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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

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**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

F-70

**Standing Committee on
Finance and Economic Affairs**

An Act to enact
the Building Opportunities
in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Tuesday 25 May 2021

**Comité permanent
des finances
et des affaires économiques**

Loi édictant la Loi de 2021
ouvrant des perspectives
dans les métiers spécialisés

1^{re} session
42^e législature

Mardi 25 mai 2021

Chair: Amarjot Sandhu
Clerk: Julia Douglas

Président : Amarjot Sandhu
Greffière : Julia Douglas

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

Tuesday 25 May 2021

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES
ET DES AFFAIRES ÉCONOMIQUES**

Mardi 25 mai 2021

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 1 and by video conference.

BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES
IN THE SKILLED TRADES ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES
DANS LES MÉTIERS SPÉCIALISÉS

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 288, An Act to enact the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021 / Projet de loi 288, Loi édictant la Loi de 2021 ouvrant des perspectives dans les métiers spécialisés.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Good morning, everyone. We're continuing our public hearings on Bill 288, An Act to enact the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021. We have none of the members present in the committee room. The following members are participating remotely: MPP Cho, MPP Fife, MPP Mamakwa, MPP Piccini, MPP Smith, MPP Gates and MPP McKenna.

MPP Roberts, can you please confirm your attendance?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Good morning, Chair. I am present and in Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): MPP Hunter, can you please confirm your attendance as well?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Good morning, Chair. It's MPP Hunter and I'm in Toronto.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): MPP Thanigasalam, please confirm your attendance.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Good morning, Chair. This is MPP Vijay Thanigasalam. I'm in Scarborough, Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you.

As a reminder, I ask that everyone speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak.

Are there any questions or business before we begin? As a reminder, our presenters today have been grouped in threes for each one-hour time slot. Each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation. After we have heard from all three presenters, the remaining 39 minutes of the time slot will be for questions from members of the committee. This time for questions will be divided into two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of four and a half minutes for the independent members.

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION
ASSOCIATIONS

ONTARIO SKILLED TRADES ALLIANCE

ONTARIO GENERAL CONTRACTORS
ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Now I will call upon our first presenter this morning, the Council of Ontario Construction Associations. Please state your name for the record, and you will have seven minutes for your presentation.

Mr. Ian Cunningham: Good morning, Chair, and thank you for this opportunity to appear before your committee today to provide our thinking with regard to Bill 288. My name is Ian Cunningham and I am the president of the Council of Ontario Construction Associations, otherwise known as COCA. With me today is Steve Dietrich, the immediate past chair of the board of directors of COCA, the chair of COCA's skilled trades task force and vice-president of AGF-Rebar.

Should I proceed?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Yes, please.

Mr. Ian Cunningham: For those of you who don't know COCA, we are a federation of 29 construction employer associations and we serve as the voice at Queen's Park for approximately 10,000 general and trade contractors who employ hundreds of thousands of workers, both unionized and non-union, performing work in the ICI sector all across Ontario and who hire and train thousands of apprentices. We applaud the government for moving forward with Bill 288 and the creation of a new skilled trades and apprenticeship system to succeed the current one that was overseen, jointly, by the Ontario College of Trades and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. As members of this committee will know, construction is at the very foundation of Ontario's society and economy. Our industry builds the places where people live, work and play, and the transportation networks that take them there.

You've heard from previous witnesses about the shortage of skilled trades that already exists in some construction trades and is forecast in many others in the months and years ahead. So if we're going to enjoy a strong recovery from the pandemic-induced recession and continued growth and prosperity thereafter, it's imperative that we have a strong and healthy construction industry. A

strong and healthy construction industry must be supported by a properly functioning skilled trades and apprenticeship system.

So what does that system look like? It ensures that the industry enjoys a positive and respected public image. It offers professional careers in the trades, with opportunities for growth for those who want it. It makes career exploration in the trades easy and accessible. It makes applying for apprenticeship as easy as applying for college or university. It offers modern, up-to-date apprenticeship curricula aligned with the way the trades operate today. It engages the industry—that is, apprentices, journeypersons, supervisors and management—in all of its important decision-making. It ensures that there are many construction employers who are eager and willing to hire apprentices.

It provides supports, financial and otherwise, for apprentices and for employer sponsors. It makes sure that apprenticeship completion rates are high. Journeypersons are proud of their chosen professions. They appreciate the benefits they receive from the licence fees they pay into the system and they remain in their chosen trades for years. It has a fair and just process for the prescription and de-prescription of trades and for the classification and re-classification of trades. It has a fair and efficient process to evaluate the credentials of those trained in the trade in another jurisdiction. As much as possible and wherever appropriate, the services provided by the system are accessible online. These are just some of the qualities and characteristics that must be incorporated into the new system proposed in Bill 288 as it is stood up, should this bill be passed into law.

Those on the committee who have been around for a while will know how the introduction of the Ontario College of Trades into the system tore the construction industry apart. The conflict over OCOT had a devastating effect on my organization, with half our members pro-OCOT and half against, even though COCA remained neutral in the debate.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Ian Cunningham: However, the heated debate subsided when certain reforms were made that (1) changed the board of governors from a 21-member highly representative board to a five-member competency-based board; (2) cut fees in half for journeypersons and eliminated them for apprentices; and (3) introduced a new compliance and enforcement policy that had a heavy emphasis on compliance assistance. This reformed system was referred to by many as OCOT 2.0, and it turned out to be one that most stakeholders, including COCA, could accept and live with.

The system proposed in Bill 288, while not exactly what COCA advanced in its submissions to the Michael Sherrard expert panel on the skilled trades, retains many of the elements that were working in OCOT 2.0 and had broad acceptance across our industry. It will operate under the joint stewardship of both the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and a new external agency called Skilled Trades Ontario, or STO for short,

with a clear separation between training and certification under the aegis of STO and compliance and enforcement under the purview of the ministry.

STO will be governed by a board of directors of not more than 11 people, including the chair. Board members will be selected based on governance competencies that are aligned with the legislative objectives of STO, and appointed by the minister. The minister will also appoint a registrar and CEO to lead the new crown agency's operations. As already stated, this is a compromise system design that all stakeholders can live with, even if it doesn't check all of their boxes.

However, we have two provisos: (1) that all construction trades in the current system must be transitioned into the new system exactly as they currently exist, with their full scopes of practice, and classified as compulsory or non-compulsory exactly as they are now; and (2) that there is absolutely no opportunity for portable skill sets to be allowed into the construction trades.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Ian Cunningham: While much heavy lifting has yet to be done to stand this new system up, we look forward to working collaboratively with the ministry and other stakeholders, including our friends at the skilled trades alliance and the OGCA, in this important work.

These are our submissions, Chair. Steve and I look forward to your questions.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you so much. We'll move to our next presenter now, the Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance. Please state your name for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Great. Thank you for having me here this morning. It's truly an honour. My name is Stephen Hamilton. I'm the chair of the Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance, or OSTA. I'm also the Ontario director of public affairs for the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada. Joining me today is OSTA vice-chair Patrick McManus. Patrick has been involved in these issues for nearly a decade, and he is also the executive director of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association.

The Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance represents 23 organizations and nearly 8,000 employers, unionized and non-unionized, in the construction, service and motive power sectors. They employ over 100,000 skilled tradespeople across Ontario. The OSTA was founded in 2011 with the goal of bringing issues faced by Ontario's skilled trades employers to the forefront of government decision-making.

Simply, OSTA supports Bill 288, Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act. The act makes important changes. It modernizes the governance of trades to put the core focus where it should be: on the promotion of the trades. Employers across Ontario understand how difficult it is to find qualified tradespeople and realize the problem will only get worse in the coming years with the wave of retirements across the sector.

While this legislation does not fix everything in the trades or settle long-standing debates about certification, training and enforcement, it represents an important and

necessary step towards improving apprenticeship outcomes and closing the skilled trades gap through the creation of a new agency called Skilled Trades Ontario.

0910

Before discussing aspects of the new agency, it is important to highlight the significant flaws in OCOT and the reasons why it needed to be eliminated rather than tweaked.

Established in 2009, the Ontario College of Trades was ambitious. The Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act set out 15 separate objectives the college would be responsible for, including establishing scopes of practice, regulating and promoting the trades, educating members, and the establishment of a powerful enforcement division. It had such broad jurisdiction that its mandate collapsed under its own weight. It prioritized draconian enforcement measures over education and maintained the status quo on apprenticeship ratios despite ample evidence that the ratios were limiting entry into the trades. In short, it was not serving the needs of industry and instead spent its time on controversial jurisdictional disputes between unions and between union and non-union workers. OCOT's backward-looking approach meant that Ontario's apprenticeship completion rates declined during its tenure. This resulted in the lowest apprenticeship completion rates in the country. Employers that wanted to hire new apprentices were barred from doing so.

On enforcement, OCOT duplicated the maze of other existing regulatory agencies, and when it didn't duplicate, it enforced dubious scopes-of-practice claims for commonplace work practices unrelated to safety.

On governance, OCOT had a Byzantine structure of a 21-member board of governors, four divisional boards and an 11-member appointments council. Under the divisional boards, there were trade boards, well over 50 of them, with six or eight members each. In total, there were hundreds of volunteer positions making up an unwieldy framework that cannot move the trades forward.

On promotion, it was either silent or antagonistic towards small employers—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: —who were rightly suspicious of the—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): You may continue.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Sorry; can you hear me?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Yes.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Okay.

So why not small changes to improve? It had been tried repeatedly. The previous government undertook two major reviews of OCOT: one chaired by Tony Dean, former head of the Ontario Public Service and now a senator; the second by Chris Bentley, former Minister of Labour—both distinguished individuals who produced a laundry list of recommendations. But OCOT was unwilling to take the steps necessary to become the agency that it claimed to be.

Bill 288 recognizes and removes some key flaws embedded in OCOT's structure. While there is still a lot of work to be done, what is in front of us today is a significant

improvement. Enforcement over safety in the trades is again the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, where it belongs. While there can be disagreements with approach from MOL, industry accepts that MOL has the expertise to enforce measures against employees and companies that aren't following the rules.

The current government has been working to accomplish what OCOT could not. It cut through years of excessive regulation and red tape. It listened to employers and new workers and very quickly put in place a 1-to-1 journey person-to-apprenticeship ratio. This is a big deal, especially for small business, as it has allowed them to open up training opportunities right away.

In addition, the Ontario Labour Relations Board will now play a key role in reviewing notices of contravention. The OLRB is best equipped to determine genuine enforcement actions, as many disputes, unfortunately, are related to jurisdictional disputes between unions rather than the health and safety of workers and the public.

The next step under the direction of the new agency is a trades promotion and recruitment body that will help to formally address the ever-evolving needs that are critical to the economy. Employers can now do what they've been asking for all along: hire and mentor skilled trades workers. Job seekers also have a better chance of turning a passion for the trades into a lifelong career.

The province is on the right track. With the right focus, the new agency can address Ontario's skilled trades gap, but that's only as long as OCOT's mistakes aren't repeated.

With that, I will conclude.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. Moving along to our next group of presenters: Ontario General Contractors Association. Please state your name for the record, and you will have seven minutes for your presentation.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: Good morning, everyone. My name is Giovanni Cautillo, and I'm the president of the Ontario General Contractors Association. Today I'm joined by my colleague David Frame. He is OGCA's director of government relations and proof positive that we need more skilled trades. He's in the middle of a concrete pour. The poor guy is stuck up at the cottage, and he can't find any skilled trades.

First off, thank you for the opportunity to present on Bill 288, which in its proposed form the OGCA supports wholeheartedly.

For those of you who don't know who the OGCA represents, our members account for approximately \$12 billion of construction each year in Ontario in the industrial, commercial and institutional sector, generally referred to as the ICI sector. We are focused on providing the infrastructure needed to support Ontario's growing communities. Our 200 members include small, medium and large firms, representing both union and open-shop contractors throughout Ontario.

Our goal today is to convey the basis of the OGCA's support for Bill 288 since it addresses two important challenges: firstly, that the Ontario construction industry has

an immediate need to address a growing, long-term lack of skilled workers; and secondly, the importance of the need for a separation of the customer support system and the regulatory enforcement responsibilities.

With respect to the growing lack of long-term skilled workers, I would like to emphasize that construction as a whole is on the precipice of a looming labour crisis. What is the basis of this statement? BuildForce Canada is a national organization that assesses the current labour pool and forecasts the needs of all construction trades. For over five years, they have consistently reported through national surveys and industry analysis that the entire construction industry, through retirements and growth, must recruit and train well over 100,000 persons. Unfortunately, based on our current trajectory, we will fall short of this target.

By way of example, in some of the northern regions, such as Sudbury, this is reaching a critical tipping point, where the average age of a journey person is 57 years old. Once the mass exodus from the skilled trades occurs and there's no one to have this critical skills knowledge imparted to or bestowed upon, that is actually the very crux of the problem and what creates the skills gap. For this reason, the OGCA supports Bill 288 as it takes steps beyond what has been done before to bring together the industry under a common intent: to build Ontario's highly skilled workforce and close that skills gap in a sustainable manner. A key element of this is how Skilled Trades Ontario will narrow its focus towards promotion and take a more universal approach. This promotional aspect for the skilled trades is critical.

For whatever reason, construction has been associated with a stigma that if you can't make it in school, then you have no choice but to go to construction. I'd like to dispel that. Let me communicate to you today that construction is filled with some of the smartest, most creative problem-solvers you can find. Additionally, it is a vocation that provides you with skills and craftsmanship and, in turn, with pride in what you are able to construct. Furthermore, it teaches you how to work as an individual as well as a team. As general contractors, we consider ourselves to be at the 10,000-foot level, as we can see the inner workings and relationships of all the trades.

This legislation will work since it brings parties who often have not wanted to work together to join forces under a common goal. What is provided is a clear framework to promote the trades. We can see the success of the consultation process as it hits all the important points: (1) it supports the removal of the stigma; (2) it provides a modern service delivery model that works for apprentices, skilled tradespersons and the industry as a whole; and (3) it's a one-stop-shop digital portal to make the path into the trades far more clear and easier to navigate.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: At this point, I'd like to pass on the conversation to David Frame, our director of government relations, to discuss the importance of the separation of the customer support system and the regulatory enforcement responsibilities.

David?

Mr. David Frame: Thank you, Giovanni.

I want to address something that Steve Hamilton brought up, and basically it is that OCOT struggled to balance conflicting priorities. Unfortunately, the focus on regulation over promotion is a contributor to the skilled trades crisis that Giovanni just talked about. Fortunately, this legislation does present a better approach. Let me give you an example.

The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development structure in developing health and safety services is an example of an approach that works by keeping vital functions separate. The prevention office, headed by a chief prevention officer, is responsible for delivery and training promotion. It has the ability to contract out much of the outreach to organizations like the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association and other safe-workplace associations. The operations division, on the other hand, is responsible for workplace health and safety inspections and enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the policy division is responsible for the development of regulations and policy under the same act.

0920

Three different divisions working at one goal with very unique responsibilities: Our experience is that these unique components of workplace health and safety work, in part, because the functions are kept separate. Each branch has a unique mandate and accountability. They are clear and they are understood.

This legislation takes a practical approach. The proposed new crown agency, Skilled Trades Ontario, will focus on training and certification.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. David Frame: It will provide a focus to the promotion of the skilled trades and develop a registration in the information portal. It takes the customer service responsibilities. The ministry, on the other hand, will have responsibility for regulation, compliance and enforcement. We support this division of responsibilities and believe it provides much greater opportunity for success. It's the opinion of OGCA that if passed, this approach provides the opportunity to address the skilled trades crisis that this legislation needs to address.

We'd like to personally give special thanks to Minister Monte McNaughton for his support in this issue and for the sector and his commitment towards ensuring all workers were kept safe during the COVID crisis. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you.

All right, so we'll start with the questions now, and we'll start the first round of questions with the opposition. MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you to all presenters this morning. I think you'll find on this committee that we are genuinely trying to get the skilled trades back on track. Some of us have very personal connections with the trades. My son is apprenticing as an electrician, and so I know how complicated it is.

Ian, you and I have talked over the years about the underground economy and about those who are in

unlicensed trades, doing the work of licensed trade work. Bill 288 does not name the construction trades in the compulsory trades or the non-compulsory trades, and there's a general feeling out there that this is by design, so if the government wants to address skill sets in the future, the door is still left open for that. How important do you think it is for us to get this right as we amend the legislation this upcoming Friday around what should be considered compulsory trades or non-compulsory trades?

Mr. Ian Cunningham: That issue is being addressed right now in the Mike Sherrard expert panel. They're receiving advice on exactly that issue, along with the issue of prescription and de-prescription.

There are 40 trades in the construction industry; 12 are compulsory. In my submissions in my earlier presentation, I noted that we're going to insist that all of those 12 compulsory trades be transitioned into the new system as compulsory trades. Having read the bill, I believe that that is the intent of the bill.

My fear is that in the years ahead—and there are probably lots of examples—there may be a strong demand for tradespeople who can install electric car charging stations. I fear that an electric charge station technician might be submitted as an application for a trade. This would be a transitory demand that logically lives in the electrician trade. It's that kind of thing. There is far more pride in being a carpenter than a door hanger. My fear is that some of these small elements that may have high demand in the short term or in a particular region might apply to become a trade.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Would any of the other panel members like to address this question? Patrick, please go ahead.

Mr. Patrick McManus: Thanks. This is a really complicated issue. The trade enforcements long relied on this two-tiered process. Trade jurisdiction issues are reviewed by the labour relations board; they've always acted as the independent arbiter of jurisdictional issues in the industry. Then the second phase is that the Ministry of Labour officers take those decisions and use their discretion to evaluate risk of harm on job sites, to make enforcement determinations. While it's a complicated and often convoluted process and leads to difficult decisions, it is a process that allows the trades and the professionals who work in the trades to continually evolve as new technologies and new work practices are integrated in.

If we establish a scope of practice in a regulation and in an enforcement guideline, a trade is only going to be allowed to change and evolve and progress when the government agrees to open the regulation and to undertake reforms. It's going to create disorder in the industry where overlapping practices exist and it's going to allow for enforcement—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Patrick McManus: —of overlapping jurisdictions, which is going to create problems that have long plagued the College of Trades. That's why opening up this discussion, having the Sherrard review, pushing enforcement of jurisdiction back to the labour relations board and

giving discretion to your ministry enforcement teams are really where you're going to be able to hash out those problems as they arise on a job.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Okay. Chair, how much time?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Two minutes and 30 seconds.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I do want to leave something with you, because my colleague Wayne Gates will have the second set of questions. We have heard some legitimate concerns around Bill 288 still leaving the possibility of future skill-setting, breaking up the trades into skill sets and not recognizing trade qualifications and the apprenticeship system. I think that, as many of you have pointed out, the window to correct and to set skilled trades on a very strong pathway forward, not only for people like my son and Jane McKenna's son, but also because we need to get it right for our economic recovery—the skill set possibility is not a concern to Giovanni or Patrick? No?

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: Not at all. When it comes down to skill sets, again, you have to look at it—I agree with what Patrick touched upon when he said “risk of harm.” That's kind of the gauge that you have to look at.

Ian, respectfully, when you said you'd take pride in being a door hanger, you can still make a very good living from hanging doors. What I am saying is that if there's a risk-of-harm component, say you're a framer and there's a structural element of it, you should be certified to the point where you've got the ability in order to do that—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: —because there are inspections involved in there. You're not going to inspect a hung door.

Ms. Catherine Fife: That's the key part, right? The key part is the inspections—

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: Absolutely. That's what you should look at.

Ms. Catherine Fife: —because the safety factor has come up a fair amount around this piece, Giovanni.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: Oh, 100%. Again, we are also, through the review that Mike Sherrard is doing—everything has to be gauged on the risk of harm. So if you've got electrical, plumbing, structural, you should look at what is the risk of harm. I don't think there's going to be a risk of harm if you hung a door, other than maybe the door will hit you. But anyway, what I'm saying is that there isn't the possibility of a fire or a flood or a major collapse. So you have to always view things in that and use that as the gauge.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, I think that the government is trying to streamline—which we support, of course, because it's such a complicated system at present—but I think that weighing the risk and the safety around compulsory and non-compulsory has to be very clear on a go-forward basis. If that—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. I apologize to cut you off. The time has come up.

We'll move to the independent members now for their first round. MPP Hunter.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank all of the presenters this morning. As we heard in our hearings last week, there is support for Bill 288 from this sector. Maybe we could start with the Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance. It is around the role of committees, which was not addressed in the legislative portion. Do you believe that that is something that we should be considering so that those who are closest to it, in terms of tradespeople, have a voice at the table? We could start with anyone from Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance. Who wants to go?

0930

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Sure. It's a very good question. Hopefully you can hear me now. I apologize for the bad audio.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It's okay.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: You're right, trade boards aren't codified directly into the legislation. They were codified under the college of trades and apprenticeship act. My position is that I think it's better that it's not codified. It gives it more flexibility to create a committee that reflects the nature of a trade. Under the college of trades and apprenticeship act, it worked under the assumption that it's a strict labour-versus-employer dichotomy throughout the trade boards. So you would have these very labour relations-type conversations with six employers, usually from the GTA, and six basically union reps, usually, representing employees. But there are a lot of folks missing from the table when you do that.

The primary one is colleges. Colleges do about 85% of all in-class apprenticeship training, and under the OCOT structure, they were effectively shut out. They were certainly shut out of the trade board structure. When a trade board is considering, you know, should there be changes to the curriculum, should there be changes to the number of hours that you need to do on-site training, I think it's critical that you have a diverse group there so that it's not the typical labour-versus-management labour relations conversation that occurred before. So I understand what you're saying. I agree. There needs to be representation, especially in the compulsory trades—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Two minutes.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: —but I'm in favour of more flexibility there, because once you codify it, you're stuck under a model that created, I think, a bit of—it didn't allow for new conversations or an evolution of the trades.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Okay. Thanks, Stephen.

David, you looked like you wanted to say something. Did you want to comment on this as well?

Mr. David Frame: No, I've got no more comment.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: All right.

Okay, go ahead, Ian.

Mr. Ian Cunningham: Thanks for the question. I'll just comment that I happened to be on the appointments council that worked to receive resumés and interviewed candidates, and there were hundreds of positions in this very cumbersome governance model, with a 21-member board of governors and four trade boards with I forget how many people.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Ian Cunningham: There were divisional boards and then numerous trade boards, and these had to be populated. As a former member of the appointments council, I would observe that you could never catch up. Somebody was always changing jobs and moving. There were vacancies. It was a whole lot of time and energy spent on a process that—often these committees didn't meet. So I would agree with Stephen. I mentioned in my presentation that the system has to proactively outreach to the industry and perhaps in that kind of outreach—and it was evidenced in what I called OCOT 2.0 where there were consultations. But the kind of flexibility that Stephen suggests, I think, is probably appropriate. But it will probably require some consultation, I'm sure.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Great. Giovanni, did you want to say something? You were nodding. I saw you there.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): I apologize. The time has come up for the first round. We'll come back to you in the second round.

Now we'll go to MPP Roberts from the government. MPP Roberts?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Good morning to all of our presenters. Thank you so much for taking the time to appear before us today after this beautiful long weekend we've just had. I appreciated all your comments and how all three of you reinforced each other on various points. That's always great to see. And I like the fact that we saw in each of your three presentations elements of the three parts of Minister McNaughton's strategy that he's laid out: the importance of breaking the stigma, simplifying the system and encouraging employee participation. All three of those together, I think, are going to be critical in this.

Under that bucket of simplifying the system, I think you each touched upon the importance of making it easier and more digitally accessible for young people and for anybody trying to access the trades. Of course, that's a big part of Minister McNaughton's push here, making sure that we can have everything on a one-stop shop online for exam booking, registration, digital logbooks or whatever it might be.

I'm wondering if each of you could take a bit of time to speak about the importance of this one-stop shop and making sure it's digitally accessible, and how that will help folks under your organizations' umbrella. Maybe, Ian, if we could start with you, and then we'll move through all three.

Mr. Ian Cunningham: Sure. Thanks, MPP Roberts. "One-stop shop," I think, is an interesting catchphrase. There are many, many, many organizations out there that are already promoting the careers in the skilled trades, and I would say none better than Skills Ontario, the organization that's headed by Ian Howcroft, who I think presented at your committee earlier. There are many organizations doing it.

But one kind of final funnel into, once the person has decided that they know they want to apply to be an apprentice, one window into all of the steps they have to undertake to get there; something that would make it easy

to find an employer-sponsor, just a simple, straightforward application process—I don't dismiss the notion that STO should also be engaged in career exploration activities. Also, the kinds of supports that should be made available to both apprentices and employer-sponsors: Information about those and supporting information should be available online to help apprentices manage their journey through their apprenticeship program, and helping employer-sponsors become better at the processes and the pedagogy of assisting apprentices.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Absolutely. Certainly you mentioned making sure that the information on what grant programs are even available for different applicants is important.

Stephen? Patrick? I'm not sure who wanted to jump in, but anything you'd like to build upon on the digital platform?

Mr. Patrick McManus: Yes, I would comment that Ian pointed out in his presentation that there are 40-some-odd trades and many, many more jobs in the construction industry, and the typical knowledge of construction is very limited in the general population and in job-seekers. If you asked somebody who was without detailed knowledge of the trades, they could name carpenters, electricians, plumbers, HVAC—the typical, very high-profile trades—but where the tremendous amount of growth is accruing in the trades is in the lesser-known ones. For instance, we represent infrastructure trades, and if you were to ask somebody on the street what a pit bottom or a loci operator or a drill rig operator does, they would have no idea.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Patrick McManus: What this does is it presents an opportunity to present regional labour market information, jobs that may actually keep people in the cities that they live and grew up in—they don't have to depart somewhere else. These are all great middle-class job opportunities to begin with, and it shows the pathways in. If you start on a road crew, maybe you can make a jump to a sewer crew and maybe you can make a jump to a bridge crew. It will demonstrate the transferability of some of the trades, especially in the voluntary sector.

It's really going to help promote those trades, where we really, really need people, but have had a difficult time breaking through the jewel trades that everybody is quite aware of. There are very great opportunities for careers in all sorts of construction trades and all sorts of trades across the skilled trades sector that people don't know about. This provides an opportunity to have all that information there, alongside the more well-known trades.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Yes, absolutely. I've had the chance—my riding has Algonquin College right in the centre of it, and of course they have their phenomenal ACCE construction unit that was opened a couple of years back. When I tour through, it's amazing; you see those skilled trades that everybody hears about, but then so much more happening as well that folks might not be aware of. I've often said that I wish I could take every high school class through that construction unit just to see all of

the possibilities, just as kind of a hands-on hub where so many of them are happening. But I appreciate that, Patrick. **0940**

Giovanni, anything you'd like to touch on, on the digital portal and making sure that there's that clear path from start to finish for folks?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: Absolutely. I think the digital portal allows you to take all of these classes through the digital portal in order to demonstrate to them what is out there. It's all about access to information, the accessibility. We all know that today's youth don't leave the house without a cellphone, and they have access digitally every time. If you ask them something, they don't memorize it; they google it.

Having access to that portal is going to be your avenue to educating the youth of today all about all of these trades that we're discussing. We can talk about—obviously there's compulsory, there's voluntary, but there are niche trades, there are regional trades that Patrick spoke of. There are a number of different things you can do, and the portal is limitless because you can just add more as you need it, and it does provide for a walk-through of a classroom if you need to digitally. They don't even have to leave—like us right now; we're not leaving the luxuries of our own homes and yet we're having a great conversation about skilled trades. It's all about the access to information from our point of view.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: For sure.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you so much. We'll go to the independent members now for their second round. MPP Hunter.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I want to talk about the recruitment aspect in terms of that skills shortage. I believe it was the—well, let's start with you, Giovanni, because we didn't get to you the last time. Let's talk about that and how we recruit and create opportunities in the trades that make it the first choice for young people.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: Start talking about trades. Make it a choice for them. Right now, throughout the academic realm, when you go through grade school and you go through high school, at no point in time are you presented with the option of going into construction. What you are presented with is college or university. It's not until the college or university level that you actually have exposure—through certain colleges, that is—to some construction courses. You've got to start way earlier.

Again, I'm old enough to tell you that I can hearken back to the days when we had shop class. In grade school, in grades 7 and 8, we would go to shop classes and we would learn woodworking and electrical and mechanical and all that. We also had home ec, and you would learn how to bake and cook. It's these skill sets that are introduced early on that allow students, children to open up to the idea or the possibilities of "I could get into that."

It's also the support structure they have at home. I grew up in a family where construction was how we had a roof over our heads, how we had food on the table. My dad was a stonemason from Italy and then he became a bricklayer

here. So we grew up in construction. Where kids would have exposure to camp in the summers, I had exposure to construction sites, so I got the gist of it from an early age. We don't have that same access point right now. So how are you going to do that? You've got to instill it in academia early on, and you've got to highlight it. There is a stigma, I'll be honest with you, when it comes down to it.

I talk to my children and they're grade-school age. I talk to them about, "Have you ever thought of the skilled trades? You can make a great career in it." When a labourer can come here from another country and has limited knowledge of English and yet can work at \$32 an hour plus benefits, that's a good career. This is the kind of thing that we have to discuss and we have to highlight. We have to welcome people into it, not make it so that it's relegated so that—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Two minutes.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: —if you can't make it in school, you've got to go to construction. That's the wrong situation to be in.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Totally. You remind me of, growing up, my brothers. My dad was a licensed mechanic and he had his own fleet of trucks. I'm not sure they enjoyed summers working with him.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: I didn't say I enjoyed it. I had exposure to it. There's a difference.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: But they definitely received that work hardening, which is so important and it has served them well in their lives.

I want to jump back to the Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance, because I believe you really touched on a really important role of the training aspect and the role of community colleges in that as well. I just want to move along that continuum of where we teach and learn the trades, because the average age right now is 28, and the goal is to lower that, to get people into this incredible career earlier on. I don't know if—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: —Stephen or Patrick, you want to talk just quickly about the important role that training has in this. Go ahead, Stephen.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: I agree. Training is absolutely critical, and exposure at a young age, as Giovanni mentioned, is really important as well. I would note that even under the previous government, there were quite a few good steps taken. I think of the Specialist High Skills Major program, which was introduced in high schools basically across the province now. That is a really good entry point for young people to understand the trades and to get hands-on learning. That is a really important step, and credit to the previous government certainly for doing that.

But you're right: Community colleges do, again, 85% of the training in the province. Union training centres do a hunk of the training as well, and—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. Sorry to cut you off. The time has come up for the independent members.

We'll move to the government side now. MPP McKenna.

Ms. Jane McKenna: First of all, I want to say it's great to see all of you: Ian, Stephen, Patrick, Giovanni. And David Frame, that backyard where you are, I could trade in a heartbeat and switch spots with you.

But anyway, I want to say a couple of things, because I was just going through the bill myself and I just want—because there was a comment earlier—to be clear that the bill provides transition from OCOT to STO for existing trades. So I just wanted to make sure—because I've just gone through that again.

But I want to say, we've had lots of conversations here, and I'm very grateful because everybody has mentioned the things that we had last week. I can say everybody that's here today—MPP Fife is the same way. We both have a vested interest and are passionate just because we both have sons who are in this profession. But I do agree with Giovanni when you talk about the stigma—that was a huge component, obviously, for Minister McNaughton—just because I, myself, as a mother of five kids—and I have four girls. All my girls went to university. I've said this a thousand times; I'm sure people are sick of it. But my son was a hard no. He didn't want to go, and he took me up to Georgian College.

It's not so much the money aspect of it that we've all talked about; it's more the fact that he had a passion. He has a smile on his face and he's driven, because he has decided to do something that he absolutely loves. And so we all have a role to play, I'll say. Everybody last week said the same thing, that government has a role to play, 100%, and people are glad that skilled trades are finally at the table, because they haven't been for so many years, with colleges and universities.

But it is important to make sure that all of these kids have an opportunity to find out what their passion is, because not everybody has the ability to find that out for themselves. My son is a chip off the old block, so he pushed his way into that situation. But when you look at it, and all of us have said this—I went home Friday with a smile from ear to ear because I was so grateful. Because it is very confusing, we needed a one-stop shop. I know Ian has just said it's kind of a bit of a one-stop—saying that term. But it's easy, because kids today, and younger, obviously—MPP Hunter has said that the average age is 30. We need to get that down, right?

I want to ask all three of you, and maybe I'll start with Ian. Ian, since skilled trades dropped off 40% in the previous government and then they have 17,000 fewer OCOT members, we needed to make a drastic change. Ian, when you've dealt with Minister McNaughton, I just wondered, all three of you, if you could just elaborate on your relationship going through this process with him. We'll start with you, Ian.

Mr. Ian Cunningham: Whenever Minister McNaughton speaks to COCA, he will say time and time again that his very first meeting with anybody in his role as an MPP was with me. He and I had breakfast at Sutton Place one morning very early in his term. I know him well, and he has a special place for the construction industry. He quickly made friends in the construction industry as an opposition MPP, and then he ran for leadership, and there was

support for him there. He has a lot of friends in the construction industry. He is among the most accessible ministers I have ever dealt with, and on this file, he has shown great leadership.

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Ms. Jane McKenna: Stephen?

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: I would echo those comments. If you look at the media release that was put out when Bill 288 was tabled, I'd never seen such a diverse group of folks as on that media release, from organized labour—and organized labour itself is quite diverse—to the employer community. The level of support is remarkable, and that is indicative of the minister's—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton:—style on this. He does listen to all stakeholders.

There are compromises in all legislation, and this is no different. Employers didn't get everything we wanted here.

But I think it's important that all groups have a new agency that we can all buy into because that creates more legitimacy and it allows for a more thoughtful conversation going forward.

But, yes, the level of consultation has been really unparalleled.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Patrick?

Mr. Patrick McManus: Both the minister and his staff have been fantastic at doing the outreach and making sure that everybody's voices are being heard on this, because it's such an impactful process that's going to change the trades for years to come. They have done an excellent job at the outreach on this.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Giovanni?

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: To put it simply, Minister McNaughton gets it. He grew up in a hardware store. He tells the story time and again. He grew up around construction, so he understands the idiosyncrasies, and he has that connection to construction. This is exactly the point that I want to be made. If you want to have someone familiar with construction, you have to introduce them early on in life—not at the university level or college level; at the grade school level—so that they're familiarized and there is no stigma to it. He grew up in that environment and, hence, he never had that stigma, so he gets it.

Rule number one: Get rid of the stigma.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: So I'm very happy and I applaud him for that.

Ms. Jane McKenna: David?

Mr. David Frame: This is a great opportunity. OCOT divided the trades. That's the challenge we were up against. To tell you the truth, I wasn't very optimistic going into this process. Like Stephen said, just look at employers and unions coming together to support this. What we have here is a real opportunity for everybody to pull together, to promote the trades, to grow our industries, to grow this province. I think he has done a masterful job in putting this legislation together, and it's a reflection of the work that the minister did.

Ms. Jane McKenna: I want to thank all of you. It has been a wonderful journey for me. I was thrilled to be able to continue on as parliamentary assistant to Minister McNaughton.

I can say this—I'll just say it for my son. He said, "Mum, it's about time you got into the 21st century, and it's about time"—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. Sorry to cut you off. That is all the time we have for the government.

We'll now go to the opposition for their second round. MPP Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good morning, everybody. I just want to start off by saying, if I ask the same question, how you work with Wayne Gates, would I get all those ringing endorsements by all you guys? Put your thumbs up. I don't need a speech about it. But that's good to see. At least I got thumbs up, so I'm good.

First of all, I want to thank you for being here.

I want to make a couple of statements, because I think it's important to do that, and then we'll get into a couple of questions.

I want to make sure that as we kind of get rid of the stigma here, let's tell people exactly what skilled trades workers are. They're very talented. There's a reason why they're called "skilled." Being in the education system—you still have to get your math and get all the stuff that's going to make you a complete skilled tradesperson. I really want us to make sure we're highlighting the skilled workers, but also saying how good they are. I think, looking at the job they've done right across the world and right across the province of Ontario, they are skilled, and there's a reason why they're called "skilled." I want to be clear so everybody understands that on this.

The other thing I'd like to ask—and all three of you can do it; I've got about three questions, so I don't want you guys to talk as long as I do, because you guys are used to that. But what amendments would you like to see into the bill?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Who is the question for?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Anybody can answer that.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): The question is directed to—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Any of them. What amendments would you like to see into the bill? Because we're doing clause-by-clause on Friday.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Who would like to respond?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Ian, you can start, and then Giovanni, and then whoever else.

Mr. Ian Cunningham: Maybe clearer criteria on what the labour relations board can consider when notices of contravention come forward.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Giovanni, go ahead.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: Again, I think we would defer back to something along the lines of risk of harm. You want to make sure that that's in some sort of element of the bill, to ensure that if you're going to gauge anything, it's against the risk of harm to the public.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay, anybody else? Then I'll go on. What—

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Just to—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Oh, go ahead.

Mr. Stephen Hamilton: Sorry. Very quickly: Yes, I agree with Giovanni. I think a lot of the legislation, as you're aware, is contingent on further regulations and policies afterwards, but I would say that the risk of harm is an important component for enforcement and that that should be emphasized.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I really appreciate your answer, because I'm maybe a little different. I believe that we should put it in legislation rather than leave it to regulations. It's a lot stronger if it's in legislation.

That will lead me into my next question: This government began their approach to modernizing the skilled trades by moving to a skill-set-based system. They later changed their approach and moved their reforms to the current legislation. Would you have preferred the skill-set model? And just so you know, this is what my concern is: There is still language in the current legislation that will allow them to do that. They may do that. I'd appreciate it if you guys answered that, please.

Mr. Ian Cunningham: We do not support portable skill sets. They de-professionalize the skilled trades. They create short-term jobs, not long-term careers. They are simply a response to a temporary spike in market demand for a narrow set of skills, often within a limited geographic area. They limit a worker's mobility and employability. They ignore our highly valued national Red Seal Program, which allows workers with Red Seal credentials to follow the demand for work and practise their trade across the country. They limit a worker's ability to work more hours and increase earnings. They complicate project scheduling. They contribute to high worker turnover. They diminish overall productivity. They increase costs. They run counter to training in other vocations with specialization as precedent by fundamental grounding in most aspects of the trade.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Giovanni, do you want to go?

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: Yes. I disagree wholeheartedly on that one. When it comes down to it, I think the skill sets form the basis of any trade, be it compulsory or voluntary. You've got to start somewhere, and that basis—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Giovanni Cautillo: Again, MPP Gates mentioned math, science and that kind of stuff, where they have the core fundamentals that they need in order to move on to the next trade or to move around within the industry. Patrick alluded to the fact that you can start on a road crew and go to a sewer and water main crew or go to a bridge crew. There have to be fundamental skill sets that allow for that mobility. You can't start from ground zero again, or else you would have nobody jumping from one to the next to the next.

I think it's imperative that you allow for the flexibility, so that you don't limit yourself. The kids today like to move around. They don't want to do anything for 30 years. That, to them, is overwhelming. They want to do something for maybe two to five years and then move on to the

next challenge. This would allow you to do that, where you have the skill set that you can then have the flexibility to move from one aspect to another. In all honesty, I think it will open the doors for you, as opposed to closing the doors.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Just quickly on that, Giovanni: I'm not so sure an electrician will agree that they want to jump around. You guys all talked about this, and I think it's important. We've actually had some very good discussions over the last little while, although they're pushing the bill too quickly—that's my own opinion—and didn't give enough people the opportunity to present over the last couple of days.

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The reason why I think they had such support was that they moved off skill sets drastically over the last little while, and I think it's because they found out that having skill sets in this legislation jeopardized the \$6 billion in the auto investment that Unifor currently bargained with the Big Three. But there's still language in the bill, to Giovanni's point, that says they may open up skill sets and being able to do more than one trade. That's going to be an issue, I think, at some point in time. So I just wanted to let you know—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Wayne Gates: —and I think that's why you saw such wide-based support, which I think is important.

Another question I'll ask: I agree with all three of you that if we're going to be serious about taking care of our shortage of trades—and we can argue whether it's 100,000 or 60,000, because the numbers are all over the place—we have to get back into our schools. We have to get back into our elementary schools what was pulled out by a previous government, and into our high schools.

I'll give you a quick example, and I've said this over the course of the last few days. I'm one of those guys that might not have been as good in class. I wasn't going to university or college. Some of it was affordability, quite frankly. When you live in poverty, you're not thinking of colleges and universities. But I wasn't bad with my hands, so I did welding, I did autobody, I did machine shop. I still laugh: I made a clock in woodworking that still works—I don't know how that happened—in grade 7; one of my major accomplishments in life. But if we're going to take skilled trades shortages—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. I apologize to cut you off. That concludes our time.

I would like to thank all three presenters. We appreciated your presentations. You are now released.

ONTARIO HOME BUILDERS'
ASSOCIATION
LABOURERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF
NORTH AMERICA
TRILLIUM AUTOMOBILE DEALERS
ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): We'll move to our next group of presenters. First, I would like to call upon

the Ontario Home Builders' Association. Please state your name for the record, and you will have seven minutes for your presentation.

Mr. Alex Piccini: My name is Alex Piccini and I'm the manager of government relations with the Ontario Home Builders' Association. Good morning, Chair, committee members, staff and fellow presenters. The Ontario Home Builders' Association is the voice of the residential construction industry in Ontario, representing over 4,000 member companies organized into 27 local associations across the province. Annually, OHBA members employ over 515,000 Ontarians, pay approximately \$32.8 billion in wages and generate over \$57 billion in economic value for our province.

We thank you for this opportunity to speak to the committee today on Bill 288, the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021. Modernizing the skilled trades and apprenticeship system in Ontario is an essential goal to ensuring that Ontario will continue to be the best place in the world to live, work, build a career or business, and raise a family. Opportunities in the skilled trades provide dynamic, rewarding and exciting careers across a variety of businesses.

We also know that the trades provide ample opportunity for entrepreneurship and skill building, whether that means pursuing a Red Seal trade or starting one's own company. The trades offer immense potential for tradespersons to build not just the structures that we see every day, but their own path as well. At OHBA, our home builder and renovator members know how much pride skilled tradespersons take in their work and it's always incredibly empowering to see some take the entrepreneurial route and start their own business. Not only is this a great opportunity that is available to the trades, but it also generates significant economic benefit and employment benefit in communities big and small across Ontario.

Fundamentally, when you talk about the skilled trades and the residential construction labour market, there is an elephant in the room, and that is that we need to build at least one million new homes over the next 10 years to adequately house the population growth that will call Ontario home in the next decade. In fact, did you know that from 2010 to 2015, Ontario's population grew by just under 600,000, but in the next five years, from 2015 to 2020, Ontario's population grew by over one million? I'm sure several committee members can see that massive population boom in your own local communities.

The economic and housing demand that our province is facing presents a key training opportunity for the proposed agency, Skilled Trades Ontario. By helping guide the next generation of tradespersons, Skilled Trades Ontario is well situated to help address labour market needs and create a straightforward and clear system of progression, while getting tradespersons into exciting and in-demand careers, particularly in residential construction. Skilled Trades Ontario as a one-stop shop for aspiring tradespersons is therefore not just a workforce imperative but an economic one as well. By establishing Skilled Trades Ontario, the

province is helping to connect employers with tradespersons and apprentices, particularly as the economy recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Home builders and professional renovators also know how important it is to reduce the stigma around the skilled trades, simplify the system and make it easier to connect with the tradespersons we need to help address the housing needs of Ontario families now and into the future, while producing a competent, highly skilled and talented skilled-trades workforce.

I want to thank all committee members for inviting us to speak today. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have. I'm now going to turn things over to my colleague Mr. Chuck McShane from the Niagara Home Builders' Association. Thank you.

Mr. Chuck McShane: Thank you, Alex. Good morning, Chair, committee members, staff and fellow presenters. My name is Chuck McShane, and I'm the executive officer of the Niagara Home Builders' Association, one of the 27 locals affiliated with the Ontario Home Builders' Association. I'd like to thank the committee members for providing this opportunity to speak to Bill 288, the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, and the proposed agency, Skilled Trades Ontario.

I'd like to start by providing the committee some local economic context on my community and how our sector builds up the Niagara region. Residential construction in the Niagara region employs—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Chuck McShane: —over 18,000 Ontarians, pays approximately \$1.2 billion in wages and generates over \$2.1 billion in economic value for the province. Having a job-site-ready skilled-trade workforce in Ontario, and particularly in my community, is critical to ensuring that the housing sector can meet the unprecedented demands that we are seeing now and into the future.

But I'm here today as a former tradesperson, and an employer myself, to speak specifically about why tradespersons must be the central focus for this new proposed agency. The construction industry has, for over 10 years, been calling for skilled-trades reform that provides a clear pathway to become a skilled tradesperson. With the Ontario College of Trades, that pathway was confusing, bureaucratic, and fundamentally was not tradesperson-focused. The OCOT process put up more barriers in trades instead of removing them.

That is why we are glad to hear the minister and the government speak about how this new proposed agency, Skilled Trades Ontario, will be tradesperson-focused: a one-stop shop that provides a clear, linear and transparent direction for how to become a tradesperson, from start to finish. The pathway to becoming a lawyer or a doctor is straightforward and well known. Skilled Trades Ontario must provide that same style of approach to the trades. By providing that clear pathway, we will be able to get more Ontarians into these in-demand trades that pay exceedingly well, offer numerous upscaling opportunities, and get people into a new career faster and with more confidence.

By having this new agency be tradesperson-focused, we are confident that it will result in better results for all those who want to take up a skilled trade, whether that means the student just out of high school—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Chuck McShane: —or someone looking for a second career. The new agency must be focused on providing that clear pathway for how that individual can, step by step, take up that trade.

That is why I want to thank the government for recognizing the existing confusion in the system and, once and for all, addressing the issues head-on, because at the end of the day, the success of Skilled Trades Ontario will be measured in getting more people into the trades safely, with the competencies they need to succeed.

I want to thank you all for letting me speak today, and I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you.

Our next presenter is the Labourers' International Union of North America. Please state your name for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Sean McFarling: Good morning, everyone. My name is Sean McFarling, I'm the general counsel to the Labourers' International Union of North America at our Ontario provincial district council. Thank you for having me today. I'll start with a brief introduction of LIUNA, and then share our thoughts on the training and apprenticeship components in Bill 288, as well as the regulatory framework.

LIUNA has a long and storied track record of working with government and private sector employers to deliver infrastructure projects from hospitals to highways. We have over 130,000 members across Canada, and we're proud to train the next generation of skilled labourers. In Ontario, LIUNA members are critical to the construction of major government undertakings such as subways, roads, bridges and sewers, and we also work with the private sector to build apartment buildings, office towers and residential homes.

We take a positive, proactive and progressive approach to ensuring safe workplaces for our members and providing them with well-paying jobs. We're proud to lead initiatives that aim to increase diversity and inclusivity in the construction industry, and we're continuing to develop strategies to remove racism, sexism and other forms of workplace violence from our job sites. At LIUNA, we're proud of the work our members do and the part we play in building our communities.

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With respect to training and apprenticeship programs, LIUNA is a significant training provider and we have significant experience with Ontario's apprenticeship pathways. We have over 10 training funds in Ontario, nine training delivery agencies and 15 campuses to provide training to our members. LIUNA has been proud to lead many initiatives supporting apprenticeships, particularly in historically under-represented communities, including providing training courses exclusively for women and

providing remote training for our Indigenous communities.

For generations, the skilled trades have offered prosperous careers to families across the province. Ontario's approach to apprenticeships and certifications must encourage rather than deter talented people from starting their careers in this sector. The complex regulatory and financial barriers created by OCOT discouraged many Ontarians, especially young people, from pursuing apprenticeships. These unnecessary burdens contributed to Ontario's current shortage of skilled tradespeople. The province is facing a looming crisis. We do not have enough skilled workers to support Ontario's surging growth. We applaud the government's commitment throughout its previous budget to address significant steps to relieve some of the barriers to entering the trades. They've addressed systemic weaknesses which have led to this crisis, including the elimination of the college of trades.

Now, by following the advice of the Skilled Trades Panel, which will be important, the province must ensure that the certification process is not cumbersome. Apprentices should be able to focus on developing their skills and not navigating layers of bureaucracy. In addition to providing efficient access to certification and training resources, the new agency needs to prioritize the promotion of the skilled trades as a prosperous career pathway. Furthermore, the province should enhance its existing strategies for addressing stigmas about careers in construction.

Skilled Trades Ontario offers a central body for the province to lead coordinated efforts for promoting apprenticeship pathways. Through outreach programs led by the agency, Ontario can take meaningful steps towards achieving its goal of increasing participation of historically under-represented groups in the construction sector, and we can continue to create prosperous opportunities for everyone.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Sean McFarling: With respect to the regulatory frame to be adopted, LIUNA welcomes the province's efforts to identify the scope of practice of the trades through the proposed legislation, but it should be expected that the scopes of practice will overlap to reflect the multi-skilled and interconnected nature of many trades. The minister needs to be mindful of these shared practices when establishing its regulations. The health professions provide an excellent example of where overlapping of skills are encouraged to best serve the public interest. The province must administer its guidelines in a manner which is both fair and reflective of the work performed by labourers and other tradespeople.

While scopes of practice are very important for creating training programs, they're not necessarily indicative of the ability of labourers and other trades to perform certain practices. Many tasks are performed by multiple trades without risk of harm to their colleagues or the public. In order for a scope of practice to be a basis for enforcement, it must be clear that carrying out the task creates a risk of harm unless the worker holds the appropriate certification.

We applaud the decision to make the Ontario Labour Relations Board responsible for reviewing notices of contravention and compliance orders, because they have the expertise to do this job.

In conclusion, LIUNA is encouraged by the province's continued efforts to increase participation in the skilled trades. In order to address our looming skilled trades crisis, it's critical that we remove the many unnecessary barriers to starting apprenticeships that have deterred young people in the past. We need to continue to make meaningful investments into apprenticeship training and promotion, and raise awareness about the many opportunities the construction industry offers. Additionally, we look forward to the government's efforts to depoliticize Ontario's regulation regarding the scopes of practice. The province's compliance and enforcement system must reflect the multi-skilled nature of many trades and the overlaps in their ability to safely and competently perform their tasks.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Sean McFarling: We support the government's continued efforts to address the skilled trades crisis and implement evidence-based solutions towards creating opportunities for Ontarians. We look forward to working with Skilled Trades Ontario, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have for me today. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. We'll move to our next presenter, Trillium Automobile Dealers Association. Please state your name for the record, and you can get right into your presentation.

Mr. Frank Notte: Thank you, Chair. I'm Frank Notte, the director of government relations for the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association. Since 1908, our association has been the voice of Ontario's new car dealers. We represent over 1,000 dealers of every brand and franchise, who directly employ 45,000 women and men.

I am a product of the skilled trades. John Notte, my father, held a certificate of qualification as an autobody and collision damage repairer. He owned and operated East Port Auto Body in Port Colborne, Ontario, a full-service autobody repair and towing business. I grew up in the family business, helping around the shop and riding shotgun in his tow truck. Upon immigrating from Italy, the trades offered my father an immediate job opportunity which provided for his young family. Years later, he used his knowledge to become an entrepreneur and opened his own business. The skilled trades provided him the pathway to fulfill his Canadian dream.

We commend Minister McNaughton for introducing Bill 288, the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act. This bill is an important step to simplify the system, cut red tape and make it easier to navigate the path towards a career in the trades.

Ontario's new car dealers have long opposed the college of trades, before it opened its doors in 2013. The college duplicated systems already in place and provided no real value to tradespeople or helped promote the trades to the next generation of technicians.

The college's record is dismal. According to the 2016 Auditor General's report, less than half of those who began an apprentice program in Ontario completed it. The average completion rate for apprentices from 2011 to 2016 was about 47%. Over the same time period, only 26% of people aged 13 to 24 said they would consider a career in the skilled trades.

Ontario's automobile dealers are in dire need of technicians and autobody repairers. Just about every dealer I speak to is hiring for these positions immediately. The numbers are staggering: The average age of an apprentice is 30, and the average age of a journeyperson is 47. Auto dealers are feeling it now and facing a worsening situation. Vehicles today are more complex to repair, given technological advancements, and with electric vehicles becoming more prevalent, a whole new skill set will be required to repair them as they become mainstream.

Established in 1962, Roy Foss Motors owns and operates two of the largest General Motors dealership franchises in Canada, located in Woodbridge and Thornhill. With nearly three centuries' worth of combined technician experience and a working inventory of over 250,000 different vehicle parts items, they know a thing or two about the trades. James Ricci of the Foss Group said three years ago at a conference that dealers are "reaching a crisis" when it comes to the shortage of technicians.

The college of trades was bogged down in bureaucracy, with too many boards and committees, lots of talk and little action. This inaction didn't help students discover the career opportunities that trades provide, and it certainly didn't help auto dealers find those who will repair and maintain the family car. The college should have channelled Elvis Presley's song: "A little less conversation, a little more action."

That's why we are pleased that Bill 288 will establish an 11-member board for Skilled Trades Ontario, representing a 50% reduction in board directors compared to the college of trades; eliminate the four divisional boards consisting of 20 appointees and trade boards comprising of up to 12 people each; and focusing Skilled Trades Ontario with clear roles and responsibilities, with eight legislated objects in the act compared to the 15 given to the college of trades.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Frank Notte: The Skilled Trades Panel said, "The present co-delivery of this statutory mandate (through OCOT and the ministry) has not been successful. While perhaps well intended, at times OCOT was paralyzed by its bureaucracy and the lack of clear direction. Its governance structure contributed significantly to this, allowing particular groups and stakeholders to dominate the system. Stakeholders acknowledged challenges with OCOT. However, the panel also heard there was no desire to return to the system that existed prior to OCOT." And we agree.

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Bill 288 strikes the right balance between placing the delivery agent outside of government but accountable to the minister. Ontario's auto retail sector follows a similar model. An organization outside of government, the

Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council, is responsible for similar items, just like Skilled Trades Ontario, and is accountable to a minister.

By working towards a one-stop shop and digitizing service delivery, this new client-centred approach will ensure the system meets the needs of those who rely on the skilled trades. Bill 288 provides a much-needed recalibration by prioritizing what really matters: promoting the trades to the next generation and making it easier to navigate the system.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. We'll start with the questions now, and we'll start the first round with the government. MPP Cho.

Mr. Stan Cho: Thank you to all the presenters for being here today.

I've got questions for all of our presenters today, but I want to start with our home builders. You raised some very important points. As we move through COVID-19—and Mr. Piccini, you brought up a statistic that's very sobering, when you say we need a million new homes to be built in the next decade. I think we can all understand that this is a key to keeping the dream of home ownership alive. Indeed, home construction will be part of our path to economic growth into the future, especially moving out of these difficult times. In order to build that many homes, obviously we're going to have to build the skilled trades. There's no question about that.

There are a few impediments to our path to success. I want to start my line of questioning on a couple of those impediments. The first part of the question will be around health and safety. You can't attract new tradespeople unless this industry has made sure that we're keeping it safe.

I'm curious to know, either from you, Mr. Piccini, or Mr. McShane, how those in residential construction, in your field, are working to ensure that accidents like we saw in Milton don't happen, and how you are making the conditions safe for tradespeople to enter the field.

Mr. McShane, I will say, if that's a Bruins fan in the background—not a fan. Go Leafs, go. But I'll pause there.

Mr. Chuck McShane: Well, MPP Cho, I was going to mention your shirt as well, so I appreciate that.

Thank you very much for the question.

Safety is paramount for our home builders' association. I think it has been proven, especially over the last year, with COVID-19 coming in. We've worked with our friends at LIUNA and with the government to ensure that we have the safety protocols to keep our sites safe. Nobody wants one of their employees to get hurt. I think what we've done and proven in the last four or five years as an industry, the home builder industry, shows. Our numbers are very, very good.

There are going to be accidents, obviously. A lot of those accidents come from the underground economy, non-certified trades, as well as people who are doing cash deals in changing roofs and whatnot. More than not, that's where the majority of injury is.

Safety is one of the number one things we deal with day in and day out, and we'll continue to do that as an industry.

Mr. Stan Cho: There are other impediments to entering the skilled trades for people out there, and the promotion of the trades is one of them—breaking down the stigma. Stigma actually came up a lot in our first hour of presenters this morning. While promotion of the trades is the core responsibility of the new proposed agency, the responsibility falls on all of us as well, inside of our education system, inside the trades themselves.

I remember, growing up—my family emigrated from South Korea—there was no talk about an option for me, my sister or brother of going into the trades. That negative stigma of the trades being dirty, poor-paying, back-breaking jobs is completely false. My friends who are in the trades are not only some of the smartest people I know, but they're the most successful people I know. And the joke is on my parents; I became a politician.

When you look towards promoting these trades, what is the residential construction sector doing to combat this stigma?

Mr. Alex Piccini: Thank you, MPP Cho, for the question.

We all know that one of the biggest aims of Skilled Trades Ontario, the proposed agency, must be to work to challenge and end this pervasive stigma around the trades. Like you said, for far too long, the skilled trades have been considered these options of last resort, the consequence of not going to university. That just simply isn't true, and we have to fight back on that.

Long before the current COVID-19 pandemic that we're in, many members were very actively engaged in their local school boards, talking to students—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Alex Piccini: —and promoting the skilled trades as the reality that it is: high-paying, extremely rewarding career opportunities that can offer an earn-while-you-learn potential. It's something that's not found in so many other lines of work, where you can begin making money while you're developing your skills, while you're learning and getting that education.

At the end of the day, these kinds of trades provide all the benefits up front, and there are so many opportunities that you can build on from there. In residential construction, we've just been promoting that, working closely with the ministry on that. We've obviously worked with other government agencies as well, like Skills Ontario, to promote the trades and to talk about all the options that are out there and the different pathways. With promotion going in-house at the proposed agency, Skilled Trades Ontario, we hope that it's going to be very beneficial to working towards ending that stigma; to really, once and for all, putting that away.

I can recall a speech made by Minister McNaughton very early on—I think it was in 2018—in which he spoke about his own challenges with the stigma and addressing it head-on. Certainly the residential construction sector echoes that: We have to end the stigma, and the new agency has a big role to play in that.

Mr. Stan Cho: Mr. McShane, do you want to add to that?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute and a half.

Mr. Chuck McShane: Yes, sure. When I was younger—and I heard Mr. Gates say this in the previous presentation—like Wayne, I wasn't smart enough to finish or go to university or college or whatnot. At the age of 16, I decided I was going to go to work. Back then, the jobs were there to get into the trades. I was fortunate enough that somebody put me on a bulldozer and I became a heavy equipment operator—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Chuck McShane: —and then that started the entrepreneurial shift. But that's back then, when we had these opportunities. With these opportunities in the trades now, getting rid of OCOT and having the proper ratios, we can provide those jobs.

I think what happened over many, many years is that the kids just couldn't walk out of school and get an apprenticeship. Everybody told them, "No, we can't do it. We're at our ratio limit. We're at this. We're at that." Now I think we're going to see it happen. Obviously I spend a lot of time in schools down here, discussing it with the youth and the teachers. I think the opportunities are there now. I think we can all work together. It doesn't matter what party you're with; I think we can all work together to get our youth in these good-paying jobs.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you.

Mr. Stan Cho: I agree, Mr. McShane. I think we're out of time. Chair, am I correct?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): We are out of time. Thank you.

We'll move to the opposition now for their first round. Who would like to start? MPP Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thanks to all the presenters. I just want to correct something that Chuck said—my good friend Chuck. Mine was an affordability issue, not that I wasn't smart enough to be a tradesperson. I just want to correct that. I don't want anybody thinking their MPP's not very smart. Mine was an affordability issue, and I'm not ashamed to admit it. It's just the way you grow up, man. You play with the cards you're dealt, and I'm very proud of my parents and what they did for me.

My first question, surprisingly maybe, is going to go to Frank. Frank, when I was president of my local union for 12 years, I bargained a lot of collective agreements in Niagara. You being from Port Colborne, you'd be familiar with Welland Chev, the Cullens, Ford out in the Grimsby area and Ed Learn Ford. You're absolutely right: During the bargaining process, we would always try to get apprentices on board, or obviously get some fair collective agreements here. They're very talented, and the cars have changed today. They're a lot more complex. It's not as easy as it used to be.

My question to you would be: Roughly how many compulsory tradespeople would be working at one of your dealerships? Did you get a lot of feedback from those workers when the College of Trades was created, positive or negative?

Mr. Frank Notte: Yes. There was a lot of consternation when the college first came about, that the tradespeople just didn't believe a big new bureaucracy was going to solve all the problems that were currently plaguing the trades, whether it's promotion, whether it's helping the kids get into the trades, ending the stigma, that kind of thing.

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I remember one example where the members of the college—or, you know, the "recent" members of the college—would get a letter saying, "Your certificate of qualification is owed to us." People had never heard of the college of trades; they thought it was a scam. The lack of communication was horrible, so they didn't start off on a good foot, and I don't think that anybody believed that the big bureaucracy was going to help.

To your first question: I believe at a dealership there have got to be at least three or four of the compulsory trades that are working on the service side, for sure. You do have some voluntary, like lube, oil and filter and that kind of job, but most of them would be compulsory.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thanks very much.

My next question is to all three of you. I know you guys had lots of consultation with the minister before the legislation came forward. Initially, they began their approach to modernize the skilled trades by moving to a skill set-based system, which we understand. They later changed their approach and moved their reforms to the current legislation. Would you guys have preferred a skill-set model? That's to all three of you, whoever wants to answer. Who wants to go first?

Mr. Sean McFarling: I'll go first. I think LIUNA had an interesting perspective on this. Initially, we saw some value in the skill sets, because the nature of the work our members do is pretty broad and having them certified for certain tasks may have made some sense. But in the grand scheme, it appeared to us that the skill-sets model was not a successful one for the entire construction industry. I know it was implemented in British Columbia, and studies have shown that was not a particularly successful way and actually undermined the trades.

Our concern, at the end of the day, will be ensuring that the tasks our members perform don't become targeted for enforcement purposes if they happen to overlap with certain compulsory components. But I think there's some value in maintaining the compulsory trades in totality, for the benefit of those trades. From our perspective, the ability to certify for certain tasks, while it may have had some value, wasn't worth it in the grand scheme of how to best regulate the construction industry in its entirety.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'll go to the next question, then. I can ask all three, and just jump in, whoever wants to speak. Do you think that the current list of compulsory trades now should stay the same, or do you believe this legislation does that? Anybody, if any one of you guys wants to answer it.

Mr. Sean McFarling: I don't want to hog the mike, but I think I may be in the best position to answer that.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. I have some questions for the building trades, but I'm going to do them in the second half, just so you know. I apologize if it seems like I'm—

Mr. Sean McFarling: I anticipate, Wayne, that the existing compulsory trades will continue to be compulsory. I don't see any changes coming there. Unless there's a very compelling argument that it is in the public interest, I don't see a need for any more compulsory trades, although some may aspire to that. But I think the current roster of compulsory trades is probably justified from a public interest and risk-of-harm perspective. The creation of new ones, I think, would have to be very rigorously investigated and subject to broad public consultation and review.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. I appreciate it.

Mr. Sean McFarling: I'm not sure if the builders share that view.

Mr. Chuck McShane: Yes, we're on board with that for sure, Sean. I don't see that it needs to be expanded once again, like you say, unless there is something that is drastically required for the public's safety.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. Just to the bill—and I'll ask this at the same time—would you like to see any amendments to the bill? I know to Sean and probably even to the Niagara home builders—I'm not so sure about Frank's group—there is really language that's already there that will allow them to do skill sets. It's where it says "may," and because I've done a few collective agreements—it doesn't say "will," but it says "may."

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Wayne Gates: So the scope of work can be expanded. It may become an issue as we go through this process, but, to your point, Sean and Chuck, I understand where you guys are at. Maybe you can answer the amendment part. Would you like to see some amendments in the bill? We're doing clause-by-clause on Friday; it's pretty rushed and it doesn't give us a lot of time.

It can go to Chuck, Frank or Shane, whoever wants that.

Mr. Frank Notte: I could just answer really quickly. For us, most of the things that need to be done to a car are compulsory anyway, so for the mode of power section, I think things in the public interest are pretty much covered off. But I know friends in the construction sector have a little more complex system to deal with.

Mr. Chuck McShane: I'm going to let Alex take care of this one. Alex?

Mr. Alex Piccini: In terms of—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. I apologize. The time has come up. We'll come back to you in the second round.

We'll move to the independent members for their first round. MPP Hunter?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thanks so much, everyone, for your presentations today and for your passion for the trades. I'll start with Sean from LIUNA, to ask about the need for recruitment in the trades but also recruitment specifically for women, Black, Indigenous and other people of colour—the diversity that's needed in the trades.

I know that this is something—I certainly know in my own community in Scarborough that you're very keen to do and I've seen some of the programs that you have, even just to reduce recidivism and some of those things. Can you speak to that, please?

Mr. Sean McFarling: Absolutely. I think that that is probably going to be the most important effort we make in terms of recruitment going forward, reaching out to equity-seeking groups that are underemployed and under-trained and have more than ample opportunity. When you look at the construction industry, the history of it, it parallels in many ways the history of immigration to Canada. But now we're at a point where we have under-employed communities here at home, particularly among women who find themselves in what we call the gig economy, working several part-time jobs, and a lack of employment within Indigenous communities.

What we've done is we've run training courses, training courses exclusively for women, in partnership with Aecon, so they can work and learn the skills in an environment that's supportive before they go out into the field. Similarly, we've taken our mobile training units and we've gone to Indigenous communities, because, as we know, travelling from many remote communities is not a viable option. Many people don't want to leave their northern community to travel to Thunder Bay to be trained, or travel to Sault Ste. Marie or Sudbury, so we are making the effort to go to them.

What we ask from the government is that you support those efforts. When we were trying to run our women in the trades courses, we ran into impediments for funding. It couldn't be released quick enough for us to get the seats we needed, which is a legacy of OCOT that we hope will be eliminated moving forward. Allowing for the funding to flow so that we can respond to the needs quickly, I think, is going to be important, because we see a lot of community benefit requirements in contracts now. Community benefit provisions will fail if we don't train people to fill those positions. The training has to happen.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Two minutes.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Talk a little bit more about the value of even just having the community benefits, because it does cause the sector to think about, "How do we do things differently?"

Mr. Sean McFarling: I think it's important because it does make us think, "Are we reaching out to ensure that we're tapping the potential labour resources available to us?" But it really has to come at the training end, and I'm seeing it being perceived as, "Well, we're just going to put people into jobs." That's a recipe for failure if they don't have adequate training, and it's not a path to a long-term career if the training is not there. I think we need to think about this on a broader scale and start focusing on the training before these projects start. We should be able to anticipate something significant like a billion-dollar infrastructure project and plan in advance for it.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you so much. How much time do I have, Chair?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Let's maybe go to the home builders. I think your point about the million homes that are needed as we move forward really speaks to the growth that we can look forward to here in Ontario, and that must be an inclusive growth, as we were just speaking about there with Sean. So perhaps Chuck or Alex, if you can just talk about what you're seeing from the sector and how we can continue to diversify the workforce. Go ahead, Chuck. You're up.

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Mr. Chuck McShane: All right. I'm going to jump right in there, and thank you very much, MPP Hunter, for that. We've seen it a lot down here in Niagara, actually, with a lot of our builders that are not that large. They bring family members into work within the—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. I apologize to cut you off. We'll come back to you in the second round.

We'll now go back to the opposition for their second round. Who would like to start? MPP Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I said I would get back to the home builders. I think this is maybe good for all of you. An important part of the new Skilled Trades Ontario organization is promoting trades to youth, and also to the under-employed, like women, First Nations, racialized and those with disabilities, to decrease the shortage of the skilled trades. Ultimately, you get more people interested in doing an apprenticeship.

What are some ways Skilled Trades Ontario could do this? One of the home builders could do it, or LIUNA could do it. I know, Sean, you talked a little bit about how funding for your training centres is very, very important—not just unionized ones, but even non-union ones have training centres as well. Anyway, go ahead, anybody who wants to answer that.

Mr. Alex Piccini: Thank you, MPP Gates. I think one of the biggest parts that is part of that in terms of making the trades more diverse and increasing representation in the skilled trades has to be that early-years education piece. It has to be ensuring that we're not talking about the skilled trades, like you mentioned, at the university or the college level only. It really has to be early on. It has to be in grade school and in secondary school. That's where you can inspire that interest in the trades, that interest of working not just with one's mind, but with one's hands as well, and being able to build something. That's how you begin to spark that interest and develop that into, "Look at all these potential careers that are offered by these skills and this pathway." So I think that certainly the early-years-education piece has to be there.

Many members, like I mentioned earlier, are heavily involved in their local school boards, speaking directly to students, providing seminars to introduce students to what it means to work in the trades and experience the variety that are out there, because even if you may start out in one trade and you find that it's not really for you, the great news is that there are so many trades in Ontario that you have your pick of the litter, really, in terms of where you want to go. That, alongside of course working with

organizations like Skills Ontario to put on sessions to introduce especially school-aged children to what tactile skills you need to get into the trades, is another great thing that membership is doing, and being involved from an association standpoint as well.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you. Sean?

Mr. Sean McFarling: Right now, we're working with an Indigenous-owned film company called Indspire. We're creating immersive 360-degree films of work on construction sites that really put you on the location in a way that takes advantage of the technology we have now. Getting that kind of content into the schools and at trade fairs and job fairs for young people, I think, will be key, because we're appealing to the technology that they are becoming more accustomed to.

I'm at the beginning of the video game generation, but I'm certainly not at the end of it. With this new technology, it's remarkable just what they're able to create. To feel like you're on a construction site and get a sense of what that's like and what's going on, I think, can provide some real excitement for the idea of this career path that would appeal to younger people. So the government can support that by ensuring that this content that's being created privately is dispersed broadly to the public sector.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you so much. I just want to—

Mr. Chuck McShane: I just—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Oh, sorry, Chuck. Go ahead.

Mr. Chuck McShane: I just want to chime in on that, Wayne. Yes, I think one of the biggest things on where the stigma comes from is that it comes from home. It comes from the parents. We need to get to the parents early. I know that I speak to the pathway summits here that the Catholic school board does every year, and the parents come in and we educate the parents about what it's like to be in the trades, how much your child can earn and that they'll never be without if they have a skilled trade. We've got to get to the parents and we've got to get to them early. That's where it all lies.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate that, letting the parents know, because their big concern principally with young people is safety on the work site. We all know that there are a lot of young people who get injured, not just in construction but at McDonald's and these places. The parents—we all care about our kids and we all want to make sure whatever job they take is safe.

This is directed to Chuck. We've had this conversation before between the two of us, but I think it's an important question. We know that there is a shortage in building supplies and that the price of supplies has increased recently. I know lumber has come down just a bit. Particularly for the home builders, one thing: Could you discuss how that has affected your members?

The second thing you touched on, Chuck, was the underground economy, which is worth billions of dollars that the government is losing out on in taxes. You're absolutely right that the underground economy is where a lot of people are getting hurt. Quite frankly, people who use

the underground economy—the quality of work isn't what it needs to be. You guys are called “skilled trades” for a reason, and it's the skill that gets the quality of work. Could you maybe elaborate on those two questions? I appreciate it.

I sent it to Chuck, but if anybody else wants to answer, that's fine.

Mr. Chuck McShane: Quickly on the lumber issue, yes, it came down a bit. I think, what, 35 cents a board foot or something, right? In fact, our prices went from \$30 for a board foot to \$100. So it's very, very difficult. The cost of housing, a single-family dwelling, could be another 30% to 35% more just for the lumber alone, and there are more items there. So we hope that—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Chuck McShane: It affects the builders, but the bottom line is it affects our consumers; it affects the citizens of this province. Home ownership is a dream, and that's what we want to provide, and we want to provide those necessary jobs. But we do see, “Have pickup, will travel,” right, Wayne? Is that what we're talking about? You can see them parked out in front of the Home Depot all the time. They don't get their lumber delivered half the time; they go and pick it up in their pickup trucks.

People have been home now during COVID: “Maybe we should put a new deck in. We're not going away. We'll do this.” And then the guy up the street comes over and does the deck and the fence. That's very, very tough, and it just sends the wrong message, I think, especially to our youth. When a parent goes and does a cash job and the kid or the 17- or 18-year-old youth knows about it, they think, “Well, if that's okay, then why do I have to go—I can just learn how to”—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. Sorry to cut you off. That's all the time we have for the opposition. We'll move to the independent members now for their second round. MPP Hunter.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I wanted to speak to Frank. I wanted to, of course, speak about the automotive industry. It's certainly one I grew up with. My dad was a licensed mechanic in Jamaica. He immigrated to Canada. He switched careers. He became a transport truck driver and eventually owned his fleet. But that skill that he had was always something that came in very handy for him.

I've also noticed that the recruitment for licensed mechanics, licensed workers in the autobody area is something that is becoming challenging. In Scarborough, there's an organization called Tropicana Community Services that does a program through high schools with the sector and does pre-apprenticeship training. I oftentimes would go to those graduations, and I would speak to the family rather than even the participant in the program. I would say, if they persist, become an apprentice, become a journey-person, become Red Seal, they will have a path that is theirs to write. They could be business owners. They can work in dealers and shops. There's just so much opportunity. Oftentimes, I get the mom or the partner agreeing, and I'm hopeful that they will stick to it, because it is tough, putting in the work, putting in the hours.

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If you could just really speak to the importance of these pre-apprenticeship programs, working directly in the high schools—I know we now have Specialist High Skills Majors that give an exposure to the trades sector just by the partnerships that we're creating with some of these community-based organizations. Go ahead, Frank.

Mr. Frank Notte: Yes, for sure. Thank you. Autobody is close to my heart. That's how my dad started his life in Canada and eventually provided food and shelter for his family.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Two minutes.

Mr. Frank Notte: Getting kids interested at that young of an age is really key to letting them know what opportunities are out there. I can't say enough about autobody and specifically about just working at a dealership or an independent shop. It really does provide, like you said, that whole host of opportunities. But yes, getting kids interested, especially at the high school level, really is important, because no one really grows up to say, “I want to be an autobody repairer or a mechanic” initially, but I think once things start to sink in and they realize that they're going to be working with computers, all these new kinds of tools—the cars that my dad worked on are not the cars of today. It really is a world of possibilities. Especially kids now, who are so technologically advanced already, I think if they were able to understand that—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Frank Notte: —they can apply that to fixing a car, that would be more amenable to them, to think about a career in the trades and auto specifically.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Frank. I just want to say, because I know our time is finishing today, the partnership aspect that I hear from all of our panellists today is really important along people's journey towards a career in the trades. One of the things that I do support very much is the provision of grants so that people can buy their first set of tools, and they can have those tools with them wherever they go along this journey and along this career. I just want to say thank you to each of you in your respective areas for the partnership, and seeing your role in encouraging young people, particularly those who are on the margins, is really essential, so thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you so much. We'll go to the government side now for their second round. MPP Smith.

Mr. Dave Smith: Sean, I'd like to start with you, if you don't mind. This bill is one of a number of things that we've done. What we've heard throughout all of the testimony is that there has historically been a push to go to college and university and to devalue anything where you would get your hands dirty. We need a philosophical change. The move of training and skills development into the Ministry of Labour out of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, I think, signalled to all of Ontario that we were focusing on skills, training—this type of a career as something that was very valuable, because it was moved away from that focus of academia. Would you agree that

that has—and I’m kind of putting words in your mouth. But would you agree that that has been a better focus of it, that having something as a career path that isn’t treated as the second cousin to academia has been a good approach?

Mr. Sean McFarling: Yes, I think creating this third path or second path—there’s university, there’s college and then the trades—and making it clear that the trades is its own path and it’s a legitimate path for young people to take is a good signal to take and it focuses the expertise and the need. While there might be certain financial need for students going to university or college, there isn’t a need to promote that path. So having colleges and training: “Okay, we’re going to focus on what’s happening at the university and college level,” and then having skills training and development saying, “This is what we’re going to do to encourage young people to enter the trades as something different”—and make it so that it’s not the choice of last resort, that it’s in fact a good-paying job.

The more that people talk about our fracturing economy and, I mentioned this with Mitzie, the idea of the gig economy, when there is this amazing, well-paying, very steady work in the construction industry—we need to encourage people that this is a legitimate path to take and you don’t need three jobs working as a barista in different cafés to put together one livelihood when you could be working on a construction site.

Mr. Dave Smith: Officially, LIUNA has supported the scopes of practice overlap between compulsory and non-compulsory trades. Can you give me an example, or a couple of examples, of where this is actually beneficial to not only the tradespeople but Ontario in general?

Mr. Sean McFarling: Sure. There are tasks that are performed on a construction site where—for example, working with live electricity is not something we want just anyone doing. That’s not a position LIUNA advocates for. If you’re going to work with live electricity, you need to be properly trained and certified to do so. But there are dozens of incidental paths that an electrician or an apprentice electrician performs that are also performed by our members. That has been going on for decades without any dispute; occasionally a jurisdictional dispute at the labour board about what the employer should have signed, but it wasn’t a health and safety dispute.

Under OCOT, these started to become health and safety disputes. These lines between compulsory trades and non-compulsory trades became very rigid. As I mentioned earlier, if you contrast that with the health professions, where overlap is encouraged—we want to see doctors, nurses and pharmacists give people vaccines because that’s in the public interest, not “Only a doctor can do it because that’s a doctor’s job.” We need to take that mindset into the trades and say, “Is it in the public interest if this task”—even though an electrician or a plumber or some other compulsory trade, you need to be trained to do that in order to be in that trade, but the task itself isn’t the entirety of the trade and it’s in fact a task that any number of skilled workers can perform.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Sean McFarling: That’s where the public interest comes into it and that’s where risk of harm becomes the compelling factor.

I think that allowing a body like the Ontario Labour Relations Board to adjudicate orders that fall under skilled trades and what is compulsory and what is not, they can bring their expertise to bear on what’s in the broader public interest. There’s a provision that allows the board to consider any factor that’s relevant, having regard to the public interest. And if asked, “Should there be amendments to this act?” I will just say this much: That should not be removed. That needs to be there. The board needs to consider what’s in the public interest when adjudicating these disputes as they arise between compulsory and non-compulsory tasks.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you.

I’m going to shift over to Alex and Chuck, if it’s okay. One of the changes in this is the agency will be a public registry of anyone who is authorized to practise in compulsory trades. Talking about the underground economy, how do you think this is actually going to benefit and reduce the effect of the underground economy and the number of people who are actually working in it?

Mr. Alex Piccini: Thank you, MPP Smith. Certainly, having that information accessible is going to create an environment in which the underground economy is very clearly identified outside of the legitimate economy, right? There are so many implications that I think we need to talk about and raise when we’re speaking about the underground economy, whether it’s the fact that there aren’t payments into WSIB or often structures are not built to the Ontario building code standard. There are so many risks associated with that. Having that information accessible provides that very clear distinction between the legitimate and the underground economy.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Alex Piccini: The Ontario Home Builders’ Association has long been advocating for changes to help combat the underground economy and drive work into the legitimate sector, because that’s ultimately where the success for the trades in Ontario needs to be centred around. I throw it over to Chuck for anything additional.

Mr. Chuck McShane: Yes, I think it’s quite necessary to add the compulsory trades that are tracked, that the consumer can actually go on and find out whether their plumber is actually certified or whatnot. I think what we need to do, though, is educate our consumers. We’ve got to do something to explain what could happen if the person is non-certified or doesn’t carry WSIB. How many homeowners would pay cash to get the roof done, and the next thing you know—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. I apologize. That concludes our time. This is all the time we have for the presentations.

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I would like to thank all three presenters for coming, and we appreciate your presentations. You’re now released.

ONTARIO SHEET METAL WORKERS' AND
ROOFERS' CONFERENCE
ANISHNAWBE BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL
ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Before we start with our next group of presentations, I want to let the members know that Ontario Sheet Metal Workers' and Roofers' Conference will have another person joining them. It is Mike Mahon, business manager, and he will be joining us shortly as well.

I would like to call upon Ontario Sheet Metal Workers' and Roofers' Conference. Please state your name for the record, and you will have seven minutes for your presentation.

Mr. Eric Comartin: Good morning. My name is Eric Comartin. I'm the legal counsel to the Ontario Sheet Metal Workers' and Roofers' Conference. With me is Michael Mahon. I don't actually see him in the panels right now. He's the elected business manager of the Ontario Sheet Metal Workers' and Roofers' Conference.

Earlier today, I provided a draft written submission to the committee. I'm not sure if that was passed on to any of you. If not, I'll review it quickly. Bear with me if you have read it and I am repeating myself.

The conference is the employee bargaining agent for sheet metal workers and roofers in the province of Ontario. We represent, through collective bargaining and representation, in grievances and other matters such as this, advocacy on behalf of compulsory tradespeople and voluntary tradespeople.

I had the benefit of listening to Sean McFarling's response to one of his questions in the previous submissions. There is a very large distinction in this legislation's purpose to deal with compulsory trades versus voluntary trades, right? Many people are unaware that, tomorrow, I could call myself a carpenter and not have any ability or training of any kind, but I could call myself a carpenter. So long as I didn't say I had a certificate of qualification in that voluntary trade, I would not be in violation of any legislative component of this legislation or related legislation.

I might be in violation of a code of ethics or consumer protection, but this legislation and its predecessor legislation, dating back to 1965 for sheet metal workers, basically says that in order to practise in a certificate of qualification requirement trade—so in a compulsory trade—you need to either have a licence or you need to be a registered apprentice. There is one other category, which is that you've got to be waiting for your exam, so you're in that sort of limbo time between having completed your apprenticeship and not yet having qualified for your certificate of qualification.

If you were to look at the previous legislation, under the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, you would see that—and it's under sections 2 and 4 of the predecessor legislation—in order to practise in the scope of practice for electricians, sheet metal, plumbers, steam fitters, pipe fitters, you have to have that licence, or you've got to be a registered apprentice.

In this legislation, if you look at sections 6 and 7, there's that category, (c)—so 6(c) and 7(c)—we don't know what that means. I don't know if you do. I don't know if I missed something. I've been practising law for about 20 years now. The overall majority of that time has been on behalf of construction trade unions. I've been active since Mr. Armstrong released his report. I've been active in the Dean study. For the last 13 years, I have been active representing construction trade unions, not the least of which is compulsory trades, and—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Eric Comartin: —I don't know what 6(c) or 7(c) means. In our view, it's inappropriate to have them in the legislation.

We appreciate that the current legislation, Bill 288, did a lot of things differently than what was proposed in the modernizing trades act, the predecessor bridging legislation. And we appreciate that the government has heard from organizations like ourselves in regard to making the necessary changes that we believe protect the public interest and ensure that compulsory trades are recognized and that the trades—like sheet metal, electricians, plumbers, steam fitters—can ensure that the training and apprenticeship programs are properly given the recognition they deserve when they get their certificate of qualification. But 6(c) and 7(c) seem to give an out to individuals or businesses or employers to allow certain work that is compulsory-trade work to be performed by individuals who are not compulsory-trade people. Without further meat to whatever those regulations are, we don't think it's appropriate to include them in the legislation.

To give you an analogy—and I'll use this again later—this is simply a system of prohibition against people who are not qualified to practise certain things. In the circumstances, we have heard a lot recently about—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Eric Comartin: —ventilation systems and air quality control systems. I don't think we really want to have people practising in this area unless they're either a licensed journeyman or they're working under the guidance of a licensed journeyman as a registered apprentice. The same thing goes for electricians.

Correct me about this; this is where we spent the majority of our time on the submissions. The written submissions that we provided earlier today discuss 28 and 42, which have similar concerns from the conference.

If you have any questions for myself or Mr. Mahon—those are our submissions.

I do want to emphasize that we do appreciate that the current government has listened. We're just hoping that they'll listen a little bit more.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. We'll now move to our next presenter, the Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association. Please state your name for the record, and you will have seven minutes for your presentation.

Mr. Jason Rasevych: Good morning. I'm Jason Rasevych, president of the Anishnawbe Business Professionals

Association. I'm also joined by my colleague Sarah Lang, who is here and will be co-presenting with me.

I'd first like to start off with a land acknowledgement and to pay my respects and acknowledge the traditional territories of the Indigenous nations across Ontario. My location today, Thunder Bay, Ontario, is home to the Indigenous peoples of the Robinson-Superior Treaty and also the many who are from James Bay Treaty 9, who call Thunder Bay their home.

The Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association advocates for First Nations business and community interests across five treaty areas: Treaties 3, 5 and 9, and Robinson-Superior and Robinson-Huron. We're here today to talk about the approach in Bill 288 and building opportunities in the skilled trades for Indigenous people. We're going to present about some of the barriers that are there, in this short amount of time, and talk about some potential recommendations.

With that, I'd like to pass it off to Sarah.

Ms. Sarah Lang: Thanks for the opportunity to speak today.

Prior to my role with the Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association, I worked for 15 years as a child welfare social worker. While I'm not Indigenous, I'm very familiar with how structural racism, economic marginalization and lack of access to the social determinants of health significantly impair wellness and ability to reach one's potential. Lack of access to clean water, inadequate housing, inequitable education and health services, and unstable employment and income are facts of life for the 48% of on-reserve First Nations people aged 20 to 24 who graduated from high school. Compare that to the 92% graduation rate of their non-Indigenous peers—a stark discrepancy. These stats are from 2016 census data.

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More recently, during this COVID-19 pandemic, infrastructure gaps impacted outcomes in remote northern Ontario First Nations struggling to deliver virtual education over land lines and fax machines because many communities still do not have high-speed broadband. While there are some commitments by government to meet certain infrastructure priorities across the country, for many First Nations communities there's still a very long way to go. To ensure equitable access to opportunities in the skilled trades for northern Ontario First Nations, holistic, localized and creative approaches need to be co-developed by Indigenous groups, industry, government and education systems.

Some of the major barriers to engagement and completion of skilled trades apprenticeship programs include:

- a lack of awareness about apprenticeship and career opportunities in the trades;
- insufficient reading and math literacy programs and employability skills training related to time management and workplace communications;
- low numbers of Indigenous journeypersons in home communities to mentor youth and act as role models;
- a lack of access to shop classes or adequately equipped shop rooms;

- a lack of local education and training programs that results in students having to separate from their families and home communities to attend high school or apprenticeship programs in larger city centres;

- a lack of public transportation;

- a lack of personal support and culturally specific wraparound services that understand the effects of inter-generational trauma, systemic racism and social exclusion that can interfere with ability to complete apprenticeship programs; and, finally,

- financial barriers.

I'll turn it over to Jason who could speak to some recommendations.

Mr. Jason Rasevych: Thank you. A lot of what is being announced related to now Skilled Trades Ontario is looking to streamline—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Jason Rasevych: —the process to certify journeymen and other skilled trades apprenticeships. However, we've identified that there is a barrier to—all these barriers that Sarah mentioned related to that pathway for Indigenous people to participate in the skilled trades sector are massive and need to be addressed with co-developing and implementing creative solutions that Indigenous people in the north can participate in, and align it with the TRC call to action 92, which explains about equitable access to jobs, training and educational opportunities for Indigenous people and that Aboriginal communities should gain long-term benefits from economic development projects.

It's no surprise that with the COVID recovery, infrastructure development in the north will be key to the economic recovery of our province as well, with natural resource development in the mining, forestry and construction sectors. What we've experienced in the past is social licence from Indigenous nations is going to be key to attracting investment, but filling those opportunities and increasing the participation of Indigenous peoples across those sectors is going to be key to securing social licence with First Nations, but also maintaining social licence. A cookie-cutter approach related to streamlining that process requires collaboration. It requires Indigenous input to ensure that the proper wraparound support is there and creating on-ramps for Indigenous people to participate in the skilled trades sector.

What we've seen in the past, whether it's the Ring of Fire, regional training alliances or opportunities to participate in training programs, is that Indigenous peoples at times are discounted and marginalized in that pipeline of moving forward with developing their—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Jason Rasevych: —education, developing their training and supporting them in their journey towards that career pathway. When we see a lack of cultural awareness, a lack of retention support, a lack of assistance related to health and well-being, it becomes a determinant for the long-term opportunities, and it puts industry in a tough position where they're failing the communities, whether it's an impact benefit agreement or a project where it's

moving forward where it requires a large amount of skilled trade workers.

A lot of Indigenous nations in the north are saying, “We could fill that skilled trades gap.” When we have 80% to 90% unemployment rates in our communities, we’re well positioned, with the largest growing youthful population in this country, to be able to move into that position. So there’s a lot that we can do with this bill to ensure that there’s going to be support there for Indigenous nations, but it will require input from experts that—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. I apologize to cut you off. That concludes our time.

We’ll start with the questions now. We’ll start the first round of questions with the independent members. MPP Hunter.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you so much to the Ontario Sheet Metal Workers’ and Roofers’ Conference, as well as to the Anishnawbe Business Professionals Association. It’s great to see you here.

I wanted to maybe allow Jason to talk more about the opportunities in skilled trades for Indigenous people. First of all, there’s an incredible history and contribution of Indigenous people in the skilled trades sector. I remember a couple of experiences I had where I toured with the ironworkers and heard about how Indigenous skilled trades people are incredibly talented in that particular space and do very, very well. They have been builders across Ontario, even down into New York. I think it’s something that we really need to celebrate and we need to talk about, these important skill sets.

I also visited Pelican Falls and visited the high school there, and also saw the training and the education that was happening around the skills area. Can you speak about the aptitude that is in the community and the opportunities that we should be supporting, Jason and/or Sarah?

Mr. Jason Rasevych: There is a lot of opportunity there for the youth, and this is really hope for the future, where community members could wake up and picture themselves in these opportunities. A lot of them are interested in operating heavy equipment or earning their level 1, level 2 or level 3 apprenticeship for millwright, electrician and other journeyman construction trades programs.

But some of the barriers that Sarah had mentioned need to be addressed related to challenges of Indigenous people struggling in a unionized environment, and also dealing with some of the equity issues and diversity issues that exist in unions today. Back in the mid-1990s, Ginoogaming First Nation was the first to create a union—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Two minutes.

Mr. Jason Rasevych: —for the Longlac sawmill that allowed for what’s now 80% Indigenous employment in that facility. Aroland, Eabametoong and Marten Falls have also done that in the Nakina Sawmill, and secured some funding from the province last year to position Indigenous apprenticeships.

We’re seeing a lot more of the youth and we’re seeing a lot more of the women getting in trades now, and we’re seeing a lot of these individuals have the opportunity to

start their own business as contractors. It’s definitely an opportunity for business 101 and entrepreneurship training, to align some of these individuals that go off and become experts in welding and experts in service mechanic types of training, who could definitely start their own outfit and work within the field.

We need to also support the mobile trades trailer and that type of training style. A lot of the Indigenous people in northern Ontario do not want to leave and migrate out to Alberta or to southern Ontario to develop their skill set. They’d like to work in their backyards—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Jason Rasevych: —and in their home communities, to be able to be close to their families. It’s become a whole migration challenge for a lot of young couples and young families, because one of the partners leaves and the other family member is at home tending to their duties with their children, without having the wraparound supports to deal with that migration.

Those are the types of issues that we haven’t necessarily seen come full tilt with wraparound support training, but if it’s supported, Indigenous people have a major role to play in filling these voids related to the skilled trades opportunities that are there in construction and operations of projects, and even within the home communities where contractors are paid premium rates to fly in to remote areas to work on projects that are maintenance that community members could be trained to support. If there’s local training, if there are local supports—

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The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. We’ll come back to you in the second round.

We’ll now move to the government side. MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: Thank you to the presenters for great presentations. My first question will be for Jason and Sarah. I work in partnership with two First Nations communities in my riding, Alderville and Hiawatha. Both Chiefs Carr and Mowat have taught me a great deal as a member and just as a member of our community. I wanted to touch on the pre-apprenticeship piece, and thank you for your presentation. It was excellent. I think, without question, we cannot address the skilled trades gap without working in partnership and unlocking the potential for our fastest-growing youth population, those being Indigenous partners, and supporting in a meaningful manner. You spoke a couple of times and the words “cultural awareness” came up a few times.

So I wanted to speak to you about pre-apprenticeship funding. I know there’s a \$21-million envelope, \$9 million more than when we first took office as a government, and I think we’ve seen approximately 1,800 placements to date. How important is the pre-apprenticeship piece—it’s again open to any application—and what more can we do to get that out as a government and to communicate it? Because I think again to applications from my community and elsewhere, and it’s really organic in nature.

I don’t want to be overly prescriptive of what that application looks like, because it’s really on the proponent who brings it forward. Are things like that, Jason and

Sarah, important for taking that step in the right direction with those sorts of applications that are designed, again, by the proponent?

Mr. Jason Rasevych: Definitely the eligibility criteria within these programs are important. I've co-developed programs in the past with Confederation College, Lakehead University, the AETS—Anishinabek Employment and Training Services—KKETS, Matawa First Nations' training arm and Oshki-Wenjack training institute.

What I've found is that at times, when we're applying for funding, whether it's through the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities or other Ministry of Labour programs, there are ineligible expenses that are put there that limit the First Nations components of the training—not necessarily cultural awareness, because that could be included, but there are other types of issues: travel, child care, support related to licensing. To just get the pre-apprenticeship and the pre-employment training programs operating, there need to be support services there at the community level, at the front line.

What I've seen in the past is many of these regional training agencies that are outside of the community will often assume those dollars to run these programs, but many of the individuals who are administering them are out in the urban centres; they're not there in the community. We've got to break down these silos that exist within some of the other providers of social services and health care. If we're operating a training program and it's funded by the province, but then there isn't retention and wrap-around support, there would be an education institute or a training institute that is not resourced to specialize in mental health training and other cultural awareness training and sensitivity training that need to be part of these programs and they're non-existent there. I think that's really important.

Sarah, I don't know if you have anything to add.

Ms. Sarah Lang: The only other thing I would add is also just targeted approaches to the math and reading literacy and identifying early on any barriers to learning for Indigenous students, and providing the resources to either get one-to-one support in place—so there's a connection between what is needed to continue on in the trades and that pre-apprenticeship skills development that's required. That's even starting at a very early age.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. David Piccini: Yes. That's really helpful. I think we can connect off-line. I know my colleague PA McKenna is on here as well on some of those barriers. I think the program there, obviously, with increased funding and increased placements through which Indigenous communities can apply, is a critical piece. But you've mentioned just here other social aspects like child care and other things that are important. I think travel—if I'm not mistaken, PA McKenna—is eligible, but the child care piece and others are excellent flags that you raised today.

Look, this is helpful. I think all parties, as MPP Fife mentioned at the outset, are really committed to ending this barrier, addressing the stigma and all things that go with it for all communities in the province of Ontario, so I appreciate that.

One other thing I just wanted to touch on with you both is perhaps when you move beyond the pre-apprenticeship piece, when one moves beyond, the expanded OSAP eligibility—as the PA for colleges and universities, I've had the opportunity to work closely with Rebecca Jamieson for the Indigenous Institutes Consortium on that piece. I know Suzanne Brant from FNTI said, “The government's commitment to Indigenous” learners “achieving their full potential in Ontario” is unwavering with this expanded OSAP eligibility.

You both mentioned cultural awareness. I think that's a critical piece that Indigenous institutes offer: “Never about us without us,” always in a culturally responsive and adaptive and receptive manner, with Indigenous teachings at Indigenous institutes, but also that financial piece as a barrier. How important is that to really unlocking the skilled trades gap for Indigenous learners in the province of Ontario? Jason?

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Jason Rasevych: It's important, because there is a financial math component to work through the eligibility to participate in these apprenticeship training programs. What we've found, as well, is the tool that some of these institutes and unionized environments are using to assess aptitude are not suited for some of the Indigenous learners. We've struggled with that, because we've tried to work across several parties to create an assessment tool that works to identify the aptitude that we believe will make an Indigenous apprenticeship successful and not have that on standard terms related to the historical views of these agencies that are utilizing these assessment tools. That's where this co-development and working together—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you so much. The time has come up.

We'll now move to the opposition side for their first round. Who would like to start? MPP Mamakwa.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you. Meegwetich to Eric, from Ontario Sheet Metal Workers' and Roofers' Conference, but also Jason and Sarah, Anishnawbe Business Professional Association.

I think it's always good, Jason and Sarah, to provide an Indigenous perspective on things, on how it impacts First Nations. Sometimes when people come to committee, they don't understand what's happening in our communities, in First Nations communities, and the example is Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which represents 49 First Nations in northern Ontario. We know that there's overcrowding. We know of some communities not having access to clean drinking water.

I know that when we talk about overcrowding—I was up in Eabametoong, there, in February and people were living in tents in minus 40 below because of that very issue. An example was when I was talking to some people from up north. In order to catch up on the housing issue, the overcrowding and the housing needs, it would require building 4,500 homes in Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which amounts to about—if you average it out to \$250,000 per home, that's over a billion dollars just to invest in that. That's just homes; we're not even talking about

infrastructure like electricity, hydro, roads and all the things that come with it. So it's always interesting to bring that.

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When you want to do that—I see a lot of construction workers, and whenever I travel up north, you see a lot of these construction workers, whether it's housing, whether it's water and sewer, whether it's schools and whatnot. We don't even have high schools in some communities; kids have to leave at 15 years old to come to an urban setting to go to high school. So it's really interesting, the rates that you provide. Can you elaborate some more on the challenges, the barriers? What does it mean exactly when we say “co-develop”?

Mr. Jason Rasevych: Yes, the issue is related to that pathway of promoting these opportunities at a young age. It should start in elementary and perhaps earlier in the individual's life of having those learned experiences and those role models at a younger age. When we look at many remote First Nations and even rural First Nations, the only three or four entities that have worked for us are the band administration, the health centre and perhaps a school if they have one and maybe the northern store or the local community store. When we look at a lot of the Indigenous youth that are coming up—they have dreams, whether they want to be an athlete or whether they want to be an entrepreneur or working in skilled trades—they need to be exposed to those environments and be able to view themselves through a pathway to be there and to be inspired, and a lot of the issues relate to the education.

I've been to Webequie in the past when we were working on the broadband development and it was noted that the students that are going to school in Webequie are two years behind the rates of the mainstream education system. A lot of the teachers that were there in the remote community have said some of the resources that are there for the teachers related to providing a learning environment that's productive are similar to Third World countries. So when we see a lot of these individuals that have to leave their community at grade 8 to go into high school, in grade 9 in Thunder Bay, they are at the grade 7 level—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Jason Rasevych: —and they struggle to be integrated into mainstream society. We see the challenges in Thunder Bay of dealing with racism and dealing with the other issues that are there. It's more of a burden for a young individual coming into the city to be able to find those supports, to be able to then focus on their educational pursuit. Those issues related to the young age are huge, and as a young adult moving forward into post-secondary and even skilled trades, there are even other biases that Indigenous people need support to deal with that are there at the workplace.

The cultural awareness side of things is really important to not only explain that to management but also the non-Indigenous workers who are at facilities so that they can understand some of the systemic issues that have been there before related to Indigenous people, with residential schools and Indian day schools, and having a broader view

as to the struggles that some of the community members have gone through.

Northern Ontario is very different from the south as well. Costs are a lot higher to be able to fly community members in and out for training. The digital divide with broadband creates more issues with distanced learning and education and other quality of life. That's why I made the comment about training travel dollars earlier. When your proponent is an education authority that's a college or university and they don't have feedback or input from Indigenous people in that proposal, it becomes limiting when the project rolls out. Government has a role to review these and also utilize expert folks that are Indigenous who have experience in developing these programs to ensure that they're efficient and effective.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Go ahead, Sarah.

Ms. Sarah Lang: Just to add, I think you really hit the fact that there's so much that needs to happen for readiness for learning, and those are the basics that we all need. You talk about housing and access to clean water. There is an opportunity there to feed two birds with one scone in that if we were to focus on addressing some of those very basic needs, you could be providing opportunities for skills and training in those community-based projects that the community identifies while at the same time improving conditions for the younger ones who are coming up, and simultaneously achieving multiple goals through those creative and collaborative approaches. But to enter into apprenticeship training programs with so much precariousness—this is why we say you have to really—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. Sorry to cut you off. The time has come up.

We'll have to move to the government side now for their second round. MPP Thanigasalam.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you to all the presenters for your great presentations. I've been listening to both presentations as well as the questions and answers.

First, I'm going to [*inaudible*] Jason and Sarah for highlighting the roadblocks and difficulties to enable the Indigenous youth to pursue their career paths, into either other career paths or into the skilled trades. When it comes to connecting bridges between these difficulties and Ontario skilled trades, what do you propose in terms of having representation from the Indigenous groups—either to be part of this board or to be part of this apprentice program? What do you offer? I know that the apprentice focus group may support a focus on First Nation, northern Ontario needs. So I think the voice, the one that you are raising today is definitely something that we want to hear. We have PA McKenna also here with us listening to these presentations so that we can provide better bridges to connect the demand difficulties to the solution-oriented.

I'll keep it very open to both of you. How would you want to proceed to meet these challenges for the Indigenous youth to, again, [*inaudible*] pre-apprentice or pre-employment difficulties that you mentioned? What's the right proposal that you would want to see from the ministry?

Mr. Jason Rasevych: I think that the ministry working more with the Indigenous organizations and perhaps developing an alliance or a funders' table to break down some of these barriers is going to be important because of the mandate and policy and also the role of other ministries and the other level of government, being the federal government, and also industry's role.

One of the ideas, of having perhaps a legislated quota or commitment for Indigenous apprenticeships would go a long way. There are targets that are set at the beginning of projects, but we don't always see those targets being met due to lack of resources, and then industry comes in with a complaint that they are not government and this is a government issue related to Indigenous infrastructure and Indigenous social issues and so forth. We see it become a political issue when it really is an issue that impacts their business and the project and implications. We've seen that with the east-west tie, the transmission build for \$700 million from Wawa to Thunder Bay, and now with the Wataynikaneyap project that's connecting remote First Nations to the grid. There were commitments that were made in the beginning, and there are challenges now with procurement, to see that filled with the Indigenous participation that was promised to green-light the project and secure social licence. A lot of that requires investment upfront in pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship to ensure that Indigenous people are ready to be positioned to participate fully in these projects in a meaningful way.

When we talk about aligning those goals and those objectives with the First Nation community, we also need to look at the lack of support or lack of services that are there in that Indigenous nation to participate. A lot of the communities would have to travel and migrate out to an urban centre, whether it's Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout or another area like Greenstone. At times, those communities do not support some of the Indigenous clients in the area and refer them back to their First Nation—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

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Mr. Jason Rasevych: —who do not have those supports, as well. So it's identifying ways to break down those barriers that are there in the urban settings, as well, and creating ways to collaborate.

You mentioned having a committee. Definitely, more diversity and inclusion on Skilled Trades Ontario and other advisory boards that work with government related to increasing human capital for First Nations to participate in these projects would also go a long way. Those are a few ideas.

Sarah, do you have any?

Ms. Sarah Lang: I would just, like you said, emphasize the collaboration and the diversity and inclusion. I mean, if there was enough coordination, I think some effective and creative solutions could be found, but they do definitely need to be basically led by or originate from the community in regard to what the priorities are and what makes sense in regard to their own aspirations.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Jason and Sarah.

Next I'll turn it over to Eric. Bob Gougeon—sorry if I mispronounced his last name—is the business manager for sheet metal workers' Local 285. He had this to say about the proposed new framework in this legislation: “Since Minister McNaughton became Minister of Labour, he has taken the time to get to know our industry and the issues that matter most, whether it's protecting health and safety or ensuring that the skilled trades system is strong for years to come. I applaud the government for listening and for working closely with labour to develop a plan to simplify the system and for following through on their commitment to re-establishing whole trades instead of portable skill sets.”

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Do you share Mr. Gougeon's enthusiasm and support for this new framework?

Mr. Eric Comartin: I'm happy to—Mike, go ahead.

Mr. Mike Mahon: Go ahead, Eric.

Mr. Eric Comartin: Listen, I think I indicated that we were very happy that the government had backed off many of the problematic components of the predecessor legislation. Mr. Gougeon identified, quite rightly, that the Minister of Labour listened intently and was available.

But I do note that that quote comes from before Bill 288 was released. I know that because Mr. Gougeon and I spoke the morning of that and participated in the consultation that morning. At that—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. I apologize to cut you off. That's all the time we have for the government.

We'll now go to the opposition for their second round. MPP Gates?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'll go back to Eric. Finish your response to that question, because I had the same concerns as you, quite frankly. I'm glad the minister listened, but there are parts in this bill that are going to still allow this government to do skill sets. As you say, they got off skill sets, but the language that you talked about in 6(c) and 7(c)—maybe you can elaborate, because that's where the amendments have to come in or be taken out of the bill. Leaving it up to regulations, rather than legislation, is a recipe for disaster. Some of the unions, I think—I agree with you—gave the quotes because they were so happy they got off skill sets; they didn't get a chance to read the bill before they did those.

So I'll let you finish. That was my little introduction into that. I'll let you finish.

Mr. Eric Comartin: Listen, it's important to give recognition where recognition is deserved, right? In this regard, Minister McNaughton and the rest of the government should get some recognition for the work they did. There's just more work to be done, right?

And to be fair, many of these mistakes—what we consider mistakes in this legislation, not to be unfair—existed with the previous government as well. These were mistakes that are repeated in earlier legislation when it was the Liberal government. This shouldn't be seen as a partisan attack in any way. What we're trying to do, I think—all of us—is to get a system in place that protects the public but

at the same time recognizes that certain work should be performed only by people with a Certificate of Qualification. And if you don't have that, you should be punished. You should face a remedy that adequately protects the public and deters individuals from practising without the required licence. In our view, this legislation could be improved dramatically with a couple of the amendments that we've proposed.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate you sending us over the amendments, so I've read them. I've had an hour lead. I'm going to have another hour lead on this bill. I agree with you: Moving in the direction that we're moving is great, but we have an opportunity to make this bill really, really good. If we don't utilize some of the expertise that's in the skilled trades around amendments, we're going to just be fighting all over again with the labour relations board or fighting among ourselves. All that stuff is going to happen.

So I'm going to ask you another question. I'm going to stay with you, Eric, because you were left out, I think, in the last little while. I think it's fair to give you an opportunity to speak here. The legislation does nothing to change the current 1-to-1 ratio set out by the province. How do you feel this impacts the health and safety of workers? That should be our number one goal: health and safety.

Mr. Eric Comartin: Just real quick: Our collective agreement, the sheet metal collective agreement, still requires a roughly 3-to-1 or 2-to-1 ratio. So we've covered that off and so have the other trade unions.

What this committee should be concerned about on a 1-to-1 ratio is the quality of the training of the apprentices. You cannot get training, in our view, where you are working exclusively on a 1-to-1 ratio. You need the support of at least two or three journeymen across the company or across the job to learn how to do the work, because otherwise you're involved simply as an assistant or a labourer. You're not being trained effectively, and that's not to denigrate labourers or assistants. The point is, you're there to be trained through your apprenticeship program, and you need access to as many trainers as possible.

Just so you understand, we can't even get employers to take on apprentices under our collective agreement when it's 2 or 3 to 1. They're not taking apprentices on. So the idea that somehow you need to have a 1 to 1 for employers is simply not supported by the evidence. If you were to look at the ratios right now, in large mechanical corporations or employers, you will not find anyone that is employing a 1-to-1 ratio.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate that.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Three minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Your comment about your collective agreements—and I heard this from unions over the last day, day and a half that we were rushed into doing this, because unions are saying, “Well, my collective agreement is 3 to 1.” I used Unifor as an example. In their auto plants, it's 8 to 1 and 9,000 hours. If they didn't get

off skill sets, we might have lost the entire investment of \$6 billion in Ontario.

But if you're a non-union employee, you have the right to have proper training. You have the right to make sure that you're safe. You want to go home to your family like everybody else. I understand where the unions are at, but the non-union people need to be trained properly as well, and I think that's a concern. In a union shop, 90%, I think it is, will finish the apprenticeship. In a non-union shop, it's about 30%. There's lots of stuff out there that we've got to do to make this bill better.

I'll get onto another question, because they don't give me enough time to ask a lot of questions. I'd like to begin by looking at the history of how we got here. This government initially began their approach to modernizing the skilled trades by moving to skill-set-based in 2019. They later changed their approach and moved their reforms to the current legislation. Could you discuss why that was the wrong approach and why you think they changed course? I'll go to Eric.

Mr. Eric Comartin: Yes, okay. Look, it's the wrong approach. I'll give you a perspective, the general perspective: We have one of the pre-eminent skilled trades programs in the world in Ontario, certainly in Canada. If you were to ask anyone, other than Germany, some of the Nordic countries and in some odds and ends elsewhere, skill sets are the exact opposite direction that you want to pursue if you want to ensure that you have a very organized and trained skilled trades program for compulsory trades. There's a really simple reason for that.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Eric Comartin: If you are given the work to perform as an apprentice, you will then be able to perform it as a journeyman both through a combination of on the job or in the classroom setting. Skill sets and how they're designed are not based on any curriculum. They are employer-only-related, right? So if your employer is doing the training, great. If they're not, it's a problem. There is no standard that is established through a “skill set” training program. There is no standard.

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We want to increase standards. We want to raise the level. It's not good enough that we are one of the best; we should be the best in the world. So we say the government heard this. We think they heard this, for whatever reason, and they acknowledge that and they realize there is a way to do this that is better. We think that the previous government understood this too, the previous Liberal—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. Sorry to cut you off. That is all the time we have for the opposition.

We'll now go to the independent members for their final round. MPP Hunter?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Eric, if you could just talk about—do you have any concerns with the 1 to 1 in this legislation and safety and moving forward with the quality and standards?

Mr. Eric Comartin: I do. We all do. Lookit, if you're a small shop that's doing sheet metal and you own your own place and you want to have an apprentice, great.

That's a 1-to-1 ratio; it has always been a 1-to-1. But if you're running a large operation and a large job site, the purpose of apprentices isn't for the labour; it's about training. So we are concerned, and Mr. Gates pointed this out, that the number of completions goes down dramatically when you do not have a regulation that sets out an apprenticeship-to-journeyperson ratio that is higher than 1 to 1. What that means is that employers are hiring individuals. Maybe they're registering them as apprentices, maybe they're not, but they're treating them as apprentices for one or two seasons, and then, "See you later. You're done. Go work someplace else as an apprentice." They're not actually becoming journeypeople. They're not doing the process, because there's no support for them.

Now that happens less—I'm not saying it never happens in the unionized job setting, but for non-union and in the marginally employed, it's terrible. So if we are concerned about the "skilled trades shortage," a 1-to-1 ratio increases that trades shortage. It doesn't solve it. We need to match departures from the trade with completions from the Certificate of Qualification process through the apprenticeship. If you look at how many people started this year versus how many people are still in it and it's not 70%, 80% or 90%, then we're failing.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Eric, we do want more apprentices, and we want to bring more people on the margins into the skilled trades to benefit the trades, to diversify the trades and to create opportunities.

Mr. Eric Comartin: Yes, you're right. We do. The way to do that is to provide the support to the apprentices directly. Providing support is identified—tool support, grants, in particular for individuals who come from more modest backgrounds.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Two minutes.

Mr. Eric Comartin: If you want to become an apprentice today, you need to get your tools, you need to have a car in many cases, and more importantly, as we all know, you need to have car insurance. Without public auto insurance, it's really, really expensive as a young person to start off in a trade. So if you want to have that diversity, that's the type of support you do. That's not in this legislation; that's not the purpose of the legislation.

What you don't want is to basically exploit people with the carrot of a potential licence or a job in the trade, which is two years of cheap labour, minimum wage and then, "See you, buddy. We're done." In my view, that's where many of the increases, in terms of funding, are going: to providing cheap labour, not to ensuring that individuals complete the trade and become journeypeople.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): One minute.

Mr. Eric Comartin: In my view, incentives need to be provided that say if you're an employer and you have an apprentice, you will get some support after they finish their fifth year of apprenticeship.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: So incentives for completion—

Mr. Eric Comartin: No question.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: —or staged throughout.

Mr. Eric Comartin: Listen, if you want to get young people, especially from modest backgrounds, involved in the trades—and we're not talking just Indigenous people; we're talking in urban environments—you need to provide the support directly to them.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: And Black, Indigenous, people of colour, women—the full scale.

Mr. Eric Comartin: Get it to them, like a grant system, that then gets them their tools, access to a vehicle, potentially child care; lots of supports. We don't do it by some sort of trickle-down component; we do it directly to them. If you need a partner with that, the trade unions are—

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Thank you. I apologize to cut you off.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you so much.

The Chair (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): That is all the time we have. I want to thank both the presenters for their presentations. You're now released.

As a reminder, the deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. today, Tuesday, May 25, 2021. The deadline to file amendments with the Clerk of the Committee is 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 26, 2021.

The committee is now adjourned until 9 a.m. on Friday, May 28, when we'll meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 288. Thank you so much. Stay safe.

The committee adjourned at 1156.

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