

Legislative  
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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

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16 September 2020

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Mercredi  
16 septembre 2020

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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House Publications and Language Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
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Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 16 September 2020

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 16 septembre 2020

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 15, 2020, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion regarding amendments to the standing orders.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** When we last debated this matter, I understand the member for Oakville had the floor. He's in the chamber, and I'll recognize him to continue his remarks.

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a pleasure to speak yesterday to this motion put forward by the government House leader. We only had a few minutes to speak, but I'm happy to finish up today. Again, it's an honour to rise here today and be back after the summer. I want to welcome everybody on both sides back to the Legislature. It's most important that everybody is in good spirits and healthy going through this pandemic. I want to start with that.

I did want to just start with some of the changes that our government has put forward and go back to why we're making these changes and a little bit of history, and then go through some of the specific changes. First of all, in terms of the Legislature here and the standing order changes, not unlike society, we evolve and we make changes. The changes to the standing orders here—I think we can certainly thank the British parliamentary tradition that we have here in Ontario. It's a system we inherited, which allows for these kinds of adjustments. Speaking of adjustments, today I'll be addressing the changes that the government House leader put forward in the proposed motion.

The first significant change to the standing orders pertains to order 35, regarding independent members during question period. The proposed change for this 42nd Parliament is that the House Speaker may allot the independent members the fourth and fifth questions during question periods that are currently being asked by government members. In total, members on this side currently can ask six questions. The current procedure is, "The Speaker has the discretion to permit an independent member to place a question and one supplementary question during question period." This is an important amendment,

because it expands the opportunity for members to pose questions that their constituents want answers to.

For me, this is my first term as MPP, and as with everyone, we put ourselves forward to run so we have the voice of our communities here at Queen's Park. I understand the importance of my role in representing the people of Oakville, having their input directed to me to be reflected here in this House. The independent members take their roles as seriously as I do, and they have the duty to represent their constituents. This amendment will enable urgent local concerns to be raised more often and to be addressed in question period.

Question period spans 60 minutes each day that we sit, and this is the only time that we have reserved for members of the opposition to hold the government to account. Most days, I hear questions from the opposition members that quote from their constituents directly, and, on times that I do not hear quotes, constituents are still referenced. This is the very essence of democracy, and constituents are always reminding each of us who we represent here.

Every part of this province is different, so, of course, there are high-level concerns, but ridings are diverse. The independent members require more of an ability to speak and ask questions regarding unique issues that impact their ridings. With the longest question period of any province, here in Ontario, we have that benefit that governments are committed to be held to account in answering questions.

In this time period, independent members should have more questions allocated to them. Enhancing the ability to fulfill their representative role matters. I believe this is something that every member of this House can support: providing more occasions to bring forward constituent concerns and inquiries after hearing input.

The independent members opposite received almost 25% of the vote in the last election, yet they have very little time allocated to them. It's unfortunate—I know, the member who was speaking yesterday from Hamilton Mountain was referencing that we were quashing democracy in not allowing the opposition to be able to speak, when, in fact, we're giving them more time. We're providing two questions from the government to the independent members, so I would hope the loyal opposition would support us. My only thought as to why they have not been supportive is that they're afraid that the independent members—perhaps there will be a shuffling in the next election of who will be the official opposition. Because allowing them more time I think is critical to democracy. I don't know why you wouldn't want them to be able to speak more.

Amendments to question period are not the only changes that are being made that benefit the independent members. There is currently a provision to allow independent members to substitute for each other on committees, as members of recognized parties can. But this is only temporary. The proposed change will make substituting permanent when there is an agreement between members. I think this is particularly important. I was on the SCOFEA committee this summer which met for many, many weeks throughout the summer, and the independent members had the opportunity to change position. We had a lot of time, so having few members, their entire summer would have been pretty much on the committee. Allowing them that flexibility I think is important for the independent members to get full interaction and full involvement on committees, so I would encourage the loyal opposition to support that as well to allow the smaller independents that flexibility.

Now, with respect to private members' public business, I'd now like to address the private members' public business amendments that this motion will make. We are bringing changes that would allow more focus on the private members' public business by considering one item from Tuesday to Thursday. Moreover, we are adding a fourth private member's bill to the House's consideration each Monday at 9 a.m., until 2021.

Additionally, there will be a requirement for all recorded divisions on private members' bills to be deferred to after the next day's question period. This will allow much more participation in private members' bills. The current practice is having the three private members' bills considered on Thursday afternoon, with the votes immediately proceeding. The fundamental change is spreading our consideration on the bills over several days, starting Tuesday, instead of loading Thursday with three bills. There will also be a fourth bill that will be added on Monday mornings.

These amendments are timely considering the changes we made during the pandemic. Over the past months, through the uncertainty of COVID-19, we suspended our regular sittings. We had diverted our attention to pandemic relief, and all parties worked together to enable swift action to be taken to help those who needed it immediately. As a result, there is now a backlog of private members' bills that should have already been considered in the spring session. Around 27 bills were delayed to the fall session, so what we need now more than ever is the ability to bring these bills forward in a timely manner for their consideration; hence, the ability to bring this fourth day in to end of June 2021 to play catch up to where we should have been if we did not make the adjustments at the outset of the pandemic.

It's important that the work members have put into their private members' bills are considered before the House. I think we all agree that private members' bills are critically important to this House, although I know the member from Hamilton Mountain yesterday belittled private members' bills, but I think it's an important part of being a legislator here in the House.

#### 0910

I had the privilege to introduce my private member's bill a while back about government institutions needing consent before obtaining personal information—that was back in 2018—Bill 55, Safeguarding Our Information Act. I remember the work that went into it, and the cause I was trying to change had overwhelming support that I received from my constituents who wanted this bill put forward. I also remember the possible impact it had, since our federal counterparts backtracked on the issue at hand during that time. If you recall, the federal government and Statistics Canada were going to intrude into the personal banking information of everyday Canadians without their consent. Perhaps my bill had some input in helping to move public opinion against this intrusion on our rights.

What I'm getting at, Speaker, is these bills can make a positive impact on our society when they're considered and passed, and not stuck in this backlog we have right now—to no fault of anyone here. Private members' bills are another way for members to express the changes their constituents want, by fixing an issue or introducing something entirely new.

Furthermore, the bills will be the final item of the day at 6 p.m. from Tuesday to Thursday. This is important, because it offers stakeholders the chance to attend and engage in the process after their workday. Moreover, the province of Ontario is large, and for the members who have long car rides back to their ridings, or perhaps even plane rides, this offers them a better opportunity to be present when these bills are brought forward, as they are currently only on a Thursday afternoon.

The changes to the private members' public business proposals and the adjustments to voting also have significance. The result of the deferring of votes of recorded divisions to the following day allows more of our colleagues from both sides of the House to vote on these important bills. A crucial aspect of our role is to vote on bills here in the Legislature. That's why we're here: to vote. Expanding on this fundamental right to receiving input from members, these adjustments are needed to promote the status of private members' bills that have been on hold.

I know we have a number of bills right now that are before the House from both sides. Let's get this moving through the House in a timely fashion. I know there's a couple of interesting bills from the opposition members as well as from our government side. I know the member from Mississauga East—Cooksville had a bill on cyberbullying, and there are a few heritage days and weeks that I know opposition members have. Let's get these through and get them through the Legislature.

Now, with respect to committee debate, extending debate on legislation is occurring by introducing additional days for private members' bills. Still, it is not the whole extent of increasing the opportunity for debate within this motion. This leads me to comment on another change for establishing more debate. Presently, there is no debate on bills that are received back from committee. The proposed change is to add a 30-minute debate after a piece of legislation is reported back to the House from committee.

Again, with this provision, independent members are benefiting: six minutes will be allocated to the independent members from the 30 minutes, and the remainder is split between the recognized official parties, being the government and the official opposition.

I think this benefits the House as a whole to have discussion after bills are put through committee and there are changes. We should have that final opportunity to be able to debate and discuss bills that have gone through committee, and that currently is not being done, so I think this is, again, further encouraging openness and democracy and transparency in this House, which our government has always been supportive of.

The purpose is clear: to provide moments for members of all sides to have their say on legislation and participate in the legislative process. We all have a range of perspectives and this should not be suppressed from bills that will affect this province. This amendment is especially important when the bill has undergone significant amendments during the committee phase, or where new information is received. Implementing a debate would allow for the information to be shared with everyone, instead of the bill going straight to voting. I do hope the opposition supports this, along with the other changes proposed, again, as this benefits all members of the House, and I think the public at large here in Ontario.

The next issue I would like to touch on that's proposed are the reasoned amendments. I'd like to bring attention to this amendment which would remove non-substantive reasoned amendments. The reasoned amendment tool allows up to two days of delay. As such, currently it's been used by the official opposition simply as a delay tactic. Looking at the recent history of this tool, between 2011 and 2014 there were no reasoned amendments used in the entire session from any party. Between 2014 and 2018, in the legislative session before this one, there were six, and that's over four years that the House sat. Contrast that to this Parliament, which started in June 2018: It's only been a little over two years, and there have already been 26 used. In just two years, 26 times bills have been delayed before being presented for consideration. Specifically, the official opposition members in the last two years have used 17 reasoned amendments, more than the previous 20 years combined. This is an increase of over 400% from the 41st Parliament.

This tool is meant to raise substantial concern at a very early stage before a second reading debate begins. But as previously stated, its history does not seem to match the function it was designed for. It is being overused on important legislation and has no practical purpose. The tool has been used on recent legislation such as Bill 195, Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, and Bill 171, the Building Transit Faster Act. Ontarians rely on public transit to commute to work, and we need to get shovels in the ground and build even more as our population grows and grows.

The final change I would like to touch on is the take-note debate, and I would like to raise this as an amendment to add a provision for take-note debates. These are long

debates on issues of substantial importance. This is yet another opportunity for members to express their views on government policy. These debates last up to four hours and are a chance for members to debate. There is no vote at the end of a take-note debate. The purpose is simply to listen and note the issue of significance. With the COVID-19 pandemic, creating this provision is of a practical importance. Looking into this pandemic and the uncertainty everyone felt across this province, it could happen again, and as a government, there needs to be a course of action.

I know this particular debate is used in the federal Parliament and has been used a number of times over the years. This type of debate allows members across both sides of the House, not just the government side, but the opposition, to be able to speak for 10 minutes and make an impactful speech before—and I stress before—the government decides on a path forward. Since these are grand discussions on significant issues, notably, they are less partisan and allow for discussion of the best possible solution. We have worked together as a province in dealing with COVID-19, as seen by the important measures we've introduced so far.

As I wrap up my discussion, I want to highlight the importance of this motion. This motion, in proposing these amendments, is very timely. Yes, we are proposing changes to the standing orders. Still, we have all adapted personally to the current situation over the past several months, and the Legislature should be no different. The system that we have inherited here, this parliamentary system, is one that is set up for evolving and change. That is what the government is doing. We are not to be static and fail to make changes for the better, but rather we are meant to evolve to the current challenges and overcome them together. Giving a voice to independent members, giving more time to speak before decisions are made by government to the opposition I think encourages discussion, democracy, and working together collaboratively as a Parliament. This pandemic has increased our awareness of the need to streamline the process to make government more efficient to get our business completed. In the process, we are strengthening democracy in this province by providing more say to members of this House as they represent their constituents.

Legislation needs to be passed, the hold on private members' bills needs to be resolved, and this motion aims to achieve just that. We are making time to add another day for these bills to be considered so they can finally get the attention they deserve.

**0920**

So with that, I hope the opposition will support us in this motion.

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

Ms. McKenna has moved the following amendment to Mr. Rasheed's amendment to government notice of motion number 88 relating to changes to the standing orders:

"That the amendment be amended by deleting the word 'Break' and substituting the word 'Recess'".

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say aye.

All those opposed will please say nay.

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Carried on division.

Further debate on the amendment, as amended? Further debate? I recognize the member from Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Sorry; I'm—nobody sent me the memo.

*Interjections.*

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

Mr. Rasheed has moved the following amendment, as amended, to government notice of motion number 88 relating to changes to the standing orders:

“That the motion be amended by adding the following in the table depicting the Thursday meeting schedule of the House in standing order 9(a):

“A row in the ‘Time’ column between ‘10:15 a.m.’ and ‘1:00 p.m.’ containing the words ‘Following morning routine’; and

“A row in the ‘Proceeding’ column between ‘Morning routine’ and ‘Afternoon routine’ containing the word ‘Recess’”.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say aye.

All those opposed will please say nay.

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Carried on division.

Further debate on the motion, as amended? I recognize the member from—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Timmins.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** — Timmins.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It used to be Cochrane South, then it was Timmins—James Bay, and now it's Timmins. So it does get a bit confusing after a while. That's what happens in 30 years.

I'm pleased to be able to speak on the main motion—because, as you know, I was able to give my lead speech on the amendment and the subamendment. What I want to do with this particular part of the speech is to, first of all, move an amendment that we wanted to put forward yesterday—but the government had moved an amendment and subamendment, which we've now dealt with.

Prior to my reading this motion into the record and giving it to the Clerks, I just want to thank Kevin Modeste and his trusty assistant Jasmine, who put these together—and I have to say, they're not simple amendments; they're fairly complicated. They did so, gave them to the Clerks, and they came back completely in order. I think there aren't a lot of people in this place who could do that. I want to thank Kevin and Jasmine for their fine work in putting

this together. You've got to give the credit where it's due, man. I can't take all the credit. That would not be right.

I move that government notice of motion 88 be amended as follows:

Standing order 39 is deleted and the following substituted:

“39(a) Every bill shall be introduced upon a motion for leave for introduction and first reading, specifying the title of the bill.

“(b) Prior to the introduction of a government bill, 48 hours' notice shall be required, with the full text of the bill tabled pursuant to standing order 57.

“(c) The motion for introduction and first reading shall be decided without amendment or debate, but in the case of a public bill, the mover may make a brief explanation of its purposes.

“(d) On the introduction of a government bill, a compendium of background information shall be delivered to the critics of the recognized opposition parties.

“(e) No bill may be introduced in blank or imperfect form.

“(f) If a recorded vote is requested, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes.

“(g) The period for ‘Introduction of Bills’ shall be limited to 30 minutes.

“(h) No introduction of a single bill shall last more than five minutes.”

Further, “The following new standing order is added:

“47.2(a) A member of the assembly may table a request with the Speaker for the House to convene an emergency debate for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration. The request must be submitted to the table in writing by 12 p.m. on the sessional day prior to being raised in the chamber.

“(b) The request in clause (a) shall include a motion for the House to consider and set out a suggested time for the debate to take place

“(i) upon the commencement of orders of the day on Thursday afternoon; or

“(ii) at the ordinary hour of adjournment on another sessional day.

“(c) At the conclusion of oral questions on the sessional day after the request is tabled, the Speaker will grant the member who tabled the request the opportunity to present without argument the written request of the matter proposed to be discussed.

“(d) Emergency debate requests

“(i) shall contain the text of a non-amendable motion to be debated

“(ii) shall not be a motion for second or third reading of the bill

“(iii) shall not be a motion for want of confidence in the government.

“(e) The Speaker shall decide, without any debate, whether or not the matter is proper to be discussed. In determining whether a matter should have urgent consideration, the Speaker shall have regard to the extent to which it concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government or could come within the scope of ministerial



action and the Speaker also shall have regard to the probability of the matter being brought before the House within reasonable time by other means.

“(f) The Speaker may defer the decision upon whether the matter is proper to be discussed to a later date, but shall provide a ruling in a timely fashion.

“(g) In awarding an emergency debate, the Speaker shall consider other proceedings of the House and reserves the right to schedule the proceeding at a time and date that differs from the one specified by the member’s request.

“(h) No member shall speak longer than 10 minutes during debate on any such motion.

“(i) The Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and declare the debate concluded,

“(i) at 6 p.m. for a debate that takes place pursuant to clause (b)(i)

“(ii) after no more than four hours of debate that takes place pursuant to clause (b)(ii).

“(j) When an emergency debate is designated to be taken up at the ordinary hour of adjournment, an extension of the meeting hours of the House under standing order 7(c) shall not apply.

“(k) When an emergency debate is designated to be taken up at the ordinary hour of adjournment on Tuesday or Wednesday, the adjournment proceedings under standing order 36 shall not apply.”

I’m going to give this to our usher who’s going to bring it to the table and to the Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Mr. Bisson has moved government notice of motion 88 be amended as follows:

“Standing order 39”—

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I heard “dispense.” Dispense? Dispense.

Further debate on Mr. Bisson’s amendment to the motion, as amended?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I realize that was a bit of long motion to read, and I want to thank the House for its patience in giving me the opportunity to read that into the record.

**0930**

Now we’re debating the amendments, so I want to quickly go through what these amendments are all about. I think they’re a reasonable way to come at what the government is trying to do in these standing orders. I heard the government members get up and make the arguments about why the standing orders have to be changed, and about how reasoned amendments were used frivolously and were used too often and all of those kinds of things. Well, the reality is that there’s a legislative process that allows a pause on the introduction of a bill at second reading so that, if necessary, not only can you amend that bill in some way, but you can actually pause the process for two days.

That becomes very important for two reasons. The first reason is that the public and the media need the opportunity to be able to see that bill, so that they are able to feed

back to us in the House—on both sides of the House, government and opposition—any concerns that they may have in regard to the bill. If the bill is introduced, let’s say, on Tuesday at 3 o’clock and we have a debate at 9 o’clock on Monday, as proposed in these standing orders, the public is never really going to have a chance to look at the bill and to put their comments in as to what they think is good and bad about the bill.

With the new standing orders, which have now been changed a number of times by this government, the process to pass the legislation through the House happens fairly quickly. Depending on the day, you can get it done in two days. You could be done second reading in two days, depending on the day the debate takes place, along with a time allocation motion that decides that there are going to be no committee hearings—and the government has done that on controversial bills like Bill 176 and Bill 178—and then send the bill right to third reading for a one-hour debate. Then we’ve cut the public out entirely. If the government has the tool in its toolbox to time-allocate legislation so that there would be no time for public hearings, it’s incumbent upon the government to give the public and the media and members of this House the ability to have a pause when bills are introduced, so that we are able to look at the bill, study the bill, think about the bill and come back with some thoughts about what’s good and bad about the bill.

Contrary to what the government likes to say, in every Parliament, the opposition doesn’t always vote against every bill. When the Conservatives were sitting across from the Liberals, they voted with the government, I believe it was, 50% of the time. They always used to say, “Oh no, no. The NDP are out there propping up the Liberals.” Well, even the Conservatives, who were opposed in opposition to Ms. Wynne and Mr. McGuinty, voted for government bills about 50% of the time; I think it was 52% of the time. We were around 57%. We were pretty close, the two opposition parties, and the reason for that is very simple: Not every bill that the government brings into the House is one we’re all opposed to. There are some bills—as you know, Mr. Speaker; you’ve sat on both sides of the House—that are bills that we agree with in the opposition. You either let them go quietly or you get up and say a couple of things about how this is a good idea, and you move on to the next bill.

But there are bills that are contentious. Speaker, I remember well when you sat on this side of the House in the official opposition. You were vehemently opposed to some of the bills that Premier Wynne and Premier McGuinty put forward, and that was your right. You represent a constituency that saw it differently, you represent a party that saw it differently, and you came to the House and exercised your right as a member to debate the bill and to put your points forward. But you needed the time, as we all need the time and the media needs the time and the public need the time, to be able to look at the bill and to understand it.

To have a bill—let’s say something like an omnibus bill like we had last August, which was introduced in the House. Under these new rules, it would be introduced on

a Wednesday, debated on Thursday morning and would probably be done by Thursday afternoon because of the way the timing now works, because we have a longer time for debate for the government bills on Thursday when we got rid of private members' bills on Thursday afternoon. The public will never get a chance to get their heads around any of this legislation, and neither will the media.

Now, who gets the advantage with that? Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to pick on you because you're a government member, but the government is the one who is going to have the advantage, because if they have a controversial bill, that's what they'll do. They'll introduce it in such a way that will limit the amount of time that the bill will stay in the House. There is a Monday and a Thursday when we have those long sessions from 1 in the afternoon to 6 o'clock at night, which could conceivably give the government about four and a half hours of debate, right? You can quickly get through legislation by having those bills timed in such a way that we do it in those longer sessions.

In the last 18 days of the House, the government can sit until midnight. So literally, on the introduction of a bill, the government could introduce the bill on Monday, introduce it for night sitting on Tuesday, get six hours of debate, be at the threshold the next morning, time-allocate it and skip the committee process, and you've gone through the entire legislative process in about two and a half days. That's why we in the official opposition, Andrea Horwath and the NDP, are suggesting there needs to be a pause.

This concept exists in a different form in Ottawa. In Ottawa, there's a rule—I know that the government House leader is fond of all that is Ottawa. I sometimes wonder, does he miss Ottawa, and is this a signal that he's running federally? I just wonder. I'm just speculating. But my point is, he likes things that are in Ottawa. I understand that he came from there, and there are things in Ottawa that we can all like; for example, how much they're paid and their pensions. I just would put that on the record. The interesting thing is they never froze their pay for 15 years. A lot of people don't know that. Anyway, time for another debate.

The point is, if we're going to bring the concepts of the federal House of Commons here to the province—fair enough—well, let's bring some of those concepts all the way. Let's use the 48-hour rule that they have in Ottawa and adjust it in a way that brings the 48-hour rule and respects what we've traditionally done in Ontario, which is to have two sleeps. In other words, you have two sleeps before you get to the actual debate.

Now, in Ottawa, it's different. It's only an amendment. It's like in a motion. The government has to table the name of the bill. It's two days that it's tabled, but you don't actually get the text there. What we're proposing is you get the text of the bill. In other words, it's tabled on Monday, and you have two days that it can't be called, which would be Tuesday and Wednesday, so the first day they can call it would be on Thursday. At least that way, the public and the media can look at the bill. They can read it.

Like I said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, it's not as if the government can't time how they're going to pass their legislation through the House in a fall or spring session. They know what they want to pass through this House, by and large. There are things that come up, yes, that adjust that, but you put it into your schedule. So you say, "Okay, I've got six or seven bills that I want to pass in a fall session. Here's how I'm going to deal with managing them through the process so that we're able to get them done within the session."

Now, when I first got here, Speaker, a bill was introduced in the fall. You got second reading done in the fall. You went out in committee and travelled the bill in the intersession in the winter, and then you came back in the spring and did third reading. Very, very seldom, when I got here, did a bill go through an entire process of first, second, committee and third reading in one session. That was the exception. It was only when there was unanimous consent to do something.

So that's the first amendment. Our first amendment is what we call the 48-hour rule, and we think that's just a reasonable thing to do to make sure that the public and the media get an opportunity to look at this legislation, because the government is going to be time-allocating much of this legislation, and if it's controversial, they will time-allocate it in a way that there will be no or little committee time for the public to come in.

The other one, which is the new standing order that we add under 47.2, is what's called an emergency debate. This is something that they have in Ottawa. The government is bringing to this House a concept from Ottawa, which is a take-note debate. That's not a bad thing. Nobody is arguing against take-note debates. But the issue is, it is up to the government House leader to decide if that take-note debate is going to happen—yes, in consultation with the official opposition House leader, but I don't have the say on when it's going to get called, or if it's going to get called. That's up to the government House leader. Fair enough: That's the way that system works.

But what they have in Ottawa is an interesting one, where they have emergency debates where any cabinet minister, or any member of the House on either side, can table with the Speaker a motion that they want to have debated in the House. The motion has to be an emergency. In other words, you can't just do something for the sake of doing it. It has to be something that is pressing, and there are criteria as to what you can debate in regard to how it affects the government in regard to their own authority as a government. But the point is that you file it with the Speaker. After question period, the member who moved it gets up and explains quickly what it's all about and why the member is asking for that—he or she—and then the Speaker decides if there's going to be a debate, not the House leader.

#### 0940

Now, there are less of those emergency debates than take-note debates in the House of Commons, but they do happen from time to time, because there are times when governments don't want to have debates on certain things.

For example, I'm sure that we're going to want to have a debate, either in private members' or as a take-note debate, on what's happening with the return to school. The government may not want to have that happen. This would give the opportunity to a member of the government or the opposition or a cabinet minister—you never know—to be able to get up and ask for an emergency debate. When the emergency debate takes place, it would be four hours, and everybody would get 10-minute slots for debate in that thing. It allows a way of being able to bring things to the floor that's not entirely controlled by the government. I think that's the point here.

I'm just going to end on this point, because we only have a couple of minutes, and I'm looking forward to hearing what other people have to say: Over the years, from the time I came here in 1990, we have seen a diminishment of the role of the House when it comes to policy-making. We have very little in the way of what used to happen here when it came to public input for legislation. In the past, it was always—especially controversial bills—that the government just couldn't pass a controversial bill easily, because the rules allowed for long debate, allowed members to speak for multiple days if they wanted to. There was no time allocation, something that I was a part of when that happened. I look at it now and say, "Boy, new government members should be aware of what they're asked to do, because sometimes it ain't for their benefit." I learned that in a hurry with that one.

But anyway, my point is, it used to be that the public was very involved. There was a lot more participation at the committee level from the public and I would argue there was a much more engaged public when it came to the creation of provincial policy. The committee process used to allow people to participate; and because the process was longer—in other words, you introduced a bill in the fall; there was a lengthy debate, or maybe not even a lengthy debate; it was referred to committee in the inter-session for travel, because we never travelled bills during sessions, spring or fall; and it would come back in the spring. There was lots of opportunity for it to be written about by the media in the papers. As a result, the public was much more involved.

This is really what's sad about what the government is doing with the standing orders. You're diminishing the role of the public in the legislative process. We can't allow that to happen because this is the Legislature of the people. We don't own it; the government doesn't own it. This is a Legislature where representatives come in and represent the people of Ontario on the questions important to us on a day-to-day basis.

I urge the government to support these amendments, as we see these as friendly amendments to your main motion.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** Thank very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Ha! He's up.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'm up. Thank you very much for this time. I want to thank the member for Timmins for

bringing forward that amendment. I haven't had a chance to take a look at it. I think it's a great idea.

I won't be supporting this, and that's not to say that there aren't some things in here that I think are good. The main reason is the reasoned amendment, and I'll get into that a bit later, but first I want to talk about what I think is good in these standing order changes.

Before I do that, we're making a lot of standing order changes and keeping the table officers pretty busy changing the standing orders. I know governments do this frequently, but not as frequently as we're doing it right now. Most people outside don't care about what the rules are that we have in here. They don't understand them. To be frank, most of us don't understand them either. They need to be explained to us. When we change these things, they impact the quality of debate and the ability to actually make legislation better, so we have to keep that in mind when we do this.

I appreciate that the government House leader closed the loophole that allows a bill to be debated three times in one day. That was something that was unintended, and I think it's good that that can't happen. That's a measure of good faith. I think that we need to ensure that we take the time and don't rush legislation through. If we take the time, it makes it better. I know all governments have an agenda and they want to get things done quickly.

We appreciate the two extra questions. I don't want to look a gift horse in the mouth and I say I do appreciate that very much, but it's not the basis on which I could support this amendment. I think it's a good thing that we are getting more participation here. The twelve of us would actually form an official party, a recognized party in the Legislature, but our interests are different. We're being treated as individuals, and I think more participation is something that's due to us.

If you can remember back in 2003, when the NDP were under that status, there was an amendment that was put forward to the standing orders that allowed for a change. I'm a bit disappointed that there was so much effort to raise the bar and not allow all members, no matter what colour they were, to be able to participate.

The other thing, too, is, I've got to say this about the extra questions: We're relieving the government members of the "feared friendly." I've been there. I've been doing friendlies on the other side, where they hand you a question and the question is, "How good are you, Minister, and what wonderful things have you done?"

Really, at the end of the day, here's what I don't understand—and even when I was in government. A member on the other side should be able to stand up and say—ask a question about the thing they've been asking a minister for. Even if the minister isn't prepared to do it, that member has to be able to stand up and say, "I'm fighting for my community"—because I know that some of you are doing it. The same thing happened when we were in government. So we'll take that question, relieve you of that burden, and we'll use that as best we can.

Also, the subbing of independent members on committee: I appreciate that very much. That change makes it

easier. We work very co-operatively here, and now we can sub in on committees, because there are different interests and, as I say, a relatively small number of us.

The main reason I can't support these amendments is the removal of the reasoned amendment. I understand the government's reasoning for doing it. It actually predated the government House leader. There was a point in this Legislature in their first year where things were coming fast and furious and hard. The changes that were being proposed—I don't want to use the word "draconian," because it gets used so much, but it was like things were being torn down. The natural reaction was, "Slow down and make sure you know what you're doing."

Quite frankly, it would have been good if the government had slowed down, because there were a whole bunch of things that they ended up having to reverse on, or a court ruled against them on. So the reasoned amendment is something that we use to pause, to think about what it is that's being put forward. It's a tool for the opposition.

This is one less tool for the opposition. Let the opposition be prepared to do our job, which is to say, "Did you think about this? Did you think about this? Did you think about this?" That's what our job is. The less time that we have to do that job, within reason, it's not good for this place. It's not good for making legislation. The removal of that is not the end of the world, but it's just one more thing that makes us less effective in here. So I can't support this, solely on that basis.

The other thing is, now that we've extended the day—and I appreciate that. I mean, from my perspective, I'm here. If we're working at night, we're working at night. But not everybody in this Legislature has the privilege I have, which is to not have the responsibilities of home when I'm here. I mean, I would like to be at home, and I'd like everybody at home to know that, but there are families here.

I know the intent of the government House leader, and I take him at his word, is that we don't want to sit at night, but I'm concerned that if we make this change that it will happen. We're not always going to have the same government House leader. It's not always going to be the same intent.

It's the erosion of the family-friendly Legislature. That's something that was brought in back in 2003. I remember the member for Nepean–Carleton, she said she was very much in favour of it and a proponent of it. Here's what she said to Ottawa: "In Ontario, making the Legislature more family-friendly did not mean we overhauled our parliamentary system or disrupted over 200 years of parliamentary tradition. Nor did it mean eroding government accountability tools, which are vital for good governance and effective opposition."

We've done that today, by removing the reasoned amendment. I know we've added the take-note debate and that's great, but it has no force, in fact, in law. It's just an opportunity for us to air our differences or different opinions or similar opinions. But it doesn't change the laws. I appreciate very much that the government House leader is doing that. I recognize that there's a lot of the image and

likeness of Ottawa in some of the changes that are made. I'm not opposed to that. I think we can always look at how we want to change the rules to make this place better. There are some things that I think will be helpful, but we've also taken away tools and put ourselves in a position where we're making it less family-friendly. I don't want to overstate it, but we're going in the wrong direction, and there's a risk that it's going to keep going in that direction.

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I want to finish by saying that we all have a responsibility to play our part here. Our job over here is to ask a lot of questions, and I know that's not comfortable, but we have to do it. If we don't do it—and I know, because I've been on the other side and I've listened to the questions on this side. It made me ask questions of the people who were making decisions inside government. So although it seems that we're criticizing you—and I think sometimes we do try to assign motive, which is a wrong thing—we're really helping you. I know it doesn't feel like it, but if you listen, you can find out that there are things you can do to make your legislation better, and there are things that are happening in the community that you need to know about. That's why we're here. When we reduce the ability of the opposition to do that, when they have less time—as with the reasoned amendment. It's a day, it's not the biggest thing in the world, but it's one less thing, and I can't support—even though there are things in this bill that I think are good and important.

It reminds me of one thing: family-friendly. Late shows are going to be the late, late shows now. They're going to be around 7 o'clock.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Are you hosting it?

**Mr. John Fraser:** Well, I'll tell you about an experience I had with a late show, and the Minister of the Environment would remember this. I got called for a late show, and the Minister of the Environment was the health critic. He got up and gave a fantastic speech. I got up to do mine—no critic, wasn't there to listen. That's not something that should happen in here. You'll never see me do that, or any other member in this Legislature. Those late shows are important. I've never forgotten that.

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** No kidding.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Yes, I've never forgotten that. I've never forgotten that because it's about respect in this place.

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** I've never forgotten about what you did with the gas plants.

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's about respect. We can talk about policies here, but it's about respect for each member. I only mention that because I think it's a good demonstration of how we need to treat each other in here. If we're going to be here until 7 o'clock at night, stick around and support your members, stick around and listen to the other side. It's not just a dog-and-pony show. This place is important. Whatever we do in here is important. People send us here to take care of the things that are most important to them. It's important that we treat each other with respect and listen.

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I'm happy to be speaking today to the proposed changes to the standing orders and the amendments proposed by the member from Timmins.

I was here yesterday, as well, listening to the debate. We all should have respect for each other, as the member from Ottawa South was just saying. Certainly, that's an important part of debate. I always listen to what everybody else is saying, even though sometimes it's hard to listen. Yesterday, at some points, I found the debate was hard to listen to, but I sat here and listened to it in any event. Sometimes it is hard to listen to because some things tend to be caged or worded in a personal kind of way. We were having a discussion not a few days ago about bullying and how hard that is for people to listen to. Some of our debate can sometimes feel like that. Like, it's bullying in some ways, so for certain people, it hits them and it hurts.

I remember on one of the first days here, one of the members of the opposition suggested that we should read books over here, as though people in this caucus do not read books, which is ludicrous. I don't like being lectured by anybody. I think we should all have open minds and listen to each other, because that's how we learn, frankly. It's really important.

I wanted to start by talking about the standing orders, because some people may have noticed that I have a great affection for the standing orders. In one of my first days sitting in this House, you would have seen me browsing through my standing orders. I was pretty excited about it. Okay, I admit I'm a bit of a procedure nerd, and it could be because I practised law for several years and so the procedure interests me. You would have found me flipping through my standing orders. I think the Leader of the Opposition even, when I rose and called her on what I thought was a breach of the standing orders, called me a "little brainiac" at the time, which—

**Mr. Mike Harris:** What a compliment.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** It didn't hurt, because I don't mind being called intelligent. I think that's what she meant, so that was okay. But I was so obsessed with them that I was looking through them quite a bit, and I really did embrace them.

I have listened carefully to some of the discussions about standing orders that we've had. I certainly listen when the Speaker gives a ruling on some of these orders to clarify things, because I think that's all very, very important and interesting to how we're going to operate here. I do think the standing orders are important.

After I memorized my standing orders, then our government House leader brought forward in the spring some changes to the standing orders. Well, you can imagine my consternation, because I'd spent all that time memorizing the existing ones and now they were changing. So I had to be a little flexible, but they did change. With delight, I have learned that the changes actually improved the procedure in the House, and so I'm kind of excited about that, too.

Sometimes, of course, the procedures we have are arcane. They might exist for this reason—you've heard this before—because it has always been done that way, and that isn't necessarily a good reason to keep things the

way they have been. We should look at things and see if they can be improved. Lo and behold, in the spring our standing orders, I think, were improved.

These are important things to be talking about. I actually heard yesterday the member from Hamilton Mountain saying that instead of having this debate and instead of spending the entire afternoon the day before debating a private member's bill, we could be debating things that are really important to people today. Well, the cyberbullying private member's bill, I think, was very important to people, and I was surprised that she had that kind of cynical attitude—both towards private members' bills and cyberbullying, frankly—that she expressed yesterday.

I was also kind of surprised that the opposition House leader, the member from Timmins, was also deeply cynical in a lot of the comments he was making yesterday. One of the things he did—which he has done before in my time here, and I've only been here a short while—is lecture us about history. He was quoting Churchill, I think, or trying to quote Churchill and bring Churchill into it.

In my experience, the people who study history and learn lessons from history, which is what he was suggesting we do, have by and large been conservatives. In fact, I remarked how a lot of the young people who volunteered on our campaigns were studying history, which I find very interesting, whereas my colleagues on the opposition benches, the ones I know who studied history, studied history with the Marxist mantra that you can't learn lessons from history because it's all random. So it was interesting to hear the opposition House leader suggesting that we needed to learn history and pay attention to it. We certainly do pay attention to history.

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He also said that no change in the standing orders is ever made to help anyone other than the government. He said that, and I think that's kind of cynical. It's certainly not true for what is happening with the standing orders here. The member from Lanark—

**Mr. Mike Harris:** —Frontenac–Kingston.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you. The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston mentioned that he thought that the changes to the standing orders that we made in the spring were not just for the benefit of the government, but for the benefit of all the members. He was certainly pleased with them, and we just heard from the member from Ottawa South and also from the opposition House leader that there are things in these amendments to the standing orders that are good for other members of the House, not specifically good for the government.

For example, it doesn't really help the government to help the independents have substitutions on committees, for example, or to give more questions to the independents. Those are not things for the government; they are things to make the House function in a more democratic fashion—which also gets me back to another thing that the opposition House leader was talking about yesterday, which is that somehow democracy is at stake here; somehow, democracy is at stake. This is where he was

reaching. I think it's a slight overreach, but he was talking about democracy with great passion.

Nobody feels more passionately about democracy, I would say, than I do. It's my favourite topic, and certainly something that I studied. I did my master's degree on it. It's something that I care very much about. I read everything I can find about democratic theory. I even read, in French, *De la démocratie en Amérique* by Alexis de Tocqueville, a great work, so I think it's really important.

So he was giving us a little talk about that, speaking about Churchill and how democracy is at stake in these standing order changes. I think the member for Ottawa South may be a little more accurate, that it's not the end of the world, whatever happens, but this is what the opposition House leader was saying. He was saying that the public sends us here to do their work, and of course they do. They do send us here to do their work, and we are all here for the public and representing our constituents, and that is completely appropriate.

I don't think that it's democracy that's at stake when we can have debate about bills and everybody gets a chance to have their debate—and we do; debate goes on and on about bills. We go to committee. Members of the public often are invited to come. Recently on Zoom, even people who have accessibility issues have been able to come and present at committee, which I think is a wonderful thing, because it makes it more accessible to people.

The opposition House leader also said that these changes in the standing orders were polarizing politics in Ontario. That's what the opposition House leader said, which I think, again, is a bit of a stretch. Now, when you say something is a bit of a stretch in political discussion, what you mean is they're trying to polarize things, so I thought it was quite funny that he was polarizing debate in accusing us of polarizing. But anyway, these are some comments just on some of the things that were said yesterday.

But look, I'm happy to talk about these. I think that the changes brought forward in the spring have had a big and, I dare say, a very positive impact on how debates have happened in this House. I and many other members of the House had first-hand experience with this new format, and we debated critical legislation in the spring. We debated the Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act and the Reopening Ontario Act, and I think everybody agrees that the 10-minute period of questions to each member, in particular, has proven to be a significant improvement over the way we used to do things here.

I just want to stop and comment that our government House leader has had experience in Ottawa, which I think the opposition House leader mentioned this morning, and he has brought some of what he learned in Ottawa about how procedures work there to this House. I think it's good, because we're learning a little bit about how things can be done differently, and better in some ways, and that's what he has brought forward.

Our experience operating under the new standing orders in the spring and summer has also helped us to identify, of course, some challenges, and some of them have been inadvertent challenges because of the new

standing orders. One of those was the 10-minute question-and-answer period. Under the rules, every speech was going to be followed by a 10-minute question-and-answer. It makes sense if it's a 20-minute speech, but it doesn't make as much sense if a person speaks for three or five minutes and then has 10 minutes of questions and answers. So that is something that will be changed and addressed in these standing orders.

We've proposed that the 10-minute question-and-answer period would be reduced to five minutes if a person speaks for less than 10 minutes, which I think again is an improvement. So we can make improvements without threatening democracy, improvements that actually make things function more clearly and better and in a fairer way, actually.

Seeing as how I'm speaking a little bit about the flow and the pace of debate, one of the measures that was adopted in this House was an amendment to the standing orders that ensured that the government could not, without unanimous consent, pass legislation in this place in just one day. This was done by ensuring the same bill could not be called in the morning session, afternoon session and evening session.

During the summer, it did become apparent that there was an inadvertent loophole in the standing orders that allowed a bill to continue being debated if there was no break between the afternoon and evening sessions. To maintain the spirit of the original change, this motion proposes to close that loophole by explicitly stating in the standing orders that the government is not able to bring reconsideration of a bill in the morning, afternoon and the night, regardless of how a motion is drafted by the government or members. As the government House leader said, I think it was yesterday morning, the original amendment to the standing orders was put forward by the member from Guelph and supported unanimously by all parties. I'm sure everyone will agree that it's an appropriate change, and perhaps even necessary, to maintain the intent of the original amendment.

Just as we're ensuring that the government cannot push a bill through in a single day with this amendment, we must also ensure that there is a genuine path for consideration of legislation by all members of this place. One of the ways we've been talking about to ensure that this happens is by taking a good, hard look at the use of reasoned amendments in this place.

A reasoned amendment is not at all what it sounds like, I have learned in my study of the standing orders. Currently, the reasoned amendment tool allows a member to lodge an objection to a bill at the earliest stage before the bill has even been considered, and the procedure allows up to two days of delay of a bill before it can be considered. This is, by the way, the practice in this House. My understanding is this is not the practice in other Houses in other Legislatures. The fact that you can bring a reasoned amendment, yes, that happens, but the fact that the reasoned amendment comes with two days of delay, that is unique, I think, to our Legislature and probably a vestige of an earlier bygone day, and it should be gone, by golly.

In this motion, we are proposing the elimination of this delaying procedure. Speaker, I think it's a simple and a logical change. We don't expect every member of this House to agree with every single piece of legislation that is brought forward. The purpose of this place, after all, is for us to debate ideas and proposals on behalf of the people of Ontario, and that's what we're doing. What we have seen in the last few years, however, is that reasoned amendments—and I think I've already said, not very reasonable—serve no constructive legislative function. Essentially, what happens, as I understand it, is they're being tabled by the opposition, brought to the Clerks, and that delays the debate, but they've never been moved by the opposition. They're so important that they don't even bother to introduce them into the House; they just table them and get their two days of delay.

As Edmund Burke, one of the great theorists of democracy, said, "Politics"—and here we can substitute standing orders, if you like, specifically—"ought to be adjusted not to human reasonings but to human nature, of which reason is but a part and by no means the greatest part."

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Human nature, in this case is, "Oh, look, we can use this in a way that will delay the debate," as opposed to, "We can use this to make more reasonable amendments and have a better debate," which is what it should be about, but it's not. The reasoned amendments, so-called, that have been brought in to this place have never actually been considered by the House, and are really just a delaying mechanism. The historical usage of reasoned amendments in this House, recently, suggests that their usage in this Parliament departs significantly from the precedent set in this place over many years before this.

In the current Parliament, reasoned amendments have been used 26 times to delay government legislation. This is an increase of more than 400%. That's 400% since the last Parliament, in which six reasoned amendments were used. Speaker, it's quite jarring, when you consider that reasoned amendments have been used by the official opposition in the last two years alone more than in the previous 20 years by all parties combined, and none of them have actually gotten to be debated. They weren't moved; they were just tabled. I hate calling them "reasoned" amendments, because it doesn't sound reasonable. It's really a delaying tactic, and it's been done and done and done, and I'm not quite sure what the public gets out of that, honestly.

I know the opposition House leader was saying that they have a right to a pause over there. That's what they would like to have, a right to a pause. But I don't think that that is the only time media, the public or anybody else gets to consider the legislation introduced by the government, because we have hours of debate about that legislation. As I said, we have committee hearings; we have people coming to committee. This is not the only time that they get to discuss it or even think about it, if they choose to do so. So I think we really have a totally different use of reasoned amendments that's been going on over the last couple of years, and the purpose of it is simply delay. I do not think delay is really serving the public.

As the government House leader noted in his remarks also, the bill would have to be published before it could be debated. In practice, this would mean that no bill could be debated on the same day, so members would have the opportunity to review any new bill before it's brought forward to the House for debate. But it would also allow a bill to be debated, at the earliest, on the next day, or otherwise, until it is published in the orders and notices paper. Amendments can still be brought forward by the opposition at committee, and these amendments come after some debate on the bill, when they can be more reasonable and thoughtful. So I think we're still looking forward to having all of that kind of debate and discussion, and hopefully seeing that legislation can be improved.

I just want to comment briefly, because I see my time is almost up, about the late night, if you will, for private members' bills which is being proposed, up until 6:45. There's some concern that this will keep people late and that some people maybe can't stay late. It is possible that people will be kept a little bit later, and it is unfortunate. Of course, there are people who are not able to participate now in private members' debates on Thursday afternoons because they've got to get back to their ridings as well. There's always some inconvenience to some people. We're just trying to find a healthy balance. In practice, where debate during the day will conclude early by unanimous consent in the House, we can immediately proceed with the debate on private members' bills. So I think that won't be as much of a problem as people are anticipating.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The time for debate has now expired, but it is time for members' statements.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I'm getting used to taking off the mask once in a while.

I want to give a big thank you to Nancy Johnson from the NorthEast Family Council Network and to the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay for organizing a fabulous, informative meeting last night.

I can share words on how people felt last night as far as passionate. People care. There was lots of love. But there was also a lot of frustration, people who were frightened, and a lot of concerns that were raised by families that were there.

We participated in a Zoom meeting. There were well over 40 participants on the call, ranging from individuals from North Bay to Thunder Bay to Timmins, Sudbury, across the North Shore—all over northern Ontario, and their concerns were for their loved ones who are in long-term-care homes; their concerns were with regard to the testing process; the consistencies with protocols; how

certain things are being done in certain homes where they're not being done in others.

Overall, it was an eye-opening meeting for myself. It gives me the fire to re-engage and pursue once again the NorthEast Family Council Network across my riding. I would encourage all of the MPPs in this House to do the same, so that we can get down to the root cause of what's happening and what is so worrisome for families in long-term-care homes.

#### THE DADS OF MILTON

**Mr. Parm Gill:** I'm just going to start by removing my #miltonstrong mask with me here this morning.

Mr. Speaker, it is always incredible to see community groups helping one another right across the province, and that can't be more true than in my riding of Milton. Started as a way to increase the feeling of community and involvement of those who live in Milton, the Dads of Milton has grown into a passionate group of over 700 members. Those 700 continue to organize fundraising events around town that support our local community.

I had the privilege to safely attend the Dads of Milton third annual Step Up to the Plate event and fundraiser at Lions Sports Park. The enthusiasm, dedication and commitment that the Dads of Milton bring to this event each and every year is something to admire.

This year's Step Up to the Plate fundraiser raised over \$5,000 for Food4Kids Halton. I want to thank Canadian singer/songwriter and Milton native Danny Fernandes for coming to show his support and hang out with dads all day.

I also want to thank all of the dads who help organize and put in many hours to make this event a reality each and every year. A special thanks goes out to Mario, Jeffrey and James for their dedication in leading this effort for the third year in a row.

I look forward to being a part of the fourth inning of this event next year, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I want to congratulate all of the dads in Milton. Thank you and God bless.

#### JANE-FINCH COMMUNITY HUB

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Years ago, the community came together to design the plan for the Jane-Finch community hub, a vision that would see community members of all ages and from all walks of life enjoy a safe and enriching space, a physical manifestation of a dream in a community accustomed to challenges, barriers and, far too often, nightmares.

So when this government revealed it would be selling off the land to build the Jane-Finch community hub to the highest bidder, the shock and frustration was palpable. The Jane and Finch community mobilized in opposition to this betrayal and were joined by voices across the city and beyond.

I thank everyone who stood up to this government, urging them to reaffirm Metrolinx's earlier agreement to

give the lands to the city of Toronto to build a future community hub. Under this immense pressure, Metrolinx has now indicated they would reaffirm their earlier commitment to transfer the land.

Speaker, I will not breathe a sigh of relief until the lands are transferred, and I will keep up the pressure. We are in this mess today because the former Liberal government refused to come to the table and transfer the lands, as negotiated between the community and Metrolinx.

Promises can be broken and words are often just wind. Our community is done with false hope and we will continue to hold the government to account until the lands are transferred.

Do the right thing. Transfer the lands. The time is now.

#### EDUCATION

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back to the Legislature. It's great to see you in the chair after a short August break.

**1020**

Like so many families across the province, the first weeks of September are always busy in my house with our kids returning to school. This week, all five headed back to the classroom, with my youngest starting junior kindergarten and my oldest going into his first year of high school.

This school year will be unlike any other for my children, their peers, their educators and our support staff, but under the careful guidance of our public health experts, including Ontario's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. David Williams, and SickKids hospital, our province has been able to put a plan in place so they can safely return to school.

I want to thank our school board officials at Waterloo Region District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board, who did a great job communicating with parents and students about how schools will look once they reopen, and our educators and support staff who worked tremendously hard to welcome our students back to school.

Returning to school during the middle of a global pandemic is an unprecedented challenge that we are all facing together. We all have a key role to play in keeping our children safe. But with our cautious and comprehensive plan that has been informed by medical experts and the work that has been done with educators and school boards, we're ensuring the proper protocols are in place so our children can return to their desks and be with their classmates and friends, albeit at a distance.

To every student in Waterloo region and across this province, I hope you have a fun and safe return back to school this fall.

#### PUBLIC SPACE

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Over the last difficult six months, we've had the gaps that exist in everything from health care to education to employment laid bare by COVID-19.



In Toronto and in urban communities across Ontario, the pandemic has also shown us how vital our shared spaces are to our quality of life. Parks and green spaces are seeing more use than ever before. The requirement to keep distance has forced a reshaping of our streets, with active transportation finally given the priority it deserves. In Davenport, new bike lanes, pedestrian-friendly quiet streets and expanded patio space have helped change our neighbourhoods for the better.

At the same time, the economic damage of the pandemic is visible on our main streets. Small businesses left to fend for themselves by a patchy series of government supports that were too little, too late have been shuttered by the thousands throughout Toronto. Without safe and affordable housing, people have been forced to live in tents wherever they can find space, and we are losing some iconic landmarks in our cityscape as well, as the government continues to put the interests of big developers ahead of our local communities. Black-owned businesses in Little Jamaica, LGBTQ spaces on Church Street, the Matador in my own riding and even Sneaky Dee's are all at risk. Tools that did exist to allow cities to enhance public spaces, like sections 37 and 42 funds, were stripped away by this government in Bill 108. Developers are seeing big gains from proximity to schools, but our school boards are starved of funds, the largest of them barred from using education development charges.

The pandemic has shrunk our worlds, reminding us just how important our local neighbourhoods are. For those neighbourhoods to thrive, we need affordable housing; walkable, bikeable streets; green spaces to stretch out; and diverse main streets where businesses can actually afford to operate.

## EDUCATION

## ÉDUCATION

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** The beginning of the school year always brings with it a special energy—a combination of stress, anxiety and excitement—and this year even more so. As parents, my wife and I have had many conversations over the summer about the return to school and what it will mean for our family. As an MPP, I've heard from many residents about their trepidation, their stress and their concerns. I've heard about the confusion caused by the ever-changing criteria, standards and start dates.

But now that school is here, I want to thank all of the teachers, early childhood educators, custodians, bus drivers and administrators for the hard work they've put in to try to bring some normalcy back to our children's lives. I want to thank Jennifer Coleman, the principal at Cairine Wilson high school, for showing me and trustee Penny the amazing work her team has done to prepare for school. Jennifer had to prepare four different back-to-school plans because the guidance from Toronto continually changed. Her teaching and administrative teams have done an amazing job.

Je veux aussi remercier Jean Gauthier, directeur, et Jean-François Bard, surintendant, de l'école Notre-Place.

Il est clair que leur engagement envers la sécurité de nos enfants est primordial.

It will continue to be a difficult time, and likely there is more change coming. But your efforts to bring professional, publicly funded education back to our children are very much appreciated. Thank you for everything that you do.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** This 42nd Legislative Assembly has been notable for many positive things, but I am proud to say that the greatest among them in the year of the pandemic is the way the people of Ontario have responded to our government's actions.

For the most part, the 14 million-plus of us have acted with the warmth and the care of a small community: looking out for each other, caring for each other, and taking actions to minimize the risk to others as we face an invisible foe that experts say is at least three times more infectious than the flu that kills too many of us every year.

Today, I would like to thank the citizens of Hastings–Lennox and Addington for doing their part, and I pass on their thanks to the rest of Ontario for doing your part to keep us all as safe as possible.

As this fall weather settles in, we have reached another milestone along our battle route with COVID-19. The evidence so far is that recent cases have come from letting our guard down in large-scale social situations, not just from schools or restaurants. It's no time to take our foot off the gas on the safety protocols that we have found have saved lives, whether it's washing hands, covering our mouths and noses to stop incoming and outgoing infections, or social distancing about two metres apart whenever possible. So let's beat this thing by doing more of what we've done already.

As one of the greatest race drivers of all time said, "You don't take your foot off the gas until you're over the finish line."

## RURAL ONTARIO

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'm sure we've all opened our Facebook and saw a picture of, "Here's what you were doing last year on this day." Today, I'd like to do this for the Legislature. Last year this week, all the legislators joined 80,000 other people and came to the little town of Verner, which happens to be in my riding, for the International Plowing Match—people from all over Ontario and from all over Canada. Now that we're in COVID-19, that sounds like such a foreign experience. But those events are the events that build the fabric of rural Ontario. Sadly, tragically, and rightfully so, the IPM has been postponed for this year, and it is our sincere hope that we will all be back there again next year to celebrate rural Ontario.

And it's not just the IPM. This weekend is the second-biggest event that happens every year in my riding, usually the biggest event, the New Liskeard Fall Fair. The New Liskeard Fall Fair has gone virtual. Their board of directors has done everything they can to keep the passion

alive. I commend them for doing that. But the fact that they've gone virtual puts salt in some of the wounds in rural Ontario—and it's not their fault—because virtual for many people in rural Ontario with no broadband is more of a slap in the face than it is a solution.

#### CLĒAN WORKS AND PURE LIFE MACHINERY

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** Niagara is one of the most innovative regions in the province, and a great example of that ingenuity has been the response of local entrepreneurs ClĒan Works and Pure Life Machinery. Located in Beamsville, in my riding of Niagara West, ClĒan Works is an incredible success story about an Ontario apple farmer, Paul Moyer, taking technology used to decontaminate produce and converting it into a device that can decontaminate personal protective equipment.

As announced by the Premier on his Niagara tour in August, ClĒan Works and Pure Life Machinery have received \$2 million from the Ontario Together Fund to help manufacture a one-of-a-kind sanitizing device called the Clean Flow Healthcare Mini. This Ontario-made device can decontaminate hundreds and hundreds of N95 masks per hour, along with many other things, including personal protective equipment. The investment by the Ontario Together Fund will help enable ClĒan Works to scale up their production, triple their capacity, bring jobs to Niagara and ensure that those on the front lines have PPE and other equipment to continue the fight against COVID-19.

ClĒan Works is a great example of the Ontario Together spirit and just another reason why our government is making targeted, effective investments to support home-grown trailblazers. By investing in ClĒan Works, our government is not only supporting local economic recovery in Niagara, but ensuring that we are ready with necessary Ontario-made PPE and equipment today and into the future.

#### UNIONVILLE SENIORS AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Billy Pang:** It feels great being back to the legislative chamber, where I continue to serve and represent the riding of Markham–Unionville.

1030

Mr. Speaker, while COVID-19 and the health and safety of Ontarians remain our government's top priority, our government continues to work nonstop to serve, address and improve the lives of Ontarians every single day. In July, I was proud to join the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Honourable Steve Clark, and municipal and federal partners as Canada and Ontario announced their investment of over \$4.2 million in the Unionville Seniors affordable housing development, to give seniors in Markham–Unionville and York region the support services they deserve. As part of this social

infrastructure fund, the new building will have 264 units, as well as a seniors' hub and community space.

Our seniors helped build our province, and our government believes that every Ontarian should be able to find a home that meets their needs and their budgets. This announcement is critical for our community and will enhance the quality of life for many people, now and well into the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our members' statements this morning.

#### WEARING OF PINS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister for the Environment, Conservation and Parks has informed me he has a point of order he'd like to raise.

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** Thanks very much, Speaker. I'm seeking unanimous consent for the members of the Legislature to wear pins recognizing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm sorry; I missed that. Could you repeat it again?

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** You just approved my raise.

*Laughter.*

**Hon. Jeff Yurek:** But anyways, I'm seeking unanimous consent for members to wear pins recognizing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of the Environment is seeking unanimous consent to allow the members to wear pins. Agreed? Agreed.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 101(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Mr. Oosterhoff assumes ballot item number 15 and Mr. Nicholls assumes ballot item number 54.

#### DECORUM IN CHAMBER

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** As we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, we now find ourselves at a point where wearing a face mask for large parts of the day has become common, even necessary, here in our building and including in the chamber. Essentially, our masks have become another piece of our daily apparel.

Pre-COVID-19, we had an understanding and expectation amongst members, as part of our dress in the chamber, that items of apparel not contain logos, slogans, advertising or other devices that convert them from clothing to vehicles of expression. Nothing has changed about that, so I'd ask all members to keep this expectation in mind when they choose the mask that they'll be wearing in the House and, eventually, in committees. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Point of order.

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is going to be here today. He wasn't here Monday or Tuesday. We would ask that we stand down the leads and allow him to get here so that we can actually ask the questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Once again, I'll remind all the members that it's not appropriate to make reference to the absence of another member. It never has been.

The member for Timmins is seeking unanimous consent of the House to allow the official opposition to stand down their lead questions. Agreed? I heard some noes.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll ask the House to come to order, as question period is imminent.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My first question this morning is to the Premier. Speaker, families are watching in horror as COVID-19 outbreaks rip through another for-profit, long-term-care facility, Extencicare's West End Villa in Ottawa. Since first declaring an outbreak two weeks ago, the virus has infected 46 residents and 6 residents have died. This is a facility with a history of police investigations and class-action lawsuits.

The Premier repeatedly talks about lessons that have been learned and that long-term-care homes are protected and that for-profit operators would be held to account. Despite all that talk and being warned months ago that this was coming, why are families once again watching another deadly outbreak in long-term care?

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

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question. I want to make sure that all of us understand that the long-term-care homes in Ontario are often a reflection of the community surrounding them. In fact, there was an article in the Canadian Medical Association Journal with Dr. Nathan Stall indicating that the outbreaks are consistent with the public health unit rate of infection of COVID around those areas and is not reflective of the ownership of the home.

Some of our homes have struggled. There is no doubt about that. COVID is an invisible invader, and that's why we have the testing processes we have. It's why, once it's into the home, we have to find it and we have to destroy it, and that's why we have the infection prevention and control teams coming in. It's why we have a coordinated effort with Ontario Health, Public Health Ontario and the Ottawa Public Health units. I'm in daily contact with Ottawa Public Health to make sure everything that is—

*Interruption.*

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** It's not mine.

In any case, I would suggest that we look at understanding the area and the communities. This is why everyone needs—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, all I can say is thank goodness that the rates of death are not the same in the community as they have been in long-term care. That was a horrifying response.

The Premier talks about taking action, Speaker; he talks about it all the time. Two months ago—two months ago—after hundreds of residents had died in long-term care, the government's own report on long-term-care staffing made very specific recommendations to address the challenges in long-term care, including funding to “urgently address the staffing crisis in long-term care.” Two months ago.

Why, then, has the government failed now to provide the additional funding that has long been needed to increase the actual staffing and prevent further outbreaks and deaths in homes like Extencicare West End Villa? When will it actually happen? When will his talk turn into action?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll ask the members to take their seats.

The Minister of Long-Term Care to reply.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Once again, thank you for the question. In fact, we have been acting. As soon as we became the Ministry of Long-Term Care in the summer of 2019, the staffing crisis was very evident and we began working on that at that time. All throughout this, we are preparing and managing a staffing shortage with every measure possible. This is a combined effort between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Long-Term Care, understanding that more needs to be done, informed by our expert panel that did a study on staffing in long-term care to provide us with a map for a long-term-care staffing strategy, a comprehensive strategy. That's exactly what we've been working on.

We have been absolutely working around the clock, dedicated to this, looking at every avenue for staffing and working with multiple ministries to address this issue. It is ongoing, and we will continue to work on this. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, this government's lack of urgency on fixing long-term care has now led to another six deaths in the last couple of days. That is unacceptable. It should be unacceptable for everyone sitting on the government bench.

The government's own report also recommended increased standards in long-term care, calling on the government to mandate “four hours of direct care per resident as quickly as possible.” That was a couple of months ago. Where are the four hours of hands-on care?

Instead of establishing that minimum or taking any steps whatsoever to address staffing shortages, the government has done nothing and is allowing the horrific cycle of outbreaks, infections and deaths to continue in our long-term-care system. How many more outbreaks need to happen in long-term care before this Premier meets the

staffing and care standards recommended by their own advisers, by their own reports?

1040

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I am going to push back. It is absolute reality that we are actively, aggressively working on the staffing strategy. The sense of urgency is absolute, not only for the Ministry of Long-Term Care but for this entire government and all the good people who are working tirelessly, whether it's in the public service, the front lines of our long-term-care homes or the hard-working MPPs and the people on your side as well who are working hard to do this. All of us—all of us—must come together and collaborate and make sure that we do everything possible. That is exactly what we're doing, and we will continue to work and take every measure.

I want to make sure everyone understands that these homes are our focus. Many of the homes that are in outbreak have one staff member self-isolating at home. There are two homes in the Ottawa area, and we are pouring all our resources into those homes to shore them up and make sure that we put the priority of the safety and well-being of residents and staff—

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

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier. Report after report from the front lines confirms that this government did nothing to prevent the COVID outbreaks that robbed Ontarians of their loved ones in long-term care. To those families, it looks like the Premier is doing all that he can do to protect a broken system. His government refused to hold a transparent public judicial inquiry into long-term care, instead trotting out their commission back in July. Two months later, families learned that the commission has only met in secret and will not commit to ever holding public hearings.

The Premier promised in July, in his own words, “a transparent, independent review of our long-term care system.” Does the Premier believe that a commission that has so far only met in secret is actually transparent?

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

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question. I take exception to the term “secret.” As a dedicated family doctor for many years who has come to this chamber to advance long-term care and make sure our most vulnerable people get care they need, I take great exception to that comment.

I can tell you that the commissioners are eminent people. They are highly skilled, highly qualified, credible, highly respected people. To say that meetings are being taken in secret is an absolute travesty.

The commissioners have the power to conduct hearings and deputations, and issue summons to any person to give evidence and produce documents as they conduct their investigation. They will uphold transparency and they will

get to the bottom of what happened. They will provide guidance to our government as to what can be done differently. They will hear from residents, from families and from staff members. They will provide the transparency that is needed. I take great exception—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, that's great, Speaker. Then I expect the transcripts of every interview that has been taken so far to be posted on the website.

Yesterday, the minister stated on the record that certainly, “there will be ... hearings, there is a public report,” only to be contradicted literally within hours by the commission itself. Families and front-line health workers who had been promised concrete action and a transparent investigation are now dismissing this as a cover-up and as meaningless as the Premier's promise of an iron ring around long-term care—which we all know never occurred.

How can this Premier claim a transparent process when key interviews have been conducted in secret already, families have been left in the dark, there is no commitment to holding public hearings and the Minister of Long-Term Care can't keep her story straight, by the look of things?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question. The commission has the ability to conduct hearings and summon individuals or groups to gather information. It is an independent commission, and it needs to stay that way. We recognize the important part of getting up and getting going. That's what they've done during the last month: establish a secretariat, establish a group of people to support them so that they can do their good work.

This is about transparency. We need to be informed as to what we can do differently. We need that objectivity. And what we will be providing is that avenue through the independent commission.

As minister, I am not in contact with the commissioners, because it must be independent, transparent and non-partisan. It's absolutely critical. I respect the commissioners that have been appointed. They are highly respected in their fields. They are going to provide the trust that is needed—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, I wrote to the commission about a week ago to ask about these issues specifically, and I got no response until this morning, after news broke that the commission was conducting key interviews behind closed doors in secret.

The Premier's hand-picked commission won't commit to public hearings, hasn't reached out to a single family yet and won't commit to providing any accountability or transparency. Will the Premier finally do the right thing today and call the fully transparent, independent judicial inquiry that should already be in place and at work?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister of Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you once again. We know from Justice Gillese, the public inquiry that she chaired and recommended many recommendations after, that it takes a long time for a public inquiry to be done. An independent commission will provide us with the necessary efficient timelines that we need to address any possible additional measures that we can take.

We cannot wait years. There are even some groups saying that we already know what happened with ward rooms, with the capacity in our long-term-care homes, the lack of redevelopment over decades of the previous government—15 years within which no essential significant redevelopment occurred. The neglect of our long-term-care system by the previous government, occasionally and sometimes frequently propped up by the opposition, makes a difference to our vulnerable—

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

The next question.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** This question is for the Premier.

Listening to claims made by the Premier and the Minister of Education this week, parents and educators could be forgiven for thinking they'd stumbled into some kind of alternate reality. Why else would the government repeatedly say they have reduced class sizes, when what's happening on the ground is so clearly the opposite? Why would the government take credit for the enormously hard work that boards have done to reduce class sizes in a few—very few—areas of high need and claim that they'd done that across the province? In fact, what they've done is create utter chaos across this province.

The Premier owes parents and educators across the province an apology. He is leaving our buses and classrooms in chaos at a time when our children need more support and not more confusion. Will the Premier listen to the chorus of voices, including SickKids, and bring in class-size caps of 15?

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for the question.

Our plan that we have unveiled has been fully endorsed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health of this province. It's evidence-informed and it is fully funded. It's comprehensive and it leads the nation in each and every realm.

In the areas of classroom sizes, it is under the Premier's leadership that we have dedicated \$200 million to enable school boards to, yes, hire more teachers, upwards of 2,000 funded by government and, funded by reserves, an additional up to 5,000 teachers could be hired through the unlocking of \$496 million.

The point is in each and every school board in this province, urban and rural, school boards are taking leadership to reduce those classroom sizes. In Toronto, in the higher-risk communities—and I've always been specific

that in those communities we're seeing absolute caps of 15 up to grade 3 and absolute caps of 20 for grades 4 to 8.

We'll continue to work with our boards to keep these classroom sizes safe and do everything we can to ensure the safety of our province.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** The Minister of Education's response is utter fiction. The minister needs to go back and do the math on what this funding is covering, because it ain't covering that.

Speaker, if you talk to any educator, custodian, principal, parent, you're going to see classes are not being reduced to ensure physical distancing, because this government has not put up the funding to do it. This week, I heard from more parents—I've heard from thousands. One parent was shocked to find out that their child's class was collapsed into a super-sized 28-person class. I've heard about 29, 35, 30—a grade 8 with a class of 35. Parents are trying to buy outdoor tents with their own money to help schools keep distanced. Some classrooms are being left empty. It's absurd.

1050

A bus driver told me yesterday she's been driving a full bus of 60 children to five schools in two different boards since last week and only got her seating recommendations yesterday morning.

Again to the Premier: Will the government commit today to keeping our kids safe by capping class sizes at 15?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** In the Toronto District School Board to date, the director of education has informed us that they're on track for hiring over 366 net new teachers to respond to this unprecedented challenge. In Toronto, for example, which the member opposite represents, there has been an additional 102 public health nurses, more than doubling the capacity to respond.

Mr. Speaker, what we're seeing on the ground, notwithstanding some of the pessimism of the members opposite, is a real sense of unity of spirit in our province, of educators and principals and administrators and public health units coming together to confront this challenge. In the great tradition of our province, what we need now more than ever is a collective resolve to do our part and to work together in the public interest. That's what our government will continue to do.

#### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

**Mr. Parm Gill:** My question is to the Premier: Premier, not that long ago, during the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, every country in the world was left scrambling for critical medical supplies and personal protective equipment. There was a worldwide shortage. Canada was left at the mercy of other countries for the PPE we desperately needed. A report by the province's Auditor General completed in December 2017 found that more than 80% of the stockpiled equipment had expired under the previous Liberal government's leadership

Can the Premier inform the Legislature about what our government has done to ensure that Ontarians are never left in the same vulnerable position ever again?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank our great member from Milton. Now, I'll never forget, Mr. Speaker, the day that the President decided to cut Canada off, their number one trading partner and number one customer. We called out for help, and the great, great companies of this province stood up; they ramped up, they switched over their lines, some of the largest companies, some of the smallest. Some people in their basements were making masks. But I'm proud to say since everyone has stood up, we have dozens and dozens of companies making face shields, we have dozens of companies making face masks and hand sanitizer and surgical gowns and companies switching over again. Canada Goose—what a great company—switched over to surgical gowns. So I'm proud to say, in a short period of time, in less than three months, we are self-sufficient. We will never have to rely on a foreign leader or a foreign country ever again for our PPE. Not only—

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

**Mr. Parm Gill:** My question is back to the Premier: Premier, thank you for your strong leadership during some of the most difficult times that we're facing. I remember, in the early days of the pandemic, stories about Ontario receiving contaminated products and having to fight with other countries for life-saving medical supplies. This demonstrated to everyone why Ontario needed to re-secure our supply chain and manufacturing strength once again.

Speaker, can the Premier please share with the Legislature about the partnership announced yesterday between our government and Linamar to secure additional medical equipment for my constituents in Milton and all Ontarians as we continue our fight against COVID-19?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Thank you very much to our great member. I'm going to back up for a second. I'm going to talk about our first announcement with 3M in Brockville. Now we have a supply of over 25 million N95 masks, with a great partnership with 3M, the federal government and the province.

We had a phenomenal meeting at Linamar. Going back months, when everyone in the world was scrambling for ventilators, we were able to partner up with O2—what another great company—and Linamar. Linamar is one of the largest and one of the best auto parts manufacturers in the entire world, employing 9,000 people up in the great city of Guelph. We went over there, and again, I'm proud to say, with the co-operation, the collaboration of our government and the private sector, they're producing 10,000 ventilators. We'll never have to rely on any other country for ventilators again. We will have a stockpile of ventilators, not just for us but for our great neighbours, our provinces across this great country.

#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Premier. London's two COVID assessment centres are completely

overwhelmed. They are seeing the longest lineups in months, with people waiting four hours or more for a test, or forced to leave without one. One of the centres is within walking distance of three elementary schools, creating safety and traffic nightmares for children getting to and from school. The Western University mobile testing unit is turning students away because it can't meet the demand. Christine and Sue Zimmer told me their 87-year-old mother, who needs a test in order to get her cancer surgery, was forced to risk exposure to COVID by waiting in line for hours with people who were symptomatic.

Speaker, with the second wave upon us, what is this government doing to reduce the risk and make more COVID tests available to Londoners?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, I stood up there, day after day after day, begging people to get tested, and people were coming. We're leading the country in testing. We have 38% of the population, and 52% of the tests. We have well over 3,200,000 test kits.

What we're doing—it's all hands on deck. We've reached out for help again, because we aren't shy to ask for help from the great people, the 14.5 million people and the thousands of businesses. Again, the thousands of businesses are stepping up. Some of the top retailers in the entire country that I've called personally are stepping up, and they're going to be doing the testing. We look forward to making sure that everyone has an opportunity to get tested.

I drove by Women's College. I'm the first to acknowledge, there were lineups, but there was good news in that lineup. The good news is I saw a lot of young people in that lineup, because we know the majority of the cases are under 40 years of age, and also under 19 years of age, so I'm so proud to see everyone getting there and getting tested, and we're going to have a very efficient system.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** An effective and appropriate testing strategy requires more assessment centres, longer hours, more options for testing. Ron Quintillan and his sisters need tests every two weeks to visit their father in long-term care. They worry that lineups for testing mean they won't be able to see their father and are planning to take vacation days in order to wait for the test. Brenda DeSousa told me that her elderly parents are scheduled to move into a retirement home but may have to delay their move because of long waits for a COVID test.

Speaker, with students back to school, the situation in London is going to get much worse very quickly. Will the Premier commit to providing the resources that London urgently needs to expand our testing capacity and help limit the second wave?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** The good news is that more people are going for tests. That's what we asked people to do, people who have symptoms and people who believe they may have been in contact with someone with

COVID-19. We are very pleased that they're coming forward, but they also deserve to have timely—

*Interjections.*

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

Please restart the clock. The Minister of Health to reply.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you, Speaker. But people also deserve to have timely access to tests, and we recognize that with people going back to work, with people returning to school, people needing to have tests to visit family members in long-term-care homes or retirement homes, we need greater access for people. We have expanded our testing capacity and our lab capacity considerably in very short order, to the point that we are now leading in testing across the country, with over three million tests having been conducted.

But we are looking to expand again—we're looking to get to 50,000 tests per day—and we have a fall preparedness plan that is calling for that to happen. We are actively looking, at this moment, at ways that we can expand access to people, not just in London but across the province, because we know there are long wait lines in other places. But we're very grateful, first of all, to our hospital partners—

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

The next question. The member for Cambridge.

1100

#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to be free. My question is for the Premier.

In March, the government implemented emergency orders shutting down Ontario's economy, including places of worship. Initially, we were told this would last for two weeks in order to not overwhelm our health care system. Six months later, we expect many businesses will close permanently as a result.

I have heard from many people across our province concerned with the lack of clarity provided with regard to the transparent benchmarks and objective criteria being used by the province and local officials in their imposition of emergency powers.

This week, the Premier stated that a second shutdown is being considered on specific regions of the province as a result of a week that saw an increase in the number of positive COVID cases being reported.

For the sake of transparency and clarity, has or will the government create a general framework that they can share with the people of Ontario, with objective criteria like the rate of increased cases and the duration the increase needs to persist, before a second shutdown is considered or imposed on the province or on specific regions, or will such a decision be made on a gut feeling?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Solicitor General to reply.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** We're going to continue what we have done since the beginning, and that is listen to experts

and get that information from the command table, from medical experts who understand what COVID-19 is. As those emerging issues come forward, as we see that we are learning more about what COVID does, what the pandemic can do within our community—frankly, kill people—we need to make sure that we listen to those experts and act quickly, which is why Ontario was the first jurisdiction in all of Canada to declare the declaration of emergency, because we knew, and Premier Ford understood, the need to act quickly to protect our communities

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

**Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios:** Bill 195 gave this Premier the unilateral ability for the next year, and possibly two, without debate amongst Ontario MPPs, to impose a second province-wide or regional shutdown at any time. The Premier could hold on to these powers right up until the next Ontario election. Therefore, it is important that the government provide consistency and clarity to the people of Ontario.

Just this week, the Premier stated that despite the source of the most recent increases in positive COVID cases being social gatherings and not activities related to workplaces, he was considering a second shutdown for affected regions. Yesterday, the Premier said that new measures were on their way. Earlier this month, the Premier stated that local officials are free to impose more restrictive limits on gatherings as they deem necessary.

My question for the Premier is: Is the government considering imposing a second broad shutdown of specific affected regions, even where the increases are due to social gatherings, or will the government's new measures be more targeted and ensure that any tightening or furthering of restrictions will be done based on a framework with objective criteria?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I would have thought that the member opposite understood the legislation, that, in fact, it has a one-year time frame—unprecedented. I cannot think of another piece of legislation we have tabled in this province that has a timeline of one year. If it is deemed necessary to extend that, it would be voted on and debated in this chamber, as it should be.

I want to come back to how we need to listen to the experts. We need to understand how this is impacting our communities, our businesses, our friends and family. We need to make sure that we do everything possible to keep people safe and sound. It is, at its core, what government must do, and I'm proud of how we've been able to do that so far.

It's an emerging issue. We're learning more as the medical experts continue to share that information. We need to react and respond when they share it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The next question. The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nice to see you this morning.

My first question is actually for the Minister of Education. I want to say thank you for all of his generous time, twice speaking directly to my constituents, parents, teachers and students, who had questions with regard to the education system.

Mr. Speaker, I know that parents, students and teachers in Etobicoke–Lakeshore are tracking the daily COVID numbers in our province; we all are. But I also know that we have confidence in our government. Our government has created a robust return-to-school plan backed by \$1.3 billion in investment to support a safe reopening.

A big part of that plan includes a comprehensive outbreak management protocol document. Can the Minister of Education please tell the Legislature why it is such an important tool in our fight against COVID-19?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I want to thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for her solid leadership for her community as well as for all students in this province who want to go to school and be able to do so safely.

Speaker, when it comes to our plan to keep schools safe, we have two aims: The first is to prevent the spread, and the second is to act decisively when cases arise. Obviously, our focus, part of that \$1.3-billion allocation investment, a one-time investment to make sure schools are safe, is really premised on minimizing the risk to all children and maximizing their learning experience.

Part of the guidance we've provided makes very clear expectations that they're constantly implementing these prevention measures; that they're maintaining accurate records of staff, students and visitors; that they're working with local public health authorities; and that they're taking appropriate action when staff, students or visitors became ill during the day, including isolation, the use of PPE and, obviously, for students, going back to their homes.

Speaker, we launched a website in this province, [ontario.ca/reopeningschools](http://ontario.ca/reopeningschools), to provide data to parents on the COVID cases. We believe in transparency. We will do everything we can in this province to make sure our students are safe.

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

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** I'd like to thank the minister for his answer. I want to say how happy I am, especially as a parent of a daughter who is in grade 11, to hear the commitment of our government to such a strong plan to keep our children safe as they return back to school.

I take comfort in the fact that our government has taken a scientific approach to reopening our province to ensure that Ontarians remain protected. However, Speaker, we all have all seen the cases and how they have risen across this province over the last couple of days. I do feel reassured knowing that we do have a world-class public health system advising our government, and I thank them for their efforts.

Can the Minister of Health please tell this House how the government plans to continue to protect Ontarians' health and well-being as the fall approaches and numbers continue to rise?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for your question and for your advocacy on behalf of your constituents.

Due to the hard work of the people of Ontario, our province continues to be a leader among many jurisdictions in the fight against COVID-19. However, there is no doubt that the latest trends in numbers have raised some concern, especially as we move into the fall months.

We know that the people of Ontario don't want to see widespread lockdowns or shutdowns again. That is why we are taking a pause of four weeks before considering any further loosening of public health measures or opening any further businesses, organizations or facilities. Additionally, we will be releasing our comprehensive fall preparedness plan very shortly. This plan will continue to build upon the measures currently in place and introduce new and innovative actions that our province can take to continue to fight COVID-19.

The people of Ontario can rest assured that our government will do everything we can to protect their health and well-being.

## INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** *Remarks in Oji-Cree.*

It's good to be back to represent the great people of Kiiwetinoong. My question is to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, First Nations have been very clear: It is disrespectful to bury legislation that affects our rights and our lands in omnibus bills like Bill 197. It is very disappointing that while First Nations have prioritized keeping communities safe during this pandemic, Ontario felt it was an appropriate time to pass an omnibus bill violating constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Mr. Speaker, why does this government conduct itself in a manner that disrespects and dishonours treaty relationships?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Attorney General.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Thank you for the question from the member opposite. It is very important that we have our relationships and the treaty rights. Although I'm not particularly aware—maybe I'll get it in the supplementary—about the specific issue that he's raising, I can tell you that the Indigenous justice division within the Ministry of the Attorney General and, of course, the Minister of Indigenous Affairs work closely with our partners, whether it be Grand Chief Archibald—we're talking regularly with them about a whole variety of issues. We value the relationship. We value the input. It's critical that we move forward in that partnership and in the spirit of partnership.

I'm happy to chat and talk with the member opposite any time, either in the House or outside of the House, about how we can foster that relationship and how we can make it even better. Mr. Speaker, again, it's critical to our government that we work with our partners. I look forward to the supplementary.



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

1110

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch. Name-dropping First Nations leadership is not partnership. As a treaty partner, this government must learn to respect the treaty relationship before it is damaged beyond repair.

I bring this up today because economic recovery from the effects of COVID-19 will not happen at the expense of our treaty rights and our lands. This is not open season on our lands. The forests and the land is more to us as First Nations than a source of money.

Most of our communities in my riding are still in lockdown. They could not participate fully in any consultation exercises or activities—if there were any—while this pandemic was happening. Will the government act honourably to ensure that all First Nations can participate in your economic recovery activities?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I agree wholeheartedly that just using names and flowery language doesn't actually make a partnership. It's what happens on the ground. It's the activities that we're doing.

Just yesterday, the minister of northern affairs talked about the mining sector, about the things that we're opening up, the partnerships that we have with First Nations. It's proof in fact. It's action. We're not here to talk about things. We're here to do things, and we're doing that. We're doing that in the justice sector with the ways that we're reaching out and we're partnering with NAN and Treaty 3 and the others.

I use names because I want to reinforce that there are individuals that we are working with very closely. There are dozens of names that I'm not using because that really isn't the point. The point is that we're taking action. It's in justice. It's in economic affairs. It's in social issues. It's in every way that we touch with First Nations and the challenges they have. I can tell you that through the justice system, the activities that we're partnering with to solve long-standing issues—I'm very excited about it. This government is taking action, and the proof is—

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

#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** My question for the Premier. For months, the Premier and his Minister of Health have been talking about the importance of testing as part of their COVID-19 strategy, but public health leaders, city councillors, our mayor and members on this side of the aisle have all been pointing to the glaring lack of capacity in our nation's capital. Capacity is so bad that lines are forming hours before the testing centres open up. Imagine waiting four to six hours in line with your kids, outside, without washrooms. Now imagine doing that in November and December in Ottawa.

Yesterday, residents in Ottawa were turned away from critical COVID-19 tests. When is the government going to release the billions of dollars in federal safe restart money

to ensure that there is equitable and accessible testing capacity in our nation's capital?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I thank the member very much for the question. It is a problem in several locations—in Ottawa, I know, in Toronto and other locations across the province where people are having to wait for inordinate lengths of time to have a test. We want them to be tested. Anybody with symptoms and anybody who believes they've been in contact with someone with COVID-19 needs to have a test, and it needs to be done, as I said before, in a timely manner.

We have expanded our testing capacity considerably since March, when we were doing 5,000 tests per day. We've expanded that capacity so that we can now do 25,000 or 30,000 tests a day. We're going to increase that capacity to 50,000 tests per day because we want people to be tested. We are actively looking for ways to expand that, whether it's by expanding the hours or times that the 148 assessment centres are open or by opening new places for the people to be tested. We're very cognizant of this issue, and we are dealing with it as we speak.

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

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** The supplemental is also for the Premier.

Residents of Ottawa's suburban and rural communities have to drive so far to access COVID-19 tests that it's often closer to drive to a neighbouring town, putting pressure on health systems in places like Rockland, Kemptville and Arnprior. Residents in Orléans have been calling for a local testing centre since the spring, and I've heard the same calls from residents in Kanata and Barrhaven as well.

Yesterday on Moodie Drive, hundreds of residents were waiting hours on the side of a gravel-shoulder road in Nepean—for hours, on a gravel shoulder next to a very busy road, waiting for their COVID-19 tests. Why do the residents of Ottawa's rural and suburban communities have to drive so far and wait so long to get a critical COVID-19 test?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Well, thank you again, but we have expanded the capacity significantly in a very short order, and we are going to significantly expand it again because we know that with people going back to school, with people returning to work, with people wanting to visit family members in long-term-care homes or retirement homes—we have boosted the capacity significantly in the last short while, and we're boosting it again.

We are making plans to expand both the testing capacity and the lab facilities because, of course, you need to have people be tested in good time, but also to receive their results very quickly as well. So we want to make sure that people can receive their results within 24 hours. We have plans to do that. Our fall preparedness plan is dealing with that. We are looking for those locations now, both in terms of expanding testing facilities but also our lab facilities so that anyone in Ontario, in the Ottawa area or

wherever else it may be, can receive those tests, because we want people to be tested. We know that we're facing a wave two, as well as flu season, so we need to be prepared for that, and we will be.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The next question. The member for Northumberland–Peterborough South.

#### ECONOMIC REOPENING AND RECOVERY

**Mr. David Piccini:** Thank you. Good to see you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance.

Minister, we recognize that individuals and businesses across Ontario have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Despite the challenges ahead, I've really been inspired to see the collective commitment to working across Ontario to overcome these collective challenges.

Locally, in my riding of Northumberland–Peterborough South, Minister, I recently spoke to our local chambers. As an example, I reached out to Brenda Whitehead. She's doing a phenomenal job with the Port Hope chamber of commerce. She spoke to me about important programs—Digital Main Street, broadband, the Recovery Activation Program—and the important work that those programs are doing to support local businesses. In fact, Rhonda at Primitive Designs is working actively on those programs as we speak.

Could the minister please share with the House the actions our government continues to take to support individuals and businesses during these difficult times?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Thank you to the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South. Thank you, as well, to yourself and many of the other members of this Legislature who have welcomed me into your riding for a chance to speak to your businesses and to your community. You do an excellent job of representing their interests.

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud of the actions it's taken in collaboration with the 14.5 million Ontarians to support people, to support businesses, to support health care.

Since the announcement of our first action plan, our \$17-billion COVID action plan, that number has now increased to \$30 billion—\$30 billion of direct support. The member mentioned just one of those programs, which, in partnership with my colleague, the Minister of Small Business, is the Digital Main Street program; to talk about that program, \$57 million in partnership with the federal government to support the digitization of main street businesses, to support them as they evolve their businesses and move through this very difficult time. With the member's help, with the help of all of the members of this Legislature, we'll continue to support our businesses with programs like Digital Main Street.

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

**Mr. David Piccini:** Thank you, Minister. It's heartening to know the important work that you're doing and that

our government is doing to support our businesses during these difficult times. We will continue to commit to working with businesses as we go forward. I'm proud to be part of this government that's doing that.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I'm also a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. They often say, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." I'm proud to say that this committee met with over 500 witnesses, 800 hours of testimony. Not one person was turned away, including the many local constituents of mine that spoke to this committee.

Minister, could you please inform the House what other actions the government is taking to listen to the concerns of Ontarians as we move forward on a path to economic recovery?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Again, thank you to the member. As soon as this crisis hit, the Legislature and, in fact, this government responded, and one of the ways we responded was by making sure we were listening. One of the ways that we did that was through the creation of the Ontario jobs and recovery cabinet committee. The members of that committee set up 56 ministerial advisory councils. They've had over 600 meetings with groups to talk about specific sectors, about specific issues.

I would want to thank not just the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South, but all the members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and the over 500 witnesses who took their time to respond to the opportunity to share with us what it was that is going on in their communities so that we can respond. We can continue to respond through the programs we put forward, through the budget that we'll bring forward by November 15, making sure that we are listening to the challenges that Ontarians are facing, that job creators are facing, to support Ontario through this pandemic.

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#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Last night, I spoke to Robert Smilie, an Ottawa resident whose son, Rowan, and partner, Kimberly, must be tested for COVID-19 every two weeks, given their health conditions and caregiving responsibilities. Robert was worried about long lineups for testing today so I asked him to tell Rowan to give me a call.

I spoke to him this morning. Rowan is standing right now in an eight-hour lineup at Moodie Drive testing facility in the west end. The lineup is more than a kilometre long. That was not a typo. Rowan and Kimberly are currently in an eight-hour lineup. The first person for that lineup, Rowan tells me, arrived at 4:30 this morning. Rowan and Kimberly arrived at 7 a.m. and they might get tested by 3 p.m. this afternoon.

I'm being told that people are parking kilometres away and walking to the line, that they're languishing outside, some with children. Folks are turning away at the sight of this massive lineup, which means they aren't getting tested. It's unacceptable.

Speaker, to the Premier: What is his plan to reduce these lineups and open up testing right now?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you very much for the question. We have set up 148 assessment centres across the province in quite short order and are very grateful to our hospitals for doing that in the midst all of the other work that they have to do, dealing with COVID patients and helping out in long-term-care homes.

We recognize that the lineups in certain areas—as you can tell from the questions that we've heard this morning—are getting to be very long in certain areas, so we're looking for other community partners to help us with this, to be able to take some of those lineups and divide them so that people don't have to travel far and don't have to wait hours in lineups. That is what the people of Ontario deserve and expect, because we don't want people to be turned away from having a test because of the length of the lineup.

We are actively working on finding those partners right now and hope to have them in operation within the next few days.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** That is cold comfort to Rowan and Kimberly. Five days ago this government heard from the Financial Accountability Officer for this province, who said they are sitting on a \$6.7-billion surplus this government was supposed to spend for the people of Ontario for COVID response.

Ottawa is one of three communities that have seen a worrying rise in COVID cases being positive. Experts have told this government—the experts this government does not want to listen to—that its back-to-school plan is flawed and that they are exposing us, right now as I speak these words, to the likelihood of a second wave. We needed months before to massively ramp up our capacity to test in different centres of Ottawa, but this government is rather passing the buck, talking about community partners. And who is suffering? Rowan, Kimberly and thousands of people and families in this province.

When are we going to get more than words and platitudes from this government? When are we going to get them to release the money the people of Ontario deserve?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Speaker, I say through you to the member that we are ramping up considerably our activity on testing. We have done that since the beginning. We were doing 5,000 tests a day when we first started; we're regularly doing over 25,000 tests per day. We're moving towards 50,000 tests per day. But we recognize that we need to have the centres available for people to be tested.

It's wonderful that people have received that message to go and get tested, but there is work that still needs to be done. The 148 centres: Many of them are under strain right now. We're looking to relieve that strain. We are actively working on that. We are speaking with other partners now in the community so that people will be able to travel a shorter distance to find something in their own communities, a place where they can be safely tested, and to make sure that we have the lab facilities. Again, we were only

able to do about 5,000 tests only a few short months ago. We're able to keep up with that right now and to make sure that we can do 25,000 or 30,000 tests per day.

We are increasing as the demand is increasing. There are lineups right now but we are going to relieve them very shortly.

## MANUFACTURING SECTOR

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** My question today is for my friend, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Across Ontario, businesses continue to show the true meaning of the Ontario spirit by providing PPE and supplies to protect people, front-line workers and communities in the fight against COVID-19. Through our Ontario Together Fund we have made strategic investments in companies across Ontario, including eastern Ontario, to secure PPE and to strengthen our world-class manufacturing sector.

Would the minister please update the House on the government's latest efforts in ensuring we have the PPE we need to combat COVID-19 and to get our economy moving again?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you to the member from Ottawa West–Nepean for the question and for your continued advocacy.

Ontario's world-class manufacturing sector continues to step up and respond with Ontario-made solutions in the fight against COVID-19. You heard the Premier a few minutes ago. We announced an historic \$23-million investment matched by the feds at a 3M N95 plant in our friend Minister Clark's hometown—great work, Steve. So 3M's Brockville plant will see over 100 million masks made each year to meet domestic demand, while creating jobs, reinforcing the PPE supply chain and reducing our dependence on overseas suppliers.

Yesterday, in Guelph, we announced a \$2.5-million Ontario Together Fund investment in Linamar Corp. to help retool their assembly line to make components for over 10,000 e700 ventilators.

Speaker, we—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We're paying close attention to the clock.

Supplementary question?

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** Thank you very much, Minister, for that response and for that update on the production of life-saving ventilators and N95 masks.

We continue to rely on our world-class manufacturing sector to retool operations and innovate to produce life-saving PPE. Our manufacturers continue to step up to that challenge, and now it's our turn to do our part.

Can the minister please outline to the House how the government is working to help the province's manufacturing base and economy recover from COVID-19 over the long term?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Over the last three months, Ontario's economy has recovered 672,000 jobs, 98,000 of which were in the manufacturing sector. But there's still much more work to be done.

So we're pleased to support the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters' Ontario Made program to raise awareness and support for goods that are made right here in Ontario. This will give consumers the information they need to support Ontario businesses and to support the Ontario Made brand the next time they visit their local grocery store or hardware store. Manufacturers are lining up to show their Ontario Made spirit, and we encourage everyone to visit [supportontariomade.ca](http://supportontariomade.ca) to learn more.

You heard the Premier: We're unleashing our innovators. We will never have to rely on another country again.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** My question is for the Premier. Toronto Public Health has identified over 80 schools that are at high risk for the spread of COVID-19 based on the neighbourhoods they are in. The 2016 census factors like lower income, multi-generational homes and racial background are taken into account. These high-risk schools have lower class sizes as a result.

How is it that the data modelling to determine which schools are at high risk is so old and faulty that schools in nearby neighbourhoods with higher COVID-19 numbers are not on the list and don't have those lower class sizes?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I thank the honorable member across the aisle for that question.

As the Minister of Education has highlighted, supported, of course, by the Minister of Health, our priority remains, across government—and, I assume, on both sides of the House—the safety and security of the students this fall.

I have two kids who are back at school. One of those areas in particular, where my daughter is at high school, has become a bit of a concern. But what has been put in place by the school board, supported by the Minister of Education, by this government, has given us all a sense of security. That does not mean that at any time we will let down our guard. As has been said often by this minister and by the Premier, it is our main concern—the safety and security of the students, to make sure that they have the highest quality of education and that parents can be assured that their kids are safe when they go to school.

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

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** In my riding of York South–Weston, the 2016 census data and postal code modelling left four schools off of the list that should be considered high-risk based on actual COVID-19 numbers those neighbourhoods have.

While on this side of the House we believe all classes should be smaller, it is simply wrong and, in fact, reckless that families with children living in the same neighbourhoods and sharing the same amenities, like daycare, are treated differently.

1130

Why are all class sizes not smaller? And why are we not accurately tracking the higher-risk neighbourhoods

that are the realities in York South–Weston and in this province?

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Just to affirm, in Toronto, the school board has redeployed 400 elementary teachers and they have hired 366 net new teachers for the very purpose of spacing and reducing classroom sizes.

In those communities of higher risk, as noted by the member, where public health, in working with the school board and the Ministries of Health and Education, has identified higher areas of community risk and transmission, those schools have caps imposed.

Remember, Speaker, for high schools right across the city of Toronto, likewise in Durham, York and Peel, the school cap in high schools is at 15 in a blended model. In elementary in those higher-risk communities specifically, the cap is at 15 between kindergarten and grade 3; it is 20 from grades 4 to 8. That, I think, underscores our commitment in the context of mitigating risk.

We've also hired over 102 public health nurses, doubling capacity within our schools. It's proof positive that we'll continue to invest and do everything possible to keep our schools safe.

#### AMATEUR SPORT

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** My question to the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. I want to thank the minister for visiting Niagara earlier this week and hearing from key leaders in the tourism and hospitality sectors in Niagara.

We know that COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on sport in this province and, indeed, across Canada. Next year, Niagara and Ontario are scheduled to host the 2021 Canada Games. I know the minister has allocated substantial investments in athletes and facilities for these games and wants them to be a great success, as do we all.

However, given the importance of protecting the health and safety of athletes, organizers, volunteers and spectators alike, would the minister speak to her commitment to flexibility and support for the Canada Games in Niagara, given the evolving COVID-19 situation?

**Hon. Lisa MacLeod:** I'd like to say thank you to the member from Niagara for his thoughtful question as well as for his diligence in supporting the heritage, sport, tourism and culture industries during this COVID period. As he will tell you, I visited Niagara three times over the pandemic over the course of the summer: first, to make a significant announcement with respect to the Niagara Parks Commission; second, to make significant announcements with respect to Metrolinx on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Transportation; and third, recently, to meet with the tourism stakeholders who were hard hit.

I would be remiss if I didn't say thanks to the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario for their lobby today. I hope everyone takes the opportunity to meet with them.

But let's get back to the 2021 Canada Games. Due to COVID-19, it is anticipated that these are uncertain times,

and we want to make sure that the safety of our athletes, their coaches, their parents and their fans are, first and utmost, our priority. Therefore, I will be supporting the Canada Games Council if they do decide to postpone those games, and we will commit as an Ontario government to pursue those games in 2022 if that's required.

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

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** Thank you to the minister for her response and her commitment to understanding the flexibility and support for the Niagara games. It's incredibly important, and her advocacy is noticed by many in Niagara, as well as her many valued visits.

Being an athlete during COVID-19 is no easy job. Ontario is home to some of the greatest athletes in the world, who have performed at the highest levels of competition. Could the minister please tell us what the ministry is going to do to ensure that these proud, hard-working athletes receive the support they need in order to compete at the highest levels on the home and international stages?

**Hon. Lisa MacLeod:** As you know, we did support the Niagara games with a \$29-million investment. We will continue to support those efforts as well. Early days in the pandemic, we brought forward a ministerial advisory panel on amateur and high-performance athletes, and we were the first in the country, actually, to allow our athletes to pre-condition at the Canadian Sport Institute of Ontario. We actually used to have, in honour of Penny Oleksiak, "operation get Penny back into the pool."

Therefore, we are committed to making sure that our high-performance athletes compete in Tokyo in 2021. That's why, last week, we made an additional \$21-million investment into our high-performance athletes. I can confirm that gold medallists like Penny Oleksiak, like Rosie MacLennan and like Andre De Grasse have been supported through this ministry and through this funding so we can see them not only go from the pool to the podium, but, again, to unify Canadians, at a time we're going to need that unification as we come out of COVID-19.

Sport is a unifier, and this government supports our athletes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The time for question period this morning has expired. This House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1135 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### SOLDIERS' AID COMMISSION ACT, 2020

#### LOI DE 2020 SUR LA COMMISSION D'AIDE AUX ANCIENS COMBATTANTS

Mr. Todd Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 202, An Act to continue the Soldiers' Aid Commission / Projet de loi 202, Loi prorogeant la Commission d'aide aux anciens combattants.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services if he wishes to explain his bill briefly.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** Yes, briefly. Through the Soldiers' Aid Commission, Ontario has demonstrated leadership in supporting veterans for more than 100 years now. The commission was created way back in 1915 to support Ontario veterans returning home from World War I, and then later expanded to include veterans from World War II and the Korean War.

It's a sad reality that with each passing year, the number of living veterans who served in those wars decreases, and while we will never forget their bravery and sacrifice, it is time we honour a new generation of servicemen and women. That's why our government is introducing legislation to modernize the Soldiers' Aid Commission and expand assistance to Ontario veterans of all ages and their families who are in financial need.

### MORE THAN A VISITOR ACT (CAREGIVING IN CONGREGATE CARE SETTINGS), 2020

#### LOI DE 2020 DÉCLARANT QUE LES AIDANTS NATURELS SONT PLUS QUE DE SIMPLES VISITEURS (PRESTATION DE SOINS DANS LES HABITATIONS COLLECTIVES)

Mrs. Gretzky moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 203, An Act respecting the rights of persons receiving care, support or services in congregate care settings and their caregivers / Projet de loi 203, Loi sur les droits des personnes qui reçoivent des soins, un soutien ou des services dans les habitations collectives et de leurs aidants naturels.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll recognize the member from Windsor West to explain her bill.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** The bill enacts the More Than a Visitor Act (Caregiving in Congregate Care Settings), 2020, which requires the minister to respect and promote certain rights for persons receiving care, support or services in congregate care settings and their designated caregivers. The minister is also required to safely integrate designated caregivers who were excluded because of the COVID-19 pandemic back into congregate care settings.

The minister is also required to improve respect for the role of designated caregivers within congregate care settings, and to develop and implement a caregiving strategy in consultation with specified stakeholders. The strategy is to be reviewed and updated every five years and is to be published on a government website. An interim

strategy that incorporates the rights of individuals receiving care, support or services in congregate care settings to have meaningful access to their designated caregiver is to be in effect for the first year.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRAITE DES PERSONNES

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** I am happy to join my colleague the Solicitor General to update the House on our government's strategy to end human trafficking in Ontario. It is a tragedy that we need to have a full-fledged strategy to take on this despicable crime.

Child and youth sexual exploitation is a massive criminal and social challenge in our province and throughout the world. This is a fight Ontario cannot afford to lose. The health of our communities and the lives of millions of young people are at stake. More than 70% of known human-trafficking victims identified by police are under the age of 25. Young women and girls are particularly vulnerable, especially those from Indigenous communities, and the average age of recruitment into sex trafficking is just 13 years old. That means children younger than 13 are being recruited. C'est pourquoi notre gouvernement prend des mesures rigoureuses pour lutter contre la traite des personnes et mettre fin à l'exploitation sexuelle des enfants.

Earlier this year, we unveiled a new five-year, \$307-million strategy. We shared this plan in March, and then COVID hit. Over the last few months, while much of the world ground to a halt during the pandemic, human trafficking carried on, continuing to put young victims in danger. It's an enemy that often goes unseen, though it happens all around us, in our communities and in our backyards.

I want to commend my colleague the Minister of Infrastructure and member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for raising this issue during her time in opposition. Her advocacy, along with other members of this House, including the member from Mississauga Centre, has been incredible, and I am so proud to work with women like them.

Speaker, human trafficking is much closer to all of us than we realize. That is why we have made raising awareness a key component in our new strategy. Faire connaître la traite des personnes est notre première ligne de défense pour prévenir ce crime et protéger les enfants et les jeunes.

Last month, we added momentum to our awareness efforts with the release of two new educational resources. I want to applaud the Minister of Education for his work in raising awareness in the health and physical educational curriculum on human trafficking and what healthy relationships of all kinds look like. These new tools are

designed to actively engage youth in discussions about human trafficking and provide culturally relevant resources for Indigenous communities.

The first is called Speak Out: Stop Sex Trafficking, an Indigenous-focused anti-human-trafficking campaign designed by and for Indigenous people. It provides information about human trafficking and sexual exploitation, how to recognize it, why Indigenous people have unique circumstances and where to go for help. It's a source of information about human trafficking and sexual exploitation for Indigenous youth as well as leaders and caregivers in Indigenous communities, to help them raise awareness and provide support. The campaign was developed through a collaborative approach, including Indigenous organizations and communities, anti-human-trafficking service providers, Indigenous youth, survivors of human trafficking and artists. It responds directly to the calls for justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to develop and implement awareness and education programs for Indigenous children and youth on the issue of sexual exploitation.

The second resource is aptly named The Trap. It's an interactive, web-based app designed to teach young people what human trafficking is and equip them with the skills to stay safe. With the support of a facilitator, youth respond to virtual scenarios first-hand to see how trafficking can happen so they know the signs and dangers and how to get help. This tool offers a new, innovative way to show youth how traffickers operate so we can stop this crime before it starts.

Speaker, we need to prevent human trafficking, but we also need to support survivors who are trying to overcome trauma and rebuild their lives. Last month, I was proud to stand with the Attorney General, the Solicitor General and the Premier to announce \$7.65 million over five years for specialized services to support human-trafficking victims and survivors. This investment will support enhancements to services like Victim Crisis Assistance Ontario, which helps meet the immediate needs of victims and survivors, including early intervention services that can help victims transition out of human trafficking and get help locally.

En soutenant les survivants et tenant en compte de leur vécu, nous permettons d'améliorer l'efficacité des programmes d'intervention précoce. By supporting survivors, we also send a signal to perpetrators that every Ontario community is behind these brave and courageous young people who are breaking free from an abusive situation, and we build a bridge to more effective prosecutions and increased convictions. We build a bridge to an Ontario that will one day be free from the deplorable crime of sex trafficking.

#### 1510

Earlier this summer, our government continued to build momentum and to support survivors with two new programs funded by the anti-human trafficking strategy. The Indigenous-Led Initiatives Fund supports community-focused, anti-human trafficking services and supports designed by and for First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous organizations and communities. This fund

prioritizes Indigenous survivor-led programming and dedicated services for Indigenous children and youth who have been sexually exploited, enabling front-line service providers to reach targeted groups, including Inuit communities and 2SLGBTQ survivors.

The community supports fund provides funding to community-based anti-human trafficking organizations to deliver programs and services for victims and survivors of human trafficking. Under the new strategy, this funding prioritizes survivor-led programming and supports for sexually exploited children and youth. This includes services such as residential placements and treatment, peer mentoring and education and employment training programs. There were over 140 submissions, combined, for these programs, which are currently being reviewed by the Provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Coordination Office. More details will be coming soon.

Speaker, on top of all of this activity, our government is also reforming the child welfare system. We know that children and youth in the system are overrepresented as victims of this crime. Traffickers are known to recruit and lure vulnerable youth into sex trafficking. It is important that residential settings are equipped and staff are trained to recognize and respond swiftly to risk indicators. Early identification of youth at high risk of sex trafficking has to be a priority for child welfare agencies, and it will be included in our efforts to modernize the system and focus it on prevention and early intervention.

I want to acknowledge the hard work and co-operation that is taking place across the board to end sex trafficking. This spring, we established a new Indigenous Women's Advisory Council made up of leaders and experts in violence prevention from First Nation, Métis, Inuit and 2SLGBTQ communities, who will provide advice on child, youth and family well-being, addressing human trafficking and broader violence-prevention issues. This council will be key to ensuring that Indigenous women's voices guide Ontario's priorities, and I thank the members for their collaboration and partnership in this work.

We cannot fight this crime alone. We need and appreciate the help of educators, front-line workers, those in Indigenous communities, police officers and, of course, survivors, who have been so strong as they share their experiences and valued input to help shape our strategy.

I'm proud to reaffirm our government's commitment to fighting human trafficking and protecting young people by giving them knowledge and skills to stay safe.

I will now hand it over to the Solicitor General to speak more about the work we are doing. I also want to say how honoured I am to be a co-lead of our government's anti-human trafficking strategy with the Solicitor General.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you to Minister Dunlop. I am pleased to join my colleague the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues in providing the House with an update on our government's strategy to end human trafficking in Ontario.

To begin, I want to highlight how I am proud of the work that we've been able to accomplish together with our partners since we announced our strategy in March. Even

during the COVID-19 pandemic, our government has remained steadfast in its commitment to move forward with the actions necessary to fight human trafficking and end child sexual exploitation. We know that while most Ontarians stayed home to stop the spread, criminals have not been staying home. These heinous crimes continue, even in the midst and in spite of a global health pandemic. Similarly, community partners, including police and victim services, have been working overtime.

Human trafficking is a vicious and violent crime that robs those being exploited and abused of their health, safety and dignity. It feeds off the vulnerable and fuels other criminal activities, such as gun smuggling and gang violence. Some 90% of those victims will be trafficked within Canadian borders. Most will be sexually exploited. All will be left significantly impacted by the mental and emotional trauma, as well as the physical abuse.

Ontario is, unfortunately, a major centre for human trafficking in Canada, accounting for roughly two thirds of police-reported cases nationally each year. Those are only the numbers that are reported; we know and fear the numbers are far greater. This is why we must remain focused and determined to end this horrifying and brazen crime.

Human trafficking is complex and dynamic. It takes place behind closed doors and is difficult to detect. And while we know that human trafficking often happens in large urban centres, it also occurs in smaller cities and communities across Ontario. Every day, criminals prey on our children and youth, our most vulnerable, for the purpose of sexual exploitation. They take advantage of young girls and boys, trafficking them for sex and often moving them around the province to avoid capture.

That is why we've created Ontario's five-year strategy to end human trafficking. It is a proactive, comprehensive action plan focused on four key areas:

—first, to raise awareness of this issue and ensure children, youth, parents and all Ontarians know what human trafficking looks like, how to recognize the signs and where to get help;

—second, to protect victims and intervene early by focusing on prevention measures to support children and youth. We are also leveraging key partners, such as police and child protection services, as part of the new specialized intervention teams, and establishing dedicated residential support to serve victims, including those under the age of 16;

—third, to support survivors by investing in community-based supports to make more services available to survivors and enhance victim services to assist survivors throughout the court process;

—and finally, to hold offenders accountable and bring traffickers to justice by enhancing specialized crown prosecution capacity, by strengthening intelligence gathering in the correctional system, and by supporting police services in the fight against human trafficking through a multijurisdictional approach.

Minister Dunlop, my co-chair for the strategy, has provided an excellent description of the government's

recent initiatives, tools and programs to raise awareness of human trafficking and assist victims and the organizations that work to help them. They work hand in hand with a strong law enforcement component to ensure that offenders are held accountable.

In order to turn the tide, we need to strengthen our ability to apprehend, charge and convict perpetrators, which is why we are taking steps to provide support to police services province-wide through a strengthened, coordinated approach. Multijurisdictional police co-operation is essential in investigating human trafficking and child exploitation and bringing traffickers to justice.

We are establishing a new intelligence-led joint forces strategy. This team will be made up of investigators and analysts with expertise in human trafficking and child exploitation from 21 Ontario police forces, including the Ontario Provincial Police and First Nations police. The team is developing added capacity to identify, investigate and disrupt human trafficking organizations in Ontario, including those run by organized crime. And major case management software is being enhanced to better support the investigators and analysts in their work.

Here is just one example that demonstrates the importance of police co-operation. Earlier this summer, the OPP worked with 12 police forces across the province to break up a commercial sex trade operation that rotated victims around apartments in Ottawa, Kingston, Belleville, Kitchener, London, Oshawa, Peterborough, Sarnia and Sudbury, a distance that spans hundreds of kilometres. Dozens of charges were laid and the victims of this investigation have been provided support through victim services agencies.

We are also expanding the Ontario Provincial Police Child Sexual Exploitation Unit. We are increasing the size and reach of the unit by adding 23 new positions to investigate sexual offences against children, including cases of child sex trafficking.

I want to once again echo the fact that Minister Dunlop has already highlighted: The average age of recruitment into sex trafficking is just 13 years old. That fact alone is why we have to act now.

We are ensuring that the child sexual exploitation unit has the resources needed to investigate offences and follow up on information from police services and other organizations involved with the sexual exploitation of children.

**1520**

Another area I want to share with this House today is the work under way to strengthen information and intelligence gathering at correctional institutions and probation and parole offices. We have increased our investment in institutional security teams, field intelligence officers and intelligence analysts to help us better identify and monitor human traffickers within the correctional system and to identify victims.

We're working to seal off the so-called prison pipeline that makes inmates easy targets for traffickers. Raising awareness about this issue is so important, and it is our

single greatest weapon in the battle against human trafficking. We need people to understand what human trafficking looks like, understand the risk factors, recognize and identify the warning signs, and if a loved one gets recruited in, to know how to get help and get out.

The tools we launched last month, the interactive web-based app called The Trap and the Speak Out: Stop Sex Trafficking Indigenous-focused program, are concrete examples of our progress to develop the resources needed to increase awareness and equip young people with the knowledge and skills to keep them safe.

Through the Ministry of the Solicitor General, our government also offers a number of grant programs that are available to police services in this important work. I am proud that our new Community Safety and Policing Grant, as well as the proceeds of crime grant, both include a funding stream dedicated to provincial priorities, including addressing human trafficking.

This summer we announced an investment of more than \$6 million over the next three years to help combat crime and build safer communities as part of our Proceeds of Crime-Frontline Policing Grant. Sixteen police services from across Ontario received funding for this grant. Among the initiatives supported are educational campaigns targeting groups most susceptible to becoming victims of human trafficking.

As part of our landmark \$195-million investment through the Community Safety and Policing Grant, over a dozen projects to fight human trafficking, put forward by police services across Ontario, are now being funded.

There is no place in our province for human trafficking, a terrible, destructive crime that preys on the lives of our most vulnerable. Our commitment to combatting human trafficking has never wavered and remains very clear. We will continue to work together to put an end to human trafficking.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Responses?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm pleased to respond to the minister's statement on human trafficking. The minister has already given a statement on this topic earlier this year, on Human Trafficking Awareness Day, and I was happy to respond then as well.

As I have mentioned before, Ontario is the place where two thirds of Canada's reported human trafficking cases happen. We also know that most of these cases involve women and girls, and the majority of victims are young people under the age of 25.

As legislators, we have a duty to respond to these alarming statistics. We have a duty to act and protect the vulnerable.

I'm glad to see that the minister introduced an anti-human trafficking strategy over the summer, and her focus on ensuring safety for Indigenous women. This a good sign that this issue is being taken seriously.

But it is difficult to square with previous cuts we've seen from this government, such as the recent change to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, which limits the compensation that victims of sexual violence can receive. I believe my colleague the member from Toronto-St. Paul's raised this issue in this House last year.



As we know, human trafficking thrives when people, especially young people, are vulnerable. This makes me wonder: What is the cumulative effect of this government's decisions over these past few years? Overall, has this government made young people more or less vulnerable?

We need to remember that part of the solution is to consider the environment we're creating for youth. We also need to remember that any strategy to end human trafficking cannot operate in a silo.

This government's cuts in other areas work against its strategy to end human trafficking. When this government ended rent controls for new buildings, and introduced Bill 184 to make evictions easier, we must ask: Does that help vulnerable young people find safe housing, or do these changes disproportionately impact low-income and already vulnerable people?

When this government refuses to raise social assistance rates, which keeps recipients in deep poverty, we have to consider how this works against the goals of ending human trafficking, particularly when we know that lower-income young people are at higher risk.

When this government cut the child advocate's office, which was a resource for vulnerable children and youth, how did that contribute to the goal of ending human trafficking?

Human trafficking does not exist in a vacuum. When our communities and the support systems within them face cuts, we see more people further at risk. This government's policy decisions, some of which I mentioned, work against the goals of fighting human trafficking.

Lastly, I want to mention that supporting women is critical to tackling human trafficking. Things like access to affordable child care, housing and income supports can help women who are already trapped in the cycle. Women who are being trafficked need to see a way out. We have a duty to help our constituents create safe and stable communities. In addition to supporting victims and bringing perpetrators to justice, we must recognize the social and economic factors at the root of human trafficking and other violent crimes. Prevention means tackling human trafficking from a systemic approach by giving vulnerable, at-risk Ontarians the support they need in their communities.

I listened very closely to both ministers' statements today. I would love to see what they've said come to fruition, but we need to look at the entire system and how we're supporting people to ensure that they do have a way out and that we can stop this absolutely horrible act from happening any further in our province.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I rise today to speak to the importance of combatting human trafficking in all of its forms across Ontario.

I would like to begin my remarks by offering my sincere thanks to the Ottawa-area shelters and transitional housing providers who are working tirelessly to support the victims of human trafficking, including the Minwaashin Lodge, Harmony House, Interval House and A New Day Youth and Adult Services. I would also like to thank the

Ottawa Coalition to End Human Trafficking and the Ottawa Police Service human trafficking unit. The Ottawa community benefits massively from the important work of all of these organizations.

Human trafficking is an insidious crime that has no place in Ontario's communities, nor anywhere else in the world, for that matter. Its digital dimension means that it can affect anyone, and it often exploits the most vulnerable, young and marginalized among us. As a parent and school trustee, I was disturbed to learn that such criminal behaviour is actually present in our schools. Each of us in this House has a moral and ethical obligation to help eradicate human trafficking from our communities, and ensure that all Ontarians have access to the education, resources and public services required to stay safe and healthy in this province.

Preventing human trafficking requires a holistic approach because of the complex ways that it affects our communities. Along with effective community-level policing and a school curriculum that is responsive to the digital dimension of trafficking, it is critical that our province is supporting a well-funded emergency and transitional housing system capable of offering a safe refuge to victims.

Ottawa, historically, has struggled with maintaining adequate numbers of emergency and transitional housing, particularly for women escaping human trafficking and domestic violence. When last surveyed by Statistics Canada in 2019, Ottawa only had 24 emergency shelter beds dedicated to youth, 117 dedicated to women, and had many reported instances of women escaping violence, including human trafficking, being stuck on a wait-list for months awaiting appropriate transitional housing. Nobody seeking to escape from human trafficking should ever face a year-long waiting list for a bed at a home offering the appropriate care.

Effectively addressing human trafficking should never be a partisan issue. I thank the government for its attention on this important issue, and ask that we work together to ensure that no region in Ontario lacks the funding necessary to support the victims of human trafficking.

**1530**

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I rise to reply to the minister's statement on human trafficking. First of all, in the spirit of non-partisanship, I'd like to thank both ministers for their hard work on this issue. I'd like to thank all members of this House who have taken action to speak out against human trafficking.

I can tell you, as the father of a young teenage girl, it breaks my heart to know how young women, in particular, are preyed upon by traffickers. To know that the average age of a young woman lured into trafficking is 13 years old, and to know that two thirds of these crimes happen right here in Ontario, highlights why we all—everyone in this House and in this province—have to act to combat human trafficking.

I especially want to thank all the groups in the grass-roots and on the front lines who prevent trafficking and support and empower survivors, from shelters and rape

crisis centres to Indigenous partners like the Ontario Native Women's Association and friendship centres, who work so hard to support survivors.

We've seen how COVID-19 has preyed on inequities in our society. We know that human trafficking disproportionately affects Indigenous women, women of colour, 2SLGBTQ+ members of our community and people who are experiencing poverty and homelessness. That is exactly why I believe that we need not only a law-and-order response to human trafficking, we need progressive social policies to reduce social inequities in our society. If people were paid a living wage to pay the bills, they would be less vulnerable. If people had a safe and affordable place to call home, they would be less vulnerable. If people had a guaranteed basic income so no one fell through the cracks, they would be less vulnerable. If we took the steps to end and dismantle systemic racism in our society, people would be less vulnerable.

So, Speaker, let's make a commitment, especially in the provincial budget coming up in November, to fund the programs and services that reduce inequity in our society to reduce vulnerabilities in our society. That would be the truly systemic, robust and comprehensive strategy we need to end human trafficking in Ontario.

## PETITIONS

### RÉMUNÉRATION DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

**M. Guy Bourgoïn:** Il me fait plaisir de lire une pétition qui m'a été apportée par Eric Brotherton de Kapuskasing, intitulée « Prime liée à la pandémie ».

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Alors que la prime liée à la pandémie doit être plus accessible et doit débuter à la date de la déclaration d'urgence; et

« Alors que le premier ministre Ford a déclaré à maintes reprises que les travailleurs-es de première ligne ont tout son appui, mais c'est difficile à croire, compte tenu de tous ceux et celles qui sont exclus-es; et

« Alors que la liste de travailleurs-es et des lieux de travail admissibles devait être élargie; et

« Alors que tous les travailleurs-es de première ligne devaient être rémunérés-es de juste façon;

« Nous, soussignés, pétitionnons l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de demander au gouvernement Ford de rendre la prime de 4 \$ de l'heure disponible à tous les travailleurs-es de première ligne, qui ont mis les besoins de leur communauté au premier plan et de débuter la prime de salaire, le jour où la situation d'urgence a été déclarée, afin que leurs sacrifices et leur travail acharné pour assurer notre sécurité soient reconnus. »

Il me fait plaisir de signer cette pétition et de l'apporter à la table des greffiers.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce this petition on behalf of residents of North York and Toronto. It reads as follows:

“Reverse the Cuts to Public Education!

“To the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Whereas the government has announced deep cuts to funding for public education and increases to class size for grades 4 to 8 and in high school;

“Whereas these funding cuts will negatively impact the quality of education for students across Ontario;

“Whereas the government will remove thousands of teaching positions in schools;

“Whereas the vast majority of parents, students and educators support smaller class sizes and want the best education possible for the students of Ontario;

“Whereas larger class sizes negatively impact the quality of education, reduce access to teaching resources and significantly diminish teacher-student interactions;

“Whereas the impact of larger class sizes will be particularly detrimental to students who need additional support;

“Whereas the government won't commit to the current full-day kindergarten model with a teacher and designated early childhood educator ... beyond one more school year;

“Whereas Ontario has an internationally recognized public education system that requires investment to ensure all of our students can succeed;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the cuts to education funding announced by the government, reduce class sizes from kindergarten to grade 12 and make the necessary investments in public education that build the schools our students deserve....”

I'm going to affix my signature to this petition, and I'll pass it to the table.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'm pleased to introduce the following petition:

“Reverse the Cuts to Public Education!

“To the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Whereas the government has announced deep cuts to funding for public education and increases to class size for grades 4 to 8 and in high school;

“Whereas these funding cuts will negatively impact the quality of education for students across Ontario;

“Whereas the government will remove thousands of teaching positions in schools;

“Whereas the vast majority of parents, students and educators support smaller class sizes and want the best education possible for the students of Ontario;

“Whereas larger class sizes negatively impact the quality of education, reduce access to teaching resources and significantly diminish teacher-student interactions;

“Whereas the impact of larger class sizes will be particularly detrimental to students who need additional support;

“Whereas the government won’t commit to the current full-day kindergarten model with a teacher and a designated early childhood educator ... beyond one more school year;

“Whereas Ontario has an internationally recognized public education system that requires investment to ensure all of our students can succeed;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the cuts to education funding announced by the government, reduce class sizes from kindergarten to grade 12 and make the necessary investments in public education that build the schools our students deserve;

“Protect and enhance the current full-day kindergarten model to give all students the best start at school.”

I affix my signature.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I have a petition from the good people of St. Joseph Island. It reads:

“Support Bill 153, the Till Death Do Us Part act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, affix my signature and present it to the usher.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Kristine Miron from Val Caron in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

“Gas prices.

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

#### 1540

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

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

#### DOCUMENTS GOUVERNEMENTAUX

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J’aimerais remercier Solange Boudreau. La pétition—voyons; j’en ai beaucoup.

Les accents en français sur les cartes de santé de l’Ontario et les permis de conduire :

« Alors qu’il est important d’avoir le nom exact des personnes sur les cartes émises par le gouvernement, tels la carte santé ou le permis de conduire;

« Alors que plusieurs personnes francophones ont des accents dans l’épellation de leur nom »—comme moi;

« Alors que le ministère des Transports et le ministère de la Santé ont confirmé que le système informatique de l’Ontario ne permet pas l’enregistrement des lettres avec des accents; »

Ils demandent à l’Assemblée législative « qu’elle s’assure que les accents de la langue française soient inclus sur tous les documents et cartes émis par le gouvernement de l’Ontario », et ce, « avant le 31 décembre 2020. »

J’appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer et l’envoyer à la table des greffiers.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I have a petition here, again, from the good people of St. Joseph Island.

“Fix the Northern Health Travel Grant.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Northern Health Travel Grant is supposed to even the playing field so all Ontarians can get the medical care they need, but is failing too many northern families;

“Whereas successive Conservative and Liberal governments have let northerners down by failing to make health care accessible in the north;

“Whereas not all costs are covered, and reimbursement amounts are small compared to the actual costs, northern families are forced to pay out of pocket to access health care, which is a barrier for seniors and low-income working families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fix the Northern Health Travel Grant so we can ensure more people get the care they need, when they need it.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to the page to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It gives me great pleasure to table this petition on behalf of parents at Brookhaven school. It reads as follows:

“Our Children Matter: Fix the Education Funding Formula.

“To build the schools our children deserve, and our society and economy need, we demand that the Legislature of Ontario fix the broken education funding formula.

“Our schools need:

“—smaller classes in all grades;

“—more resources and supports in special education;

“—more support staff;

“—protection against violence; and

“—urgent repairs to our aging buildings.

“We are united in calling for a funding formula that is based on our children’s actual needs, and is necessary for the community, families, and educators of Ontario.”

I’m going to affix my signature to this petition as I support it, and I’ll pass it along to one of the ushers to table with the Clerk.

#### PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Natalie Labranche from Chelmsford in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

“Pandemic Pay....

“Whereas the pandemic pay eligibility needs to be expanded as well as made retroactive to the beginning of the state of emergency; and

“Whereas Premier Ford stated repeatedly that the workers on the front lines have his full support but this is hard to believe given that so many” of us “do not qualify; and

“Whereas the list of eligible workers and workplaces should be expanded; and

“Whereas all front-line” health care “workers should be properly compensated;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To call on the Ford government to expand the \$4-per-hour pandemic pay to include all front-line” health care “workers that have put the needs of their community first and make the pay retroactive to the day the state of emergency was declared, so that their sacrifice and hard work to keep us safe is recognized.”

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

#### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** This petition is totally appropriate. We’re getting into the fall and the white powder is going to be falling on our roads pretty soon.

“Improve Winter Road Maintenance on Northern Highways....

“Whereas Highways 11 and 17 play a critical role in the development and prosperity of northern Ontario;

“Whereas the former Liberal government introduced private winter maintenance contracts, and the current Conservative government has failed to improve winter road conditions in northern Ontario;

“Whereas injuries and fatalities are twice more likely to occur on a northern highway than on a highway in southern Ontario, per capita;

“Whereas current Ministry of Transportation classification for winter highway maintenance negatively impacts the safety of drivers on northern highways;

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

“Classify all 400-series highways, the QEW highway and Highways 11 and 17 as class 1 highways;

“Require that the pavement on class 1 highways be bare of snow within eight hours of the end of a snowfall.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to a page for the Clerks’ table.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I’m pleased to introduce the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Don’t Increase Class Sizes or Cancel Full-Day Kindergarten.

“Whereas the vast majority of parents, students, and educators support smaller class sizes and the current model of full-day kindergarten and want the best education possible for the students of Ontario; and

“Whereas larger class sizes negatively impacts the quality of education; reduces access to teaching resources and significantly diminishes teacher-student interactions; and

“Whereas the impact of larger class sizes will be particularly detrimental to students who need additional support; and

“Whereas Ontario has an internationally recognized public education system that requires careful attention and the investment to ensure all of our students can succeed;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit to reducing class sizes, maintain the current model of full-day kindergarten, and make the necessary investments in public education to build the schools our students deserve.”

I affix my signature.

#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Kelly Dougan from Hanmer in my riding for this petition.

“MS Specialized Clinic in Sudbury....

“Whereas northeastern Ontario has one of the highest rates of multiple sclerosis ... in Ontario; and

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 16, 2020, on the amendment to the motion, as amended, regarding the amendments to the standing orders.

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to see you again. I haven't seen you for a while. And it's always a pleasure to rise and talk to the amendment to the amendment to the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to rise today and discuss this government's changes to the standing orders. To most of the people who watch this channel, you may not be familiar with the standing orders or what they are, so let me summarize this. The Conservatives are trying to change the rules of the game so they can pass as many laws as they want without ever hearing about it.

Mr. Speaker, I know you can't say this, but I'm sure you disagree with it. That's true, but look at what they're doing. They're changing how long they need to put a bill before the House before it's debated. Under these new rules, they could put a thousand changes into an omnibus bill at 3 o'clock on Tuesday and begin debating at 9 a.m. on Wednesday. Legislators may not even have enough time to actually read and analyze the bill before it's debated, and that's happened here already.

**1550**

For those of you at home, when I get a bill on my desk, like a lot of my colleagues, I'm sure, the first thing we do is go back to our ridings and talk to the people who will be affected, our shareholders. How will we do this if we only have one night? How do you go back to your riding and do that? In some cases, you're in Toronto, and you can't even go back to your riding. How can I make sure that the people in my riding are properly consulted?

Take the Environmental Bill of Rights, for example, Mr. Speaker. We have people in Crystal Beach and Fort

Erie who are watching the lake they love become overrun by pollution and algae. We have wineries in Niagara that depend on stable weather and the climate. We have people who use the Niagara River every day who want it to be clean. All of these issues are on the environment, yet the Premier doesn't want to hear from these people.

The bill was rushed, committees were barely allowed to discuss this issue and the people of my riding were not allowed to bring their concerns forward to the Conservative government. Mr. Speaker, what is more important than hearing the voices of the people of Ontario? By that, I mean all the people of Ontario, not just major businesses, not just PC donors, not just personal friends of the front bench, but all of Ontario.

That means hearing the voices I raised yesterday of a family desperate for home care, who can't get home care because there's no funding. That means voices like 11-year-old Peter—I know our critic for education was at our town hall—from Niagara Falls, who is desperately trying to get this government to make smaller class sizes so he can be safe and go to school with his friends.

That means my friends down at the Legions in Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie and Ridgeway who need funding so they can keep their Legions open and accessible to our veterans.

There are all kinds of people who need to be heard. Any single thing that limits debate on a bill is going to remove their voices. I know, Mr. Speaker, and I know my colleagues—I'm even surprised on the other side of the House that they don't want to hear from their constituents, that they don't want to hear from Ontarians. They just want to rush bills through. It makes no sense to me.

If this chamber isn't designed to get the feedback from the people of Ontario, then why are we here? I'm asking my colleagues: Why are we here?

Mr. Speaker, let me just quickly say that when a bill goes to committee and the residents come to committee, the government has a duty to listen. I know that's hard sometimes, but they have a duty to listen. You can't just do it for show. This is an important part of the process in our democracy. I'll say that again: “in our democracy.” Our system is set up so that we can bring forward issues, but also so that we can hear directly from the residents, not only in my riding, Windsor, Toronto, but right across the province of Ontario. During this pandemic it has been.

Mr. Speaker, look at what's happening in California right now. There's no greater issue than the issue of climate change. When we talk about the Environmental Bill of Rights, that's something that requires the input of the residents of Niagara, community members, the businesses, everyone. When you get rid of committee time, that removes the time these people have to talk to their elected representatives—elected representatives; that's called democracy.

I can think of one recent example. We're having a big issue down in Niagara-on-the-Lake. There was a bill that came before committee, Bill 156, and one of the residents spoke before the committee. The minister hasn't even responded to her remarks. In fact, to date, he's ignored

requests to meet with her. Maybe he disagrees with her, and if so, he should say it. But when residents come to committee, it's because they've done their homework. They're passionate about their issue and they believe they're offering solutions to make the bill stronger, quite frankly. So in this case, I believe the minister at least has an obligation to respond. You don't have to agree, but you have to say why or why not.

Mr. Speaker, not only do we need to reverse these changes, but I believe we need more committee work right across the province. At the beginning of this pandemic, my colleagues and I called for a safe-return-to-work committee. Do you remember that we called for that? Listen to this. I want my colleagues to listen to it: It would have been a meeting between government, workers on the front line and their representatives. And the goal was simple: to make sure that everyone was on the same page and returning to work safely. Well, as we can see with this terrifying back-to-school plan, they did not agree to that committee, and I have no idea why.

Had we had the committee we had originally wanted, we could have heard from teachers long before they ever had to get back in the classroom. They could have heard from parents, grandparents, but they didn't want that committee. We could have done this right, instead of trying to negotiate at the eleventh hour. We shut school down in March, and we're still trying to figure it out here in September. We had six months where we could have had a committee. We could have had all these things done correctly.

So now, we have teachers who are terrified in their classrooms and nurses who are trying to get the support they need to do their jobs. Why was this government afraid to hear from them? Why do you think government doesn't have the courage to sit across the table from them? How is it possible, looking at that and not striking that committee, that this government has decided even less consultation is necessary? Who would come up with that?

Let me return to the issue of the Ford government rushing bills through the House. Why might the people of Ontario have cause for concern over this? Why would they? Well, we know from this government and from how many of those from across the aisle came from the Harper government how much this government loves to use omnibus bills. For those at home, this is when you take one bill and then you cram hundreds of changes into it. The idea here is that they're afraid to put a bill before this House that is just their cuts to health care. They're afraid to tell the people of Ontario they're cutting education, not funding long-term care. So what they do is put all these terrible policies into one giant bill, and then they try to pass that.

And we know, with a majority government—we saw this in the budget that passed before the pandemic came. Remember, it was before it came. The budgets they were passing before this pandemic cut funding to health care. They cut funding to education. They didn't legislate mandatory care in long-term-care homes, and we saw what happened: Over 2,000 seniors have died in long-term-care

because they wouldn't mandate care in long-term care. Now these things are coming back to bite them, and you probably all know where.

They couldn't choose to make Ontario's tax rate for bigger business more in line with the rest of the country, but they let these corporations get away with their breaks. I know they didn't like this, but I looked at their record in the last budget. They're all listening over there, I think, I hope. This is what they did, Mr. Speaker:

- cuts to education and health care spending in real terms;

- their so-called increases couldn't even keep pace with inflation;

- community and social service agencies which help our disabled are facing a billion-dollar cut over four years;

- post-secondary education funding was cut by \$400 million;

- child care costs were reduced to just one month's worth of child care;

- cuts to workplace health and safety protection;

- \$164 million in legal aid;

- cuts to the Ministry of Agriculture of \$284 million for our farmers;

- cuts of \$336 million to the ministry that oversees affordable housing—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Excuse me for a second. The member for Mississauga East–Cooksville is standing on a point of order.

1600

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** Speaker, I would appreciate if the member opposite can just talk about the motion, because so far I haven't heard anything about the actual motion that we are debating this afternoon. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Well, it's your right to stand and raise what you think is a point of order. I, in this case, would use your words to say to the member to please stick to what is being debated on the floor.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that advice. I'll stop there, but the list goes on and on, and that was just one single bill from this government. That's why you have to have debate. That's why you've got to have committee hearings. All of that stuff is what happens when you don't have that stuff, when you don't have committee hearings.

My colleague who wants to stand up: Let's debate it. I'll debate it across, because that's what the problem is. We're not having committee hearings. You're rushing bills through. You're not allowing—think about it, in a democratic society—to have me go back into my riding and say, whether they're teachers or whether they're health care workers, “What do you think of the bill? What do you think of Bill 195? What do you think of Bill 197? What do you think of Bill 124?” I could have all those debates with them, but I can't do that if you're bringing a bill forward at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and you start debate at 9 o'clock in the morning, and I'm staying in Toronto because we're sitting all week.

If you want to talk about if I'm on the bill, I think I'm on the bill. I think I'm on the amendments. I'm trying to tell you why you're wrong and why democracy should be protected in the province of Ontario. Why do you guys continue to do this? Why don't you want to hear from the residents of Ontario? Why don't you want to hear from your MPPs? I'm not in government—I know that—but I was elected to represent my riding, and that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to stand up and defend democracy every single day that I'm here, because they voted me in. Think about it: They voted me in to be here, and I'm going to stand up and make sure that this type of language, these type of amendments and cutting my debates are going to stop. And if it doesn't stop, I'm going to make sure that every single person in my riding, whether they're in Niagara-on-the-Lake, whether they're in Niagara Falls, whether they're in Fort Erie, Ridgeway, Crystal Beach or St. Davids, knows that you're not giving me the opportunity to get their voices heard in this Legislature. It's wrong. So if I'm on the bill—I think I am.

Okay. Where was I? What I'd ask the government: Why are you afraid to debate these? Why, instead of calling those bills forward, are you eliminating the ability to discuss and pass bills in this House? And I appreciate you waking me up.

Now, these are bills, just so you know—my colleagues bring bills forward all the time. How much time have I got? Oh, I've got lots of time. They bring forward bills. Here are four bills that I've brought forward here that you guys could call tomorrow, and you choose not to:

- a bill to ensure OHIP coverage for every person in the province who needs a prostate exam. This would mean that no person would have to choose between a needed prostate exam or their bills;

- a bill that would bring tax fairness—I know my colleagues here from Niagara—for our local wineries, to stop foreign competition from destroying them;

- a bill to end the practice of deeming in Ontario and protecting injured workers, something that you guys should do. They're living in poverty;

- a bill to give our front-line health care workers the respect and coverage with WSIB that is being denied them during COVID-19. Think about that. We all know that our health care workers are getting COVID-19. We all know that we've had deaths of health care workers. Why won't you at least give them to not have to fight with the WSIB to get a benefit? Why, instead of—I think I already did that line. I'm sorry.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It will be better the second time.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'm sure it would be, buddy.

These are bills that do good for all our communities. These bills about health, about protecting workers, about protecting local business—why is this government trying to pretend these issues don't exist? They do, and they're going to get worse before they get better, my friends. I'd like to know that, and I hope that the Premier will tell the people in my riding why he believes that it's not worth

discussing their prostate exam costs, unfair taxation, injured workers in poverty or health care workers in poverty because they contracted COVID-19 in the workplace.

These are policies that will literally save peoples' lives or save them from going into poverty. Why won't this government debate that? Does the government think Ontario shouldn't join almost every other Canadian province and have prostate exams covered? Do they not believe we should ensure our health care heroes have the coverage they deserve? Those are the questions we'd like the answer to. Call those bills instead of changing the rules to make it harder to call bills.

I want to go back to the changes that allow the government to pass their own bills quicker. I get that we are facing a public health emergency right now. During this time, it hasn't been easy for elected officials. We've all received the emails from constituents on many sides of many issues. Tough decisions had to be made.

But making a tough decision does not require shutting out the people of Ontario. Are people raising their voices at us? Of course they are. They're all frustrated. They're scared. Some of the hardest-working people in Ontario are losing their life's work and their business through something that is no fault of their own. In some cases, they're losing their businesses over something that could easily be solved by government.

I've got to tell you a story, Mr. Speaker—I've only got a few minutes left—and then I will explain why it's important here today.

There is a business in my riding known as the Min E Mart, near Clifton Hill—a business that has been there for 22 years, with the same employees working there just as long. The owner is a single mom. This was her career. This was her love. This is what she did.

Their landlord—which has a federal and provincial benefit—wouldn't apply for the rent subsidy from the government. The owners of the Min E Mart are good people, good community members, good job providers. We wrote to the Minister of Finance and asked him to directly intervene here. The landlord could have had the money, but instead he chose to evict this local business. Why did he do it? He won't say, but if I had to guess, he wants to jack up the rent.

I was there with the staff when they closed the place down. Mr. Speaker, that is a sight you never want to see. Those people did not deserve that, and shame on their landlord for doing this to people. Shame on the landlord for their greed. The people tried to get the Premier to intervene, and they never even heard back.

I want to tell a little more about that story. I raised this issue with the minister and with the Premier. I asked them, "If the landlord is not going to apply, and there is still"—I think it's \$3 billion in the fund and they've used \$1 billion of it—"2 billion sitting there, why would you not say, 'Okay, if he is not going to participate, take the 50% and give it to the tenant,' so at least they'd be able to use that 50% toward paying their rent and staying in their business?"

I made that suggestion to the finance minister. I made the suggestion to the Premier. That would make a lot of

sense, rather than have to go to a business where a single mom who has given up 22 years of her life to have a business ends up having to close. It's my understanding two more businesses closed today in Niagara Falls for similar reasons.

The Premier is worried about bills being backlogged? Extend the sitting hours. I will sit here all night if I have to have their voices heard. I worked the back shift for over 20 years, steady midnights. I could stay up all night almost any time I want, so if that's what it takes, let's get it done.

Thank you very much for allowing me to say a few words and also thank you very much for staying on the bill.

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

**Mr. Parm Gill:** It's always an honour and a pleasure to rise in this House and represent my constituents in the great riding of Milton.

I am pleased to rise once again today to speak to motion 88, introduced by, of course, our government House leader. I would really like to thank him for taking the time to consult and introduce meaningful changes to the standing orders. Many of these are long, long overdue. Most of these changes serve largely to enhance the prominence of private members' business. All of these changes intend to increase the time and opportunity for debate and to further improve the processes and procedures in this Legislature.

**1610**

Speaker, there are 124 members, of course, in the House; 28 of those are in cabinet. The remaining 96 in this chamber have a unique ability that ministers do not, and that's the ability to introduce private members' bills, also known as PMBs. PMBs have been used to bring forward great ideas and worthwhile recognition days. Most recently, my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence passed her PMB, Bill 141, the Defibrillator Registration and Public Access Act, 2020. The consideration of important bills like these has been significantly impacted and pushed back, of course, due to COVID-19.

With motion 88, I am glad to see that we will now be considering one private member's bill on each day of sitting—one on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and so forth until next summer. This gives the remaining 77.5% of the members in this chamber who are not in cabinet a chance to introduce legislation of their own—legislation that some members have been working on with constituents and stakeholders to develop for months or even years.

When the Legislature was forced to suspend regular sittings at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 27 private members' bills which would have been considered in the spring sitting were delayed until the fall. The four weekly PMBs will allow us to make significant progress catching up to where we should have been by the end of the spring 2021 sitting.

We are making PMB consideration a daily item of business to better incorporate it into a regular flow of the business year.

Some members, especially from distant ridings, sometimes have plans to leave Queen's Park on Thursday so that they can get back in their riding and they're not present for the consideration of private members' bills the way it is currently. Rather than considering all PMBs as one of the final weekly items of business, it will now be easier for all members to engage in the process.

Speaker, before being elected as an MPP, I was honoured to serve in the House of Commons as an MP in Ottawa. During my time there, of course, I worked hard, just like I do here at Queen's Park, to develop and to come up with a private member's bill. The bill number was C-394, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the National Defence Act. I was proud to introduce this piece of legislation that makes it a Criminal Code offence to recruit anyone into a criminal organization, also known as gangs. As a proud father of three, it has always been important to me that our communities and neighbourhoods stay safe and that we try to do everything we can to keep our youth on the right path and not lead them in the wrong direction. During the development of C-394, I consulted with communities right across this country. I had an opportunity to travel, meet with some wonderful organizations, individuals, school boards, police services—you name it. Some of the stories I've heard still stay with me to this day. Communities were looking for help. They were looking for the federal government, at the time, to help protect their children against these thugs and gangsters. At the time, there were 729 known criminal organizations in the country, and this was a huge issue. This continues to be an issue to some extent.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote one of the justice ministers from Manitoba, an NDP member, Andrew Swan, who appeared before the justice committee to talk about my private member's bill at the time—because the justice committee was, of course, studying this piece of legislation. He said, "Gangs know the law. They know that if they get young people involved, if they have an 11-year-old running drugs for them, there won't be a consequence." My private member's bill delivered those consequences, and those consequences have teeth, because my private member's bill had a minimum mandatory sentence of six months for individuals found guilty of the crime of recruiting young people into criminal organizations.

I am of course proud to say that my private member's bill went on to pass through the House of Commons and through the Senate and ultimately received royal assent, and it is now a law. It's ideas like these that allow members to take their time and develop good pieces of legislation that can go on to become law and make our country, our province and our community safer.

In addition, to allow for members' participation, any recorded divisions on a private member's bill would be deferred to the following day after question period. This will definitely allow for more members to participate.

During the debate on motion 88 yesterday afternoon I was heartened to hear thanks from the independent member for Guelph. I am paraphrasing, but the member from Guelph thanked the government House leader for



increasing the number of questions the independent members can receive if motion 88 passes. In contrast, the opposition railed against this entire motion.

Ontarians expect us to be here working, debating and passing legislation to make life better for everyone across our great province. The spirit of this motion is what Ontarians want to see: more opportunity to debate, different forms of debate, including take-note and report-stage debates.

The work done in committees is important and leads to better pieces of legislation. Many committees conduct fulsome consultations that include hundreds of hours of testimony and dozens of delegations. The reports coming out of committee currently can be voted on, and we have all seen that, but cannot be debated. If motion 88 passes, this would now give members another opportunity to participate in the legislative process.

I touched on take-note debates, and I think this, especially during the current pandemic, is extremely important. Where there is a need for recognition of an issue or an event of significance, if passed, this motion would allow for a take-note debate. A take-note debate could be up to four hours in length and could take place during the regular day, but would usually take place in the evenings after the House would normally adjourn.

It's important to note that in the House of Commons, take-note debates have been held on such items as the international campaign against terror in 2001, Iraq in 2003, mad cow disease in 2004 and Canada's deployment in Afghanistan in 2005. These debates have been noted to allow members to participate in the development of government policy, making their views known before government has determined a specific decision, direction or conclusion. During the pandemic, we have seen all levels of government drop their party affiliation in order to work together. A take-note debate would allow for a less formal and less partisan discussion.

Speaker, as you know, motion 88 also proposes changes to closure votes. Currently, a closure vote calls for the end of the debate and for the question to be put. Votes on closure must happen immediately when they're requested by a member. Under the proposed changes, these votes, like most others, could be deferred to the following day and be taken up at deferred votes. Making this change will make the flow of business more predictable and better allow members the opportunity to vote on the legislative business.

**1620**

As we know, closure votes can happen with little or no warning, and members have 30 minutes in order to vote. If these votes were deferred, as most others can be, members can plan other business and commit to other obligations without the fear of missing a vote in which they wanted to participate. This is a well-thought-out, common-sense change.

Currently, during question period, government MPPs can ask approximately six questions, but independent members can only ask two questions. We are allocating two questions normally reserved for the government MPPs

to the independent MPPs. Question period, historically, is exclusively reserved for opposition to question cabinet and hold governments to account. In the interest of democracy, we're making this change to further enhance question period.

Speaker, do you know what province has the longest time allocated for question period? It is Ontario, right here in this Legislature. It is worth reminding members of this chamber that we already have the longest question period of any province or the House of Commons.

Speaking of time, this motion would also adjust the length of question and answer for short speeches. If passed, debate time would be more equitable by adjusting the length of question and answer to five minutes for any speeches shorter than 10 minutes. Because of the inflexibility of the current rule, theoretically, a member could make a very brief speech for, say, only two minutes but then receive 10 minutes of questioning from other members. This change would make debate more equitable and more practical.

The changes introduced in motion 88 also include some very basic, needed housekeeping items, and these include closing an unintended loophole which would allow a bill to be debated in the morning, afternoon and night sittings on the same day. As the government House leader outlined yesterday, that was not the spirit of the previous standing order changes, and I, again, was glad to see an across-party-lines solution to this. Motion 88 also enhances the role of the independent members by making the temporary provisions allowing independent members to substitute for each other on committee.

If passed, we would make several consequential housekeeping amendments to the standing orders to provide clarity and interpretation, and to eliminate outdated requirements like the physical posting of notices on notice boards in the Legislative Building. When someone says they are going to "post this," the last thing I think of is posting a physical piece of paper to a notice board. How arcane is that, Mr. Speaker?

I am proud that our government continues to move with the times and make changes to the rules of business in this chamber. These changes, as I mentioned earlier, are long, long overdue. These changes serve largely to enhance the prominence of private members' business, and all of these changes are intended to increase the time and opportunity for debate and to further improve the processes and procedures of this Legislature.

I'm hopeful, and I'm asking all members in this House, including the independents and the opposition members, to consider supporting this very, very important motion.

Thank you for allowing me to say a few words. I appreciate it.

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

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It's my pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents of Windsor West to speak to government notice of motion 88, and I think the important piece of what I just said was that I'm rising on behalf of my constituents. What this government is doing, and has

been systemically doing since they were elected, is dismantling democracy in the province of Ontario. They have been removing the voice of the opposition MPPs, they've been removing the voice of their own MPPs and, by extension, removing the voice of the people of the province of Ontario that are represented in every single riding in this Legislature.

This is another change to the standing orders from this Conservative government. It really has become a trend, and it's alarming. It's an alarming trend for this Conservative government to change the rules to suit their own purpose, and oftentimes, that purpose is to ram through legislation without any debate or thorough conversation. They're hoping that it is without any scrutiny. They want to get things pushed through before the opposition has a chance to look at the bills—and I'm not just talking about the NDP as the opposition, I'm talking about the independent members who are also elected to represent their constituents. They're trying to rush things through before the media has a chance to see what they're doing and report to the public what they're doing, and they're trying to rush things through before the general public has an opportunity to see what it is that they're doing and hold them accountable.

It speaks volumes about a government who will shut out their own constituents, will not represent their own constituents, will not speak on behalf of their own constituents, will not stand up for their own constituents, but rather, for their own interests, and simply because they feel they wield this incredible power and mandate to do so. I will tell you, that is not what the people in this province vote for. That is not what they expect. Every single one of the government members who either stands in support of this motion and every other thing that the government has done to ram through legislation without proper debate—every single one of them should be ashamed if they stand up and support it. And to those that sit silently while it goes on, you should be equally ashamed.

I know my colleague stood up and was talking about why this is so concerning and raising other examples. I know that the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville got up on a point of order and said that my colleague was off topic. But he wasn't off topic, and I'm going to explain why, and I'll keep explaining why so the government members who might actually be listening will understand why these points are not off topic to this bill.

As I said, this seems to be a pattern of behaviour, a power grab by this government. I'm going to reference another power grab and an example of something they've already done, which is mirroring exactly what they're doing now with motion 88. I'm going to mention Bill 195, which was an act to enact the reopening of Ontario. That bill allowed the government to continue to renew the emergency orders on a regular basis beyond the declared state of emergency and without seeking approval of the Legislature—so without coming back to all of the MPPs in this House, without debate and without the opportunity for the people of this province that elected us to be here, without them having any input into what the government

was doing, and without giving the media an opportunity to ask them questions about it and report to the public about it.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association had said about Bill 195, “The proposed legislation is unnecessary and eliminates essential democratic controls over unprecedented emergency powers. It is a significant threat to democratic oversight that should be rejected.” It also said, “The powers governments have under emergency legislation are supposed to be exceptional—Bill 195 would make the exercise of those powers the ‘new normal.’”

And that is what we are seeing with this Conservative government, that power grab, that control and that completely silencing the voice of opposition MPPs and, by extension, the constituents in our ridings and across the province—their own as well. They have rejected democracy and rather chosen a grab for power to be able to do whatever it is they want to do—

*Interjection.*

1630

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Order, please. The member for Kitchener–Conestoga, come to order, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Second time. Member for Kitchener–Conestoga, come to order, please.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** If the member from Kitchener–Conestoga wants to heckle me across the floor, perhaps he should stand up and actually debate, which is what we're supposed to do in this House but what they are trying to take away. That's exactly what they're trying to take away. And they apparently think it's funny—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Third time. The member for Kitchener–Conestoga, come to order, please.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Speaker, when we're talking about a pattern of disturbing behaviour, Bill 195 also allows for the emergency orders to override the collective bargaining rights of workers to be extended. They already trampled on collective bargaining rights. That shouldn't be a shock to anyone in this province, frankly, because that's what they do. They want to say they support workers, and they want to say they support unions, but they don't. Bill 195 was a shining example of how they really feel about unions and, more specifically, workers in this province.

They stand and they talk about our front-line heroes, those who put their own lives at risk to take care of the rest of us during a pandemic, but this is what they did to those workers. They gave themselves power to cancel vacations for those workers. The jobs could be eliminated and reassigned with no say. They could change the hours of work. Those who have a leave of absence for any reason—perhaps they need medical treatment themselves that requires them being off to recover, perhaps they have a loved one they need to be taking care of, perhaps they have children they needed to be home to take care of during the state of emergency and they've asked for a leave of

absence—the government has taken that away from them. They've decided that workers could be moved to another site. So whether or not you are actually qualified to do that job, the government has said, "We can tell you that you need to go somewhere else and do another job, and when we do that, we can bring in a contractor or a volunteer to do your job."

Again, Speaker, a pattern of behaviour, of disrespect—disrespect for those of us who were elected to be here and, more importantly, for the people who put us in this place and given us the honour and the responsibility and the privilege. I think that is a really important piece, because it's very clear that this government thinks that somehow they have just been magically ordained to be here, that they have all these magical powers to do whatever it is they want and not be accountable for it, that somehow the people of the province of Ontario have given them a mandate to not listen to the people who put them here and who gave them the privilege to be here.

It's interesting, because I talk about people being given the privilege to be here by the electorate. Many of these changes are being brought in by the government House leader, driven by the government House leader, the member from Markham–Stouffville. We heard the member from Milton talk about all the wonderful things—he took a great deal of time, patting himself on the back for all the wonderful things he did as a federal member. There are other former federal members sitting on the other side of the House, and what I will say to them, and specifically to the government House leader, as he comes into this place where we have our own tradition and our own way of doing things, our own rules, our own standing orders: This is the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. This is not the House of Commons. If you are so keen on doing things like they did in Ottawa, then you should run again. You should run again to try and get your seats back in Ottawa. Clearly, the electorate didn't feel that that was the place for you to be, though.

Now they come in, they're changing rules; they're trying to eliminate the voice of opposition MPPs. They're shutting down the voice of the people in the province: "No consultation. Let's ram things through as quick as we can." I'm going to reference another bill that talks to this pattern of behaviour, the same pattern of behaviour that we're now seeing with motion 88.

They brought in Bill 197, rammed through Bill 197, An Act to amend various statutes in response to COVID-19 and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes. The issues with that bill: Bill 197 actually does very little to assist with the immediate post-pandemic recovery, but rather is mainly another typical PC omnibus bill. For the folks who don't know what an omnibus bill is—because I can tell you, when I first got here, I didn't know what "omnibus bill" meant—an omnibus bill is when a government wants to throw in a little bit of this and a little bit of that. They don't necessarily have to be related to each other at all. They put a little bit of good and, in this case, with this government, a whole lot of bad into a bill, and then they put it out to the people of the province. They get their

propaganda machine going. You know, they had their own news channel at one point, their own propaganda channel, where they would push out to the people of the province, to their own constituents, "Look at this. Isn't this great? Isn't this great? Look what we're doing. Look what we're doing." But they didn't talk about all the bad things that were in the bill, because, no, no, no, they wouldn't want the people of the province to know what's really going on. They don't want the people of the province to really know what it is they're up to.

So Bill 197 was a typical PC omnibus bill that cut regulations for various interests, particularly developers. It was in line with the government's pre-pandemic priorities. They changed the environmental assessment, so anybody who cares about the environment, which I think is the majority of people in this province aside from the Conservatives on the other side of the House—they made sure that their friends, their developer friends who are oftentimes donors—it would make it easier for them to do what it is they wanted to do, and to heck with the environment and to anyone who cares about the environment.

And then, Speaker, I want to talk about Bill 124. Again, for anyone on the government side who says that I'm not speaking to motion 88, I'm talking about this pattern of behaviour like we're seeing in motion 88, so save your energy. Don't bother standing up.

Bill 124, An Act to implement moderation measures in respect of compensation in Ontario's public sector: This was a bill that violated the collective bargaining rights enshrined in the freedom-of-association guarantee of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They introduced it right before the summer break, Speaker—right before the summer break of the Legislature, in advance of contract negotiations with teachers. There is a term for that. They're probably not familiar with it because they don't like unions, but it's called bad-faith bargaining—bad-faith bargaining.

Bill 124 limits compensation increases, including salaries, pensions and benefits, to 1% for a three-year period for millions of unionized broader public sector workers in Ontario. This rate is lower than the inflationary increases to the cost of living and would effectively result in pay cuts for workers—the very workers that the Premier and every member of the Conservative government has stood up during this pandemic and applauded for their heroic efforts.

Speaker, I want to go back to Bill 175. Bill 175: again, a pattern of behaviour, like they're doing with motion 88. The bill enables the privatization of home care and was rushed through the Legislature in the middle of a pandemic—the middle of a pandemic. Speaker, I don't think it's a surprise to anyone that when you look at our long-term-care sector, when you look at our hospitals, when you look at the home care system, there is work that needs to be done to make sure that they're better serving the people of this province, absolutely. I don't think anybody would argue that. There are systemic issues in every one of those areas. But to think that the government would push through their agenda of privatization of our

health care services during a pandemic, when the people in this province, including them, including government members, are relying on our health care services the most—the most. And yet the government says, “This is a great opportunity for us to privatize more health care services. Let’s rush the bill through when we think nobody is looking.”

Speaker, the recent experience with COVID-19 I think has really shone a light. Those of us on this side, and a vast majority of Ontarians, already understand that privatizing health care is a bad thing. Publicly owned, publicly funded, publicly delivered health care: That’s what we need in this province. We should be building on what we have, which was brought in by a New Democrat, nonetheless.

**1640**

The people of this province expect that we are going to be investing in that publicly funded, publicly owned, publicly delivered health care system. But this government went, “Ooh, look, pandemic—a big distraction. Let’s slip through a bill where we’re going to privatize more of the health care services that people are really relying on right now,” and shame on them. Shame on them. If they think that the people of this province are so naive that they don’t see what the government has done, they are very, very wrong, Speaker, because I can tell you that I hear on a daily basis from my constituents about the fact that this government is trampling on democracy and pushing through their privatization, that they’re catering to their buddies, to their donors, to their connected folks.

They’re doing things behind closed doors without consultation—wow, are we seeing a theme? No consultation, ramming through stuff, talking behind closed doors, don’t want to debate, don’t want to hear from people—Speaker, the people of this province are paying attention, whether the government thinks they are or not. This pandemic is a horrible thing, and it has touched many, many people’s lives, but that doesn’t mean that they aren’t paying attention to what the government is doing and the damage that they are doing.

So, Speaker, I’m just going to wrap up on this point. I’m going to remind the government, yet again—it’s a great reminder—that if you think that you are here because you deserve to be here, because you are some sort of chosen one who is not accountable to the people that put you here, then you need to walk out that door right now and not come back, because you have forgotten that this is a privilege that we are here. We are here to represent our constituents, whether we are on this side of the House or that side of the House. Just because you are a government member does not mean that the people of this province have given you the right or the green light to trample on democracy. They didn’t give you the green light to privatize services. They didn’t give you the green light to shut down the voice of every other MPP in this House. They didn’t give you the green light to ignore the people in ridings across the province. You need to take a long, hard look in the mirror and really think about what it is that you’re doing here.

I can tell you, Speaker, that on Sundays, when I drive up and I’m coming up University Avenue and I see the Legislature, every single Sunday I think, “Wow, how the heck did I get the opportunity to be here?”, and about how grateful I am that the people in my riding entrust me to represent their best interests. I’m going to take every opportunity while I’m here to make things better for my constituents. That is exactly what the government side should be thinking as well: What can you do to make things better for your constituents and for everyone across this province?

Speaker, we have seen time and time again—whether it’s Bill 195, Bill 197, Bill 24 or, today, motion 88—that this government takes for granted the people in this province. That really needs to stop. Again, I will say that they need to stop and reflect on who it is that put them here, because they didn’t get here on their own and they’re not going to stay here on their own, either. The people in the province, their constituents, are watching, and they will be held accountable.

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

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** It’s a real pleasure to be able to rise today to speak to this motion to change the standing orders and to contribute to this debate about some really constructive changes that our House leader has brought forward to really improve the work that is being done here in the chamber. I’m pleased to be rising today to support these changes that our House leader has brought forward.

When I had the chance to study in England for a couple of years, I was given a really, really unique opportunity. A member of the House of Lords, Lord Wood of Anfield, invited me to come with him to the palace of Westminster for a tour of, really, the seat of our democratic tradition, our Westminster parliamentary tradition. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you it was one of the most eye-opening and illuminating experiences of my life to get the chance to visit Westminster and to go behind the scenes. I must admit I was very excited when I got to have tea in the House of Lords. That was quite an exciting moment.

But while I was there, my friend and mentor, Lord Wood, walked me through some of the funny little traditions that still exist in the rule book in Westminster about some of their parliamentary traditions. One of the ones I found particularly interesting was the throne in the House of Lords, which is where the monarch would come and sit and deliver the throne speech—there’s a little carpeted stool right below the throne, and there’s a rule in the rule book in Westminster that the first male heir of the members of the House of Lords can, on any day, come and sit on that little stool at the foot of the throne and watch the proceedings in the House of Lords. Of course, the idea of this goes back to when the lords were all hereditary peerages, and so theoretically that would be passed onto the first male heir, and so it was a way for that heir to come and learn how the proceedings happen so that they could be prepared to take on that position. I found it quite funny, and of course it seems very outdated to us that that would be something that still exists, but that’s still a rule in the rule book.

Another funny tradition in Westminster is that whenever there is a throne speech, one of the MPs is actually kidnapped from the House of Commons in the UK. One of the MPs is kidnapped and taken to Buckingham Palace and held hostage for the duration of the throne speech. This was so that, back in the day, if the king or queen was in Westminster delivering the throne speech, they had one hostage so that nothing bad would happen to them while they were there amongst all the MPs. So again, another funny Westminster tradition.

I was also shown the cubbies where MPs—it's kind of like school there. MPs get a chance to come and they can hang up their coats in their little individual cubbies and they all have their names listed on it. But there's also a special hook in all of their cubbies for all the MPs, and this hook is actually for where you hang up your sword when you come into Parliament. I found that quite funny. I'm not sure whether or not we have our own cubbies here, but if we do, I don't think we are asked to hang up our sword. As far as I know, none of us regularly carry swords around.

The last one that I found really, really strange, was that bills in Westminster are still printed on what's called vellum, which is goat or calf hide. The idea of this is that when they're printed on this vellum, it will last for, I think, it's somewhere like 400 years. Every single bill that is passed in Westminster must be printed out on vellum, which apparently costs the UK Treasury somewhere in the realm of £80,000 a year, which seems somewhat ridiculous when we have great paper available to us today.

All of these things are funny rules and traditions that still exist in the Westminster system. I must say, Mr. Speaker, I am a huge, huge fan of the Westminster parliamentary tradition. Many political scientists have argued over the years that the Westminster parliamentary tradition is one of the most stable, if not the most stable, forms of government in the entire world, and so I'm proud that here in Ontario and in Canada we have adopted that system from the United Kingdom and from the Westminster tradition, and that we have it here today.

But of course, that's not to say that things don't evolve and change to meet unique situations. Those three examples that I provided earlier are things that don't happen here in Ontario: When we have a throne speech and the Lieutenant Governor comes in, we don't have one of our MPPs kidnapped and taken away over to the first floor into the Lieutenant Governor's quarters; we don't print our bills on vellum; and we don't have hooks for swords here at the Legislature. Although, again, as I mentioned earlier, that might be slightly interesting if we did have that. But anyway, all that to say, there are things that change and evolve over time.

**1650**

Just recently, this past year, our House leader brought forward a number of measures to modernize the standing orders here in the Ontario Legislature on a number of different measures. To go through a couple of them, we had members' statements changed. Members' statements now happen before question period, which gives them a bit more profile because, of course, question period is

often when a lot of viewers tune in to watch what's happening here during the day. I know my grandparents often tune in from your riding, Mr. Speaker, to watch question period every day on the off-chance that they might catch a wee glimpse of their grandson. And so, by putting members' statements right before question period, we give them an increased place of prominence—I think a great change to the standing orders.

Another one that we did is we introduced some accommodations for any members who have disabilities, which is something that I think was very, very well-needed here in this House. I know members on both sides of the chamber were extremely supportive of those changes.

Another change was to bring in a new system by which we conduct debate, by following the question-and-answer model that of course is quite common in the Ottawa House of Commons and something I was familiar with during my time working for the federal government, for the late Minister of Finance, the Honourable Jim Flaherty. This has, in my opinion, really contributed to the quality of debate that is happening here in this chamber, that we have an opportunity now, after someone speaks, to pose questions, to answer, to make sure that we're having that verbal joust that is so critically important during debate. I think it was a wonderful change to the standing orders that has made our business here much more productive and fruitful.

Continuing on, we saw the introduction of an ability to now have co-sponsoring of PMBs across parties. I think this is something that's a fantastic contribution because we know that there is not necessarily just one party that has all the good ideas. Sometimes folks from two different parties have a similar idea and want to work together on something.

I'll give you an example, Mr. Speaker. When I first arrived here, the private member's bill that I introduced, the Caregiver Recognition Act in Ontario, I had modelled it after some legislation that had happened in Manitoba. I later found out that there had been a similar version, slightly different, that had been introduced by one of the members of the opposition party in a previous Parliament. Had I known that, and had this mechanism been on the paper at the time, I might have had the opportunity to reach out to that member from the opposition and speak to them about co-sponsoring and introducing this caregiver act together, which would have shown a lot of party unity—I think, again, a strong mechanism change that was introduced to help modernize some of our standing orders here in Parliament.

We also made some changes to how we introduce visitors. Unfortunately, throughout the COVID pandemic, our visitor galleries have had to remain empty, but in regular times our galleries are often full with guests that many of us have invited from our ridings, whether they be constituents or family members or friends, and we have the wonderful tradition here in the Ontario Parliament of introducing guests. But sometimes those introductions could go on and on and on, and so we made some changes to tighten those up and make sure as many people as

possible can get those introductions in, because I know for myself that it's very exciting when someone gets their name read into Hansard. Last year, I had the chance to bring my grandfather here to visit Parliament and introduced him to the Legislature and got him a nice, signed copy of Hansard afterwards that he's now got up in his house in beautiful Tecumseh. So that was another change.

Another one, a simple thing: allowing us to verbally refer a question or to allow a minister to simply rise when there is an issue that very clearly falls under their purview, without it having to be verbally referred to another minister. This is a natural thing. There are some pieces of overlap between different ministries, and sometimes it isn't entirely clear to those of us who perhaps aren't in cabinet which minister might be responsible for which file. I find sometimes I get a tad bit confused between the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources. There are some areas of overlap there, so if a question is posed and a minister realizes it's somebody else's, boom: We can allow that to happen smoothly and get on with those important questions every day.

The last one I'll mention in terms of changes that happened earlier this year was formally allowing us to use electronic devices in the chamber. This was one of the funniest things for me when I arrived here, Mr. Speaker. I arrived here at 25 years old. I've got my iPhone attached to my hip; it's practically an extension of my hand. I was told at the beginning that, actually, electronic devices are technically not allowed inside the chamber, but the Speaker has chosen to simply look the other way.

That seemed foolish to me. All of us now have these devices that allow us to stay in contact with our staff and our constituents, to respond to messages, and to work on speeches. I know that when you're speaking, sometimes you want to be able to pull up some notes, perhaps. In the past we had to have all of those handwritten, stacked up on books of rules and procedure. Now we can actually bring our devices and formally use those. Again, it's an item of modernization that has been brought forward that makes a lot of sense and allows us to get on with the business of this chamber.

What is being proposed here today? What are the new changes that our House leader has proposed to bring forward? Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll go through them one by one here.

The first change that's being introduced surrounds private member's bills. Private member's bills are, of course, one of the many tools in the tool box for an MPP to be able to advance an issue, to be able to perhaps make a legislative change to something that needs changing, or perhaps to draw attention to a critically important issue. This change that's being brought forward within this motion will allow us to debate private members' business on more days than just Thursday. We're going to have the opportunity on Tuesdays and Wednesdays to be able to consider a PMB at the end of each day, at 6 p.m. That will allow us to get through more of our private members' bills. As I understand it, we'll also be able to consider a private member's bill at 9 a.m. on Mondays.

Now, of course, beyond just the practicality of being able to consider more private members' bills and give more of us the opportunity to bring our bills forward, this is also responding to the situation that we all find ourselves in with COVID. When COVID happened, we had to retool Parliament and figure out how we could make it work during the early time of the pandemic. One of the things that was sacrificed at the time was the Thursday PMB debates. This is going to allow us to play catch-up on that and make sure we're getting the focus on those incredibly important private members' bills.

We've seen many private members' bills that have been passed thus far over the course of this Parliament. I recall well my colleague the member for Eglinton-Lawrence bringing forward an important measure on defibrillators that got passed in the previous Parliament just before the summer recess, and a number of other ones, as well.

My own private member's bill slot is coming up fairly soon and I've got two ideas that my staff and I are diligently working on. I look forward to having the chance to introduce that, have it debated through second reading and potentially have the chance to have it advance through the legislative process and get that bill brought into law, which would be a great achievement and something I very much look forward to having the opportunity to do.

We're also making some changes to that Q&A process that I spoke about earlier. Up until now, the way it worked was that no matter how long somebody spoke, the time for Q&A would be exactly the same afterward. Sometimes you have longer speeches of 20 minutes or 30 minutes or 40 minutes or an hour, and sometimes folks get up and simply speak for two minutes on a particular issue. With these changes, we're going to make it so that if a member's speech is less than 10 minutes, then the Q&A portion will be only five minutes. It allows us to get through that much faster. We don't really need as long of a Q&A portion if the speech is under 10 minutes, because Q&A for five minutes should certainly provide more than enough time to debate and have that question-and-answer period.

**1700**

We're also going to be allowing the procedure known as take-note debates, which is something that I was familiar with during my time as a staffer in the federal government. It provides an opportunity for the Legislature to debate issues of real significance and provide feedback to our cabinet, to our lawmakers, to our decision-makers, on some of these critically important issues before something is tabled. This has been used in the federal government in the past, at times of great national significance. This might have been something that could have been used at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when we brought back a select number of MPPs into this chamber. So the take-note debate is a wonderful tool that's being added into the tool box of the Ontario Legislature.

We're also going to allow closure votes to be deferred. This is going to make it a bit more predictable for all of us. Every single one of us here in this chamber is busy. We have calls. We are answering correspondence from constituents. We are taking meetings with different stakeholder groups, whether it's via Zoom or whatever

technology folks are choosing to use these days. So this is going to allow us to defer those votes until the next day and provide more consistent timing for votes, to make sure that all of us know we need to be in the chamber at this particular time to take part in those very important votes that our constituents expect us to be at.

Another change—a fantastic change, in my opinion—is allowing us to have a debate at the report stage. Mr. Speaker, to explain to the folks watching at home—oftentimes, after a piece of legislation has gone through committee, it is then brought forward by the Chair of that committee, or in some cases the Vice-Chair, to be presented as a report to the Legislature, and then it moves on to the next legislative process. We are now going to create a provision to allow for a 30-minute debate at the report stage. This will allow folks to raise some of the different feedback that was heard from witnesses during that committee stage. Having just participated in the—I can't remember what the exact number was—somewhere around 200-plus hours of witness testimony we heard from finance committee this past summer on our COVID-19 recovery. I think just about every single MPP in this chamber participated in those hearings in some way or another. This would have provided an opportunity, whenever those reports were tabled, if some folks on either side of the chamber wanted to engage in a discussion and speak a little bit about some of the different pieces of feedback brought forward during those committee hearings. This would provide that opportunity. So we're giving that extra time for more debate here in the chamber.

Recognizing that my time is almost up, I'll mention the final item. This is the one that has caused a little bit of consternation within the House, and that's around removing the reasoned amendment provision. Having looked at the numbers on this—we have seen a 400% increase in the use of reasoned amendments during this sitting. It has been used 26 times during this sitting compared to just six times in the last Parliament. It has become very clear to me that this is a tool that is being used to delay proceedings, not advance them. I want to be very clear that this does not take away the ability for bills to be amended.

I think this is a package of proposals that is going to be very well received, that is going to enhance our Legislature here today, and that's why I am pleased to have stood today to speak in support of it.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this today. I want to begin with a proposal for my friends in government. I'm channelling the inspiration of one of my favourite writers, George Orwell. I want to suggest, through a reasoned amendment, through a friendly amendment, whatever kind of amendment my friends want to support, that we rename this legislation. Why don't we call it an act to empower the bubble government? And why am I saying that? Because our public health officials have been encouraging us, haven't they, in recent days to socially distance. The only proximity we could have are to people in our bubble, and

that's important. Ontarians have done their part to flatten the curve.

But weirdly enough, I think we've been living in this pandemic for long enough that my friends in government are starting to emulate public health advice into their legislation, because what this legislation will do is allow themselves to bubble themselves away from the people in this province. That's not the kind of social distancing we need. We don't need a government that figures out a way to bracket itself away from due process and reasoned amendments.

My friend, my neighbour from Ottawa West–Nepean, who just spoke, talked about the 400% increase in the use of reasoned amendments. Sometimes, in life, I know, when we have something happen on and on again, we want to get it out of the way. We want to get that annoyance, that distraction—whatever word we want to use—out of our life. We want to move on. But maybe, just maybe, the reason why there has been a pronounced increase in the use of reasoned amendments is that we're trying to get the government's attention. We're trying to tell them they're moving too fast.

Now, let me segue a little bit as I talk about this motion, take a step away from the sarcasm for a second and actually talk about something I'm happy the government did, and that is the small business hearings around COVID-19 recovery this summer. I am very glad that we had those hearings and we got to hear first-hand from small and medium-sized operators. But I've got to tell you, what I think is coming out of it is very little by way of legislation from this government. So what have we seen so far? What would I like this bill to have within it? I would like this bill to empower this government to do more than defer utility bills or taxes until later.

Some 97% of the COVID-19 response funding that has flowed out in this country has come from the federal government, and not all of it is great. I've got quibbles with it, but at least it has come. Meanwhile, this government, the Financial Accountability Officer told us on September 10, is sitting on a surplus of \$6.7 billion—money that should flow right now to those small and medium-sized enterprises in each one of our ridings.

I think about Natalie Peterman, who runs a party rentals organization in our city, whose landlord, RioCan, has told her they will not apply for CECRA, they will not apply to the rent relief program, even though her organization and its three outlets qualify. What happens to Natalie's business? One of the three outlets has to shut down because of a flawed federal program that allows landlords to have a veto. And not all landlords, I need to say, have been acting like this. A lot have gone to bat for their tenants. But in this case, RioCan has decided to scupper this business.

And where are my friends, the avowed apostles of business, the people who value entrepreneurship, people who value hard work, people who roll up their sleeves, people like Natalie? We're talking about a piece of legislation to make the work year go faster. Faster for what, is the question I have. Why can't we talk about a piece of

legislation that makes sure Natalie's store doesn't have to close, that makes sure that the employees that depend upon that business will have a job? Why don't we talk about that? Why are we making sure that we move legislation quicker here?

Because, remember—I'll never forget, actually; it would be hard for me not to remember what it was like for me in my first year as an MPP, sitting in this building, realizing that this government empowered itself to get rid of half of the seats at Toronto city council, that the Premier talked about invoking the "notwithstanding" clause if anybody got in his way. It was amazing. People are going to write about this for years. It's probably going to be your legacy. But think about that: They established a reputation early on as a government of being in a huge rush. What happens? People who worked hard in campaigns across this city, that built relationships with volunteers and donors, that put themselves forward for public service—and everybody in this House knows what's involved with that—all of a sudden, the rug was tugged right out from under them and, today, the people of Toronto have less channels of access to fewer representatives. There may be some talk radio talking points over there about how that's great because there are fewer politicians, but in actual fact what has happened is that people in the city who have real complaints, real concerns, are not getting access to decision-makers.

1710

I want to talk about another person who is not helped by this legislation because it's in a rush to do something that may or may not happen later. I want to talk about Jason Woodruff, who messaged me not long ago, who actually doesn't live in Ottawa Centre, Speaker. He's a man with a degenerative disability, rheumatoid arthritis, diagnosed in 2017. His life from now until when he leaves this world is going to be a situation of constantly diminishing returns. He lives in constant pain.

But what does this piece of legislation do for Jason? Nothing. And what's the status quo for him? Let me tell you what it is, because it's something many people in the Ontario Disability Support Program live every single day. Jason desperately wants a disability income so he can look after himself and his young infant daughter who's two years old. Instead, for the last three years, as he's tried to negotiate keeping body and soul together, his marriage has fallen apart. His partner and he are separated. The one silver lining in the last two years is that he's been able to have a role in his daughter's life when his pain isn't too intense. But his partner is off working many precarious jobs to pay for his medications, to keep them together, and he's trying to apply to access the Ontario Disability Support Program.

And do you know what the worker told him, Speaker? He told Jason, "Well, look, Jason, you and your partner own a modest townhome in Rockland," a community that's just to the east of me in Ottawa. "So, in order for you to qualify for the Ontario Disability Support Program, Jason, you're going to have to compel the sale of that home, and then we might admit you onto the program."

What that would do is almost certainly, because of the debt they have involved in that asset, which is a very modest asset, compel his family into homelessness and poverty.

So, here is Jason's decision, which is not resolved by this legislation. Jason has to choose: Does he want to stay in his daughter's life, does he want to be—and I hate to use these words but they're his words, Speaker—a burden on his ex and on his daughter, or does he want a disability pension? Can you imagine that? That is what we do in the province of Ontario. We do it every day.

I want a piece of legislation that's not in a rush about how we make the wheels move faster here; I want a piece of legislation that looks at every person with a disability in this province, every person living in poverty and says, "You know what? It is humiliating for you to have to keep living like this, and it is expensive for Ontario for you to keep living like this." We can't do this anymore. We can't punish you with bureaucracy and punish you with rules, which in Jason's case basically says, "You either get your disability benefits, or you and your family are homeless." It makes no sense.

I want to look at that story from the other side, Speaker—again, not included in this legislation. Do you know who's on the other side of that story, whom I don't want to impugn—I want to make it very clear that I don't. The ODSP worker who had to give Jason that response. Do you think that person likes giving that advice? Do you think somebody likes telling somebody with a degenerative disability that they have to sell their home and drive their family into poverty? No, they don't.

We talk to ODSP workers, and I'm sure my colleagues in government do all the time, when we help constituents. Most of them have over 400 clients. Do you know what this government did with its COVID-19 response benefit for people on ODSP and OW? They made every single recipient chase their ODSP worker. They didn't apply the 100 bucks per month across the board. They didn't just say, "Hey, you know what? This is a rough time in life. You've got a disability. You're poor, you're at home, you're trying to shelter yourself—maybe you're immunocompromised." They didn't say, "Here's an extra 100 bucks for groceries. Here's an extra 100 bucks because we know you've got to take an Uber and you're afraid to take public transport," or whatever the case may be. They did not generalize it across the board. They told people living in poverty, "Go chase your ODSP worker." A 400-to-1 ratio: What do you think happens? There was a 38% take-up rate of that 100 bucks before this government cut it off a month ago. That is shameful, Speaker. What in this legislation helps us address that? Nothing.

It's a weird thing. This is what I've come to believe: We've inherited another virus from the British. Like a lot of things about England—my family traces to parts of that country. My friend from Ottawa West-Nepean was waxing poetic about rules and traditions. But a virus we have inherited from Britain in our social programs in this province is the notion of the deserving and undeserving poor. And we have to build up a bureaucracy to say, "Oh, this person might be cheating the system so let's make sure



we police the poor and the disabled so we figure out who those people are.” We end up spending an incredible amount of money policing people’s poverty instead of giving them a decent shot at a decent life, which is what a government that wants to support people ought to do.

Let’s talk about, for a second, this COVID moment. Does this motion, which is talking about making sure Ontario can be ready to move efficiently enough—what are we seeing right now during COVID-19 for some of the most vulnerable people in this province? I got off a Zoom call with Ottawa Public Health before I reported here for House duty. We were talking about the crisis in our testing facilities that many of us were raising in question period this morning: a lineup a kilometre long at the west facility in Ottawa, eight-hour waits, and the nurses and the health staff doing that are—I love you. Thank you, thank you for all the work you’re doing. But think about that for a second, Speaker: Imagine if you had to take a child to wait in that line, a child with a disability, a child with hyperactivity issues, impulsivity issues, a child with social anxiety. Imagine what that experience must be like.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Eight hours becomes 20.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Eight hours becomes 20, as my colleague the MPP from Algoma–Manitoulin just said. Absolutely, it does. It feels like it.

What we’re learning, Ottawa Public Health told me that this motion does not resolve, is that the virus is disproportionately impacting the poorest parts of our city: people who work in retail work; people who work in itinerant work; the people of Heron Gate in Ottawa South; people of Caldwell, which is a community that borders my friend’s and my riding. People who are racialized, who are marginalized are disproportionately getting this virus. Some 66% of people who have contracted COVID-19 in the city of Ottawa, Dr. Vera Etches, our public health officer, told us on this call, are racialized, low-income people of colour. That’s who is being impacted.

So we’re living in this moment when some of us have the benefit of sick days. Some of us have the benefit of protection. Some of us have the benefit to distance ourselves from the virus, and some of us do not. In fact, one of the first things this government did, which is not resolved in this motion, was take away the two paid sick days that the previous government had instituted—two. Two paid sick days: They took them away—red tape, too expensive, Loblaws doesn’t want it and Canadian Tire doesn’t want it. Whoever the big box retail employers are that this government listens to, they don’t want it.

What are the choices that people in Heron Gate and Caldwell are making right now? Well, they might be saying to themselves, “If I get tested and I’m positive, I can’t go to work. I can’t pay my rent, so I’m not going to go get tested.” I guarantee you, Speaker, that decision is being made in homes across this province right now. What are we doing about it? Presumably, we’re waiting for the federal government to solve the problem. That appears to be the government’s approach for almost everything.

The Prime Minister has said that 10 paid sick days are going to come at the end of this month—10. But—there’s

always an asterisk with federal Liberal legislation—you have to make sure that you can demonstrate a clear COVID connection, and by the time you figure out all the fine print, by the time you figure out all the asterisks, what the experts are telling me, what they’re telling us is that there are too many holes in this federal sick day program. We could have kept those two days. We could have expanded on those two days.

When I talk to employers, including the employers who are in trouble right now, they say to me, “I don’t want people coming to work sick, Joel. I don’t. I want people to have the option to stay home and healthy.” Myself, as an MPP, I have that option. I may not be the most popular person in our neighbourhood, but if I got sick, I could take a break, as could anybody on our MPP team, anybody in this caucus, anybody in this building. Thank goodness. But we do not give that option to poor people, and those are the people who are disproportionately being hit by this virus.

This virus, as the Prime Minister of New Zealand said very well, exposes all of the inequalities that we have carried along for generations. It asks us, are we prepared to take action about them?

**1720**

I would be remiss, Speaker, in talking about this legislation and why I worry that it’s empowering a bubble government, if I didn’t talk about long-term care and what we aren’t doing about long-term care for people with disabilities and seniors in this province. My neighbour, again, is in an awful situation in Ottawa West–Nepean, where there is a home with an outbreak that has gotten 45 seniors sick. Five people have perished, sadly, in the last few days. What’s at the root of this? When I talk to the personal support workers, when I talk to the experts, when I talk to the families and the loved ones in Ottawa, they tell me the same thing: We are compelling the staff who run this sector to take huge risks with their health, personal support workers in particular. We’re telling them to be itinerant, to run around homes, and we’re putting them into contact with people who are probably the most immunocompromised. What is this legislation doing for them? What is it doing to make personal support workers safe at work?

I think about my friends in the province of British Columbia. What they did very early on in this virus is they said, “There is one collective agreement, there is one wage, and there is one benefit system for the entire province of British Columbia.” They took the Hospital Employees’ Union’s collective agreement and they said, “This is the floor. This is the wage. These are the benefits. These are the sick days. You work at one facility.” Guess what has happened? Yes, they’ve had an uptick in cases, primarily from younger people, as we’ve seen here, contracting the virus, but they did a lot more in assisted living centres, in long-term care, in retirement homes and in group homes, with all those immunocompromised people, because they looked after the workers, which is what this place should do.

We shouldn’t look after Extencicare or Revera or Bayshore or all of these parasitical companies that tell the

province of Ontario, “I’m going to pay the worker \$16 an hour, but I’m going to bill you \$34.” That’s usury, straight-up usury. I don’t know how it has persisted in this province for so long. The only answer that I can think of is power and greed. And the next time I want an answer to this question, I’m probably not going to ask my friends in government. If I ever run into her in the hallways, I’ll probably ask Melissa Lantsman, Speaker.

Melissa Lantsman was the campaign spokesperson for the Premier in the last election. On April 27 of this year, she registered as the lead lobbyist for Extencicare, the same company responsible for those five deaths in Ottawa West–Nepean. Their head spokesperson was the spokesperson for this government in the last election. That weighs not on my conscience; it weighs on yours, my friends.

So, if I’m not getting answers, why don’t I just hope I run into Ms. Lantsman in the halls? You’d better believe I’m going to have a few questions, because I’m sick and tired of rhetoric. I’m sick and tired of talking about expediency in this place. In a rush to do what? In a rush for whom? It seems like we’re always in a rush to help the same old people line their pockets at the expense of working people in this province, and we’re done with it.

The Premier may love his daily press conferences, and frankly, I’ve heard good reports from constituents who like the fact that we see a less combative guy leading the province, who seems to be assuring people. But in this moment, where we are seeing an uptick of cases, in this moment where we are seeing marginalized populations consistently falling behind, people are having little of it.

This is what I hope this legislation does: stop being in a rush. Work on concrete, specific projects of law. A paid sick day regime for Ontario: That’s a good idea. Empower personal support workers by raising their levels of pay across the province. Get profit out of home care and long-term care. Tell Revera, tell Bayshore that they have milked the cow enough. They’re done. We need public oversight and a co-operative non-profit mindset for those essential services in this province.

What do we need? We need support for small businesses right now who are hurting, not for back-end referrals but for upfront grants that go around landlords who won’t help them. We need a government that is going to stand up for people and stand up for communities that are hurting right now. So I’m hoping this piece of legislation gets pulled off the table, and I’m hoping we move forward with clear pieces of legislation that help people who have real needs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 101(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members’ public business such that Ms. Bell assumes ballot item number 21, Mr. Bisson assumes ballot item number 37, Ms. Lindo assumes ballot item number 20 and Mr. Hatfield assumes ballot item number 27.

Further debate?

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** As always, it’s a privilege to be able to stand in this chamber and speak to the issues that

come before this Legislature. Again, I’m just struck by the importance of the debates that we have here in this House, recognizing also the differences in perspectives but also the value of those differences in the contributions from members opposite, as well as those of our independent members, and also hearing so much contribution from members of the governing party, the Progressive Conservative Party.

Speaker, I’m struck and reminded and inspired by the fact that we live in a democracy where disparate voices can come together and speak to the issues that arise before this House. I want to thank the people of Niagara West for placing their trust in me and sending me here to represent their concerns, their priorities, and as they know, I take that trust very, very seriously. I look forward to always hearing from my constituents and speaking about the issues they raise, whether with myself and my team or whether it’s out in the community speaking with others.

I also want to begin very briefly by congratulating Wayne from Fenwick who won a by-election last night in ward 1 in Pelham in my riding, so I want to congratulate him. I know he’s going to make a great councillor in Pelham, and I want to thank him for his desire to step up and serve.

Speaker, I’m going to speak a bit about some of the standing order proposals that have been brought forward by the government House leader for good reason, I believe. I’m going to be walking through perhaps some of these pieces. I want to also recognize that there have been a number of voices this afternoon already who have spoken a lot on the pieces of legislation that should be debated before this House or that should have come before this House or that will come before this House, whether those are private members’ bills or whether those are government pieces of legislation. I want to just acknowledge that and take that as a granted.

I’m not going to be talking about all those pieces. I recognize their value, whether it’s issues that come forward dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic or other particular areas: issues of equity, issues of consideration for marginalized communities, issues of ensuring that we get employment back here in the province of Ontario. I take all of those as a granted, and I understand the importance of those conversations and recognize that. I believe this motion, this change to the standing orders, is one that enables us to have those conversations more frequently in the sense of being able to move forward pieces.

So I’m going to walk through fairly systematically, for the sake of those who are at home and also those who are listening from Niagara West, some of the changes that we’re bringing forward, because to listen to the members of the opposition—the members of the opposition like to talk a great deal about the perceived shortcomings of areas that perhaps they feel we have not addressed as quickly as we could have, that we didn’t move as rapidly to address. Frankly, Speaker, I understand the importance of making sure that that perspective is on the record, and I recognize that.

I want to also just rebut some of that by pointing out that when it comes to similar jurisdictions across North

America, Ontario has had great success when it comes to COVID-19. We've seen the actions taken by the government, as well as the sacrifices and hard work of 14.7 million Ontarians, have led to a very low caseload. Although every death is tragic, although every case is unfortunate, it's important that we also look across jurisdictionally, as well as historically, to see the types of changes that have been made here in Ontario to ensure as few people as possible have been impacted by this. That's just something I think we should take for granted when we're having these discussions.

This discussion today is about the standing orders to ensure that we can run more efficiently, more effectively. We can represent backbenchers' voices more often through the use of private members' bills. There's actually more debate given here in the Legislature, for example, by allowing private members' bills to be able to be debated Monday mornings.

**1730**

Perhaps not a lot of people know this, but the Legislature here doesn't sit until quarter after 10 on Monday mornings. The reality is, I'm sure the vast majority of my constituents are already at work and have been for some hours by that time. Although we're, of course, working in our offices, we believe it's important also that MPPs come to this chamber, come into this House where we have been sent, and debate also the issues that come forward, not just from the government benches, but also from the other members.

So I'm going to perhaps start with some of the areas that I haven't heard discussed a whole lot, and a couple of those are so-called housekeeping items. I often find there are some real nuggets in housekeeping items, things that might get a little bit overlooked, but I think are very important.

One of the items that is going to be closed is section 10, which is closing an unintended loophole which would have allowed a bill to be debated in a morning, afternoon and night sitting on the same day. So we're making this change because when the House adapted the last set of changes to the standing orders, a provision was included to prevent a bill from being called for debate in a morning, afternoon and night sitting of a single day, but the language used contained a loophole, and this loophole would allow this actually to be done in specific cases. So we're closing that loophole to ensure that we don't see things moved forward too quickly, but also recognizing the importance of expediency.

Currently, another area where we're making some housekeeping changes is enhancing the role of independent members by making the temporary provisions that were in place that allowed independent members to substitute for each other in committee, we're making these changes permanent. That's important because although currently the independent members can substitute for each other at committee in the same way that members of a recognized party could, that was only a temporary, for-this-Parliament change. So the reason we're making this provision permanent is that we've seen independent

members, who are an important aspect of this Legislature and have a long and respected history in Westminster parliamentary democracies—and as we've seen, even, in fact, in the last federal election, the number of independents elected for the federal Parliament. So also, of course, recognizing that we want to make sure that independent members can work together and of their own accord arrange substitutions with other independent members—so a vote of confidence, if you will, in our independent members and the important work that they do.

We're also making several housekeeping amendments, essentially, to provide clarity in interpretation and eliminate outdated requirements like the physical posting of notices on noticeboards here in the Legislative Building. Some of these are housekeeping, but I think it's still important to know that lot of this work that goes on and that it is in this legislation isn't always talked about or addressed.

We also want to ensure that things—such as the specific requirement for the Clerk to appoint a Clerk responsible for keeping a record of all reports required to be tabled by statute. We don't believe this should be specifically indicated in the standing orders. We trust the great work of our Clerks and thank them for that work, and we trust their discretion in this regard. So we want to make sure, also, that as we have the types of debates—the debate loophole that I referenced earlier—that we won't see this loophole be exploited, and so we're making these types of changes.

But another area I think that is important, and that I've heard some of my colleagues speak about but that I want to perhaps return to, is the question of private members' bills. I know there are different aspects of this. For example, when it comes to—later on, I hope to speak to the reasoned amendment and the use for reasoned amendments and, if you'll permit me to say, a reasonable use of the reasoned amendment. I believe it is, of course, important and something that is valued, but also recognizing that this has been if not misused, then perhaps overused in an unreasonable way, so that's an important consideration that I will get to.

But one of the things I wanted to talk about briefly, because I know many of my colleagues have spoken about it at some length, is private members' bills. I know many colleagues on the opposite benches, as on our benches, have brought forward issues that are of great importance to their ridings, of great importance to themselves personally or other issues that come forward. And those who are paying very close attention to the proceedings of the House may have noticed this morning, my ballot date was actually changed with the member from Chatham-Kent-Leamington's, and so I will be having a motion come before the chamber sooner than I was going to. It will actually be on October 1.

But it's very exciting for me as a member to be able to bring forward this legislation. It's about something I care about a great deal, and so I'll keep everybody in suspense until that time. I know, Speaker, you're dying to see it, but I promise you that it's going to be good news for the

future, good news for the environment and good news for jobs and clean jobs here in Ontario. But that's all I'll leave you with. That's a bit of a teaser. I think that it's important because, here in the chamber, we have a bit of a unique opportunity in comparison with some other Legislatures in the province in that we have the opportunity to bring forward more than one bill a session.

Not everyone knows this, but before I was elected to serve in this place, I also worked on Parliament Hill, so I had the opportunity to live in Ottawa for a year—a wonderful, wonderful place; a little bit cold sometimes in the winter, but beautiful in spring and summer and fall. When I worked in Ottawa, I saw that the private member's bill, especially I think for those in opposition—and I know the opposition has raised some concerns with their perspective on this. But when I was serving in opposition as a staffer in Ottawa, I saw the use of the private member's bill, of incredible importance, to be able to promote issues that were important to a member's particular riding, recognizing again the geographical vastness of Canada and our diversity, the difference between Iqaluit and Niagara and Okanagan and Halifax, and also recognizing here in Ontario that we have a province the size of France, if not larger, and so recognizing that there are huge differences between Kenora and Niagara and between other aspects. Being able to have those private members' bills come forward was always a highlight.

I spent a great deal of time working with the member of Parliament Tom Kmiec from Calgary on rare diseases and actually ensuring support for families with children with rare diseases. We worked with many organizations. We brought together stakeholders. We were able to combine these types of resources together to be able to bring forward these private members' bills.

Earlier in this session, I actually had the opportunity to bring forward bill number 3 on the legislative docket. If you go back, bill number 3 was the Compassionate Care Act, the palliative care strategy for the province of Ontario, recognizing the importance of supporting those in their end-of-life journey with palliative care in meaningful ways. I know for a fact that working with the Ministry of Health and working with the government House leader and working, of course, with many stakeholders and hospices across this province—in fact, just a couple of weeks ago, I was in a hospice that is being constructed in Vaughan. I spoke with them there about that act, and they're watching it very closely, because many people might not always see the particular issue they are passionate about reflected in every single bill. We recognize there are a lot of things that governments, especially in today's day and age, govern, everything from electricity to roads and bridges, to police force, to housing, to education, to health. These are an enormous amount of different areas that are brought forward. So governments obviously are bringing forward solutions and ideas, but also recognizing that there are many individual issues that can be championed and spearheaded and incorporated into government legislation.

The role of the private member's bill or the private member's motion is one that we should not overlook. It's

one that has, I believe, seen a lot of results here in this chamber over the years. I know, looking at my colleagues who have had pieces of legislation that have been integrated into government legislation—whether it's things on cyberbullying, whether it's pieces of legislation around recognition of our first responders, whether it's those who have brought forward legislation to help crack down on illegal substance abuse—we've seen a significant amount of collaboration as well. So I want to also thank the members from the other benches, from the Liberal Party, from the New Democratic Party, who co-sponsored my legislation with me. It's a great example of collaboration, and I think that's something.

This change that we're making will enhance the focus on private members' public business by considering one item per day on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, temporarily adding consideration of a fourth private member's bill each week on Monday at 9 a.m. until June 2021 to ensure that we've caught up with the delays from COVID-19, as well as requiring all recorded divisions on PMBs to be deferred to the following day after question period so that more members can have the opportunity to vote. These are important changes. These are changes that will allow more members to be able to bring forward issues that matter to them and to their constituents. I want to thank the government House leader for seeing the value of that.

I think it's fair to say, again, from my time in opposition and from my time also serving in Ottawa when I was in opposition helping there, I've seen governments that had no regard for private members' business. I've seen governments that haven't valued that contribution, and that was unfortunate, but I think with our government—and I especially know for sure that our government House leader does care about these issues. He has brought them forward, and he has been a champion for the role of the private member, the role of the honourable backbencher, really the backbone, if you will, of our democracy, representing everyone.

1740

That's a beautiful thing, Speaker, because it underlines the point that we don't live in a democracy that is governed solely by cabinet. Yes, absolutely, they're the executive officers. They have the important role of carrying out the decisions of the Legislature, and that's really the role of the executive. The cabinet, in many ways, serves the backbenchers. They serve us, and so if you want to think perhaps not of a hierarchical approach to the power structures in our form of democracy, but rather as a broader assembly that then delegates authority to those ministers, to those executive officers, to bring them forward when that broader assembly gathers and deliberates on private members' bills, as well, and is able to suggest these ideas and pass and enact and force the cabinet, the executive officers, to carry out the decisions of this Legislature, that's a powerful thing, it's a beautiful thing, and it's a full expression of the democracy that we live in.

I think it's important, when we're looking at what's changing, why we're making these changes. Currently,

Speaker, three private members' bills are considered on Thursday afternoon and all votes occur immediately. The proposal that is coming before the House would split these up. One PMB would be considered each day at 6 p.m. That's important, as well, to make sure that we can also move through these challenging times. We can continue to move forward with those particular areas. Further, until the end of June 2021, a fourth private member's bill will be considered each week at 9 a.m. on Mondays, and if a recorded division on a private member's bill occurs under the new rules, it will automatically be deferred to deferred votes on the next sitting day.

Of course, going back to the member from Niagara Falls' comments about the importance of hearing from people and thinking about these votes that are coming forward, I agree that we need to make sure, of course, that they're able to come before the House the next day, that we're able to see these votes deferred on private members' bills as well under these new rules.

When the Legislature was forced to suspend our regular sittings at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had approximately 27 private members' bills which would have been considered in the spring sitting, but they were delayed to this fall. The fourth weekly private member's bill will allow us to make significant progress in catching up to where we should be and where we should have been at the end of the spring 2021 sitting.

We're making private member's bill consideration a daily item of business. Perhaps this might be a touch of a loss to those of us who had the privilege of sitting on Thursdays, if that was our duty day. Again, going back to the opposition—I sit on Wednesdays, of course, now, although it's a privilege to be here every day of the week—the Thursday sittings were always a special time, because you could really see people coming and often speaking from a unique position of lived experience when it came to their private members' bills, and being able to speak for particular communities or interests. That was always something that was special.

But the beauty is that instead of it just being relegated to Thursday now, Speaker, we get to have every day as a Thursday. How does that sound? We're able to have people come forward with issues that they're passionate about, not just—not to downplay government business; it's incredibly important and we recognize that, but it's to really escalate and lift up that valued private member's business.

We're also making this consideration to better incorporate it into the regular flow of business. Some members, especially those from distant ridings—I know there are members from the north on the opposite benches—plan to leave the precinct on Thursdays and are not present for consideration of private members' bills. Of course, we all understand the importance of being back in our constituencies, when we can meet with our constituents in our constituency offices—socially distanced, of course, in a safe setting—and taking advantage of those particular opportunities, so I think that this is a flexibility that, especially understanding how many members on the

opposite benches are from more rural areas, allows for that flexibility for members in the opposition benches. I think it's a great consideration on behalf of the government House leader and his team for bringing this forward. But rather than considering all private members' bills then as one of the final weekly items of business, it will now be easier for all members to engage in that process.

I know I had this myself, actually. We had this experience when it was coming before the House on a Thursday afternoon, and it was simply, due to reasons in the riding, completely impossible for me to be here on that Thursday for a particular member who I wished to support and wanted to be able to come and support. It was extremely difficult to have to say, "No, I can't speak to that," because, of course, between all our particular commitments, it can be challenging, so to have this spread out throughout the week and to have a number of different opportunities to be able to come forward and speak to legislation, and to help and provide perspective on those who are speaking, is very significant.

Speaker, I do want to just say, leading to the conclusion of this debate, that it has been a privilege to be able to speak to this issue. I recognize the people of Niagara West, who reach out every day with great ideas, with great suggestions. The fact that I can bring those forward and that more members can bring forward these suggestions through the use of private members' bills, and see the important work that government does, moving along through this process, I believe is a powerful thing, one that I am fully in support of.

In conclusion, I support this motion. I'm grateful for the government House leader's advocacy, and I look forward to hearing the rest of my colleagues speak this afternoon.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It's a real pleasure to speak here today about this government notice of motion 88 on behalf of my constituents in Davenport.

I want to start by saying that when I was first elected to the Legislature a couple of years ago now, I wasn't particularly naive. I've been following legislation and the process here for many years, and I had been working in public policy and research for many years. But I have to say that today, as I stand here, I'm really kind of ashamed at the extent to which this Conservative government has shown their utter disdain for democracy and for the role of our Parliament in Ontario and particularly the role of the opposition. I know many of them sat in opposition and all I have to say to start is: What comes around goes around; what goes around comes around. Be careful of what you ask for, because we've all seen it come around before.

Since I first started working in public policy and research in legislation and such almost 30 years ago now, I have seen the rules of this House change many times. It's true. I have to say, it has been successively a watering down of the rules that allow for debate and discussion, and the kind of collaboration that the members opposite like to talk a lot about. I've been listening here all afternoon and I've heard a lot of talk about that, but I have to say—and

again, I don't think I was very naive walking into this place, but I was, and I remain, pretty shocked at the lack of those opportunities. It's very unfortunate, because we do a disservice, as my colleagues have said so eloquently up until now, to our constituents, all of us. I feel a little ashamed of that; although I don't take a lot of responsibility because I think we're defending those things, but I do feel like this is very unfortunate.

I want to say, I do believe that all of us here, on both sides of the House, really do want to represent our constituents in the best way possible. I mean, we really, really do. We were elected to represent them. But I think as we stand here today, with COVID-19 numbers rising around the province and with the first school closing—I don't know if everybody is aware of that, but we have our first school closing now in the province of Ontario as a result of COVID-19 outbreak. We just received news of this: Fellowes High School in the Renfrew County District School Board in Pembroke. Three cases were confirmed this afternoon. The school is closed down. We don't know when it will reopen, but the school is closed down.

I think that in this moment, one could pretty easily argue that this motion is not a priority for the people of Ontario. It's certainly not what people are thinking about as they head off to the first day of kindergarten with their kids. I want to say, I talked to some staff of the Legislature here this morning who were dropping off their kids for their first day of JK. What an important moment that is, and we're afraid. We're scared just even getting to the school. It was very stressful. They watch the debate here. They're worried. They know what's happening on the ground. This is not the priority of the people of this province.

**Interjection:** It's not even close.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It's not even close, thank you.

For those who are watching right now—it's late in the day. I know not everyone is going to know or think they care about our standing orders, but I would just say that they are kind of like the rules of this place. They are the rules under which we operate as members of provincial Parliament. They dictate the opportunities we have to debate, what opportunities we have to debate legislation in committees—all of those little rules. What we've seen happen—and again, I don't blame just this government; it has happened under successive governments, Liberal and Conservative—is a watering down of those rules. And along with it—and I don't think there's any coincidence here, and I say this having spoken to many parliamentarians over the years of all political stripes—what we've seen is a degradation in the relationship between the parties in the House. There is no coincidence here. If you want to talk about how we collaborate, how we do the best we can do for the people of this province, you've got to work well together, you've got to play nice, and some of that involves not watering down the rules so that you can just bring in and ram through legislation without proper and due consideration that the people of this province elect us to take on.

Others have said this very effectively this afternoon, my colleagues here—what the government is trying to do

today is change the rules of the game. They're trying to pass legislation even faster. And let me tell you, there's not a whole lot of room, anyway, for the opposition to hold up legislation or to ensure debate. If a majority government wants to do what they want to do, they're going to do it.

I can say, I think pretty clearly, that we have tried to reason, we've tried to bring forward amendments in committees, and we just don't get anywhere. It doesn't really matter if it's just a simple editing, a crossing of a T—it just doesn't move forward, because it's their way or the highway.

With this motion, pretty much the only requirement to table legislation and then immediately to debate a bill is that it be printed. So actually, what they want to do is be able to rush it through, and as I said, there weren't that many ways to do that previously anyway, to hold it up, but one of the few ways was something called a reasoned amendment, which I'll get into in a little while. Ultimately, what the Conservative government is trying to do is limit any opportunity for debate, but also for consultation. They don't want to hear from Ontarians.

I just want to point out that—my colleague from Niagara Falls said it very well. The fact is that this motion, because they're doing away with this reasoned amendment, will have the effect of preventing MPPs from doing the work of seeking input from their communities—or in the case of the critic who's assigned to the stakeholders. I want to give you an example. Just today, at 3 o'clock, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services tabled a bill without any notice. This happens pretty much every day. It's the Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, 2020. It sounds promising. What do I know? Well, I haven't really had a chance to look at it yet. In fact, under these changes, members like the member from Niagara Falls would be unable to go back to his community to talk to, say, the Legions, to talk to people in the community and get their input on this legislation and then be able to come back a few days later, the following week, and bring their voices into the Legislature—maybe supportive voices, maybe some really good ideas for improvement.

That won't happen because under this amendment, under this motion and the amendment to the standing orders, this could be introduced at 3 o'clock this afternoon and then debated at 9 a.m. tomorrow morning, and that's that, and then rushed right through the whole process. That does a disservice not only to his constituents or my constituents; it does a disservice to everyone, because I've got to say, despite all of the folks who work in government and all the great people who do good work in government, there are going to be things that are missed, there are things we can improve. Even in a piece of legislation that's potentially a good piece of legislation, there are so many things we can do better. That is ultimately what we all want to achieve, I hope: to pass good legislation. We're going to disagree, I'd say, pretty often about what that looks like. But that is the beauty of democracy. That's why we prefer democracy to, oh, I don't know, an authoritarian state, because we want to have that opportunity for all

voices to be heard, and in fact, it's what we are elected as legislators to do.

Now, I also want to point out that within this motion 88, there are the few occasional odds and ends in there that the government members opposite have tried to use throughout this debate to sort of try to paint their great generosity of spirit, as if these changes were actually something that improve the tenor of this House or the tenor of debate in this House and the opportunity for opposition to play a central role, like, for example, adding questions for independents—that's interesting. I just want to point out that the Liberal and Green independents have said they're not going to support the motion because of the changes to the reasoned amendments.

So now, let's put on our thinking caps. What could we possibly do to resolve that situation? Perhaps we could actually just do away with this change to the reasoned amendments. But that won't happen, because that's not what this is really about. This isn't really about working nicely together or providing all these opportunities, because I've heard the government members talk ad nauseam over the last few months about how well everybody is working together. But we in the opposition know that has not happened. We don't get consulted.

I have to say, we raise questions in here every day, over and over and over again, with, I think, pretty good points we're trying to make. Certainly, I feel like in education, we've been raising the voices of parents from across this province and educators and students for months and months now, in this Legislature, when the House resumed. The experts are there saying the same thing, and for some reason, the government won't budge. I guess that's your prerogative, but, my goodness, so much for actually trying to work together and trying to get things done for the betterment of this province.

I know I'm running out of time today and I'm going to have to pick it up tomorrow morning, and I will do that. I'll be talking a little bit more about some of these issues tomorrow morning and some of my concerns. I wanted to also point out that we have, in the official opposition, proposed an amendment. I want to thank Kevin Modeste—who is a staff person here who works with our caucus, works with our House leader and whip—for his

incredible work. He has been here for many years. He has seen many things, too, and he has been very helpful in coming up with that amendment.

Our amendment is to ensure that there remain 48 hours between when a bill can be introduced and when it can be first debated in this chamber. The government House leader, I know, enjoyed his time in Ottawa. Actually, pretty much everybody who spoke today talked about all the time they spent in Ottawa and how much they enjoyed it, whether you were a staffer or whatever. They maybe preferred those parliamentary federal rules, but they would be then familiar with this concept of the 48 hours, because that is what they call, federally, the "two sleeps." So let's honour that. If we're going to move to all those rules, let's add that in and let's ensure that we actually have, again, opportunity to bring that legislation back to our communities, consult with our community members and bring back their voices, their concerns, their ideas and even their support, sometimes, back to this Legislature, because I think we all do a discredit to them if we're not prepared to do that.

I'm going to share tomorrow morning, when we're back in here, Mr. Speaker—because I believe I'll be picking it up then—a little bit of background on some of the examples of where we've actually used reasoned amendments to have that opportunity to provide that pause where we can actually consider a really important piece of legislation. I'm going to run through some of that tomorrow.

I'm also going to, I think, share with some of the members opposite some examples of some of the things that their own members have said in opposition about some of the problems with perhaps limiting debate or speeding legislation through.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Unfortunately, the time we have allocated for debate has expired this afternoon.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** There being no further business to discuss at this point, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

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Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
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Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
<b>Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)</b>	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
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Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
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Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
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Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
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Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
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Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
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Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
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Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
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<b>Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
<b>Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)</b>	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
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Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)</b>	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
<b>Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)</b>	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
<b>Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates  
Lorne Coe, Wayne Gates  
Randy Hillier, Andrea Khanjin  
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell  
Michael Parsa, Randy Pettapiece  
Kaleed Rasheed, Donna Skelly  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts  
Ian Arthur, Stephen Blais  
Stan Cho, Stephen Crawford  
Catherine Fife, Randy Hillier  
Mitzie Hunter, Logan Kanapathi  
Andrea Khanjin, Laura Mae Lindo  
Sol Mamakwa  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Daryl Kramp  
Robert Bailey, Jessica Bell  
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover  
Mike Harris, Daryl Kramp  
Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu  
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens  
Daisy Wai  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Vanthof  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak  
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe  
Rudy Cuzzetto, Robin Martin  
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls  
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard  
Marit Stiles, Nina Tangri  
John Vanthof  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

Chair / Président: Roman Baber  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
Roman Baber, Will Bouma  
Lucille Collard, Parm Gill  
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison  
Lindsey Park, Gurratan Singh  
Nina Tangri, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
Kevin Yarde  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam  
Rima Berns-McGown, Michael Coteau  
Faisal Hassan, Logan Kanapathi  
Jim McDonell, Christina Maria Mitas  
Sam Oosterhoff, Kaleed Rasheed  
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly  
Vijay Thanigasalam  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas  
Deepak Anand, Jill Andrew  
Toby Barrett, Stan Cho  
Stephen Crawford, Catherine Fife  
John Fraser, France Gélinas  
Christine Hogarth, Norman Miller  
Michael Parsa  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma  
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett  
Stephen Blais, Will Bouma  
Stephen Crawford, Laura Mae Lindo  
Gila Martow, Paul Miller  
Billy Pang, Dave Smith  
Jamie West  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian  
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch  
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle  
Joel Harden, Mike Harris  
Christine Hogarth, Belinda C. Karahalios  
Terence Kernaghan, Natalia Kusendova  
Robin Martin  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight /  
Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic  
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson  
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth  
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin  
Sam Oosterhoff, Lindsey Park  
Tom Rakocevic, Sara Singh  
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell