

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 51A

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 51A

2nd Session
42nd Parliament
Thursday
31 March 2022

2^e session
42^e législature
Jeudi
31 mars 2022

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
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 31 March 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 31 mars 2022

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers / Prières.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EATING DISORDERS

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Speaker. Today, I'm rising on behalf of a wonderful constituent of mine, and her name is Sherri.

First, I want to remind folks here that in Canada approximately three million people are battling eating disorders. Sherri is one of the 500,000 or so people in Ontario who is struggling with her own battle.

I want to make it clear in this House that we need additional supports for eating disorders. Sherri has been struggling for roughly 30 years, and I'll explain to you the brunt of the struggle. We only have 20 publicly funded beds in Ontario for people who are critically ill enough—on death's door—to be hospitalized.

Speaker, I know the government has made some investments in eating disorders, and I appreciate the effort, but for many families, too many of which are in St. Paul's and across Ontario, we need more. We need additional publicly funded beds. We need staff to support patients in those beds.

It is absolutely heart-wrenching to know that there are empty beds that cannot be accounted for because there are no staff to take care of patients. We need additional publicly funded beds. We need more staff. We need more psychotherapy, more mental health supports for people here in Ontario who are battling eating disorders, and it must be publicly funded because not every family in this province has \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 or \$60,000 to spend for months of private care.

Please join me, everyone in this chamber, and let's fight for people who are living with eating disorders so they can live another day.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: It was wonderful news to hear our Premier announce the \$10.2-billion child care deal this week alongside our federal government. This deal is meant to deliver an average of \$10-a-day child care by September 2025, and it couldn't come at a better time for Ontario residents.

1020

I have been hearing from many working families in my riding of Markham–Thornhill that they have been struggling to keep up with the cost of living. Child care costs went up 300% under the previous Liberal government. This child care deal, along with other initiatives from our government, will help the people of Ontario make ends meet.

This is just one example that our government is reducing financial pressure on families in Ontario. The deal also includes hiring new early childhood educators and supports improved compensation for all registered early childhood educators working in licensed child care.

Ontario is creating 86,000 child care spaces, with more than 15,000 spaces already in place since 2019. As our Premier stated, our childhood educators deserve more money.

This is a great deal for all Ontario parents. Under this program, reducing fees to an average of \$10 a day in Ontario would save an average of \$7,300 annually per child, which will give parents an opportunity to afford child care for the first time.

Thank you to the Minister of Education for his hard work. He also stated that we will be maintaining the Ontario Child Care Tax Credit program and that it will continue. That is great news for many hard-working families.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The current epidemic of homelessness and lack of mental health supports in my community is hurting everyone. Residents, business owners, shoppers, visitors and especially those who are struggling without supports are all suffering.

When this government took power in 2018, they immediately cut promised mental health supports by \$335 million. They voted down my bill to provide powerful prescribed supports to those with struggling mental health needs.

Since I was elected, I have called upon the government to provide emergency supports to address our homelessness and mental health crises. People who are struggling are sent to London from all across southwestern Ontario, and London doesn't have the capacity to handle everyone. The government needs to step up.

Mayor Ed Holder wrote a letter in early March, and city council is still awaiting a response from this government about SSRF supports. Shelters like Unity Project, London Cares and Atlohsa need your help now. Nick in my riding

wrote to me about the human suffering seen on London streets and he underscored how the province is not looking after its responsibility for health care and mental health.

For too many years, governments have not built enough affordable and supportive housing. It's unacceptable to leave people this way. It's time for the government to step up, build supportive housing and provide meaningful assistance so that those suffering from homelessness and mental health can rebuild their lives and businesses and people can enjoy beautiful downtown London again.

HAZEL McCALLION WALK FOR HEALTH

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Work hard when you are young, so you don't have to when you are old: From the days when my Italian grandparents and parents first immigrated to Ontario, this was the saying that was passed down through our family's four generations. I'm sure many Ontarians, if not all, abide by this philosophy in their regular lives.

However, we all know one special person who does not follow this sentiment: former mayor of the city of Mississauga Hazel McCallion. Even though it was only a few short months ago when she celebrated her 101st birthday, Hazel continues to give back to her community, proving to us all that age is simply just a number.

That is why I am honoured to rise today to recognize another accomplishment in her life, and that is the Hazel McCallion Walk for Health. The Hazel McCallion Walk for Health is a new fundraising event hosted by the Trillium Health Partner Foundation that takes place in my riding of Mississauga-Lakeshore.

With the support and funding of our government, along with the largest donation ever in Canadian history of \$105 million by the Peter Gilgan Foundation, the community will soon have a chance of their own to fundraise for the new hospital. These investments will help increase the number of operating rooms and add over 350 new beds.

Our government continues to promise that the health and safety of all Ontarians is our number one priority. With what will be the largest hospital in Canadian history, this build will help ensure we keep the promise not just for the Mississauga residents but all Ontarians.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Today, I rise to talk about protecting our environment and our greenbelt. The direction we need to be going in is protecting more Ontario parks and expanding green spaces, expanding the greenbelt. On one hand, we need to do this work to combat the climate crisis, the greatest threat to everyone. However, on the other hand, it is an opportunity to support communities and create jobs.

One of the reasons our region and St. Catharines see so many visitors a year is because our community was built in harmony with our natural environment. Once this is paved over by a developer, it will be gone forever. I mean every word I say: I look at our shoreline, our community

and our green spaces throughout St. Catharines. One of the reasons it is so beautiful is because it is a priority to protect these spaces.

We are already paying the price for the climate crisis. Our children and their children will pay this price in the future. We need a province with a bolder, clearer, fully committed plan for the environment. For the last four years, too much time has been about making it about politics when it should have been about policy.

I am proud to stand with a caucus that takes this seriously, and I hope all of the members in this chamber do as well.

MONIQUE WOLFE YELLE

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: C'est avec admiration et émotion que je commémore aujourd'hui la vie d'une femme remarquable de la région de Prescott-Russell, une femme que j'ai eu le privilège de connaître : M^{me} Monique Wolfe Yelle, guerrière pacifique, décédée d'un cinquième cancer le 27 janvier dernier, à l'âge de 77 ans.

Monique était une citoyenne exceptionnelle : mère de quatre enfants, aimante et présente, et enseignante pendant près de 30 ans. Elle a donné son temps à tellement d'organisations et de regroupements, surtout pour l'éducation et pour les femmes—impossible de faire même un résumé dans le temps alloué. Ses innombrables qualités, dont sa générosité, sa rigueur, son intégrité et son courage, ont marqué des centaines de personnes tout au long de sa vie.

À ses yeux, la vie était un moment perpétuel d'apprentissage, d'entraide, d'émerveillement et d'épanouissement. Elle a vécu ainsi jusqu'à la toute fin. Monsieur le Président, aujourd'hui, les femmes exercent leur leadership dans des sphères déterminantes et influentes grâce au courage et à la rigueur de femmes comme Monique.

I want to thank Monique's family, who is here today with us, coming all the way from eastern Ontario, Prescott-Russell, our home—the place where Monique significantly improved the quality of life for so many, a place she left in better shape than she found it. And for that, we are forever grateful.

Elle a certainement laissé sa marque, et nous ne l'oublierons jamais.

FIRE SAFETY

Mr. Deepak Anand: “‘We Are Devastated’: Family Members of Five Killed in Brampton Home Fire Plead for Others to Check Alarms”—this is a strong and compelling headline.

Last week, an early-morning fire claimed the life of a family of five. Flames tore through their Brampton home around 2 a.m. Monday. We lost lives that could have been saved.

The whole community is in shock, but more heart-breaking is how it may have happened. Potentially, it was an inactive smoke alarm. Since March 1, 2006, it is the law for all Ontarian homes to have a working home alarm on

every storey and outside all sleeping areas. Still, we keep losing lives to no or inactive smoke alarms in the house.

In commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, every year, Fire Prevention Week is observed from October 3 to 9 to raise fire safety awareness and help ensure every home and family is protected. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, this is not enough. Commitment from communities and everyone is the only way to save these precious lives.

In 2020, there were 10 fatal fires that left a total of 11 people dead, while in January 2021, 15 fires left 22 people dead. Half of these fires were preventable house fires. We could have saved those lives.

1030

Most fatal fires occur at night, when people are sleeping. A working smoke alarm will detect smoke and provide an early signal to the presence of smoke so you and your loved ones can get to safety or prevent the fire from spreading.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to urge everyone to test home smoke alarms regularly and replace them every 10 years. One life lost is too many. Let's all do our part and save lives.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Miss Monique Taylor: Today I want to highlight a significant issue that is impacting my constituents of Hamilton Mountain: the affordable housing crisis. This is something that has been going on for some time, and it has certainly gone from bad to worse. Low- and moderate-income tenants are bearing the brunt of this crisis.

The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Hamilton is now \$1,486 a month. For families, two- or three-bedroom units in the city can cost over \$2,000. The housing system is failing our families. Now, almost half of renters in Hamilton are living in unaffordable housing. This means that one in five renters are spending more than 50% of their monthly income on rent, making it difficult to afford food, transportation and other necessities.

Even worse, renovictions are destroying the stock of affordable housing by driving up rent and displacing people from their homes. Several constituents have come to my office over the past year because of renovictions. Each time I've expressed their concerns here in this chamber, the Premier and the minister have still been silent. Tenants trying to find new housing face skyrocketing rental costs and end up paying upwards of 20% more every month for housing in Hamilton.

Affordable housing is a crisis. We need to end tenant displacement and renovictions, and commit to developing policy that puts the health and housing security of our tenants ahead of the profit of landlords and developers.

OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

Mr. Norman Miller: Parry Sound–Muskoka is most often known for its natural beauty and welcoming people, but what you might not know is that it is also home to

world-class athletes. I want to offer my congratulations to the Olympic and Paralympic athletes from Parry Sound–Muskoka who represented Canada in Beijing.

Graham Ritchie from Parry Sound competed in cross-country skiing, posting a impressive fifth place in the men's classic-style team sprint. Along with his teammate, he earned Canada's best-ever finish in that event. He also finished 11th in the 4-by-10-kilometre relay and 34th in the men's sprint.

I also want to congratulate Mark Ideson, born in Parry Sound and skip of Canada's Paralympic wheelchair curling team, who brought home a bronze medal. Mark is now a three-time Olympic medallist.

Megan Oldham from Parry Sound earned a remarkable fourth place finish in women's big air skiing after winning the qualifying round. She also finished 11th in women's slopestyle.

Megan Farrell from Bracebridge finished 12th in women's snowboarding parallel giant slalom, and just two days after coming home from Beijing, she won gold at the nationals.

Finally, Collin Cameron from Bracebridge is bringing three bronze medals home to Parry Sound–Muskoka. Collin finished third in men's sitting sprint para cross-country skiing in the 4-by-2.5-kilometre mixed relay and in the men's long-distance sitting cross-country event.

Congratulations to the athletes from Parry Sound–Muskoka and to all the athletes from Team Canada for overcoming the hurdles presented by the pandemic and representing our country with determination and sportsmanship—job well done.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Norman Miller: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature, from YourTV Muskoka who are down for the day, James Bowler and Samantha Johnson.

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: J'aimerais introduire la famille de Monique Wolfe Yelle: Caroll Yelle, Yves Yelle, Josée Yelle, Francine Denis, Paulette Wolfe et Pierre Lavigne. Bienvenue à la législature de l'Ontario.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: On behalf of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, it's a pleasure to extend a warm welcome to Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, 30th Governor General of Canada, and her husband, Whit Fraser, as well as Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare. Later today, Her Excellency is visiting the Legislature, which sits on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to give a warm welcome to my staffer, Spencer Julien, who is in the gallery today and will be spending the day at Queen's Park.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: *Remarks in Oji-Cree.* Chief Randy Fobister, I welcome him to the Ontario Legislature. He's here from Grassy Narrows, with Holli-Lynne Elash, one of the staff. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would also like to inform the House that although they're not here in person, the legislative interns from the province of Manitoba are

watching us today and participating at the Legislature virtually. We're pleased to have them today.

REPORT, FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report of the French Language Services Commissioner entitled *Strengthening the Designation: A Collaborative Effort, Investigation into Laurentian University's cuts to French-language programming during the restructuring and into the university's designation by the Ministry of Francophone Affairs and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, from the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario.*

COVID-19 DEATHS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the Leader of the Opposition has a point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Point of order, Speaker: I seek unanimous consent for the House to observe a moment of silence for the 71 Ontarians who have succumbed to COVID-19 over the past week.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Horwath is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to observe a moment's silence for the 71 Ontarians who have succumbed to COVID-19 over the past week. Agreed? Agreed.

Members will please rise.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Members may take their seats.

QUESTION PERIOD

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is to the Premier. The dream of home ownership is fading fast for Ontarians; their hopes are being dashed. Renters are terrified that they'll be the next ones to be renovicted or see their rents jacked up by 20% or 30% by their landlords.

Yesterday, the Ford government tabled legislation that literally does nothing to address the housing crisis Ontarians are facing. My question is, why has this Premier thrown up his hands and literally given up on the housing crisis facing Ontarians?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I just don't know where this Leader of the Opposition stands. We made a commitment from the first day we sat in the Legislature that we were going to make housing supply a priority of the government. We delivered in 2019 on More Homes, More Choice, our housing supply action plan.

1040

We acknowledge that the Housing Affordability Task Force is the long-term road map for the government, but our bill yesterday, the More Homes for Everyone Act, recognizes what everyone, other than the Leader of the Opposition, acknowledges: It takes too long to get housing built. We need to have municipalities on board. We need to make sure that both levels of government work together to deliver housing that meets people's needs and their expectations. That's what we're—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member for Waterloo, come to order. The member for London North Centre, come to order. The Minister of Education, come to order.

Restart the clock. Supplementary question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The government's inaction plan has been a dismal failure. Young families face the real prospect now in our province of never, ever being able to afford to own their own home. Many Ontarians wonder how they're even going to keep a roof over their head with rents rising the way that they are.

This crisis is serious. Ontarians are hurting, Speaker. The average selling price for a home surpassed \$1.3 million in our province. Here in the GTA, \$1.8 million is the price of a home. How many people have to have their dreams dashed or their fears of rent hikes realized before this Premier, before the Ford government realizes that it's his job, their job, to help them?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, we acknowledge that the housing supply crisis is a long-term plan for the government—we realize that there's no one silver bullet. There's not one bill or one set of initiatives that's going to, in the blink of an eye, solve the housing supply crisis. The only person who doesn't acknowledge that is the Leader of the Opposition, because every time we present a plan to this Legislature, her party continues to vote against it.

We've seen the improvements in housing supply. We've seen record housing construction because of the initiatives that we put forward in 2019. But many of those initiatives, Speaker, have yet to be implemented by our municipal partners. So we know that the only way that we're going to follow this long-term problem is to have the municipalities sign on with us. They've told us they're not there yet. They're not with us yet on the Housing Affordability Task Force. We need more time. In the meantime, this plan, right as soon as it's passed, if it's passed, will start to provide relief that I think Ontarians both need and deserve.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontarians have run out of time. There is a housing affordability crisis right now, and it has been growing since the last government was in office. This government, after four years, has just made things worse.

People need real zoning reform so that new housing that people can actually afford can be built. We need rent control so tenants can be secure that they can keep a roof over their heads and the heads of their families. We need

investment in supportive housing, in social housing. Premier Ford's priority has been his buddies, prioritizing the building of big highways that lead to big houses that nobody can afford, Speaker.

Why won't this Premier help everyday Ontarians instead of paving a pathway for more money for his buddies?

Hon. Steve Clark: For 15 years, we saw inaction by the previous government, propped up by the official opposition. For 15 years, those parties on that side of the House did absolutely nothing. They didn't even recognize that there was a housing supply crisis, that there was a housing affordability crisis. On this side of the House, we recognized that there needs to be a plan and we put together systemic changes to our planning and our building system to break those logjams at the municipal level, to ensure that permits get pulled and shovels get in the ground. But we need to do more, both in the immediate future, but we also need to look at that long-term sustainable plan.

The housing affordability road map is there. We're going to work towards it. Every year of a re-elected Doug Ford government is going to have a supply action plan bill on the table to increase housing supply—

Interjections.

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

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The Red Lake emergency room closed for 24 hours on the weekend. Patients who needed services had to be sent by ambulance over 200 kilometres, for more than two and a half hours, to get emergency room attention. In rural, remote and northern communities, the doctor shortage is an absolute crisis.

Health care professionals across the province, we know, are burned out. A memo that was actually prepared by 13 northern physicians laid out the problem clearly for the government: "Many communities across the north are suffering a severe shortage of physicians." It goes on to say, "The decision and consequences of closures need to be owned by the government, including Ontario Health, and not the clinicians in communities."

My question is pretty straightforward: Why isn't the health and safety and the basic access to hospital emergency room care of northern Ontarians a priority for this Premier and the Ford government?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you to the leader of the official opposition for the question.

The health and safety of the people of Ontario has always been our government's foremost responsibility.

We're aware that there are situations in parts of Ontario where we need more doctors, and that's why we're expanding coverage in our medical schools, to have more doctors graduate. We've expanded to 160 more

undergraduate positions and 295 postgraduate positions—including the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, which will have 30 new undergraduate spots and 41 postgraduate spots. Recognizing that this isn't a solution for now—but it will be for the near future—we are also working on providing care in other locations, making sure that we have locums in place to ensure that people receive the coverage for their health care services wherever it is that they live in Ontario.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the briefing that northern doctors provided—and I'll ask a page to come here and provide it to the minister in case she hasn't seen it—described the situation as dire. Staff are suffering from increasing burnout. Small and large hospitals are at risk of intermittent emergency department closures. Recruitment efforts are not working, regardless of what this minister is trying to sell. Physicians have no time to carry on clinical hours as well as staff the hospitals and the ERs. It shouldn't be like this in a province like ours, in a province of such wealth.

Northerners deserve to have quality, reliable access to health care. They shouldn't need to travel over 200 kilometres to get to an emergency room that's open to provide service. It is unacceptable. It is absolutely not okay or safe that this situation exists in our province.

My question is, why hasn't Premier Ford done what he needed to do to resolve this? Why has he abandoned the health care needs of northerners?

Hon. Christine Elliott: In fact, our government is taking action to protect the health care needs of northerners. I can advise that the ministry, the Primary Health Care Branch, and the Capacity and Health Workforce Planning Branch have been collaborating with Ontario Health, Ontario Health North and HealthForceOntario to find a resolution to recruitment and locum shortages by meeting regularly to identify potential opportunities to recruit new permanent or locum physicians.

I can also advise that the newly ratified Ontario Medical Association and Ministry of Health agreement has introduced a 4% base salary increase to a number of groups, including the physicians practising out of Thessalon and Bruce Mines.

So that is the action we are taking. We are aware that there's a concern. We are taking action because we need to make sure that every person in Ontario who has medical needs—it doesn't matter where they live—should have access to emergency room physicians and to primary care.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what the government needs to do is to listen carefully to the recommendations of these doctors.

Dr. Sara Van Der Loo, chair of the Northwest Regional Chief of Staff Council, who serves as the chief of staff at Atikokan General Hospital, says that every small hospital in the region could see its emergency room temporarily closed due to the shortages, just like what happened in Red Lake. Every single one is at risk of the same situation.

When I spoke to Mayor Mota on the weekend, he was beside himself with worry. If an accident were to occur, what would happen on those northern highways that are poorly maintained by this government? What would happen if there was an accident in one of the many mines that exist around Red Lake? He was extremely worried and he should not have had to be. An incident of that nature would have been a foreseeable—a preventable, actually—human tragedy. It would have been horrifying.

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Now, we know it doesn't have to be this way, Speaker. The doctors have proposed solutions. My question is: Over four years in office, why has Premier Ford and his government made access to health care for northerners worse instead of better?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I think it's really important to understand exactly what happened in Red Lake because I believe that there—it was known to the Ministry of Health. The declaration was due to a service disruption. A physician was unavailable for one day in the emergency department at the Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital from 8 o'clock on March 26 through to 8 o'clock on March 27 because of the physician not being available. But the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre and the Ministry of Health coordinated patients to be redirected to Dryden and air support was available for EMS transfers as required. As a result—

Interjection.

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

Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: As a result, no one needed to be airlifted and two people were transferred by ambulance, so they did receive the health care that they needed.

We are aware of these situations and we are providing for locums to be available, or for people to be redirected as needed, so that no one needing care is left without that care, that they will receive it as early as possible.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. I am sure you'll be surprised, as we all were, to learn that the Premier's one-million-dollar man is back. Yes, after the Premier appointed his former tour director a desk job in Washington for more than \$350,000 a year, Ian Todd is back in Ontario. He collected his million bucks and the "million-dollar man" title in Washington, rubbing elbows with far-right Republicans and scheduling "office work" on his calendars day after day with, actually, no meetings to be found. But he is back here, Speaker. He's back in Ontario.

Mr. Todd's appointment expired in January and he hasn't been replaced, but thankfully for him he's managed to find himself some new employment. This time, Speaker, it's on the PC Party campaign tour bus.

Why did the Premier give his million-dollar man a job in Washington when the intent all along was to just help him find something to do between campaigns?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I don't think it comes as a shock to anybody who might be watching this or who has any knowledge of finance and trade that the NDP are not supportive of Ontario having a representative in the United States of America, in the capital of our largest trading partner. Of course, the NDP would not want Ontario's interests being represented there.

Mr. Speaker, we had to have a robust trade representative, following the 15 years of disastrous Liberal rule, supported by the NDP, where thousands and thousands of jobs fled this province. We had become an unreliable trading partner. But thanks to the work of our officials on the ground, not only in Washington but in other parts of the United States, it helped this Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade bring back jobs: Stellantis, GM, Ford, Honda and more to come because of the work that this minister has been doing in co-operation with our trade representatives around the United States.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Ian Todd's calendar is pretty sparse. From what we can find, he may be the Premier's million-dollar man, but through the freedom of information act, we found that he didn't actually deliver a million bucks' worth of work in Washington. Following the US election, Mr. Todd did manage to have a string of meetings with leading Republicans, who probably do more damage to our reputation with the Biden administration than he helps at all.

Don't forget, Speaker, the Premier first tried to appoint his lacrosse-playing buddy and a relative of his chief of staff to lucrative posts as Ontario's agents general, two jobs that were never filled even though at the time they were called mission critical. Shouldn't this province have anyone else as our representative than the Premier's hand-picked million-dollar buddy who is idly waiting his next gig as the PC tour director?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, our trade representatives have been very busy at work, because what they are having to do is counter the Buy America and the trade policies that would disadvantage the people of the province of Ontario. That is why we have had to become so aggressive in supporting and advancing Ontario's interests across the United States.

Now, those are the very same policies that we're seeing in the United States that the Liberals and NDP brought to Ontario for 15 years, which saw jobs flee this province. It saw high energy prices. It made it more costly to invest in the province of Ontario. In fact, Chrysler said that Ontario was the least competitive jurisdiction to do business in and that if things did not change, they would not have invested here. Thankfully, because of the work that we're doing here in the province of Ontario across government ministries, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade was able to land the biggest investment in the auto sector, saving thousands of jobs, creating even more jobs—billions of dollars in economic activity, ensuring prosperity. That's what a strong, stable, Conservative

majority government delivers for the people of the province.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. As we all know, some of the world's most delicious food is grown and made right here in Ontario. Not only do our province's farmers and food processors keep Ontario food on our tables, but they also contribute over \$45 billion every year to Ontario's economy. Now more than ever there is demand for food that is made close to home.

Ontario's agri-food sector has been ignored for far too long under the previous government. Agri-food employers are counting on our government to help grow their workforce and to kick-start business growth. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, please, what is our government doing to build a strong, competitive processing sector right here in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I want to share my appreciation to the great member from Brantford–Brant for that question because it's an opportunity to shine a spotlight on how our government has not only listened but we're taking action and we're getting it done.

After 15 years of neglect from the Liberal government, we actually are working with Ontario farmers, and we've identified the need to build capacity, particularly in the processing sector. That's why, as of tomorrow, we are so thrilled to be able to present to our entire agri-food sector a \$25-million strategic processing fund that will allow farmers from Ontario, whether they're beef farmers or vegetable growers, to realize their potential, because for far too long, they have not been able to realize the market potential that they have.

So our strategic fund that becomes live tomorrow will actually increase processing across this province. Not only are we going to ensure our food processing sector can beat the growing demand right here at home in Ontario, but we're going to make our farmers and our processors competitive—

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

The supplementary question.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Minister, for that response and for this investment. From new start-ups to existing facilities that are looking to expand and modernize, the Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund will drive economic growth across the entire province of Ontario. When we invest in agri-food, we invest in every community in Ontario from the north to the east and to the GTHA, we invest in the careers of 720,000 Ontarians and their families. These are good-paying jobs that will be key to our economic recovery.

So, through you, Speaker, can the minister please tell us how our government is supporting the agri-food sector across the province?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, I want everyone in the province of Ontario to know that our government,

under the leadership of Premier Ford, is standing tall beside that member from Brantford–Brant and we're supporting every single commodity the best we can, from ginseng growers right through to our chicken producers.

With that said, in particular with the processing investment that we're making, in addition to the agri-food innovation program, in addition to the program where we're matching available processing capacity with farmer demand, we've introduced a strategic processing fund that opens as of tomorrow, and until April 22, food processors across this province can apply to up to \$3 million of support to construct brand-new facilities—that is very new, and I'm proud to be able to announce that today—as well as enable processors and abattoirs to expand their operations and adopt the advanced technology.

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I want to share a quote with you. Just a couple of weeks ago, we were in eastern Ontario, and Craig McLaughlin of the beef farmers—

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

The next question.

FIRST NATIONS CONSULTATION

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: *Remarks in Oji-Cree.* Good morning. My question is to the Premier. On this government's watch, the number of mining claims staked in Grassy Narrows territory against their will has exploded from a few hundred to over 4,000. Grassy Narrows has been clear that they want no mining exploration and no industrial logging so that the land and the people can heal from the impacts of residential schools, child apprehension, damming, relocation, industrial logging and mercury poisoning.

Grassy Narrows has asked this government to withdraw mining exploration and logging from their lands. How is this government going to respond to this call from the chief of Grassy Narrows?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Obviously, we understand very, very clearly that we have a constitutional obligation and a constitutional duty to consult with First Nations. It is something that we take very, very seriously.

It's less of an obligation, however, and more of something that we know we have to do if we are to ensure that northern Ontario participates in the economic growth of the rest of the province. That's why we will continue consultations and we will ensure that we work as closely as we possibly can with our partners in First Nations communities across Ontario, including Grassy Narrows.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Back to the Premier: When this government met with Chief Fobister on November 18, there was no talk about mining exploration and logging. This government has granted thousands of mining claims

and nine mining exploration permits on Grassy Narrows land without their consent or even consultation. However, the minister did promise to visit Grassy Narrows to discuss these important concerns. More than four months later, Grassy Narrows has not heard from the minister. Speaker, why has the minister not been to Grassy Narrows?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Look, Mr. Speaker, as I said in the earlier answer, we understand the constitutional obligation that requires us to consult, the duty to consult, and we're going to continue to do that. But as I also said, we look at it as less of an obligation and more of an important part of helping us ensure that all of Ontario, including northern Ontario, can participate in the economic growth that is so important not only to the province of Ontario but, frankly, to the entire country. So we're going to continue to do that.

The minister himself has worked within First Nations communities his entire career, whether it was as a nurse, whether it was as a federal minister or now, as a minister in the province of Ontario.

It's very clear, Mr. Speaker: The previous Liberal government all but abandoned northern Ontario. They left them out of any attempts to grow and to have a prosperous north, just as the south was. We are ensuring that we work with First Nations so that all can participate in the economic growth that is so important not only to southern Ontario, but to northern Ontario.

We can reduce that disparity between north and south, urban and rural, but we can't do it without our partners in First Nations—

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Under the Premier's watch, the average home price in Toronto has gone from \$787,000 to \$1.3 million. After almost four years in office, the government's primary response to the housing affordability crisis is to consult. I would suggest that the Premier consult the Ontario Greens' housing affordability strategy if he needs some solutions.

Ontario is in a housing crisis, and we need action now. There was a time when the Ontario government provided funding for non-profits and co-ops to build housing that people could actually afford. Will the Premier commit to the funding necessary to build 160,000 deeply affordable homes, supporting non-profits and co-ops in the spring budget?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: We've acknowledged to non-profits and co-ops that we want to keep them in the system. That's why our Community Housing Renewal Strategy is being implemented. Since 2019, we've been working with those two sectors and we have now published our path forward.

Unlike the previous government that had 15 years to deal with this, we're acting upon the Auditor General's

recommendations from 2017. We're trying to ensure that those co-ops stay in the system. What keeps me up at night is the fact that we could lose 105,000 community housing properties, so we need to do everything we can to keep them in the system.

Speaker, what I'm concerned about is, we've had a campaign going, many municipalities have supported us on our call to the federal government for our fair share. We're owed \$490 million. The Greens and this leader have never come forward and supported us. You want to build more affordable and supportive housing? Sign our agreement to the federal government and support that extra \$490 million.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, the bitter irony, especially for young people, is that the government's new bill has no commitment to actually building housing that's affordable for people. Essentially every housing expert has come out panning the government's bill because it's clear—and they've said this; the experts have said this—that the government doesn't understand the severity of the crisis or the urgency of needed action.

If the province wants to work with the federal government, absolutely we should do that, but it means the province has to come to the table with money and with a commitment to building 160,000 affordable homes in this province. So, if the housing minister's not going to answer, maybe the finance minister will. Will there be money in the spring budget to build housing that people can actually afford in this province?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, we put our money where our mouth is in terms of dollars to municipalities. We provided record dollars for homelessness supports. We just made an announcement last week that added more dollars in the system and consolidated supportive housing programs to make sure there were extra dollars in the system. We continue to call on the federal government in their budget to recognize that we're not getting our fair share paid. We're putting our skin in the game. We're ensuring that we're putting up land and dollars to our municipal partners and to not-for-profits and co-ops, but we need some partners.

Every time, Speaker—and again, I can't emphasize this enough—we put recommendations, bills, regulations forward that are going to help the situation, that are going to help solve the housing supply crisis, this member for Guelph, on behalf of the Green Party, votes against it every single time. It's not going to make sure that housing is affordable when you keep opposing every measure that's going to help the supply crisis.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: My question is to the Minister of Education. My constituents in Oakville North-Burlington and, indeed, all Ontarians were pleased to see Ontario achieve the right deal on child care with the federal government, and I would like to congratulate the

minister for getting it done for all working families in our province.

During negotiations, the Premier, the education minister and our government repeatedly called on the federal government to recognize the unique components of Ontario's child care system. We believe it is important to provide flexibility and parental choice to parents. One important component is the CARE tax credit.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can Ontario families count on our government continuing the CARE tax credit?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member for Oakville North–Burlington for her leadership in the Legislature.

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Indeed, our government, our Progressive Conservative Party, believes in respecting the choices parents make and in recognizing the inherent cost to raise a child. That's why we are, in addition to delivering \$10 daycare, on average, by the year 2025, in addition to the 50% reduction that will be realized by Christmas of this year, we are going to preserve the Ontario Childcare Tax Credit, a critical form of relief that provides up to 75% of child care expenses for families that are eligible for relief, up to \$6,000 per child per year. This is an important way we can help reduce the costs and increase support for working people.

It is regrettable that the New Democrats and Liberals have opposed this measure, but Ontario families can count on our government to deliver \$10 daycare by 2025 and continue to provide direct financial relief, thousands of dollars on average, through the Ontario Childcare Tax Credit.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Thank you, Minister, for your answer. Maintaining an array of options for parents to access affordable child care will help families, our youngest learners and the economy. The government has repeatedly said that affordability and sustainability were guiding principles to land the right deal for the province of Ontario. Ensuring relief from child care costs for working families has been a priority of this government since negotiations began.

Speaker, can the Minister of Education share with parents how much families save through Ontario's plan and how quickly parents will realize the benefits?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Again, thank you to the member. You know, Mr. Speaker, what we did not do, which the Liberal Party would have done, is leave \$3 billion off the table. They would have left behind families with children in for-profit child care and they would have left a year of investment out of reach.

Our government stood up to the federal government to deliver a better deal for Ontario families. We are proud to see on average a 25% reduction immediately for families, and 50% by Christmas, representing roughly \$4,000 per child in the province of Ontario. It will rise to \$12,000 in the year 2023.

This is real financial relief to support families, to get women working in the economy and to deliver the relief

that families for generations have heard politicians speak about. They can count on our Premier to get the job done for Ontario families.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. For five weeks the world has watched in horror the unspeakable suffering of the Ukrainian people and saluted their incredible courage. In my community, Londoners are ready and waiting to welcome Ukrainians fleeing Putin's illegal invasion into their homes. But Ola Nowosad, from the London Ukrainian congress contacted me to say host families are worried they may have to cover health care costs for Ukrainians who won't have OHIP coverage right away. On top of routine health care needs, many Ukrainians have experienced significant physical and mental trauma. They and all who flee to Canada for refuge deserve access to comprehensive health care when they arrive.

Speaker, will this government commit to waiving the OHIP waiting period for Ukrainians and those seeking refuge in Ontario?

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

Ms. Christine Elliott: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. This is a really important issue, because what's happening in Ukraine right now is horrifying and absolutely heartbreaking to all of us. We're all asking ourselves what we can do individually and as a government to help people who are fleeing the country right now.

I can advise that right now we do have five pediatric patients at the Hospital for Sick Children who need oncology assistance. They are here now with their families. There's more that we can do, however. This is something that is a subject of urgent discussion within the Ministry of Health and across all of our ministries to understand what we can do to help, recognizing that people will have significant both physical and mental health needs when they do come to Canada and when they do come to Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reports that over four million Ukrainians have fled their home country. Tens of thousands of those people have already applied for entry into Canada. Ontario must be ready to support Ukrainians when they arrive.

Quebec, British Columbia and Newfoundland have all announced that they will waive health coverage waiting periods for Ukrainians entering the province under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel. More than 12,000 people have already signed an online petition asking Ontario to do the same.

I ask again, Speaker, will this government commit right now to following the lead of the other provinces and waive the OHIP waiting period for Ukrainians and others seeking refuge in Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We certainly recognize that Canada has a responsibility to take in refugees from Ukraine, as many other countries have done as well. Of course, you will know that it's the federal government's responsibility to indicate how many and when they will be able to come in, but we will be ready. We do recognize that Ontario also has a responsibility. I can't commit specifically right as of this moment what we will be able to do, but I can tell you that waiving coverage for OHIP is something that is specifically and urgently being discussed by our government right now.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. John Fraser: Today is supposed to be the last day that the Premier has to deliver a budget. But the Premier, well, he changed his own law for his own convenience, just so he doesn't have to pay a fine right before an election. Instead, he's been flitting around the province like Tinker Bell, spreading billions like it was pixie dust—pixie dust—like it was going to make the pandemic go away.

We don't need magic. We don't need pixie dust. We simply need a plan to get our vaccination rates up. So, Speaker, through you, how is it, in the Premier's plan to reopen, there is no plan to get Ontarians' vaccination rates up?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: I can advise the member opposite that we do have a very specific vaccination plan to get more Ontarians vaccinated. We passed the 32-million mark last week. We have, at this moment, total shots in arms as of today, 32,064,229.

We are also moving forward. I can advise that 92.8% of Ontarians have had partial vaccination and 90.9% have had two doses. We're working on the booster shots and we're also examining whether a fourth shot is necessary, an extra booster. We're waiting for NACI's advice—that should come later today—about what age groups should be receiving the fourth vaccination, if necessary. We are actively moving on this, and we're continuing with our plan across the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. John Fraser: I'm just kind of surprised that the Minister of Health doesn't recognize that there's a problem. In the Premier's plan to stay open, the word "vaccines" is mentioned once and only in reference to manufacturing. The single most important thing we can do to protect Ontarians and protect our economy isn't even in this plan. I don't know about you, but I think that's incredible. We're at the back of the pack for vaccinating our children. Only one third of five-to-11-year-olds have had a second dose, and our third doses are at 50%. I don't know about you, Minister, but I think for the rest of us here, 50% doesn't cut it.

Anti-vaxxers are spreading misinformation. We know that. They work 24/7. It's all over the Web, all the time. We all see it. We even hear it in here.

Why is this Premier missing in action, asleep at the switch? Where is a plan to get our vaccination rates up to where we need to be? Because it's the most important thing we can do right now, and it's clearly not in your plan.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, it clearly is in our plan. We do have a plan to increase the vaccination rates. With 92.8% of Ontarians partially vaccinated and 90.9% having received the second dose, we are distributing the third doses. We do have them available. We have clinics in schools. We have primary care that's providing them. They're available in pharmacies as well. We also have the GO-VAXX buses that are going to locations where there are low vaccination rates. We're making sure that people in congregate care get help. We've been going to Community Living organizations and other organizations, making sure that people who are not able to come to us, we can go to them. So we're continuing to work on that and we will continue until we get every person in Ontario vaccinated who wishes to be vaccinated.

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HOUSING

Ms. Donna Skelly: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As we all know, Ontario has a housing crisis driven by a severe shortage of supply. Young families, seniors, all hard-working people are desperate for housing that meets their unique needs, and our government is using every resource at our disposal to build all kinds of homes.

But some city councils, including Hamilton council, are pushing an anti-housing and anti-growth ideology that is preventing homes from being built and driving up home prices. This includes Hamilton council refusing to expand urban boundaries, despite their own staff admitting that Hamilton does not have enough land within our existing urban boundaries on which to build the homes we need.

Speaker, through you, what is the minister doing to address this issue?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Great question.

Hon. Steve Clark: That is a great question.

One of the proposed measures under the bill would give me the authority to pause the 120-day timeline on reviewing official plans. Official plans are a critical tool to address the housing crisis because they set out that long-term plan on how the municipality will create the amount of homes, jobs and community infrastructure it needs over the long term.

We have a serious housing crisis in Ontario, and the official plans that I've seen, like Hamilton's and Ottawa's, don't maximize the housing outcomes for Ontarians and instead prioritize anti-growth and anti-housing ideology. If passed, I would pause the timeline on the official plans that I have received and I would consider referring them to the Ontario Land Tribunal as an impartial adjudicator.

I have not yet received Hamilton's official plan, but I want to emphasize to the House that I am prepared to take the same approach if Hamilton's official plan doesn't

maximize housing for the hard-working people of Hamilton, including those in Flamborough–Glanbrook.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: Back to the minister: The average price of a home in Hamilton is over \$1 million, and that is shutting out too many people of all ages. The word “crisis” is an understatement.

As the minister has said, our government is taking a long-term strategy to address the housing crisis and to provide more attainable housing options for all Ontarians. Speaker, through you, will the minister share the government’s long-term strategy to address the housing crisis?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to again thank the member for her incredible advocacy in her riding and in the Hamilton area.

The More Homes for Everyone Act proposes smart, targeted policies in the immediate term that would help get housing built faster, get shovels in the ground and build all types of housing for Ontarians who deserve it.

Over the long term, though, the Housing Affordability Task Force is our government’s housing road map. We commit to implementing the task force’s recommendations with a housing supply action plan every year over the next four years.

The first step, though, is to deliver on the task force’s report on our consultation on the concept of multi-generational community to bring in gentle density. This consultation would feed into our Housing Supply Working Group, which my ministry would establish in the summer, to engage with municipalities to ensure that they actively support and are willing to implement the measures that we need to implement on the ground.

With these measures, we will be collaborating on a new opportunity with the Housing Affordability Task Force. We need municipalities to pull their weight, get things done on the ground and get shovels in the ground for Ontarians.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Gurratan Singh: My question is to the Premier. Brampton is facing a health care crisis because of years of Liberal and Conservative neglect.

Last year, the Premier came to Brampton and he didn’t even announce a hospital. He announced a few more beds for Peel Memorial, with no emergency room. Now we’ve learned that what he did announce, Bramptonians are going to have to pay for.

Why does the Premier think it’s okay for Bramptonians to pay to fix a health care crisis created by him and the Liberals?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: This is a really curious question from the member opposite, because for 15 years, the Liberals, propped up by the NDP, heard the calls for more health care in Brampton, and what did they do? They said no and they ignored them.

It’s our government that’s saying yes to a new hospital that’s going to include over 250 new patient beds and includes a 24/7 emergency department.

In fact, the mayor of Brampton was very enthusiastic about the announcement and said that this is a huge step in the right direction and that it’s actually six times larger than the original project that was planned only a few years ago. Why would the mayor of Brampton say that, and then this member is alleging that we’re not providing services? We’re providing those services and we will deliver them.

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Back to the Premier: So let me get this straight. The Premier comes to Brampton and doesn’t even announce a hospital. And what little he does announce, Bramptonians are going to have to pay for?

I want to ask the Premier this: Name me another city in Canada that has over 700,000 people, is one of the fastest-growing and has only one hospital? Does the Premier think that this is acceptable? Enough is enough. Brampton has been left behind for far too long.

Will the Conservative government finally listen to what we in the NDP have been saying this whole time? Invest in Brampton and our health care crisis. For Brampton that means three hospitals with three emergency rooms paid for by the provincial government, not the good people of Brampton.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Under the leadership of Premier Ford, the city of Brampton is going to have and receive the largest investment in health care in its history. Mr. Speaker, this includes a new hospital, a second hospital for the city of Brampton, which was neglected for 15 years by the previous government.

This also includes a new medical school for the people of Brampton so that the kids who live and stay in Brampton can then also, at one point, work in Brampton and deliver care in Brampton. Mr. Speaker, we’re going to continue to build upon this.

Our government has announced over 600 long-term-care beds for the city of Brampton, Mr. Speaker. There has been no government that has delivered more for the people of Brampton than this government under the leadership of Premier Ford.

CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Premier. There are over 28,000 children and youth on wait-lists for mental health care services, and wait times can reach up to 2.5 years. The impact of the pandemic has been hard on our kids. According to SickKids, over 70% of children reported worsened mental health during the initial lockdowns. Speaker, mental health is health and it should be available when and where our kids need it, not months or even years down the road.

Will the Premier commit today to delivering the additional \$150 million targeted to youth mental health in this year's budget that is needed to reduce wait times for children's mental health services to under 30 days?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for that question. Mr. Speaker, from day one when our government was elected, we made mental health and addictions a priority. In fact, I am the first Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions in the history of the province of Ontario. That, Mr. Speaker, is the commitment that this Premier made and that our government made to ensure that mental health and addictions was looked after in the province of Ontario, by creating those continuums of care.

But to put behind the fact that there's a ministry created is the fact that we have \$3.8 billion that has been invested on an annualized basis—\$174 million, \$175 million, \$176 million—and now we're investing \$525 million annually in mental health and addictions in the province of Ontario to create those continuums of care.

And, of course, what we've done is we're looking at the lifespan and addressing the issue for the children. In the supplemental I'll give you more details as to the investments that are being made.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, I want to be clear: I respect the associate minister's work on this issue. I actually appreciate his coming to Guelph and providing funding for a youth wellness hub. But let's be clear with people and honest with people: Our kids need more.

I met a youth on a suicide watch list who had to wait months to access therapy, and this is happening all across the province. So let me repeat: Some youth are waiting up to 2.5 years to access services. Everything is not okay when it comes to youth mental health. Our kids need all of us, everybody in this House, to do better.

I'm offering the Premier an opportunity today to say yes to an additional \$150 million, on top of what has already been invested in mental health in this year's budget, to reduce wait times for our children to less than 30 days. Yes or no, will the government support this request?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Once again, I would like to reiterate the importance of mental health as it relates to children and youth. Through the Ministry of Education, substantial sums of money, four times what has ever been invested by the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP—those investments have been made and are having effects and an impact on children.

In addition to that, in the continuum of care—which is so important as kids need supports outside of the school day—we increased the overall budget by 5% to all children and youth operators within the continuum of care outside of the schools to provide additional supports. We've created youth wellness hubs and continued to invest, through the Addictions Recovery Fund, in additional youth and wellness hubs. Because it's not just about giving

them treatment, it's also about building resiliency and providing them with the supports they need to become better, stronger and able to participate fully in school and, of course, in life later on. We are—

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

The next question.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Faisal Hassan: My question is to the Premier. I have stood in this House on many occasions and spoken of how young people and families in my fine community of York South–Weston can no longer afford to stay living in the neighbourhoods they were raised in. The cost of buying a new home or renting an apartment is simply not affordable.

On this side of the House we have offered many solutions to the housing crisis, and we have been ignored, just like this government ignored many of the recommendations of their own housing task force.

With prices skyrocketing, families in my riding need affordable housing. Why is this Premier failing to address the need for such housing in communities like York South–Weston?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, through you to the honourable member: You're the MPP for York South–Weston. Your federal colleague in your own riding is the federal housing minister. I would think, of all New Democrats who sit in this chamber, there would be one New Democrat that would actually come forward and agree with us when we're asking the federal government for our fair share of an extra \$490 million. Here's something that the member opposite can do for me and can do for residents in his riding, and that's make that overture. Some New Democrat has got to stand up for more dollars and the fact that we need our fair share to build more affordable housing in our ridings.

The other thing—through you, Speaker—that I could suggest to the honourable member is, when we table a housing initiative, like we did with the More Homes, More Choice Act in 2019—our housing action plan—when we do measures that result in more shovels in the ground to help this crisis, that the member break away from his party, that the member stand up for the residents of York South–Weston and vote for—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Faisal Hassan: The member is out of order. He is the Minister of Housing responsible for Ontario.

Back to the Premier: So many families see home ownership as out of reach because of these high prices, and yet their rents are going up even more. I have raised the case of tenants in my community facing massive rent increases if they change units and of the issue of above-guideline rent increases being abused and used as a tool to jack up rents, in some cases as much as 73%. With half of

the population in my community residing in apartments, I hear regularly of their struggles with affordability. This government ended rent control on all new units when they arrived in office in 2018, which is the responsibility of this minister, which has led to devastating rent increases for families.

Why is this government refusing to bring back real rent control and close the loopholes that empower landlords to evict good tenants and allow rents to skyrocket?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to reply.

Hon. Steve Clark: Mr. Speaker, this member has zero credibility on the issue that he just asked about. When we, as a government, put forward a bill that required landlords to make efforts to renegotiate a repayment agreement if the tenant had rent arrears, that member voted no. When we increased fines under the Residential Tenancies Act to \$50,000 for an individual and \$250,000 for a corporation, they voted against it. When we asked that landlords disclose to the Landlord and Tenant Board whether they have ever filed for a renovation, this NDP voted no. And, I can't believe this, Speaker, when we increased tenant compensation for bad-faith evictions, allowing the Landlord and Tenant Board to give another 12 months' rent to that tenant—again, I can't believe it—the NDP voted no.

Every time this government puts in place protections for tenants, this NDP says one thing—this is Andrea Horwath's problem: She says one thing and then—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Hon. Steve Clark: Withdraw.

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

STUDENT SAFETY

M^{me} Lucille Collard: My question is for the Minister of Education. A draft document circulated by the Ontario Ministry of Education outlined plans to download medical and, potentially, clinical support services for students with disabilities onto unqualified school staff. It says that school board personnel with no professional health or medical backgrounds could soon be tasked with medical responsibilities. This government seems to be planning to have these education professionals perform tasks including oral and nasal suction, catheterization and injecting medication. Disability advocacy groups and teachers' unions are extremely concerned about this plan that would place disabled students in harm's way.

Mr. Speaker, this is cruel, reckless and really unfair to the students and to the school professionals. Can the Minister of Education confirm, or deny, whether he plans to download medical duties onto untrained school board employees?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I want to report and confirm that the PPM, the policy surrounding this issue, was first conceived and written in 1984. We are consulting with the sector to ensure we provide those critical services to

families, and obviously our first priority is to ensure that children with special education needs and disabilities are cared for. It's the basis for why our government has increased investment for children with special education exceptionalities to the highest levels in provincial history. It's now well over \$3.25 billion in funding. That has increased by over \$100 million just from the year prior.

We understand how critical it is to support these children. It's why the staffing has been enhanced. There's now \$300 million provided for the coming school year specifically to hire more EAs or ECEs, more special education teachers to give the care that these kids deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Again, about health and safety in schools: It's an issue that needs to be taken seriously. On February 1, the Minister of Education said that schools would be getting rapid tests every two weeks from then on. That was back on February 1. It's been two months. Teachers have reported to me that they haven't been receiving those rapid tests that they're supposed to be distributing to students.

Now as much as we want this pandemic to be over, we can't simply not be testing for COVID anymore. It gives families and students the confidence to go to school knowing, whether they're symptomatic or not, that they're not going to be transmitting the disease.

1140

Will the Minister of Education admit that schools have not been receiving an adequate number of rapid tests from this government, and why?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: On the contrary, the member opposite should be assured that there are seven million rapid tests that are being sent to school boards every single month in the province of Ontario. The Deputy Premier has just confirmed the continuation of rapid tests in our communities well into the summer, for the purpose of enabling families and individuals to reduce the risk before they enter congregate settings and pursue their careers and their studies.

In addition to the 73,000 HEPA units that are in classrooms in Ottawa and all regions of Ontario—the most HEPA units in all provinces combined, as of this past September—our government is taking it further, with an additional deployment of 49,000. We're working with the Minister of Government and Consumer Services to deploy 40,000 net new HEPA units to schools and 9,000 for child care in the month of March and the early weeks of April to reduce risk and build confidence and ensure our children can remain in class, learning.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader has a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: In accordance with standing order 59, I will outline business for next week and thank all colleagues for what has been a very productive week this week.

On Monday, April 4, during routine proceedings, a new government bill will be introduced. That afternoon: a take-

note debate with respect to the 120-day report on the blockade emergency.

On Tuesday, April 5, in the morning we will return to Bill 88, Working for Workers Act. Before question period on that day, there will be a tribute to former member Mr. David Ramsay. In the afternoon, we will return back to Bill 88, Working for Workers Act. In the evening: PMB ballot item 37, standing in the name of the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

On Wednesday, April 6, in the morning: Bill 88. In the afternoon: Bill 88, as well as a bill that will be introduced. In the evening, there will be PMB ballot item 35, which is Bill 104, standing in the name of the member for Durham. It's the Connected Communities Act. That evening, there will be a night sitting on the 6th, and it will be with respect to the bill that will be introduced earlier in the week.

On Thursday, April 7, in the morning, we will be debating the bill that was previously introduced. In the afternoon, we will have a take-note debate. I do encourage all members to be in the House for the take-note debate on the afternoon of Thursday, April 7. We will be allowing members who are retiring to give speeches with respect to the important people in their lives and the amazing contributions that they have made to the people of Ontario. I would encourage all members to be here for that. That evening, we will have PMB ballot item number 39, the member for Brampton North. There will be another evening session as well, and it will be with respect to a bill that will be introduced earlier in the week.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES DAY

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker. I'd just like to acknowledge that today is National Indigenous Languages Day. I want to do a big shout-out to the Indigenous-language speakers but also the Indigenous people who are reconnecting with their language, with their identity and the way of life.

Remarks in Oji-Cree.

I'm just talking to language speakers. Our language is really important. Meegwetch.

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report concerning Jessica Bell, member for University–Rosedale, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA INTERNS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before question period, I informed the House that the Manitoba legislative interns were tuning in today. They are Nathan Dueck,

Celina Oster, Sanjam Panag, Christina Rabet, Carson Ransom and Aidan Trembath. Once again, we're delighted that they were able to watch us today, and I hope that they were impressed.

DEFERRED VOTES

PANDEMIC AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LA PRÉPARATION AUX PANDÉMIES ET AUX SITUATIONS D'URGENCE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 106, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 106, Loi visant à édicter deux lois et à modifier diverses autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

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

On Wednesday, March 30, 2022, Mr. Sarkaria moved second reading of Bill 106, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various other Acts.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Ghamari, Goldie	Pettapiece, Randy
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Piccini, David
Bailey, Robert	Hassan, Faisal	Rasheed, Kaleed
Barrett, Toby	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Calandra, Paul	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Ke, Vincent	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	Kernaghan, Terence	Schreiner, Mike
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova, Natalia	Scott, Laurie
Collard, Lucille	Lecce, Stephen	Simard, Amanda
Crawford, Stephen	Mamakwa, Sol	Singh, Gurraan
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Mantha, Michael	Skelly, Donna
Downey, Doug	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Jill	McDonell, Jim	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Elliott, Christine	McKenna, Jane	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norman	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fife, Catherine	Mulroney, Caroline	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fraser, John	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
Gates, Wayne	Park, Lindsey	Yakabuski, John
Gélinas, France	Parsa, Michael	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 62; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

There's no further business this morning. This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1153 to 1300.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I rise today to mark International Trans Day of Visibility. Trans and non-binary folk face countless barriers, whether social, economic or health-related, most acutely for those with intersectional identities. This day exists to celebrate our trans friends and amplify their voices. Let's commit as a Legislature to provide trans-affirmative health care and let our friends know that we see you, you are loved and you belong in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I want to thank the member. Technically, that's not a point of order, but thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CLEAN TRAINS NOW ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR L'INTRODUCTION DE TRAINS À ÉNERGIE PROPRE MAINTENANT

Ms. Karpoche moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 110, An Act to amend the Metrolinx Act, 2006 to provide for a committee to review matters relating to the Union Pearson Express / Projet de loi 110, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur Metrolinx pour prévoir la création d'un comité chargé d'examiner des questions concernant l'Union Pearson Express.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Would the member like to make a brief statement?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Yes, Speaker, thank you. Residents in Parkdale–High Park and across Toronto have long had to grapple with the harmful health and environmental impacts of dirty diesel trains running through our neighbourhoods. Our community has been fighting for electrification for over a decade and we have been let down by successive governments, both Liberal and Conservative.

This bill, the Clean Trains Now Act, amends the Metrolinx Act to require the establishment of a committee to review the Union Pearson Express rail line. The committee

would be required to make recommendations to achieve the electrification of the UPX line, full fare integration and an increase in service capacity. We deserve clean trains, better access, and frequent and reliable service.

LUNOVA MACHINERY IMPORT AND EXPORT LTD. ACT, 2022

Mr. Bouma moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr68, An Act to revive Lunova Machinery Import and Export Ltd.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Pursuant to standing order 89, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I recognize the member for Etobicoke Centre.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Infrastructure is the backbone of a strong and healthy economy, and it plays a critical role in supporting the quality of life for Ontarians. Whether it's highways and transit, hospitals, long-term care or high-speed Internet, infrastructure helps connect us to education, health care, community and social services we need and rely on each and every day.

That is why I'm pleased to rise today to introduce our government's infrastructure report, Building Ontario: Getting Shovels in the Ground. Mr. Speaker, this report can be found online at Ontario.ca and highlights key infrastructure accomplishments we've delivered over the past four years. It also demonstrates the great progress that our government is making to build infrastructure to support economic growth and prosperity, as well as some of the new and exciting projects and programs that are currently planned or under way to help us build a stronger Ontario.

The report features projects from across all sectors, from every region across this amazing province. This includes the ongoing construction for the widening of Highway 3 to four lanes between the towns of Essex and Leamington in southern Ontario, thanks to the leadership of the Minister of Transportation, the incredibly hard-working Minister Mulroney.

It features GO expansion projects including the Highway 401 rail tunnel, which reached substantial completion in July 2021 and will accommodate two additional tracks. This will enable more frequent two-way, all-day rail service along the Kitchener GO corridor.

It also includes expanding the Carlington Community Health Centre in Ottawa to create a health and community hub with primary and mental health care, as well as a new

French-language Catholic school in Vaughan that will have enough space for more than 400 students from grades 7 to 12 and 49 new licensed child care spaces, thanks to due diligence by Minister Lecce, our Minister of Education.

Our government is meeting its commitment to getting shovels in the ground faster for hospitals, highways, long-term care and high-speed Internet, among other priorities. We also know our spending must be strategic and targeted. That is why we have been making the right investments in the right places at the right time.

Mr. Speaker, as part of our capital plan, we are focused on building Ontario. This report highlights that we are investing more than \$148 billion over the next 10 years to support the construction of schools, hospitals, public transit, roads, bridges, water and waste water facilities, and access to reliable high-speed Internet.

This includes a province-wide investment of more than \$600 million to support new school and child care spaces, including a historic investment of \$44 million to build a new Lower Yonge Precinct Elementary School in Toronto. This is the first elementary school being built in a Toronto condo, and it will support working families through a modern, accessible and technologically connected space. In addition, there are currently over 300 child care and education building-related projects in development across Ontario, with more than a hundred actively in construction.

Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to ignore the significant impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our communities. During these difficult times, we continue to adapt by accelerating the delivery of government priority projects. We are also investing in key infrastructure projects to help strengthen communities, create jobs and protect the health and well-being of all Ontarians. This includes additional investment in ventilation and filtration improvements in schools, to help ensure our young ones remain as safe as possible, and the accelerated build pilot program that aims to deliver four new long-term-care homes faster.

As part of this program, Lakeridge Gardens at Lakeridge Health in Ajax opened its doors to residents just recently. This state-of-the-art long-term-care home was built in only 13 months, when on average it takes eight years to build a long-term-care home in Ontario. Our government did it in 13 months. Anything is possible through collaboration, looking at all resources and tools, and expediting processes. I want to thank the Minister of Long-Term Care for working with Infrastructure Ontario to make it happen. We are assessing what we have learned through this rapid delivery model to see where else it can be implemented.

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Mr. Speaker, we are also building Ontario's future with shovels in the ground for highways and public transit. By 2041, Ontario's population is expected to grow by four million, and our infrastructure needs to grow with it.

As the greater Golden Horseshoe is one of the fastest-growing regions in North America, we are taking decisive action to help a region already struggling with gridlock.

By moving forward with the Bradford Bypass and Highway 413, we will help improve congestion, connect communities, and ensure a better quality of life for future generations.

I cannot emphasize this enough: Essential goods and workers rely upon provincial highways to get from point A to point B. An efficient highway network is critical to preserve Ontarians' quality of life. If you're buying food, picking up a prescription, purchasing PPE to keep your employees safe, or getting vaccinated—all of these critical products were delivered using Ontario's highway network. It also means that it will be easier and faster for Ontarians to get to where they need to go.

However, our plan is more than just public transit. We're setting out to create transit-oriented communities at or near subway, light rail transit and GO rail stations across the greater Golden Horseshoe. By creating vibrant, connected communities, we are bringing jobs and housing closer to transit.

Mr. Speaker, with the hard work from Minister Elliott and the Ministry of Health, we are also making investments in more than 50 major projects across the province as part of our plan to stay open to help deliver high-quality care for Ontarians. As part of our comprehensive plan to end hallway health care, we are investing in new hospitals, in addition to expanding and maintaining existing health care services.

Just this past December, we announced a multi-billion dollar investment to build a new, state-of-the-art Mississauga hospital and expand the Queensway Health Centre.

Health care infrastructure investments will help improve access to care and reduce wait times for patients. These investments will ease pressures on our hospitals, while we continue to build a stronger and more resilient public health care system that will serve Ontarians now and for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 has also highlighted just how critical access to reliable high-speed Internet is for all Ontarians. No matter where you live, every Ontarian deserves to have access to high-speed Internet to work, learn, start a business, participate in the agricultural sector, access vital services, and connect with loved ones. That is why we made a commitment to connect every community with high-speed Internet by the end of 2025. This commitment is supported by a historic investment of nearly \$4 billion to achieve 100% connectivity across Ontario. This is the largest single investment in high-speed Internet in any province by any government in Canadian history. To deliver on this ambitious commitment, we have a comprehensive and bold plan to bring access to high-speed Internet across the province. Through our initiatives, we have already committed \$900 million to over 180 high-speed Internet, cellular and satellite projects to date. Some of these initiatives are already starting to connect homes and businesses as we speak. This includes up to \$16 million for our 17 projects under our provincial Improving Connectivity for Ontario program, known as ICON, and a joint investment of over \$1.2 billion in federal-provincial funding for 58 projects.

We are working on initiatives that will help bring reliable high-speed Internet access to every corner of the province. This includes investments in northern Ontario through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. and the Next Generation Network Program. With the support of our government, the federal government and other partners, we are bringing high-speed Internet access to communities across southwestern Ontario through the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology project. In eastern Ontario, we are significantly improving cellular connectivity through the Eastern Ontario Regional Network Cell Gap Project. In total, we are bringing faster Internet access to 375,000 homes and businesses across the province, and significantly improving cellular connectivity in eastern Ontario.

In addition, Infrastructure Ontario is leading an innovative process that will help connect the remaining 300,000 homes and businesses in unserved and underserved communities.

Earlier this month, we introduced the Getting Ontario Connected Act, 2022. If passed, this new legislation would remove barriers, duplication and delays, making it easier and faster to build high-speed Internet infrastructure across this province. Our high-speed Internet initiatives will help ensure that every home and business in every community can participate in today's economy. Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that our government will spare no expense to help connect every household in our province, including those in the hardest-to-reach places. As Premier Ford has told me directly, connecting residents to high-speed Internet access is the most important infrastructure initiative in our generation.

Ontarians deserve to be informed about how public dollars are being invested. Whether it is a new health care facility or a new school or critical infrastructure needed to ensure Ontarians continue to have access to clean water, we want Ontarians to be aware of these important investments because they truly impact their daily lives. To ensure residents across this province are aware, we have an interactive Ontario Builds webpage that features a map and a database with information on thousands of infrastructure projects taking place in communities in every corner. By visiting ontario.ca/ontariobuilds, you can learn about what is being built in your community. Ontario Builds is part of our plan to make data on infrastructure more transparent, while also keeping people informed about investments that will impact their neighbourhoods.

This report emphasizes and demonstrates the importance of building, upgrading and modernizing our infrastructure. We continue to look for new and innovative ways to build faster and better to help provide more services to the public and to build more sustainable communities.

When we were elected in 2018, we inherited massive infrastructure needs. Investments were required in health, long-term care, transit and the municipal sector. But Ontarians don't have to worry. Under the bold leadership of Premier Ford, we are getting shovels in the ground. We are building hospitals, long-term-care homes, highways,

subways, high-speed Internet infrastructure and schools, and we are investing in our municipalities.

I encourage you all to review my report to see how Ontario is working hard to get shovels in the ground to build a strong and resilient province for everyone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): First of all, I would like to apologize to the minister for not recognizing her properly, as I do to the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Responses?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I want to take the opportunity as the infrastructure critic for the official opposition to respond to the Minister of Infrastructure.

I think the overall lack of transparency with infrastructure procurement is a big issue. The government is spending tens of billions of public dollars on much-needed infrastructure, yet basic information like the approved budget, project budget scope, service standards etc., are routinely kept secret from the public.

If we're lucky, there may be a project business case published showing a preferred design option, but that option may not be what is ultimately delivered. For example, right before the Ford government signed the contract for the Hurontario LRT, the line's loop connection to downtown Mississauga was suddenly cut with no explanation. Now with the P3 contract signed, the Premier has told Mississauga voters that he'll bring back the loop, but if he really supports the loop, why did he let it get cut in the first place?

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The opacity of P3 procurement is especially bad. There have been unexplained delays and cost overruns, bidders have dropped out of the procurement process for undisclosed reasons and we can never get a straight answer about what is going on behind the curtain, where Infrastructure Ontario's private consultants could cut secret deals with infrastructure investors and their private consultants. With all this opacity and no public accountability, it's no surprise that infrastructure costs keep going up with no explanation.

According to a 2020 RCCAO report, the per-kilometer costs of subway construction have doubled under the Ford government, which took subway planning and procurement away from the TTC and gave it to Metrolinx and IO to be procured as P3s.

In 2014, the Auditor General said the Liberal government could not provide any evidence that the public was getting value for money for the millions of dollars extra paid for P3s as compared to traditional public procurement. Last year, Infrastructure Ontario announced something called progressive P3 procurement, which seems to give the private sector even more control over the project's scope and design by bringing in a development partner before the contract is signed, but no one can explain exactly what this is or how this is an improvement over traditional public procurement. It's as if the government's priority is to preserve the P3 procurement model at all costs, even as the evidence for value for money for the public gets weaker and weaker.

This government is talking a lot about its investment in broadband, and \$4 billion is a lot of money, but you will forgive me for my cynicism when this is the same government that has left money earmarked for broadband unspent in the past few budgets. Four billion should be enough to ensure every house and business, farm and family has access to quality Internet. I am concerned, however, that the Ontario Connects procurement program might be structured in a way that shuts out small- and medium-sized Internet service providers. The big ones, like Rogers and Bell, have a lot of capacity, but rural Ontario is not exactly where they prefer to do business.

The government is divvying up the provincial map into lots. Will the lots be larger than \$10 million to \$20 million and beyond the capacity of small ISPs? What minimum financial capacity will ISPs have to demonstrate to be eligible to bid? So if the lots are expensive and expansive, again, it will only be the big boys who can play, and there's no way they will make money on the last milers. Much like natural gas, the folks at the end of the line will not become folks online.

Leaders like Swift and EORN have taken to the time to negotiate service level agreements with local providers and have ensured that last-mile neighbours will get service. In fact, 80% of Swift's past contracts went to small and medium ISPs. It is a lot of work to hammer out these small local contracts. Infrastructure Ontario usually only deals in bulk, and I can't imagine the big companies IO tends to do business with are interested in little local deals for the last-mile folks.

I wrote to Michael Lindsay, president and CEO of Infrastructure Ontario, with concerns about the secret and hidden nature of the process we've been unable to scrutinize thus far. Every ISP has had to sign an NDA. How can the public be assured that this procurement process will serve the interests of rural broadband consumers and not the interests of large ISPs?

We also filed an FOI about the service area maps that show the size of the service area contracts and would show whether a small or medium-sized ISP will likely have the capacity to bid for the contract, but apparently these are state secrets. I'm not allowed to have them, and neither is the public who will be paying the bills.

I asked the Minister of Infrastructure about the quality of service that is coming. Speaker, remember dial-up? Well, the wireless of today is the dial-up of tomorrow, and 50/10 won't cut it. The ideal target should be one gig symmetrical with the capacity and bandwidth needs of now and what's coming, and future-proof Internet is fibre. I've asked the minister about the specifics, but apparently I'm not allowed to know them.

The people of Ontario will eventually get to know after all the deals are done and it's too late for changes. Maybe things will work out, or maybe this government will do to rural broadband what previous governments did to rural hydro: sticking them with skyrocketing costs and unreliable service.

I just wish we didn't have to fight so hard for transparency and accountability when it comes to infrastructure investment in this province.

PETITIONS

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition titled "Protect Migratory Birds," and I thank my constituents in Parkdale–High Park for sending this. It reads, "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas an estimated 25 million birds in Canada die each year due to collisions with windows on buildings, including many migratory and bird species at risk;

"Whereas materials to prevent the collision of birds into windows can proactively be incorporated into the designs of new buildings;

"Whereas the Canadian Standards Association has established a national standard for bird-friendly building design which has been adopted by some municipalities...;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to incorporate the CSA 2019 bird-friendly building design standard into the Ontario building code, requiring bird-friendly materials to be used in new residential and commercial building windows."

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

POST-STROKE TREATMENT

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend Ontario's community physiotherapy clinic programs to include young adult stroke survivors.

"Whereas young adult stroke survivors in Ontario continue to be denied provincial government-funded physiotherapy on the basis of age, after completion of their initial rehab programs; and

"Whereas, as a consequence, these young adults are prevented from recovering to their best potential and possibly returning to work or continuing their post-secondary studies; and

"Whereas, to date, both Liberal and PC governments have failed to permit such funding, although both parties have previously taken steps to publicly support its implementation;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand Ontario's government-funded community physiotherapy clinic program to include stroke survivors between the ages of 20 and 64 with a doctor's referral, and after completion of initial rehab programs."

I fully support this petition. I am going to affix my name to it and give it to page Pallas.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to save eye care in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition and I’m going to give it to page Rhythm to bring to the Clerk.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Stop Highway 413...” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government is pushing ahead with plans to build Highway 413, a redundant and wasteful 400-series highway through the greenbelt that would cost taxpayers an estimated \$10 billion or more; and

“Whereas according to a TorStar/National Observer investigation entitled ‘Friends with Benefits?’ powerful developers and land speculators with political and donor ties to the Premier and the PC Party of Ontario own thousands of acres along the proposed highway corridor and would profit from its construction, suggesting that this \$10-billion taxpayer-funded highway is about serving the private interests of the Premier’s friends and donors, not the public interest; and

“Whereas the Ontario government’s expert panel concluded in 2017 that Highway 413 would be a waste of taxpayer money that would only save drivers 30 to 60 seconds on their commutes; and

“Whereas that expert panel identified less costly and less destructive alternatives to new highway construction, such as making better use of the underused Highway 407, just 15 km away; and

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“Whereas Highway 413 would pave over 400 acres of the greenbelt and 2,000 acres of farmland, destroy the habitats of at-risk and endangered species, and pollute rivers and streams; and

“Whereas building more highways encourages more vehicle use and increases traffic and congestion; and

“Whereas the highway would cause significant harm to historic Indigenous sites;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the plans for building Highway 413.”

This is a very, very important issue to my community, and I support this petition.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I have a petition here titled “Stop the Bradford Bypass.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the proposed Bradford Bypass is a \$2.2-billion, taxpayer-funded, 16.2-km, four-to-six-lane highway through the greenbelt between Highways 400 and the 404;

“Whereas according to a Toronto Star/National Observer investigation, the main beneficiaries of this project are land speculators with political and donor ties to ... the PC Party of Ontario, and together own nearly 3,000 acres of land along the proposed ... corridor;

“Whereas the highway would threaten the Holland Marsh and the Lake Simcoe watershed, cutting through 27 waterways, damaging prime farmland, wetlands, woodlands, and significant wildlife habitat;

“Whereas the most recent EA for the project is nearly 25 years old, and this PC government has exempted it from the Environmental Assessment Act;

“Whereas due to this exemption, the government is now free to ignore impacts on agriculture, fish and fish habitat, ... human health, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and other impacts that would have otherwise required an updated assessment under the act;

“Whereas the highway will also destroy one of Canada’s most significant archaeological/historical sites, the Lower Landing;

Whereas this highway was conceived in the last century, before the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act and the growth plan were enacted, and prior to global agreements to fight climate change;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cancel the politically driven, wasteful, and destructive plan for the Bradford Bypass, and redirect all funding ... into investments that better serve the regional transportation and mobility needs, including evidence-based plans for transit and regional road improvements, and other investments in the public interest.”

I fully support this petition, and it’s also a very important issue in my community.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Raise Social Assistance Rates.

“Whereas Ontario’s social assistance rates are well below Canada’s official Market Basket Measure poverty line and woefully inadequate to cover the basic costs of food and rent;

“Whereas individuals on the Ontario Works program receive just \$733 per month and individuals on the Ontario Disability Support Program receive just \$1,169 per month, only 41% and 65% of the poverty line;

“Whereas the Ontario government has not increased social assistance rates since 2018, and Canada’s inflation

rate in December 2021 was 4.9%, the highest rate in 30 years;

“Whereas the government of Canada recognized through the CERB program that a ‘basic income’ of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;”

Therefore “we, the undersigned ... petition the Legislative Assembly to increase social assistance rates to a base of \$2,000 per month for those on Ontario Works, and to increase other programs accordingly.”

I support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I also support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Take Action on Maternal Mental Health Now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in Ontario, as many as one in five new mothers experiences some type of maternal mental illness, such as perinatal mood and anxiety disorder, during pregnancy and in the first 12 months following childbirth;

“Whereas people who give birth of every culture, age, income level and race can develop perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. Additionally, marginalized populations, such as LGBTQ2S+ people, members of the Indigenous community, the Black community and other racialized communities, adolescents, mothers with histories of substance use, immigrants, refugees, and individuals with disabilities, may experience maternal mental illness at higher rates;

“Whereas maternal mental illness is treatable and the negative impacts can be mitigated with timely access to

diagnosis, treatment and support services; however, up to 85% of mothers with maternal mental illnesses go untreated;

“Whereas the province of Ontario is lagging behind other jurisdictions in providing a comprehensive system of culturally appropriate, accessible perinatal mental health services;

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

“Review the state of maternal mental health in Ontario and implement a provincial framework and action plan, in addition to proclaiming the first Wednesday in May of each year as Maternal Mental Health Day in the province of Ontario.”

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

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Protect Vulnerable Road Users.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas vulnerable road users are not specifically protected by law; and

“Whereas Ontario’s Highway Traffic Act allows drivers who seriously injure or kill a vulnerable road user to avoid meaningful consequences, facing only minimal fines; and

“Whereas the friends and families of victims are unsatisfied with the lack of consequences and the government’s responses to traffic accidents that result in death or injury to a vulnerable road user;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to commit to reducing the number of traffic fatalities and injuries to vulnerable road users; create meaningful consequences that ensure responsibility and accountability for drivers who share the road with pedestrians, cyclists, road construction workers, emergency responders and other vulnerable road users; allow friends and family of vulnerable road users whose death or serious injury was caused by an offending driver to have their victim impact statement heard in person, in court, by the driver responsible; and pass the Protecting Vulnerable Road Users Act.”

I urge the government to bring this bill before committee. We are waiting for it patiently. I urge action.

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

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Real Rent Control Now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas average rent has increased by over 50% in the past 10 years;

“Whereas average monthly rent in Ontario is now over \$2,000; and

“Whereas nearly half of Ontarians pay unaffordable rental housing costs because they spend more than a third of their income on rent;

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“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to establish:

“—rent control that operates during and between tenancies, so a new tenant pays the same rent as a former tenant, with allowable annual rent increases calculated by the government of Ontario and based on annual inflation;

“—a public rent registry so tenants can” know “what a former tenant paid in rent;

“—access to legal aid for tenants that want to contest an illegal rent hike; and

“—stronger enforcement and tougher penalties for landlords who do not properly maintain a renter’s home.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MORE HOMES FOR EVERYONE ACT, 2022 LOI DE 2022 POUR PLUS DE LOGEMENTS POUR TOUS

Mr. Clark moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend the various statutes with respect to housing, development and various other matters / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement, l'aménagement et diverses autres questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I return to the minister.

Hon. Steve Clark: Thanks very much, Speaker. I want to just say how great it is to see you in the chair this afternoon. I want to wish you well in all your endeavours. You're a great friend, and I'm so glad to see you here today for this afternoon's debate.

Members, today it's my pleasure and my privilege to rise on second reading of our government's proposed More Homes for Everyone Act. I want to right off the top indicate that I'll be sharing the government's time with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, the outstanding member for Brantford–Brant.

Right off the top, Speaker, we know on this side of the House that Ontario is the best place to live, the best place to start a family and the best place to run a business. Our government is building Ontario. Our government is helping to build Ontario by creating the housing, the health care and other community infrastructure to support our growing population and to keep our economy moving forward.

But we can only build on the success if all hard-working Ontarians and their families are able to find a home that they need and that they deserve. Across Ontario, in every town, in every city, in every community, no matter where

you go, one thing is the same: People are looking for housing that meets their needs and their budget—young people who are searching for their first home, where they have room to have children, grow their family, be close to work, to schools and to essential services; whether it's seniors who are thinking about downsizing and want homes that meet their needs as they age, without having to move far away from a neighbourhood that they love. These are things that we hear all across Ontario, Speaker. Everyone is looking for something different.

The problem is all kinds of housing is stifled by too much red tape and bureaucratic inefficiencies. This is driving up the cost of homes and pushing home ownership out of reach for far too many Ontarians, Speaker. Ontario needs more housing, and we need to make it easier to build all kinds of housing faster that Ontarians need today in Ontario. These delays drive up the prices of homes.

Speaker, I want to start by looking at the numbers. I want to quote the Ontario Association of Architects, who have concluded that for a 100-unit condominium building in Toronto, delayed approvals cost home builders almost \$2,000 per month, a staggering figure. The Building Industry and Land Development Association also looked at the impact of delays for low-rise construction. They estimated—and this is unbelievable—approval delays add an average of almost \$3,000 per month to construction costs of a single-family home in the greater Toronto area. Let's face it: We all know where those \$3,000-a-month costs are going to go. They're going to go to the end user, the person who wants to realize their dream of home ownership or that renter who wants to get into that apartment. We don't see any kind of delays in any other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker—far from it.

If you look at the Scotiabank housing report, it found that Ontario is last in the country in the supply of new homes per capita, and that Canada has the lowest amount of housing per capita of any G7 country. According to the World Bank—again, another staggering statistic—Canada ranks 34th out of 35 OECD member countries for the length of time it takes to obtain all the approvals for a building project.

Speaker, you might ask me: “How long are the delays you're talking about, Minister?” Well, they vary between municipalities, but there can be anywhere between 17 and 28 different studies that you're going to need to get a single project through, and approval times can vary from eight months to 37 months, over three years. These delays cost new homeowners over \$110,000 in additional costs, and they drive up the cost of rentals because of those delays.

I'm going to tell you a story, Speaker. When I got elected on March 4, 2010—I just celebrated my 12th anniversary—the first file I opened up in my constituency office was a housing project in downtown Brockville called Wall Street Village. I cut the ribbon in June 2019, as minister, for that project—nine years—an affordable rental project to be built in Brockville. Every single level of government was unanimous. It never went to the Ontario Land Tribunal—100% in favour, all the residents,

and still, Speaker, it took nine years. That's an unbelievable story in Ontario that needs to change. Ontarians can't afford that type of process to get shovels in the ground.

Our government took a contrast when we took over. We decided that hard-working Ontarians needed a break, so our government decided that we needed to dive right into the housing supply problem. Today, with the More Homes for Everyone Act, we're building upon the progress to get all types of housing built in Ontario, so that families can have the opportunity to choose a home that's best for them at a price that they can afford.

Let's go back two years. Let's go back to 2019, actually, when the government introduced More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan. More Homes, More Choice unlocks the development of all types of housing, from single-family detached homes to town-homes to rental apartments or family-sized condos. Our plan actually was called the most pro-ownership legislation in a decade. I'll let that sink in.

Under More Homes, More Choice, we cut red tape that delays approvals, so builders can get shovels in the ground more quickly. That included accelerating timelines to obtain project approvals by up to two years. The cost of savings can range from tens of thousands of dollars to over a million dollars for some projects.

Our government has implemented several measures to unlock affordable housing options and remove unnecessary barriers to building housing. Here are some examples of what that includes: Accelerating the timelines for official plans to enable municipalities to plan for growth. We've accelerated zoning bylaws to get more projects approved in a timely manner. We've exempted additional residential units from development charges to make it easier for homeowners to build second units.

Our government has encouraged innovation, as well. We've approached new building opportunities like tiny homes, creative approaches to home ownership like co-ownership and public-private partnerships. We need to help people across the province at every stage of life to have a home that's right for them.

In addition, since 2019, our government has invested up to \$350 million to help municipalities modernize services and achieve faster turnaround. We're doing this through three programs: the Audit and Accountability Fund, the Municipal Modernization Program and our brand new Streamline Development Approval Fund that the Premier and I announced in January.

I want to give you an example, Mr. Speaker, of the success of one of these programs. My parliamentary assistant, Jim McDonnell, right back home where he is, in the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, public works used the Municipal Modernization Program funding to speed up approvals with a single permit application—a huge, huge benefit to the municipality. This form automatically inserts the applicant's information into each permit that's needed and gives each party—wait for it, Speaker—a digital record of the application and any amendments, plus all related communications. It's such a great measure, to use our digital strategy to deal

with this permitting issue. So what does it do? It cuts costs. It reduces errors. It saves time to get those eastern Ontario homes built faster in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. Funding local projects like that one, as part of that \$350-million strategy, is just one example of how our government is working with local municipalities to get homes built faster.

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I'll give you another one, Speaker: In partnership with municipalities, we've used minister's zoning orders, or MZO, to kick-start the planning approval process by getting zoning in place for critical projects, such as housing, long-term-care homes and health care facilities. Thanks to our government's use of MZO, we've accelerated more than 58,000 new housing units, including well over 600 supportive housing units. On top of that, MZO have helped to create over 68,000 jobs and over 4,100 long-term-care beds. It's a good tool, working in collaboration with local municipalities.

We've also implemented, streamlined and combined processes to make things even more efficient. We've merged five tribunals into the single Ontario Land Tribunal to make the land dispute resolution process more efficient. It depoliticizes the process. We've entered into an agreement to harmonize the Ontario building code with codes across Canada to cut costs, reduce interprovincial trade barriers—good public policy to be able to add to all of the measures that we've done in the housing supply action plan.

In addition, we've clarified that the building code allows remote inspections to reduce delays and improve efficiencies. I know, in my own riding, that was an issue around a tiny homes development, and our regulation is really helping that industry move forward.

We've also encouraged the use of more wood-based, modular and prefabricated housing construction. All of these kinds of housing leverage Ontario's manufacturing industry and also support the forest sector and rural Indigenous communities that rely on this for their livelihood. We're using our own natural resources and encouraging the use of low-carbon, climate-resilient home-building materials.

These are just some of the steps that our government has taken to increase housing supply.

Our measures are delivering real results. In 2020, one year after we implemented More Homes, More Choice, Ontario had more than 81,000 housing starts, the highest level in a decade, and we had over 11,000 rental starts, the highest since 1992—unbelievable stats. The trend continued last year. In 2021, Ontario had more than 100,000 housing starts—this was the highest level since 1987—and we saw 13,000 rental starts, which was the highest level in over 30 years.

Speaker, even with those housing starts, even with those records levels over the last two years, unnecessary red tape and bureaucratic processes continue to slow down construction and prevent more homes from being built at a pace that Ontarians don't just need but deserve.

While we introduced comprehensive legislation and regulatory changes three years ago, I've always said that

there's much more work to do when it comes to making the climate where homes can be built more easily. That's why we recently conducted a three-part consultation with the public, with municipalities and with the industry through our Housing Affordability Task Force. Through this three-part consultation, we sought feedback to help identify and implement additional measures to address the housing supply crisis and make it easier for all hard-working Ontarians to know what the next steps are.

In January, the Premier and I hosted the Ontario-municipal housing summit, where we met with big city mayors and regional chairs to coordinate efforts to increase housing supply across the province and to identify barriers so that we can build homes more quickly. We also held a rural Ontario summit, with Ontario's smaller, rural and northern municipal players, reeves and wardens to discuss the same thing. We wanted to look at their experiences, their opportunities and their challenges with the housing supply crisis.

We sent letters to all 444 municipalities asking for their feedback on provincial processes that could be streamlined and data on land speculators in their areas. And we had follow-up meetings with all of the municipal partners—AMO, ROMA, OBCM, MARCO, all of those groups—to discuss some of the recommendations we've heard, including the Housing Affordability Task Force's report.

Finally, Speaker, I created the Housing Affordability Task Force to consult with those municipal associations, with the public and with industry experts to provide concrete expert recommendations to increase the supply of market housing.

Yesterday I stood in the House and I tabled this bill, More Homes for Everyone Act. Today I want to take time during debate, right off the top, to explain some of the details for my colleagues. If this bill is passed, the legislation would introduce, I believe, very smart and targeted policies in the immediate term that would make the housing market fair and get all kinds of homes built faster for Ontarians. It would also make it easier to build community housing.

To address the root cause of the housing supply crisis, we need ambitious, forward-thinking action, like the recommendations from the task force. However, municipalities were pretty clear, Speaker. They told us they're not ready to implement those ambitious policies from the task force's report right now. And I think we all acknowledge that it's key for us, it's key for the success of our housing supply action plans that municipalities have to be at the table with us. We've seen this before. The province introduced measures, like the additional residential units, like the community benefits charges framework, that have either not been implemented or have had additional conditions placed upon them so that they would neutralize their impact.

Over the long-term, the task force's report is our housing policy road map. Our government makes a strong commitment to implementing the task force's recommendations with a housing supply action plan every year over four years, starting in 2022-23, with policies and tools

that support multi-generational homes and missing middle housing. We have to ensure that municipalities actively support and are willing to implement these policies.

To do so, my ministry will be establishing a housing supply working group this summer. It's going to engage municipalities. It's going to engage with the federal government, partner ministries, industry and associations. We have to monitor our progress and support improvements in our annual—I want to stress “annual”—housing supply action plans. We're consulting with the public, with municipalities, with stakeholders. We have to develop recommendations on how to support multi-generational housing, to bring the concept of the missing middle housing online and to bring much more housing relief to those living with their parents or living with grown-up children. We have to also address the housing need in rural and northern communities, something that ROMA, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, has identified directly to us.

Addressing the housing supply is a long-term strategy that requires a long-term commitment. It also takes coordination with all levels of government. Our government's policies have delivered real results. I talked about some of the changes we've seen, but we have to do more.

More Homes for Everyone Act is focused on three elements: (1) less delay, more homes; (2) we need to make it easier to build community housing; and (3) we have to protect homebuyers, homeowners and renters.

Speaker, I'd like to discuss the first two themes and some of the proposed measures, and then the parliamentary assistant can speak to the third item.

I'm going to talk first about data. Our government is implementing measures across our ministries to really bring the government into the 21st century. Good data forms the foundation of good planning decisions. It enables us to measure our progress over time. It allows us to close the gap between housing supply and demand.

1400

From our consultations, we heard that we need to do a better job. The province needs to do a better job of collecting and sharing data regularly with municipalities to help them plan for growth. So we will report to municipalities on the results of the Ministry of Finance's annual population projections, with a focus on the emerging and key population growth trends.

We're proposing, Speaker, amendments to the Planning Act that would provide more transparency by establishing authority to require public reporting by planning authorities on development applications that have been submitted, that are complete, that are under review and that are approved, such as zoning bylaw amendments, plans of subdivision, site plan, as well as the use of what we're calling a data standard.

As many of my colleagues in the chamber know, Speaker, our government is working with municipalities and industry to build a provincial data standard for planning and development applications. This is going to help developers. It's also going to help municipalities. It's going to help agencies. It's going to help the province, and

allow us to share data far more quickly, more easily, to be able to track results for accuracy, to find new efficiencies, to improve data-driven decisions right across the province.

Our government has also made a commitment—and this is very important: We're going to establish an authority to outline requirements for public reporting by municipalities and by planning boards on development applications and approvals.

Now, Speaker, you know, we understand that while we're providing better data, there has to be an impact on how municipalities are currently planning for growth. This is why we're exploring additional measures to help municipalities update their growth planning. We want to ensure that we are accurately and intelligently planning for both short- and long-term housing and also community infrastructure needs, which I think is very important. It's something municipalities have told us over and over again that we need to do.

Our government is proposing changes to the Planning Act to introduce a new tool to help municipalities accelerate their own planning policies called the community infrastructure and housing accelerator. It would help municipalities speed up approvals for non-profit housing, for market housing and community infrastructure like hospitals and community centres. To access the community infrastructure housing accelerator, to access this tool, a municipality would be required to pass a council resolution and submit a formal request to the minister explaining the rationale for the project, the approvals sought and the consultations that they have undertaken.

This tool would empower local communities to break down the silos by removing barriers to these projects and accelerate downstream approvals for the municipality using this tool.

The community infrastructure and housing accelerator would include strong transparency and accountability requirements for the municipality requesting this tool, such as requiring municipalities to consult with the public prior to requesting the tool, including Indigenous communities. And it will require the municipality's request to be available to the public.

After royal assent, the community infrastructure and housing accelerator will be the tool that our government will use in partnership with municipalities to kick-start planning approvals by getting the zoning in place for critical local projects like housing, like long-term-care and health care facilities.

Now, the minister's zoning order, or the MZO, will be reserved for provincially significant infrastructure projects like our Transit-Oriented Communities Program. The community infrastructure and housing accelerator could not be used in the greenbelt, maintaining our commitment to protecting this very valued area in our province.

Speaker, I want to outline, in some of the time I have left, details of some of the other new proposals. We all know—I've said this in the House many times; I've said it during question period—about NIMBYism. We all know about “not in my backyard.” I've talked about where we're at now, which is “BANANA,” which is “Build Absolutely

Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone.” I think that's where we are today: We've gone way past NIMBY, and now we're into BANANA. And I just think—

Interjections.

Hon. Steve Clark: I'm glad you're clapping, because I just think we need to make a change.

Even technical planning decisions are subject to NIMBYism, like a site plan. I think some of us who have been in municipal politics understand this, but for people who maybe haven't lived in this space, site plan control is the planning tool that municipalities use to manage development on a parcel of land. It helps them evaluate certain site elements—walkways, parking areas, landscaping, exterior design—on that land where development is being considered and how site elements interact with the surrounding areas. As the task force report said, “Technical planning decisions have become politicized.”

To get politics out of planning while continuing to ensure that the objectives of site plan control are fully met, our plan would require council to delegate site plan control decisions to municipal staff. I want to remind people, municipal staff are those professional planners who have the professional expertise to evaluate the issues and to understand the technical planning matters. The delegation—what we're proposing—is already done, by convention, in many municipalities. To help municipalities meet realistic timelines, we're also proposing to extend the timeline for municipalities to review site plan applications before appeals can be launched from 30 days to 60 days. We also propose changes to the Planning Act to establish what municipalities can or cannot require as a condition of draft approval for subdivision plans.

I know I'm getting into a bit of technical language, Speaker, so I again want to explain to members of the House what this actually means. So, we've got a registered subdivision plan. It creates new, separate parcels of land that can be legally transferred or sold on their own. According to the same study I quoted earlier today from BILD, in the GTA, it takes municipalities in the greater Golden Horseshoe between seven to 25 months to approve plans on a planned subdivision—a long time. Similarly, if you look at a zoning bylaw amendment, which is a change to the way the parcel of land can be used through zoning, it takes municipalities in the greater Golden Horseshoe between nine and 25 months to approve a zoning bylaw amendment.

All these delays are pushing the dream of home ownership out of reach for too many Ontarians. Our plan would allow the province to propose what we can do and what can be required as a condition of draft approval of subdivision plans. It's going to standardize plans of subdivision. Our requirements are going to prevent scope creep and remove redundancies, and it's going to help get housing built faster. We would also give municipalities a one-time discretionary authority to reinstate draft approved plans of subdivisions that have lapsed within a five-year period without a new application to streamline decision-making. It would only be allowed where units have not been pre-sold. So it gives those municipalities that one-time opportunity to get the plan back.

These measures to improve efficiency for site plan and plans of subdivision complement the over \$350 million our government has provided to municipalities to help them make their planning and their approvals processes more efficient. Once municipalities have had time to implement these measures, once they've had time to find efficiencies, we propose to establish an additional accountability check in the form of a phased, gradual refund of application fees for site plan and zoning bylaw amendments, if a decision wasn't made in the legislated time. This phased, gradual refund would only come into effect after January 2023.

Speaker, I've already mentioned the planning process. I've already talked about how we've become politicized with NIMBYism and BANANAism, but the Ontario Land Tribunal, or OLT, plays a really important role as an impartial adjudicator to address these matters. We're proposing changes to the Planning Act to, again, help depoliticize planning decisions and also empower the OLT to get housing built faster. These changes would give the minister the discretionary authority to either refer all or part of an official plan matter to the Ontario Land Tribunal for a recommendation. It would allow the minister to maintain final decision-making authority on the matter. And in all other cases, the minister would be able to refer all of the matter to the tribunal for a final decision, rather than a recommendation.

1410

We're proposing other changes, as well, that would provide new discretionary authority to allow the time period for decision-making on an official plan matter to be paused. I want to stress that: It would be paused. There have been cases where the clock has been informally stopped on these matters. An example of this would be when all sides involved with a matter are actively working towards a solution and agree not to appeal—what's referred to as a “non-decision,” another municipal term.

We propose another amendment under the Planning Act to, again, depoliticize planning and support municipalities in responding to provincial changes, including on data collection and use, which is to give the minister the ability to pause the 120-day decision-making timeline on official plans and amendments that are before the minister for approval. I think this is a very important change. It just builds upon depoliticizing the system.

I want to talk for a few moments about development-related costs. Our government is proposing changes to the Development Charges Act and the Planning Act that are going to increase transparency and certainty of development-related costs. They're going to improve existing municipal reporting requirements for the fees that are imposed on new development charges. Municipalities can apply these development charges on a new development to help pay for the capital costs of infrastructure to support new growth. For example, development charges can help pay for the capital costs of services ranging from stormwater drainage to police services to library services. Our proposed changes to the Development Charges Act are going to require municipalities with a development

charge bylaw to make their annual reporting of these charges available to the public on the municipality's website—again, adding to that transparency. Many municipalities already have reporting that's public; they've already made it accessible. The changes are going to increase standardization and transparency across the sector. I think we can all agree those are very good proposals.

We're also going to propose a change to the Planning Act to require any municipality with a community benefits charge bylaw to publicly consult and complete a review of that bylaw. That's going to be done at least once every five years. After this review, a municipality would need to pass a council resolution to indicate whether any changes are needed to the bylaw, and if they didn't do this, the community benefits charge bylaw would expire. A new bylaw would need to be put in place. The municipality would need to deal with that.

The development charge piece and the community benefits charge are just two of the many financial aspects to consider in developments across our province.

What we're proposing in changes to the Planning Act would allow the minister to develop a future regulation that would allow homeowners to require surety bonds to be used in connection with land use planning approvals. A surety bond is a type of financial instrument that can be used to ensure that a project is carried as required by its planning approval. Right now, there are municipalities that obviously use letters of credit instead of surety bonds to secure development. Again, surety bonds are just another financial instrument that could be used for the same purpose. Wider acceptance of surety bonds—because there are municipalities that use them today—would help free up money for home builders to pursue additional home building projects and make some projects that currently can't obtain financing a lot more viable. This is part of our government's commitment to help more Ontarians live closer to where they work.

Providing opportunities for public transit—we're taking further steps to help build those transit-oriented communities I talked about before. Building a transit-oriented community is a very long process. It can take decades to fully actualize. During this process, transit-oriented community builders are negotiating with multiple levels of government to incorporate housing, transit, parkland and other community uses into that very limited parcel. We're proposing changes to the Planning Act to help make it easier to build transit-oriented communities, to help these projects be more viable over the long term, even as new governments come and go.

The Planning Act gives municipalities the ability to require home builders to provide a portion of the development land or cash in lieu of land to the municipality for parks and other recreational purposes. To make this rate consistent in jurisdictions where transit-oriented communities apply, our proposed changes to the Planning Act would set a tiered dedication rate on how much parkland municipalities can collect, only for transit-oriented communities. To break it down, for five hectares or less, parkland would be dedicated up to 10% of the land or its

value. For sites greater than five hectares, parkland would be dedicated up to 15% of the land or its value.

Encumbered parkland could be identified through a minister's order that would be deemed to count towards any municipal parkland dedication requirements. This is consistent with existing parkland policies for transit-oriented communities, and it represents a very balanced and very thoughtful approach to support more transit-oriented communities while also creating more parkland. I think anyone who lives in an urban area, who wants to see more transit-oriented communities, wants that flexibility so that the municipality and the proponent can work on a collaboration. Everything has got to be right on the ground.

I'm going to take a few minutes before I turn it over to the parliamentary assistant to talk about community housing renewal, something that comes up quite often in the chamber. And that's the second theme of More Homes for Everyone: making it easier to build more community housing.

We introduced, as a government, a new regulatory framework under the Community Housing Renewal Strategy. Our new framework responds to our extensive consultation with the sector, and it's going to strengthen Ontario's community housing system for those who live and also for those who work in it.

The updated framework encourages the housing providers that support a quarter of a million households across the province to remain in the community housing system and to continue to offer deeply affordable rents for tens of thousands of Ontario households. We're also improving access rules so that community housing helps people who need it most, while giving service managers flexibility to innovate and to meet local needs. We'll do this by requiring service managers to set local income and asset limits and also to prioritize victims of domestic violence or human trafficking for rent-geared-to-income assistance.

We have also updated the accountability rules to encourage new programs that meet local housing needs. I think we can all agree that the community housing system was neglected for 15 years under the previous government. Our government had to act, and we're working together.

We've made historic investments of more than \$3 billion since 2020 to help sustain, repair and grow community housing. We've directed funds of over a billion dollars through our social services relief fund to help bolster community housing stock in our communities.

Our Homelessness Prevention Program will streamline and provide provincial housing homelessness supports—\$464 million in funding each year. Our track record shows that we're committed to supporting our municipal and housing-sector partners to strengthen our community housing system and to support vulnerable Ontarians.

We're also looking for a true partner at the table. We need that federal government to provide their fair share of housing. They currently underfund Ontario by approximately \$490 million for housing and homelessness over the term of the National Housing Strategy—almost half a billion dollars short from the federal government. Every

one of those 490 million dollars, every single penny, should be going to vulnerable Ontarians. Our municipal partners, our Indigenous program partners and our most vulnerable Ontarians deserve sustainable housing and sustainable homelessness-prevention programs. They deserve security and certainty in the sustainability of housing and homelessness prevention programs—programs that we need now more than ever. Our government is going to continue to advocate on behalf of Ontarians to receive our fair share from the federal government. We are not going to give up on our most vulnerable.

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Addressing the housing supply crisis is a long-term strategy. It requires long-term commitment and it requires coordination from all levels of government. Our government's policies are delivering real results, but we know that there is much, much more work to do. Over the past four years, our government has introduced forward-thinking policies and tools that have delivered results for Ontarians.

You know, Speaker, the Del Duca-Wynne Liberals had 15 years to plan for growth, yet they sat on their hands and they did nothing about it. For over a decade, home ownership became further and further out of reach for too many Ontarians. But on this side of the House, Speaker, we're different. We're going to say yes to building more housing for Ontario families, yes to building more long-term-care capacity and yes to fast-tracking those local priority projects.

We're taking, as a government, a very ambitious, forward-thinking action like the task force's recommendations, and we're saying yes to helping more Ontarians and their families find a home that's right for them. We're saying yes to a brighter future for Ontarians. That's exactly what More Homes for Everyone lays out in the short term, and our government has a plan for the long term.

Speaker, with that, I want to invite the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, the exceptional member for Brantford-Brant, to take it away with our third theme in More Homes for Everyone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I recognize the member from Brantford-Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: I wanted to begin by applauding the leadership of the Premier and Minister Clark on this important issue because it's an issue that matters to so many young families and workers right here across the entire province of Ontario. It's the issue of home ownership. For decades, owning your own home was an important part of the Canadian dream.

A home is so much more than an investment—it provides security, stability. It represents a place to lay down roots and a place to watch your children grow up. But for too many young families in our province, that dream is out of reach. For years, the short-sighted policies of the previous government have stifled housing supply. Burdensome red tape tied up the process, from assessments to permits to construction and, as a result, we have seen the cost of housing skyrocket in our province.

In fact, as we've already heard, a Scotiabank housing report found that Ontario is last in the country in the supply of homes per capita, and, indeed, Canada has the lowest amount of housing per capita of any of the G7 countries. The Ontario Association of Architects concluded that for a 100-unit condominium apartment building in Toronto, delayed approvals cost about \$1,940 per unit, per month, and a BILD study estimated that approval delays added an average of \$2,920 per month to a single-family home in the greater Toronto area.

Requirements to build new housing vary from one municipality to another, with anywhere from 17 to 28 different studies for a single project and approvals timelines from 14 months to three years. It's no wonder that the dream of home ownership is slipping out of reach for so many people in our province.

It is clear, Speaker, that this was a broken system—a system that continued to prevent essential new housing from being built, but it is the predictable result of a Liberal government who, for too long, governed this province with no ambition, no plan and no long-term vision. But thanks to the determination and drive of Minister Clark and Premier Ford, we are moving forward every day with our plan to restore the Canadian dream of home ownership.

Our government is addressing the supply-side challenges and bringing more homes and more choice to the people of Ontario. Since the release of our first plan, More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan, our province has made incredible progress on getting more shovels in the ground to build the housing that meets the needs and the budgets of the people of Ontario.

For example, we have successfully accelerated timelines to get housing built faster by reducing the official plan amendment timelines from 210 to 120 days; reducing zoning bylaw amendment timelines from 150 days to 90 days; and reducing plan of subdivision timelines from 180 to 120 days.

We have invested up to \$350 million to help municipalities modernize services and achieve faster turnarounds. These three programs, the Streamline Development Approval Fund, the Audit and Accountability Fund and the Municipal Modernization Program, have all supported municipalities in our joint efforts to drive the time for permitting and approvals down.

In my community of Brantford, our mayor has been so pleased and has been able to take advantage of these programs. He's told me that with the \$175,000—if I remember correctly, because I'm speaking from memory—that the province gave the city of Brantford to find efficiencies, they were able to save \$1 million the first time. Just when we needed more support locally in order to find more efficiencies, the province came through with another funding announcement of \$45 million for municipalities to apply to.

Another example that has been mentioned—I think it's worth repeating—is the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. Their public works are using Municipal Modernization Program funding to develop a

one-window permit service. This will lead to a single permit application, a common form that can be used by all participating municipalities that will automatically insert each applicant's information into each permit and gives each party a digital record of the application, any amendments and all related communications. It's a project that will help cut costs, reduce errors and save time, while helping to build more homes faster.

As the parliamentary assistant to the minister who has always championed modernization of government, cutting red tape and improving government service, it's an example of how government can meet people and businesses where they are by making front-line services more convenient, reliable and accessible.

Our government is also using ministerial zoning orders to kick-start the planning approvals process and get zoning in place for critical local projects, including housing, long-term-care homes and health care facilities. As mentioned, we have merged the five land tribunals into the single Ontario Land Tribunal, making the land dispute resolution process more efficient, reducing delays and eliminating the overlap between cases. We addressed the backlog by hiring 12 new adjudicators in 2019. As a result, we have reduced the backlog of Ontario Municipal Board cases by more than two thirds, from 1,200 cases in June 2019 to just 380 in early March.

If I can, Speaker, I have to make mention of Marie Hubbard, who has spearheaded that effort—an absolutely wonderful lady who I had the opportunity of working with and meeting when I was in the Premier's office.

This is a sampling of everything that our government has achieved in just four years. It's proof of what can be accomplished with the right drive and the right leadership—leadership that unfortunately has been absent in this province for far too long.

That leadership is delivering results. The year after Minister Clark introduced our housing plan in 2018, we saw 81,000 housing starts. That was the highest in over a decade. In addition, we also saw 11,000 new rental starts, the highest since 1992.

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Year over year, we have seen more homes being built in Ontario every single day. In 2021, there were 100,000 housing starts in Ontario. That is the highest since 1987, before most of our staffers here at Queen's Park were even born. And we have seen more than 13,000 rental unit starts in Ontario, the highest since the early 1990s. These are important statistics, and being in the Ministry of Finance, it is our job to look at those statistics, but it is also an important part of our job to remember what those statistics represent. They represent young couples having the opportunity to buy their first house. They represent families finding the home that they will raise their children in. They represent dynamic and vibrant communities being built right across our province.

Despite the opposition voting against each and every one of these measures, despite their insistence on standing in the way of every plan this government has put forward to make housing more attainable, we have made real, tangible progress in our plan to build Ontario.

But there is no silver bullet when it comes to fixing a housing crisis that was decades in the making. We need a long-term plan and a long-term approach.

Yesterday, Minister Clark put forward our government's plan. Building on the recommendations of the Housing Affordability Task Force and the first-ever provincial-municipal housing summit, it's a plan that delivers near-term solutions and long-term commitments for creating more attainable housing for Ontario families.

While housing starts have skyrocketed over the past four years, the reality is that supply has not kept pace with demand. So we must take steps to ensure that our housing supply is going to meet the needs of those who need it most: Ontario families and Ontario homebuyers—not foreign speculators looking to turn a profit in our real estate market.

That is why, as of this week, in this third pillar, Ontario has the most comprehensive non-resident speculation tax in the country. When it was first introduced in 2017, the non-residential speculation tax was successful in pushing down prices, but it clearly did not go far enough—in particular, now, as the cost of housing in Ontario continues to rise. That's why we have increased that tax from 15% to 20%, a rate that will help discourage speculation in our housing market by foreign nationals, foreign corporations and taxable trustees, so Ontario homebuyers looking to join the Canadian dream won't have to compete with foreign speculators whose only real interest is a return on their investment.

Our government also recognizes that the cost of housing is no longer a problem isolated to a few urban centres. Prices are rising beyond the borders of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and the greater Golden Horseshoe. The last thing we want is for foreign speculators to go looking elsewhere in the province for a better tax rate, so we have expanded the tax to apply province-wide. Housing should be attainable for families in every single corner of the province and homebuyers in the north, in the east and in the southwest—everywhere, and for everyone.

Speaker, when the previous Liberal government introduced this non-resident speculation tax, they also introduced a number of rebates and exceptions, including exceptions for foreign nationals studying and working in Ontario. These exceptions were well-meant, as they helped ensure that those who come to Ontario with the intention of laying down roots will not be penalized when they purchase a home. Unfortunately, these rebates have been used by foreign speculators as a tool to avoid paying the non-resident speculation tax. This isn't fair to Ontario homebuyers and to the newcomers who do come to Ontario in good faith, which is why our government is eliminating loopholes and focusing tax relief on those who are committed to staying in the province long-term.

Ontario is a welcoming province. We need workers, we need families, and we need students, the best and the brightest from around the world to come to our province. We need them to help us build communities, build our economy and build our future. Immigration is a key component of our plan for a stronger Ontario.

So we are ensuring that the rebates for new permanent residents of Canada will continue to be available for those who are eligible and for foreign students and nationals working and studying in Ontario who decide to become permanent residents. That rebate will be available to them should they choose to purchase a home in Ontario.

As Minister Clark and the Premier have both said, our partnership with municipalities is a key to our plan for increasing housing supply. Municipalities also have an important role to play in making housing more attainable for Ontario families, which is why we need to work so closely with municipalities to deliver our plan to make it easier to build more homes in Ontario. That includes working with municipalities on actions that help address speculation in our housing market.

For example, we have established a working group with municipal representatives to facilitate the sharing of information and best practices, including working with municipalities who are interested in establishing a vacant home tax. The authority to establish a vacant home tax currently exists under the Municipal Act, and our government is willing to sit down with any municipality interested in looking at imposing a vacant home tax to curb speculation in their local market.

Let's take the city of Toronto as an example, which has already put a vacant home tax in place. The city of Ottawa is also considering a vacant home tax option as well. Addressing the issue of vacant homes is one more tool in the tool box to help address the challenge of making housing more attainable.

Another is addressing the issue of land speculation, which is a contributing factor to the rising price of a home in Ontario. It is our expectation that developers not sit on the lands and permits they acquire in the hope of seeing a greater return on their investment. That is why we are consulting on potential measures that will address concerns related to land speculation. Some of the issues that will be explored will include ways to discourage construction slowdowns—slowdowns that might have a positive outcome for the bottom line of developers, but are a net negative for the families looking to purchase their first home.

Speaker, these measures are part of a comprehensive suite of proposals included in the More Homes for Everyone Act and our government's plans to make housing more attainable.

Additional measures include doubling fines and extending building licence suspensions to address unethical conduct by developers. We are creating a new community infrastructure and housing accelerator to help municipalities expedite approvals for housing and community infrastructure, like housing and community centres. We are investing more than \$19 million to help the Ontario Land Tribunal and the Landlord and Tenant Board to reduce their backlogs, and we are making it easier to build more community housing by making better use of provincially owned lands for non-profit housing providers.

Most importantly, in recognition that fixing Ontario's housing crisis will be a long-term process, our government

will be delivering a housing supply action plan every year for the next four years. In each of these four years, we will introduce more policies and tools that will help make housing more attainable and help more families realize the Canadian dream of home ownership.

Once again, I want to recognize the leadership of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, all the partner ministries who have played a role in the development of this plan and, of course, the leadership of our Premier, Premier Ford.

Our government has issued a long-term commitment to the people of Ontario, with the right plan to get it done. Ontario is getting stronger, and our efforts to make housing more attainable are an important part of our plan for this province.

Every day, all across Ontario, new homes, new highways and new hospitals are being built. We have broken ground on the historic Ontario Line, demonstrating real progress in our province's transit plan and the largest subway expansion in our province's history.

We are bringing new investments in our automotive supply chain, from Alliston to Brampton and everywhere in between. The next generation of electric and hybrid vehicles will be Ontario-made by Ontario workers and sold across North America. We are keeping costs down by eliminating road tolls and licence plate stickers, while delivering real tax relief for families, for seniors and for workers.

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The people of Ontario have big dreams. They have ambitions for themselves, for their families and for their communities. They deserve a government that matches that ambition with a clear vision for our province: the plan to realize that vision and the determination to get it done.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, I'd like to thank Canadians for Properly Built Homes for bringing forward their concerns. My comments and question today are about the Conservative track record. Prior to the June 2018 election, the opposition PCs, while on this side of the House, acknowledged the lack of enforcement of the Ontario building code during construction. Homeowners with building code violations are often told to sue the municipality, who have endlessly deep pockets. When asked what they would do if elected, the PCs said, "Clearly we can do more with municipalities to ensure that homebuyers and owners aren't left without any recourse but the courts." But after the election, Speaker? Crickets.

People in Ontario deserve accountability, and they need transparency. Will this government support homeowners and homebuyers when they identify building code violations? Yes or no?

Hon. Steve Clark: The Premier talked about consumer protection last fall. Nothing burns the Premier more than a greedy developer trying to take money away from an honest Ontarian, and part of this bill is consumer protection.

We're boosting fines on house and condo developers who breach Ontario's rules for the sector. We're going to hold new home builders and vendors to strict professional standards.

Last fall, the Premier promised action on this item. He wanted to protect consumers and make sure that there is protection for this largest purchase of their life. Looking forward, we are going to work with municipalities to identify and enhance measures that are going to crack down on land speculation and protect homebuyers, so there are consumer protection methods and the minister has addressed those issues.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I'm so shocked—in the presentation from the minister—about the timelines to get the projects or the houses ready for families to move in. Even if I assumed that the purchase of land would take three months and the design of the project would take three months, it could take up to 24 months to get the approvals, up to 24 months to be subjected to zoning or rezoning for the land, and maybe even three months to build the houses and sell them. That gives me roughly about five years from the date of the start of the projects until the house is ready for a family to move in. That's five years.

With an accelerated number of immigrants and people moving—it's 400,000 coming this year, so in five years it's almost like a million will be with no houses. How will these changes in this proposed bill enable the houses to be ready for families to move—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Response?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member for that excellent question. Throughout our consultations—and it didn't matter whether it was the public consultation, the municipal consultation or the work that the Housing Affordability Task Force did—the single biggest impediment is the process. There's far too much red tape, far too many bureaucratic delays, and as the member rightly notes, those delays, at the end of the day, cost that end user, that end purchaser who wants to realize the dream of home ownership, a lot of money.

So we owe it to them. We owe it to that senior who wants to downsize or that young couple that wants to realize the dream of home ownership. We owe it to them to ensure that we do everything that we can to reduce those timelines, to streamline, to work with our municipalities and put a plan in place to get shovels in the ground faster. Exactly what that member has brought forward is why we've tabled More Homes for Everyone.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you to the member opposite.

Speaker, through you: Every year, housing affordability has gotten worse since you have held a majority government, may I say—encroaching on million-dollar home prices in Niagara. That's what we're encroaching on—\$1 million-plus.

Even ignoring the fact that your task force and the legislation did not include the voices of regular families across Niagara, across Ontario, for that fact—does not include demand-side support for renters or first-time homeowners. Why did it take this government this long to make a meaningful policy on housing—arguably, the big affordability issue in Ontario? And you are bringing policy forward weeks before an election.

What do you say to the young Niagara families who have been struggling to buy a home and can't afford it while this government waited four years to create somewhat of a beginning, meaningful policy for housing—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for his response.

Hon. Steve Clark: The member opposite—the premise of her question is wrong. We've stood up for that young family. We want that young family to realize the dream of home ownership. We've put policies in place that have got shovels in the ground right in her own area. I spoke on the radio with—

Interjection.

Hon. Steve Clark: She can heckle me all she wants, but I'm trying to answer her question.

I was on the radio in her riding this morning, and I talked about the measures that we put forward in 2019 that resulted in record housing being built in the Niagara region.

But we know that there's more work to be done. That's why we tabled this bill. That's—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I apologize to the minister for interrupting.

Stop the clock.

The member from St. Catharines will stand and withdraw.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Folks, let's keep the temperature down. We've got a long day.

I return to the minister. Please continue.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, I hope someday she'll withdraw her opposition to us trying to have people realize the dream of home ownership. That's why we're here. That's what More Homes for Everyone sets forward.

We need to get shovels in the ground faster so that young couple in Niagara realizes that there's a path to home ownership. We can't add tens of thousands of dollars to the cost of a home through bureaucratic red tape and inefficiencies at the municipal level. We need to work with all levels of government to get the job done for that—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you, and that is time.

Next question?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I thank the minister for this excellent bill.

On the weekend, I was having dinner with my two sons, Michael and Joey. We've lived in Mississauga–Lakeshore

for 72 years. Their great-grandparents lived in Mississauga–Lakeshore. They want to know how they can afford a home, moving forward, in our community, where they were brought up.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, that's a great question.

I want to thank the member for his advocacy. I've toured some great sites in his riding, watching people build a variety of housing so that people can actually realize that dream of home ownership.

Part of what we want to do is to get municipalities on board. I talked in my speech—and it addresses the member's question directly—about the concept of a multi-generational community, so that different people at different stages in their life can live as a family in a neighbourhood, using something that I'll call gentle density. Some areas don't support it. But I think the fact is, we need to have that consultation and we need to bring municipalities forward.

So the member brings up a very important point, something that's being addressed as part of our initiative.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): One more question?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Speaker, the government's Housing Affordability Task Force already had a very narrow mandate, of focusing only on private, market-oriented solutions. The government was heavily criticized because the task force's mandate explicitly excluded building affordable housing, but still, in the housing task force report there were recommendations that were long-overdue and much-needed. The government brought forward a piece of legislation that almost entirely ignores their own task force's recommendations.

I ask the minister, why would you want to set up a housing task force, have a narrow mandate and not even go forward with the recommendations that their own housing task force has come forward with?

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Hon. Steve Clark: I made it clear in my speech that the Housing Affordability Task Force is our government's long-term road map. We need to have housing initiatives as part of a housing supply action plan every single year of a strong, majority, re-elected Doug Ford government. We need to build upon more homes for everyone. We need to build upon our housing supply action plan, More Homes, More Choice.

But for the member to say that we haven't addressed community housing is wrong. Obviously, the NDP don't support getting \$494 million of extra money; none of them will support us on that. But I was very encouraged by having CHF Canada, our co-op partners, praise us for our Community Housing Renewal Strategy regulations, the fact that we're supporting over 21,000 co-operative homes through our new plan.

So regardless of what the NDP says, I'm glad that our partners appreciate the work we're doing not just on community housing, but on market housing as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Just before we continue debate, if I can remind all members, because I've seen it as a theme in the last few days: Can we please refer to members only by their titles or their ridings and not list everybody's family name and

celebrate all of their accomplishments, please and thank you? I don't want to have to interrupt every single speaker for the rest of the afternoon, but I will be happy to.

Report continues in volume B.

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Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
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Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associé des Transports (RGT)
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
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Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiles et du Multiculturalisme
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteure générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (NBP)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Hon. / L'hon. Jane (PC)	Burlington	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (IND)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (OP)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (IND)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Associate Minister of Digital Government / Ministre associé délégué de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines, des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises et à la Réduction des formalités administratives
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
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	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Vacant	Ajax / Ajax	
Vacant	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Vacant	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Randy Pettapiece
Teresa J. Armstrong, Toby Barrett
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto
Goldie Ghamari, Randy Hillier
Christina Maria Mitas, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Michael Parsa, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ian Arthur
Ian Arthur, Will Bouma
Stephen Crawford, Catherine Fife
Ernie Hardeman, Mitzie Hunter
Logan Kanapathi, Sol Mamakwa
Jeremy Roberts, Dave Smith
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Michael Bushara

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Logan Kanapathi
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner
Jill Andrew, Robert Bailey
Will Bouma, Guy Bourgouin
Chris Glover, Mike Harris
Logan Kanapathi, Sheref Sabawy
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Gilles Bisson
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Deepak Anand, Aris Babikian
Gilles Bisson, Lorne Coe
Wayne Gates, Robin Martin
Norman Miller, Billy Pang
Amanda Simard, Marit Stiles
John Yakabuski
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lucille Collard
Lucille Collard, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Jim McDonell, Suze Morrison
Randy Pettapiece, Gurratan Singh
Donna Skelly, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Présidente: Laurie Scott
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Rima Berns-McGown, France Gélinas
Goldie Ghamari, Mike Harris
Faisal Hassan, Jim McDonell
Sam Oosterhoff, Laurie Scott
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Taras Natyshak
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Hogarth
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Jessica Bell, Stephen Blais
Stephen Crawford, Rudy Cuzzetto
Christine Hogarth, Michael Mantha
Taras Natyshak, Michael Parsa
Amarjot Sandhu
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Aris Babikian
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser
Aris Babikian, Lorne Coe
John Fraser, Vincent Ke
Laura Mae Lindo, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Jeremy Roberts
Dave Smith, Daisy Wai
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Bhutila Karpoche
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Bhutila Karpoche, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin, Jim McDonell
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Vanessa Kattar

**Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight /
Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations
d'urgence**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Tom Rakocevic
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell