, the procurement of those who do clean those roads up there. I think it's significant, and it's important that we here on the government side hear about what's happening up north so that we can put the right policies in place and make sure the procurement system does work well for those people in the north.

1750

It's extremely important that roads are safe for all Ontarians. Our winters, as we've seen, are very difficult sometimes, even here in the GTA. Even if we don't have our snow tires here, they can have dire consequences.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question?

Mr. Lorne Coe: The Minister of Transportation, in an earlier presentation, spoke about the breadth and scope of the consultation that had taken place to develop the legislation.

Would the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, who made an excellent presentation just a short time ago, highlight some of the level of consultation, particularly with the travel industry, and with the Insurance Bureau of Canada?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the member from Whitby.

Prior to putting this legislation—and even when I did my own private member's motion—much consultation took place. Over 70 stakeholders were consulted, whether they were in the towing industry, consumers, of course, automobile insurance—and when I talk about automobile insurance, I'm talking about the Insurance Bureau of Canada, the insurance brokers' association, and also consumers' associations and municipal and law enforcement sectors. I've spoken to police associations, the OPP—many, many stakeholders participated in putting this legislation together.

I think it's critical that we do speak to all stakeholders. If this legislation is passed, I look forward to going to committee, to having more input from other members and other stakeholders, so that the final product will be something that will make roads safer for all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Next question?

Mr. John Vanthof: I listened intently to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, and I'd like to thank her. She also listened intently to me.

One of the issues I brought up was when there is an accident on Highway 11 and the Trans-Canada Highway

is closed. An hour ago, there was an accident on Highway 11. The Trans-Canada Highway is now closed—truck versus car. We don't know what the results are, and our thoughts go to the families. But this isn't a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence. I was talking about it an hour ago, and now we're here.

Would the member agree with us that this is something that has to be looked at for the people who live along Highway 11, the trucks that are on Highway 11, and the people of Canada who depend on Highway 11 as a major trade route?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the member.

I know many people who live on roads that have no other access except for that one small road—sometimes, it's just a small road into their neighbourhood. If there's an accident there, they can't get out and go to work, they can't get home to their families, and it can be absolutely devastating.

Always, whenever there's a collision on a highway or on an arterial road, lives can be taken.

Just this morning, in Burlington, on the QEW—you may have heard that a crane hit an overhead sign, and the sign fell, crushed a car, and the person passed away right away. That is what happens on our highways.

I think it's prudent for the government and all stakeholders to make sure we have the safest roads in the province. All input is welcome.

I understand that on Highway 11, when it backs up, the supply chain gets affected; many things are affected. We have to find better ways to make sure that there are alternatives for people to be able to get their goods and supplies, and that people can get home, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Seeing the time on the clock, there is no time to continue debate on this matter this afternoon.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): It is now time for private members' public business. Orders of the day?

The Acting Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Christopher Tyrell): Ballot item number 76, order M260, second reading of Bill 260, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to workplace violence and harassment policies in codes of conduct for councillors and members of local boards. Mr. Blais.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): There being no matter to debate on this, pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

YOUTH SERVICES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Hamilton Mountain had given notice of dissatisfaction with a question she put to the government

House leader earlier today. The member for Hamilton Mountain will have up to five minutes to state her case, and someone from the government side will respond for up to five minutes.

We turn now to the member from Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: Today, I raised with this government the impending closure of Syl Apps Youth Centre's treatment program for youth in the youth justice system.

Since 2009, the centre has provided treatment to youth with severe mental illness who are involved with the justice system. This is intensive mental health care in a secure setting. As I mentioned earlier today, these are young people at high risk of hurting themselves and others, and they need help. Over half of the youth in the Syl Apps Youth Centre have attempted suicide, or they have high rates of self-harm and aggression towards others. The majority of these youth are racialized, and over a third are crown wards. These are young people who are marginalized already, who don't have access to mental health supports in the community. These youth end up in the system due to chronically underfunded and under-treated mental illness.

The government has said that closing this program is part of the closure of underutilized facilities. The youth justice program at Syl Apps has been operating at full capacity for years—and often had a wait-list to be able to get a bed there. Even from a money-saving perspective, the cost of a bed at Syl Apps is much lower than the cost of a crisis bed in a hospital.

Stakeholders in the youth justice and mental health sector were shocked to hear this centre was closing, and they have asked me to speak out against it. That's why I brought the question here this morning. That's why I was completely shocked to hear that most of the members on the other side had no idea what I was talking about, and they simply used their standard messaging on youth corrections, without a clue that this was so important to young people with mental health issues.

Closing the youth justice program will have a real impact on these youth.

Here is what Children's Mental Health Ontario had to say about the closure:

"This unilateral action has cut access to the only available and evidence-based complex and intensive mental health program to some of the province's hardest-to-reach youth who are in desperate need of the services. There is nowhere else for these adolescent boys and girls, who are disproportionately Black or Indigenous, to receive the proven clinical treatment required to meet their needs."

"Without SAYC, youth with complex mental health issues in the Ontario youth justice system will not have equitable access to the mental health services that other youth in the community do."

Here is a quote from a letter sent to this government from the CEO of SickKids, Ron Cohn, and the CEO of Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Alex Munter:

"The decision to eliminate on-site mental health services in the youth justice system for seriously ill young

people at Syl Apps Youth Centre (SAYC) will result in poorer outcomes for this population already at risk of mental health crisis admissions to hospitals, placing increased pressure on stretched pediatric acute care health services.

"Accordingly, we are writing to request that admissions to SAYC be immediately reopened and these programs be transferred to the administration of the Ministry of Health."

Speaker, these stakeholders want the government to stop saving money on the backs of vulnerable youth. There is nowhere else for these young people to go, who need intensive supports in a secure setting. Without enough supports, this government is basically abandoning these young people to further mental health issues and waiting for them to get caught up in the adult corrections system—locking them up as adults, instead of providing help earlier in their lives so that they can live a productive and healthy life.

1800

The mental health community is demanding that this centre remain open, and they want to see it transferred from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to the Ministry of Health, where it belongs. The government must listen to these experts and support these youth. They're counting on you. This is their only hope. They need you to do the right thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The parliamentary assistant from Ottawa West-Nepean will have up to five minutes to reply.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you to the member for Hamilton Mountain for her remarks this evening.

Our government's priority is the safety and well-being of youth in conflict with the law, as we focus on developing a comprehensive and sustainable youth justice system.

Over the past decade, a focus on prevention and community-based programming has contributed to an 81% reduction of admissions to custody and detention in Ontario. This means there are approximately 8,500 fewer youth admitted to custody each year now than there were in 2004-05. This reduction shows the success of the efforts of multiple governments to keep families together and return youth to the right track. That should be good news for all members in this chamber.

Speaker, as we move forward, we remain committed to ensuring that youth in custody today have access to the supports they need to prepare for when they leave custody and reintegrate into their communities.

With respect to our modernization, I can tell you that a guiding principle was ensuring adequate capacity would remain in all regions of the province. We have also been committed to addressing any impacts on youth in custody, and that's why every step was carefully planned with the best interests of youth in mind. Youth continue to receive the supports they need, including mental health services, culturally relevant programming, and educational programs.

With respect to the Syl Apps Youth Centre, I can tell you that no youth have resided in the youth justice secure custody and detention program since October 2020. Our focus is on ensuring services are available across the system so youth can be closer to their family and community where they will reintegrate.

For instance, youth residing in youth justice facilities across the province have access to mental health and addictions supports that are based on their individual needs, including access to psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, mental health nurses and social workers.

Above and beyond the existing supports, the ministry provides further funding to support mental health and specialized programming for youth with complex needs. Just last year alone, the ministry funded over \$2.5 million in additional mental health and specialized services, including assessments, counselling and clinical treatment to meet the needs of justice-engaged youth with complex mental health needs.

Local services for youth are also informed through regular consultation with mental health specialists from the Hospital for Sick Children through their tele-mental health program.

Further, we are making significant investments in other mental health supports and services for justice-involved youth, which include:

- the Youth Mental Health Court Worker program;
- medical or psychological assessment reports under section 34 of the Youth Criminal Justice Act;
- intensive support and supervision programs,
- community support teams; and

—ongoing training and education for front-line staff, including specialized clinical training for clinicians operating in facilities.

In February of this year, our government announced an investment of up to \$10.5 million to expand the mental health Secure Treatment Program for the province's most vulnerable children and youth at Syl Apps and at another program in Ottawa.

We are also providing a range of other culturally relevant supports for youth through over 400 community-based programs and services, which include more than 40 programs for First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth in or at risk of conflict with the law.

Ontario's youth justice facilities will also continue to support connections to communities and families. In response to COVID-19 public health measures, the ministry has invested in video-calling capabilities through the Connected to Communities program, to support youth in staying connected with family, guardians and other authorized individuals like elders and positive community mentors. Planning is under way to support in-person visits as they resume following the outbreak.

Our government remains committed to addressing the needs of high-risk youth with complex mental health needs and providing for the safety, well-being and support for all youth in conflict with the law.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the earlier motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1805.

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Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteure générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (NBP)	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	
McDonnell, 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, Rod (PC)	Ajax	
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	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire 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	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna Skelly
Teresa J. Armstrong, Toby Barrett
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto
Randy Hillier, Jane McKenna
Judith Monteith-Farrell, Michael Parsa
Randy Pettapiece, Donna Skelly
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Amarjot Sandhu
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Catherine Fife, Mitzie Hunter
Logan Kanapathi, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Jeremy Roberts
Amarjot Sandhu, Dave Smith
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Goldie Ghamari
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner
Jill Andrew, Robert Bailey
Guy Bourgouin, Stephen Crawford
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
Mike Harris, Sheref Sabawy
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Gilles Bisson
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Aris Babikian, Gilles Bisson
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe
Wayne Gates, Robin Martin
Norman Miller, Rick Nicholls
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard
Marit Stiles
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lucille Collard
Will Bouma, Lucille Collard
Parm Gill, Daryl Kramp
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison
Lindsey Park, Gurratan Singh
Nina Tangri, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Rima Berns-McGown, Michael Coteau
Faisal Hassan, Logan Kanapathi
Michael Mantha, Jim McDonell
Christina Maria Mitas, Sam Oosterhoff
Kaleed Rasheed, Donna Skelly
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Taras Natyshak
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Jessica Bell, Stephen Blais
Stephen Crawford, Rudy Cuzzetto
France Gélinas, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Taras Natyshak
Michael Parsa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Logan Kanapathi
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser
Will Bouma, John Fraser
Logan Kanapathi, Vincent Ke
Laura Mae Lindo, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Jeremy Roberts
Dave Smith, Daisy Wai
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Deepak Anand
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Bhutila Karpoche
Deepak Anand, Aris Babikian
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Mike Harris, Christine Hogarth
Belinda C. Karahalios, Bhutila Karpoche
Natalia Kusendova
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight /
Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations
d'urgence**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Lindsey Park
Tom Rakocevic, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell