

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

No. 5A

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

N° 5A

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament  
Wednesday  
17 August 2022

1<sup>re</sup> session  
43<sup>e</sup> législature  
Mercredi  
17 août 2022

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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House Publications and Language Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400  
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  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

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**ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR****Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022, Bill 3,  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 17 August 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 17 août 2022

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER  
FOR HAMILTON CENTRE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that, during the adjournment, a vacancy has occurred in the membership of the House by reason of the resignation of Andrea Horwath as the member for the electoral district of Hamilton Centre, effective August 15, 2022. Accordingly, I have issued my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRONG MAYORS,  
BUILDING HOMES ACT, 2022  
LOI DE 2022 POUR DES MAIRES FORTS  
ET POUR LA CONSTRUCTION  
DE LOGEMENTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on August 11, 2022, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to special powers and duties of heads of council / Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les pouvoirs et fonctions spéciaux des présidents du conseil.

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

**Mr. Dave Smith:** This is the first time, actually, I've risen to speak in this Parliament. I want to thank the people of Peterborough–Kawartha for giving me the honour, again, to be their voice, as I have been for the last four years.

One of the challenges that Ontario faces is a growing population over the next 10 years. We're expected to add more than 2.5 million people, and we have seen over the last two decades really, a lack of housing that has been built and challenges in doing it. There have been a number of changes that have been made by different governments throughout the years to try to address this. And every time a change is made, it seems that someone finds a way to weaponize one of those changes to make it possible to delay.

I'm going to talk specifically about some of the challenges in Peterborough. I'm very close to what happens in Peterborough, coming from the riding there. I don't necessarily experience the challenges that you see in Toronto

or that you see in Ottawa, and the strong-mayors legislation is specifically for these two cities to make some adjustments. But I think that if you take a look at, historically, what my community has been, my community has always been seen as a microcosm of everything that's happening in Canada.

For more than 40 years, we were a test market for everything. When a company wanted a new product, when they were going to introduce something new, they would introduce it in Peterborough as one of the test markets, because we had that mix of individuals. We had blue-collar workers. We had manufacturing. We had knowledge base. We have a college, a university. We have a great, diverse population. We have a strong arts community—

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** The Petes.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** And we have the Peterborough Petes, absolutely, the greatest junior A hockey team that ever existed. Despite what my colleague from Oshawa says, we have the greatest one. I got off-topic; I love talking about the Petes, or the Lakers.

We're also the centre of the lacrosse universe in Peterborough as well. And, as everyone knows, I refer to it as God's country, so how could it be bad? But I digress.

Whenever something was being introduced, it was being introduced in Peterborough, and they took a look at what our market would do and how successful something would be. I think if you take a look at what has happened in Peterborough over the last number of years, it represents what has happened all across Ontario.

In June 2018, when I was first elected, the average home price was \$314,000. Last month, it was \$760,000. We have a shortage of housing. In 2019, in the city of Peterborough, only five single-family home building permits were issued. The population in Peterborough proper, the city itself, has grown by almost 4,500 people in four years, yet we've had just a shade over 1,200 new residences added, whether that be a house, condo, apartment—only 1,200. Our vacancy rate is 1%. Rental rates have increased significantly because we don't have the inventory. Housing prices have increased significantly because we don't have the inventory.

Kate Kidd, the former president of the Peterborough–Kawartha area realtors—her term just ended in July—said to me about a year ago that we need an inventory of 1,400 to 1,500 houses for sale at any given time to make sure that we have enough inventory. We had less than 100 this past January. In February, we were averaging about 127 listings. Right now if you go to realtor.ca, there's a little over 400. We're still significantly lower than what we should have to have the proper inventory.

There are a lot of pressures that have been put on my community, in particular. Yes, I am talking about Peterborough, but Peterborough is that microcosm of everything else that's going on in Ontario. When the 407 opened all the way to Highway 115, a great addition to the transportation network, what it meant was—those individuals who were being priced out in the GTA, who could not find a home in the GTA—it was easy for them to commute from Peterborough, and we've had a number of people come in. There was a time when it made perfect sense to do that.

My colleague from Oakville, who was my seatmate early on in the last session, had talked about home prices in Oakville. Actually, prior to being elected, the house beside me sold to somebody from Oakville. At the time, they had sold a two-bedroom home with a 30-foot lot in Oakville for \$1.2 million. They moved to Peterborough. At the time—this is prior to 2018—they bought a five-bedroom home with two bathrooms on a 65-by-130-foot lot that backed on to environmentally protected green space. I'm painting a beautiful picture of it. Who wouldn't want to live with wildlife right behind your home in the city? They paid \$418,000 for it.

So we saw an influx, when the 407 opened, of individuals who were able to sell their property in the GTA for a very large sum—and it's gone up in the GTA—and move to Peterborough for a significantly lower price and have more home, a better lot and a higher quality of life. That raised the price in Peterborough to what it is today, \$760,000 for the average home in Peterborough, whereas just over four years ago it was just a shade over \$300,000—\$314,000. That's a massive jump.

Why am I focusing on that? Peterborough city council has made a number of what I would say are poor decisions around housing. I'll go back to 2019: five single-family residential home permits issued—five, that's it. More than 4,000 people moved into the community, 1,200 homes, apartments or condos is all that we've added, and the previous council used some of the tools to delay, to not make decisions.

**0910**

In my old neighbourhood, just around the corner from where my house was, a developer had a piece of property. Originally he wanted to have a single level of commercial and two storeys above that of residential. He was not able to find someone to move into the commercial property because there weren't enough people in that general vicinity to make it worthwhile for commercial activity to happen. There weren't enough people. It wasn't convenient enough for a professional office like a dentist, a lawyer. There weren't enough people in the area to put in a retail outlet, a convenience store or a small grocery store, just because of the nature of where it was. But it's not far from Trent University. It's a walkable distance to Trent University, and there's actually a walking trail that goes right to Trent.

That was blocked by council because the developer wanted to change it to a six-storey apartment building, and council said no because of some pushback—not because

it didn't meet the requirements of the community, not because the transportation study wasn't effective, not because there wasn't the demand—they were afraid they were going to offend someone and they were going to lose votes. And when you have councils that are doing those types of things, then you're not serving the needs of your community. That developer took the city to LPAT and won, because the city chose not to send someone to the LPAT hearing to oppose it.

On Sherbrooke Street, another development: 164 homes, 164 apartments to be put in. A few city councillors lobbied to say no to it because they had some pushback from some other individuals in the area. On Lansdowne Street, two developments: The developer originally wanted 14 storeys, came down to 10, and the city came back and said, "No, six is all you could do." They couldn't build them then and actually make it work. The city was taken to LPAT by the developer on all of those, and the developers have won. And in each case, the city chose not to have a delegation come because they knew they were going to lose. They were doing it for political reasons, not for the right reasons.

And that's happening in a community like Peterborough. As I said earlier on in my speech, Peterborough is the microcosm for everything that happens across Ontario. If you want to see what's going to happen in this province, look at Peterborough, because it will be emulated or replicated in other areas. The cost of housing has gone sky high and councils have continually made decisions to block development—not because it's the right thing to do, but because they're concerned about gaining votes or losing votes.

What we have to do is take a look at what is in the best interest of the entire community, what's in the best interest of the city. We have 2.5 million people coming into Ontario over the next 10 years. We set a record last year in housing starts of just over 100,000—100,000 units built last year, the most that we've had in more than 30 years. That will not get us to 2.5 million over 10 years. It will not get us enough bedrooms for the people who are going to be coming into this province. It won't. And it was a record year.

The problem is we have councils who are saying no to development. "No, we don't want a house over there." "No, we don't want this." "No, we don't want that." And what I find interesting about it and almost hypocritical—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** That word is not appropriate. I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I withdraw.

What I find most interesting about it is, every single person who is standing up and saying, "We should not be building more houses, we should not be building more apartments, we should not be building more condos," lives in a house, apartment or condo. Why do they not want others to have that?

We've got OREA who has come forward, and they've talked for a few years now about the dream of home ownership. I firmly believe that the vast majority of people who live in this province aspire to own their own home. I

firmly believe that. And why would we not be doing things, then, that make it easier for those individuals to purchase their first home, to move from that two-bedroom home, when they have three, four or five children, to a home that suits them? Why are we not doing things so that those individuals, those seniors, who raised their family and they're now ready to downsize, and they want to sell that four-bedroom or five-bedroom home and go to a two-bedroom condo some place, or move into a nice apartment building someplace, or move out of the city to some place like Peterborough—or God's country—where you have an opportunity to have a beautiful one- or two-bedroom home by the lake, by the river or out in the county—why are we obstructing that?

The reality is we have a number of councils across all of Ontario that are saying things like, "It's just this one. There's a sentiment in the community, there's a loud group right around this area, who don't want it. I'm going to have to go with them because they vote for this ward."

The entire city votes for the mayor, though. Giving the mayor in cities like Ottawa and Toronto, where we know more than a third of those 2.5 million people are going to be moving in in the next 10 years, the ability to advance homes, to advance home ownership, to make more affordable units to live in—giving them that ability is something that is good.

You want to make sure that there are checks and balances in place, though, so the mayor cannot just unilaterally do something, the mayor cannot just unilaterally declare that this is going to happen. There is that check and balance in place where council, with a two-thirds vote, would have the opportunity to veto the mayor's veto on that. That check and balance is in place.

You can still advocate, as a councillor, for the community that you represent, that small group in the large city that you represent, but the rest of council and the mayor have the opportunity then to look at, what are the needs of the entire city?

There was an expression that was used when I was on the election trail the first time, in 2018. We've all heard of NIMBYism: "Not in my backyard." There was another expression that was given to me and I absolutely love it because I think it's so very true. It's called the BANANA group: "Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone." It seems to be that that's what's been happening.

What this legislation does is it gives a tool, then, for those large municipalities of Ottawa and Toronto to advance housing, to advance the provincial priority of making sure that people have an opportunity to buy a home, to rent a home, to rent an apartment, to move into a condo, to get appropriately sized living space.

When I go back to Peterborough again, and using that as the example—\$314,000 to \$760,000 over the course of four years because there wasn't enough inventory. The council in Peterborough, many of them were elected on building upward, not building outward. They didn't want to have urban sprawl. But when those projects came forward to build up, they said no to it because there was

pushback on it. We see that in larger cities as well. We see that in Ottawa; we see that in Toronto.

If you don't have the full suite, if you don't build everything in each of the different categories that are needed, you put pressures on so many other things. Why would a developer who is going to take 12 years to develop a piece of property—why would they build something that they're not going to get their money back on? We have to change those timelines.

Again, coming back to Peterborough, there's a prime example. We had a subdivision that was being built. It took eight years to get the approvals to build that subdivision. They wanted to put in some townhouses in one section of the subdivision. It took an additional five years to get the approvals for that. And by the time they got those approvals, the added costs that were put on by carrying it for five more years before they could actually develop and sell increased the price. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out if you can get to market in a shorter period of time, your carrying costs are lower. If we're talking 12 years to get something shovel-ready, there are added costs that are put onto it.

#### 0920

The task force that Minister Clark commissioned to find out about affordable housing, one of the things that they had said was that those additional costs add 22% to the cost of housing. If your base price is \$760,000, that's \$165,000 in wasted costs. You gained nothing for it, the builder gains nothing for it, the municipality gains nothing for it and the consumer gains nothing for it. Finding a way to eliminate those additional costs, those unnecessary costs, to stop the weaponization so that the BANANA group has the ability to delay, delay, delay, means it's going to be better for the people of Ontario.

And I cannot emphasize this enough: 2.5 million people coming into Ontario over the next 10 years. We built 100,000. We had 100,000 new starts last year during COVID, which is fantastic. That will not get us to what we need over the next 10 years—and it was a banner year. It had been more than 30 years since we had done that.

We have to find ways to speed up development where people want to move. We want to make sure that it's still safe. We want to make sure that every check and balance is put in place, but we have to find ways to accelerate it so that those who dream of home ownership have the opportunity for home ownership.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Questions to the member from Peterborough–Kawartha?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you to the member. I have to say, there's probably not a lot we have in common. Peterborough Petes—we could spend some time saying whether it was Bob Gainey, whether it was Chris Pronger. The best Peterborough Pete: That's something we can talk about.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Wayne Gretzky.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** He only played for, like, three days.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** He still played.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Three days, and he didn't cry then.

But, anyway, what I want to say is you're talking about this bill, but let's be perfectly clear: This bill does not talk about housing, which is what you talked about. You neglected to talk about the special powers and the significant changes that will be happening to democratically elected city councils without your government doing any consultation. You also shed quite a few tears when it came to concern for the developers' bottom line, but you didn't talk at all about the infrastructure costs that are borne by your taxpayers.

Right now, you have an infrastructure deficit in the city of Peterborough. You can tell us how much that is. It will cause residential taxpayers' rates to go up. In the city of Hamilton, we're pushing \$3 billion in infrastructure deficit costs that are not borne by the cost of development. So could you share some of your empathy for hard-working residential taxpayers in the province of Ontario and in your city of Peterborough?

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Actually, if you had listened carefully to what I had actually said, 22% of the cost of housing is unnecessary expenses that get added on because of delays—22% of the cost. So when we're talking about our ratepayers, when we're talking about taxpayers, when we're talking about citizens, the people of this great province and those who will be coming into this great province, who want to have home ownership, in Peterborough alone \$165,000 is added to the cost of where you live because of added expenses that do not need to be there. That is \$165,000 that we are looking at putting right back into the pocket of that individual. You're lowering the cost to build. That is an actual realized saving for those individuals who are purchasing their homes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

**Hon. Parm Gill:** I want to thank my colleague for his passionate speech and for sharing some of the examples and ideas, obviously, from his community and his riding. I think we can all relate to some of the challenges that he shared facing his community. I can tell you that my riding of Milton, Mr. Speaker, which is also one of the fastest-growing communities across our province, especially faces some of the similar challenges. On average, we have about 5,000 people moving into my riding each and every year: a lot of young families, lots of new Canadians and so forth. Supply of new housing or housing in general is a big concern, probably the number one concern in my community. So, I'm wondering if the member can share some of the provisions in this piece of legislation, how they might be able to help address some of the concerns, not just in his or my riding but right across our great province.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Thank you very much for the question. When we take a look at housing itself, one of the biggest challenges that you have is the length of time it takes to develop anything. From concept to shovel in the ground, we're talking more than a decade. All of the things that we're doing in this will speed that process up.

When you want to have a subdivision put in, you go through all of the appropriate processes on it. One of the

things that happens, though, is there's opportunities for individuals, for different groups, to object in different ways. We're streamlining all of that. Instead of it being a waterfall approach where it was, you can object on this; and then once something comes in from that, you object under this; and then once that comes in, you can object under a third—if you think of it from a project management standpoint, it's more of a scrum or an agile approach. So we're looking at the critical path instead.

This is a way that we can make things better for people in Ontario. This is a way that we can streamline this. By empowering the mayors in the two cities that we have, they can look at what's in the best interests of the entire community instead of just that small group.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** Thank you to the member, the Conservative member, for talking about the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act. The member spent all of their time talking about building homes, yet the bill does not include anything on housing. In a riding like mine, Toronto—St. Paul's, where we have 60% or so renters, the government can talk about owning a \$750,000 home, but many in St. Paul's can't afford that. Many can't even afford their rent. So I'm wondering, if this bill is really about housing, why is there no mention of ending exclusionary zoning, why is there no mention of real rent control, why is there no mention of banning above-guideline rent increases? Furthermore, why don't you talk about what the bill is really about, and that is creating strong mayors that this province and this Premier can control?

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I appreciate the question, because really what we're talking about here is empowering the mayors in the city of Ottawa and Toronto so that they can make sure that development happens on key priorities of the province of Ontario, and the key priority right now for the province of Ontario is to make sure that we have housing for the more than 2.5 million people that will be coming in over the next 10 years. As I said in my speech, last year we started 100,000 new units, between houses, apartments and condos. That was a banner year—a record year—that will not get us to what we need over the next decade. We have to make sure that we have things in place so that cities like Ottawa and Toronto, where the vast majority of individuals will be moving to, have the tools to build what they need to support those people.

If you don't like the price of rent, the problem is that we don't have enough rentals. If you don't like the price of a home, the problem is that we don't have enough homes. This is something that is going to speed that process up, which lowers the cost and makes it easier for people to have home ownership.

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

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I will say that I'm proud to be a Conservative here in the Ontario Legislature, because we're actually getting things done for the people of Ontario. We're building more homes. We're building



more purpose-built rentals. Maybe we'll give the member for Peterborough–Kawartha an opportunity to talk a little about the purpose-built rentals that are being built here in the province of Ontario. It's been over 1,000 over the last year that have been built in Toronto alone. It's more than we've seen, I think, over the last 20 years, the last two decades. So I'll give the member an opportunity to speak a little bit more about that.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Again, this is one of those cases where, when you take a look at supply and demand, if there aren't enough purpose-built apartments, then the price goes up. If we put things in place that make it too difficult to build apartments, what ends up happening is you build condominiums. Then individual investors will purchase that, and they'll rent that out. But that's done at a higher price, and that increases then the price of the rental, because those bills still have to get paid.

**0930**

If we speed up development, if we make it easier to build a purpose-built apartment building, it lowers the cost of the build. It lowers the cost of the rent, which means that that individual who is looking for a place to rent can move into a place that is going to be at their price point and more suitable for them.

If we obstruct—which is what has happened over the last two decades—prices rise and people get priced out of a home. We want to reverse that trend.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I listened intently to the member from Peterborough, who spoke completely about housing and the housing crisis that we're all seeing. But the bill itself, the strong-mayors bill, talks nothing about housing. It's in the title, but as we've seen in previous Conservative bills, titles don't necessarily mean what is actually the purpose. What the bill actually does is empower the mayor with a whole bunch of powers that will probably create more chaos than we're seeing currently.

The member talked about his community. He talked about the land tribunal, how it went through the process and actually fixed the community's needs in favour of the developers that he was talking about. Why does he not believe in the process that's already in front of them, instead of giving mayors powers that are unnecessary?

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I think, if we take a look back at the last 20 years of what's been happening in Ontario—actually, we just have to look at the last four years in the city of Peterborough: \$314,000 to \$760,000 for the average home price. What has been done has not been working. It is incumbent on us as legislators to make sure that we're looking at the best interests of the people of this great province and put forward legislation like this that's going to make a positive difference and allow for that development to happen so that all of those individuals who want an apartment, who want a home, who want a condo, have the opportunity to acquire that.

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

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Thank you very much. Aanii. Boozhoo. Sekoh.

It is an honour to rise today to give my inaugural speech as the new member of provincial Parliament for Toronto Centre.

I want to begin by honouring the long and ongoing Indigenous histories of this land. We owe our gratitude to the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, the Huron-Wendat, the Métis and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River for the work they have done and continue to do in taking care of the land and all the water around us.

Congratulations to the Speaker on his re-election to the esteemed post and to all members for their election win. I look forward to getting to know each and every single member and to finding ways to work together for the people of Toronto Centre, your communities and Ontario.

I especially want to honour my predecessor, Suze Morrison, who made history as the first woman of Indigenous ancestry elected to Queen's Park in Toronto Centre, a bold and diverse community with an appetite for making history—a record this riding lived up to this June when I was elected as the first member of provincial Parliament who uses they/them pronouns.

Speaking of that election, I want to thank my family, friends, the campaign team, volunteers and the Toronto Centre NDP riding association. I did not arrive at Queen's Park without their tireless help. I will never ever squander their trust and will work hard every single day to re-earn their support.

I also want to thank the best campaign team any candidate could ask for. My gratitude goes out to my campaign managers, Duncan Salvain and Lisa Brody Hoffman, and my core team who filled the campaign office with great spirits, high fives, fist bumps and big hugs. A shout-out to them, because without their hard work I would not be standing on the floor here today. I want to say thank you to Jeff Slater, Emma Beattie, Tyler Johnson, Keaton Kwok, Jed Sears, Vienna O'Shea, Dani Michie, Jocelyn Courneya, Julianna Notten, Ibna Chowdhury, Ben Donato-Woodger and Sasha Kane. I also want to say thank you to Brian Chang, who is a former NDP federal candidate in the riding. Thank you to all of you from the bottom of my heart.

Every member knows that we cannot serve in this House unless our own house is in order. To that effect, I am grateful and blessed to have the remarkable support of my family. My mother takes care of my son every single day. It is her seventh grandchild. Without grandma Mee Ling Wong, I couldn't do this work. The same goes for grandma Maggie Byckalo, grandpa William Byckalo and grandpa Tak Kwan Wong, who hold us safely in their thoughts and hearts every single day.

To my energetic preschooler and my beloved son: I have already missed too many dinners, weekends and weeknights with you, especially after mama's municipal ward doubled in size. One day, I hope you will forgive me and understand that I am doing this work for you, your friends, your peers and future generations. Every moment that I am not serving in this House and serving the public, I am committed to you. I pledge to be the best parent I can possibly be.

To my extraordinary wife and best friend, Farrah Khan: I love you. I owe you everything. When I co-founded Asian Canadians for Equal Marriage to promote racial justice, social inclusion and same-sex marriage, I did not think I would personally get married. I wasn't the marrying type. That all changed with Farrah. Getting married to Farrah in front of our families and community at The 519 community centre was the greatest joy of my life. It is also a very proud moment.

Queer love and queer families are special. Many of us fought for—we fight for the right to be our authentic selves. We overcome homophobia and transphobia every single day. Nothing about queer love is ordinary. We cannot take that for granted. I will rise up again and again in the streets, in the courtrooms, in the boardrooms and in the house and halls of government to defend queer rights, trans rights, women's rights and all that falls under the umbrella of human rights.

My public service is enabled because of Farrah. Without her tremendous sacrifices, I would not be standing here today. To all the spouses, to all the life partners, to all the co-parents and caregivers out there, we all owe you our debt of thanks.

The past June's election victory was my fourth. I want to be able to share with you why I am here at Queen's Park today and why I want to continue to serve our people of Toronto Centre. Like many international downtowns, Toronto Centre is a coin with two sides. The city's postcard skyline will tell a story of Fortune 500 companies with their North American and international headquarters based here, residential skyscrapers with panoramic views; incubators, accelerators and leading green, tech and innovation companies all on the course to redefine every day as we know it.

Turn that coin, and the other side of Toronto Centre, you see something different. Against the backdrop of luxury condominiums, multi-million dollar heritage homes, five-star hotels and the financial district, there is another story. This is the story of Toronto's downtown east. The country's largest social housing project in Regent Park, covering 69 acres, is undergoing transformational revitalization. Its success will be tied to the partnership of three orders of government coming together to champion it.

The other side of the story also reveals a story that is not exclusive to Toronto Centre: poverty, runaway inflation, stalled construction sites, racism, gender discrimination, violence, failing infrastructure, negligent and predatory landlords—not to mention exploitive bosses. Compound that with the housing, health care, mental health and opioid crises, and the social safety net becomes nearly unrepairable if immediate and effective government action is not taken. This is why I am here today. I want to bring meaningful change.

My story in Canada began like so many others. My mother and father uprooted their family when they left their crowded and unsafe social housing apartment in Hong Kong with a couple of hundred dollars in their pocket, a pair of suitcases and their children in tow. Mom and Dad had very little access to education and grew up in

extreme poverty watching their parents, my popo and gung gung, struggle to rebuild their lives after nearly four years of the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong, during which time all trade and economic activities were strictly regulated by the Japanese authorities who took over factories and banks, and outlawed the Hong Kong dollar.

The Japanese established a military government and puppet councils. They stripped residents of their civil liberties and freedom of movement. Internment camps and prisoner-of-war camps were set up while famine, malnutrition and illness set in. Families, including my own, watched their loved ones starve to death; a tragedy that befell my grandfather's first wife and two daughters. Hong Kong elders recall many painful stories of torture and rape.

My parents came to Canada like so many other immigrants, hoping to seek out a better life and to plant roots so that the next generation can reach what they could not. This included a safe and affordable home that they can call their own. We moved into Regent Park. In so many ways, it was familiar. We moved into an already crowded apartment with another immigrant family. We lived there with seven people, and we shared one bathroom. My parents still told me we had nothing to complain about; it was still better than what they had in Hong Kong.

My parents were not just working class; they were poor, and every Canadian penny that they earned they earned with sweat and occasional tears. Loneliness and isolation set in, and the joy that can only come from being a part of a large extended family had gone.

#### 0940

Life in our adopted home was a different type of struggle, especially because English was our second language. I learned to speak English at Sprucecourt Public School by taking out as many books as my little hands could carry. I was a very shy child and was not confident in speaking in my new language.

My father was a chef. He worked in two of the biggest hotels in Toronto. My mother became a factory worker who worked 12 hours a day making garments for some of Canada's largest fashion retailers for very little money. They both worked many hours, and as soon as they came home, they continued to work. They worked by creating additional garment pieces in the basement. As children, we learned to fall asleep to the rumbling sounds of old sewing machines and a cranky furnace.

Immigrant families are tight-knit. We cling to each other out of love and necessity. In so many ways, it's family that actually protects us and gives us a sense of belonging. And what happened next was scary. All of this made things harder when I came out of the closet, when I told my parents I was gay. I was 16 years old, and I felt like a fish out of water. Not being my authentic self was literally killing me. Being gay or transgendered or non-binary are not lifestyle choices; it's just who some of us are. Like so many teenagers and young adults coming out for the first time, I was unprepared for what was to happen next. There were no television shows, celebrity role models or influencers to guide the pathway. I was all alone and struggling to find a way out of an unbearable closet.

My parents are the most kind-hearted people I know. They were extremely disappointed that their hard work and personal sacrifices to bring their young family to Canada all seemed in vain when their eldest child came out of the closet. Their dreams for me obtaining a better life over the one that they fled evaporated as soon as I came out. My parents reacted with fear. They were scared for my personal safety and emotional well-being. They feared the judgment of the community and, worse, the religious zealots. They were further outraged that I would bring shame to the family when my dirty little secret became a secret no more.

Despite all my parents' fears about strangers and community members hurting me because of my sexual orientation or gender identity, they ended up inflicting the most harm on me by rejecting me when I was most vulnerable. My parents kicked me out after I came out to them. They were consumed with confusion, anger and fear that they let their first born go. As one would imagine, a 16-year-old without the protection of a family and a safe home would not be prepared for the life of a big city. I had no money of my own. I had no place to go that was safe. My high school guidance counsellor eventually got me access to student welfare. It enabled me to rent a room, sharing a small bathroom and an equally small kitchen with other kids going through their own family troubles. It wasn't easy for me as I desperately tried to make sense of what I needed to do next in order for me to survive and finish high school.

Again, my story is not unique, as millions of kids coming out of the closet around the world can attest. The hardship that I experienced scarred me for life. It's also the reason why I work so hard so that others may not feel lost as a newcomer to Canada.

The great thing about being a human being is that we can evolve. Our hearts and minds can change. We can do better, and this is exactly what my parents and I did. We put in the emotional labour to rebuild our relationship that was torn apart because of ignorance and bigotry. We moved towards each other in a deep embrace of love, acceptance and forgiveness. We listened to each other actively with our ears and our hearts. Today, my parents are my closest advisers, and they love me unconditionally. Today, they are the best grandparents to my son and amazing parents-in-law to my wife. They are truly proud of me, and they have become true 2SLGBTQI allies. My parents supported my efforts to legalize same-sex marriage in Canada. Both my parents walked me down the aisle when I married Farrah. They show up to Pride every single year in Toronto to cheer me on annually under the sweltering June sun.

I've learned so much from my parents and still do. They are proud Canadians of Chinese heritage, and that is who I am. They taught me to never turn my back on my heritage and my ancestors. My parents remind me to speak up for who cannot. I'm told to use my voice, my intelligence, my heart and my courage to serve the community and my country.

Even before I became an elected official, I first learned that words were important and what we say as lawmakers

even more so. Seventeen years ago, I had the privilege of sitting in the House of Commons with then-Senator Nancy Ruth to listen to Prime Minister Stephen Harper deliver what would be an all-party apology for the racist legislation directed exclusively at people of Chinese background, known as the Chinese head tax and the Chinese Exclusion Act. It was an emotional day as I sat with weeping descendants and survivors who paid the punishing head tax that amounted to two years of wages and endured family separation.

At that point in time, I was a president of the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter, and activists from across the country had been working for years to obtain the parliamentary apology and the redress that was to come. It was a bittersweet moment when we heard Prime Minister Stephen Harper speak.

It was also an ironic moment for me, in Parliament's historic railroad room afterwards, knowing that in that room hung a portrait—and as the Prime Minister was delivering and gifting the last spike to the descendants, it was in that room that I was thinking that it was the flow of Chinese immigrants and migrant workers that built the Canadian Pacific railroad that made Confederation possible. And there we were, having to demand our dignity so that we can feel a sense of belonging in this country.

Anti-Asian and anti-Chinese racism continues today. It exists, and it still exists with so many forms of hate. We can draw on the lessons of the past to ensure that we don't repeat the mistakes made then. This is our collective responsibility.

Before my time as a public office-holder, I was also an entrepreneur, a small business owner. I worked hard planting deep roots in Toronto Centre. In 1999, I became a small business owner on Church Street. I co-founded the Church Wellesley business improvement area. While owning the Church Street business, I continued my love of the arts by creating a contemporary Canadian art gallery in the West Queen West area, also known as the art and design district. Art and literature document our human existence and give us a cultural footprint in time.

I have always blended my activism with my professional work. I am happiest when I'm creating. I want to stand for something that is important and bigger than myself. I wish to be judged not by my success but the success of those around me.

I want my son to know that I did everything I could serving in this House to build a better future for him and his generation. I want him to inherit a country that is more equitable, more prosperous, more green and more just than the one that I came into as a young child. I want my son to be proud of his parents who are queer and out, and that his non-binary mama is courageous enough to use they/them pronouns at Queen's Park.

I will do everything in my power that I humanly can to ensure that every child has a place of belonging in Ontario. I want children who have cognitive, physical and learning disabilities to be affirmed wherever they are. I want them to feel no shame about their skin colour, their hand-me-down clothing or perhaps coming from a single-parent-led

household. I want every little girl to have the same opportunity that her little brother has.

I will be vocal and relentless in supporting vulnerable tenants and residents, and holding bad landlords responsible for failing them. I will do everything in my power, as we all should, to end chronic homelessness in Ontario.

As I conclude my inaugural remarks, I want us to think about how we can roll up our sleeves to work together to address the unrecognized and often ignored mental health and addictions crisis—a crisis wrought with stigma and misunderstanding, a crisis overshadowed by the health care crisis, but just as important and deadly when left unattended and allowed to run rampant.

Citizens of Ontario expect us to work collaboratively to solve the pressing issues of the day, whether it be the health care, cost of living or housing crises. Simple solutions may have worked to resolve simple problems. Those days are over. In the age of pandemics, climate crisis and growing disparity, we must do everything we can to turn the tide.

Speaker, it's been an honour to address the House, and with my deepest gratitude, I look forward to getting to know all the members and working with you to uplift our communities, every community, every Ontarian.

Merci, meegwetch, Xie Xie, do jeh, Mh goi and thank you.

**0950**

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Questions to the member for Toronto Centre?

**Mr. Ross Romano:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to reply and ask a question to the member for Toronto Centre.

To the member: I want to, first off, congratulate you on your election into this House. I remember my first day so very, very fondly. It's quite exciting to be able to stand in this House and be able to have your first speech and speak about what motivated you to come here.

I was listening, as you spoke, and I really appreciate all that has motivated you to come to this House. I think that for each one of us, we all have some type of motivation—myself as a child of an immigrant family as well, coming from Italy and having challenges in our community.

When I look around the room and I see each one of us here, we all have challenges and we all have things that have motivated us to be able to come here and serve.

It was very good to hear your story. I enjoyed seeing you in the hallway this morning, actually, as we were coming in and saying hello, and I look forward to being able to work together with you.

I know that as we enter into this House, sometimes when we put on our jerseys, things get a little bit more difficult. But I hope you'll join me in wearing a jersey that we can speak to the member for Peterborough–Kawartha and remind him that the Soo Greyhounds are really the only place for Wayne Gretzky to be recognized as the best player for that organization. So I hope you'll join me in that regard.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** It was really nice to see you as well this morning. I find that sometimes our best

conversations are the ones that happen most spontaneously. So I look forward to many of those encounters, when we can sit down and really focus on fixing the issues that are facing Ontarians. This is the work that I want to do. I think it's incredibly important that each and every single one of us tries to look at what we can do best for our communities. I know that public service comes with a lot of sacrifice. I'm very aware that the work sometimes can feel daunting and overwhelming.

With respect to the jerseys, I've seen the mayor of Toronto don other jerseys when we've lost or perhaps we've taken on opportunities to champion the teams in the sports fields that we love, and we should do that. I welcome those moments when we can build friendship across every political line.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** As with many members who rise for their first opportunity to address this House for their inaugural speeches, I enjoy being here. I enjoy the fact that they take that opportunity to talk about themselves, to talk about their riding, where they came from and what got them here.

I really enjoyed you expressing and showing your vulnerability because that takes courage. It shows a human aspect of things that we want to see changed in here.

I remember in 2011, when I was first elected, there were many of us members who were in here who said, "Holy jeez, we've got to change decorum in here." That will change decorum in here—putting that vulnerability and making yourself relatable to constituents. You carry yourself with a lot of weight, and you show presence in this House, and I think that will work well for you, and I look forward to being in this House with you many, many times when you're going to be putting questions to this government and holding them accountable.

My question to you is, what more can your constituents expect from you? I know why I'm here. I'm here because the people of Algoma–Manitoulin want me here and elect me here, and I respond to them. What do you offer, and what can your constituents expect from you going forward?

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Thank you very much for the question.

I think the most important task for us as parliamentarians here is to bring the voices of the community we represent into the House. So when I rise, oftentimes I will share a story—and I want to be able to share their stories as often as I can—it's largely because they don't get to stand here at the podium and they don't get a microphone. So I want to carry their stories. I want to share their priorities and their family priorities so that we can all listen to them, just as much as I will be actively listening to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members as they share their stories from their communities.

The other thing that I think Toronto Centre residents can expect from me is that they'll have a champion. I know that sometimes our fights will be difficult. I totally get that; I came from a place where we had some fights every now and then. But I also came from a house in a lower form of

government where we were able to work collaboratively together, where we found ways to work together, and that's what the residents of Toronto Centre expect. They expect us to be able to find ways of co-operation and to address the issues that matter most to them.

Right now, what matters most to them are health care, education, mental health and addictions recovery services. That's what I'll be championing, along with affordable housing.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Congratulations to the member on their election. That inaugural speech was truly amazing, so thank you. My question to you is, what prompted the member to stay and live in Toronto Centre? What is it that you love so much about Toronto Centre that you remain in this area?

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Thank you very much. That might be my favourite question of the day. Talking about Toronto Centre brings me a lot of joy. It's obviously the downtown of Toronto, and Toronto is a city of three million people; we continue to grow. But living in a downtown and actually raising a family is really one of the most exciting things, whether it's access to the parks and the ravines or being able to just step out and spontaneously find a concert. You get to walk on Toronto's longest and oldest main street, Yonge Street, which becomes almost a little bit of a calling card for Toronto, Ontario, because everybody knows it.

It's a place where we get to see all of the community members out, and Toronto as a city—Toronto Centre in particular—is a microcosm. Our friend, our colleague, talked about the microcosm that exists in Peterborough; we have residents from around the world who call Toronto Centre home. They speak over 180 different languages. It truly is the most culturally dynamic multicultural city in the world.

I think many people can recognize that not only is Toronto a major employment hub—and there are probably many members who have family members who come to Toronto Centre to work. They become my residents during the daytime, especially during an employment cluster, even if they don't necessarily vote for myself or the local representatives. But it actually is a place that brings us together, and I really am proud to be a downtown resident raising a family in Toronto Centre.

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

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** It is my deepest honour to be able to congratulate my friend and colleague Kristyn Wong-Tam, on their successful campaign, their successful campaign team and their beautiful family. I think what I want to say in this moment to Kristyn—sorry; to the member for Toronto Centre—is a big thank you. I know that they have single-handedly encouraged and motivated and inspired several of us—myself, NDP federal candidate Brian Chang and many of us across the GTA—to get into politics. I also sit here in this chair because of the member's support and encouragement.

I'd like you to express how important representation is in this House. We walk through these halls, we look on the

walls and we don't see ourselves. How important is it that you are here, and what will that do for future generations to be here too?

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Thank you to the member from Toronto—St. Paul's for that question. Representation does matter, and I think most of us recognize this in our hearts. But it matters to the kids of Ontario, to the kids in Canada. Let me tell you that when I was first elected to city council, I made history there. I don't talk about it a lot, but it was done: I was the first out lesbian elected to city council. I received mail and phone calls from people from around Toronto—kids, young adults, family members and parents—who thanked me for just standing up, being present and being counted, because it gave them and their families an opportunity to see someone who looked like them, who stood for their values, to be in that house.

We have an opportunity to serve in this House. I will not take this privilege lightly, because I know that what I do is going to be analyzed under a microscope; I am very aware that my presence here is very unusual. But I also want to say to all the kids out there, and to all the young adults out there, and to all the queer families—and this includes parents who are taking care of queer kids—that there's no chair you can't sit in. Whether it's the councillor's chair, the mayor's chair, the Premier's chair, or the Prime Minister's chair, these are places that we all belong. We didn't get here lightly, and it was not without struggle, and so I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me, who took to the streets, to the courts, to win our civic rights so that we can be free to be who we are today. It's those giants, their shoulders, that I stand on. Thank you very much.

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**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I wasn't planning on speaking this morning, but the opportunity has arisen, and this is actually the first time that I've been able to speak since being re-elected by the good people of Timiskaming—Cochrane. I, as everyone else here, would like to thank the people who worked to help me get elected, but I would also like to thank the candidates who ran against me, and the people who helped them, because democracy doesn't just take people from one side to work; it takes people from all sides to work. In Timiskaming—Cochrane, there was a record number of candidates this year. We had eight candidates, and I'm going to say some people were confused because we're used to, you know, three, four—but more choice.

I have to go on the record, Speaker: I was vehemently opposed to some of their positions, extremely vehemently opposed to some of their positions, but not to them as people. And I would like to be on the record as saying, in Timiskaming—Cochrane, we have a long tradition of being able to be vehemently opposed to one thing and being able to work together on another thing. By and large, we maintained that tradition, and I think it's very important that we all do that.

I've said to a few people when I came back that we all have—and, to the new members, from all sides, you will

have days in this place you wonder why you won and why you ran. I have also had those days, and I've had days when I've said, "Why would I run again?" I never knew how much I relished the opportunity to be able to speak on behalf of the people of Timiskaming–Cochrane until this election, when I almost didn't get that opportunity again. It didn't come that close, but it came much closer than we were used to, and that's not a bad thing—it isn't—because it's really important that you listen to people's voices, that you listen to people who you are philosophically opposed to, and you explain to them why—what your position is, what their position is. I would like to make sure that the people of Timiskaming–Cochrane know that, regardless of their individual positions and individual issues, my office door is open. It always will be open, and we will work very hard for them on the issues that we can agree on. That's why I'm here, it's always been why I'm here.

There are many days—I had no childhood dream of ever becoming a public official. All I ever wanted to do was be a farmer, and that's the first thing I thought of on election night: "I might have to go back to that quicker than I thought." So I thought, "It's lucky I kept the farm." I actually kept a large part of our farm for my kids, in case they ever wanted to come back. It's near and dear to our family, but on election night, I was thinking I might have to come back. But having said that, on that night, when the results were over, I've never felt so honoured to be able to have this opportunity. I think we all feel this: How many people have the opportunity to speak in this House and, in large part, say what they believe in a safe space?

We have just heard an inaugural speech from the member from Toronto Centre, and it was incredibly moving. I haven't faced the issues that the member has faced, but in some ways, my family could relate. I was born in Canada, but I didn't learn English until grade 1, because we always spoke the language of our family. I can remember my mom making soap. There's a reason I hate liver: We were always on a farm. We raised cattle. We sold all the good meat, and we bought liver. My mom bought pig heads, and she made headcheese. I'm not a big fan of headcheese, either. I remember those things.

Immigrants, no matter where they come from, have a drive. The drive isn't just colour or creed; it's family. It's pride in where you came from but also pride in where you're going to. And except for the First Nations, we're all immigrants. It's just the degree of how long ago our families came. My kids won't remember the liver and the headcheese; I do. We all work very hard so our kids don't have to remember the bad things. Some people might love liver; I don't. We all work very hard so our kids don't have to face the same issues that we did. It's a balancing act, because we also want our kids or our friends to keep the good things from our histories, because that's what also makes Ontario and Canada very strong.

Speaker, you come from a much different background than I come from. The member who just spoke comes from a much different background than either of us come from. Yet the fact that we're all here and we can all express, I would hope, in this place, without fear and without fear of

retribution is incredible. The reason that we're all here is to be able to do that so that others who don't have the ability to speak without retribution can see themselves in us and so that they can approach us and tell us what their issues are so that we can help them overcome those issues. That's one of the reasons we're all here.

And the member from Sault Ste. Marie, I appreciate his comments too, because in every one of our lives, I am sure, there is a moment that you go, "Whoa, that's not cool, and I don't want that to happen to anyone else." We have all had that, and so have I.

But actually, what we're here to talk about is the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act. I have listened to most of the debate on this bill, and the government is focusing on an issue, housing, but it isn't actually addressed in the bill. So if the answer to housing is changing the power of two mayors in Canada, it's pretty simplistic.

#### 1010

I was a councillor in a very small township for a long time, and we had incredible frustrations with the length of time for planning. Some of the planning issues—there are just not enough planners. Changing the powers of two mayors isn't going to change that.

One of the issues we heard at the AMO conference is that building permits are given and developers sit on them—they sit on them. Maybe if we put an expiration date on building permits—and I'm not saying it's just that; this is just one issue—so that if you, the developer, get a building permit, you can't just sit on it until the price goes up high enough so you can make a bit more money. And that's not evil; that's private business. I've been in private business my whole life, but you don't need to change the power of two mayors to do that. There's all kinds of things you can do.

I listened very intently to the member from Peterborough. He's a great speaker. We were elected—I think you were elected after I was. But anyway, great speaker. I actually agree with a few things with the member from Peterborough—not a lot, but a few. We get along. But he spoke very eloquently about how this was going to change, and how the schedules were going to change. There's absolutely none of that in this bill—nothing. Nothing. This bill is about changing the power structure of the mayors for two cities.

One thing he did say which was very interesting, I thought, was that the purpose of this bill was so the municipalities would align more with the will or the wishes of the province of Ontario. That's really what this bill is about.

#### **Interjection: Priorities.**

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Priorities—that's what this bill is about. But that's not necessarily housing, either. That's not necessarily housing, because the bill does not focus on housing. The speeches do, no doubt—absolutely no doubt. Every speech, the focus is on housing. But the bill, except for the "building homes" in the short title, those two words, doesn't focus on housing at all.

And something for members who haven't been here very long: What you have to look at in legislation—look

at the legislation itself, not just the talking points that your party gives you. Look at what could happen to that legislation over the years, because we're making legislation not for the next two weeks. What your government is doing isn't just for the next four years. That legislation also impacts—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I agree with that—impacts what's going to happen in the future. So changing the democratic process won't just impact the talking points about housing.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** I'd like to remind the member to make his comments through the Chair.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I apologize. I apologize. See, I'm used to herding cattle, and you have to kind of look all over to find the cows. But in deference to you, Speaker, I apologize.

But what you always have to look at with legislation is look at the legislation, not at the talking points. And the legislation itself—very well, I am not disparaging the government. I'm saying that the focus might be housing. I have no way of knowing that. But the speeches do not equal what the bill says, and that's the biggest problem with this. Changing the mayoral—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. I have to interrupt the member because it is now time for members' statements.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** The government is bringing high-speed Internet access to hundreds of homes and businesses in the town of Whitby, marking another milestone to help connect every corner of the province by the end of 2025. The province has signed agreements with eight Internet service providers to bring access to as many as 339 municipalities across the province. Now, these service providers are part of Ontario's historic investment of nearly \$4 billion to bring access to reliable high-speed Internet across the province.

What's clear is that the government has a plan to build Ontario's future with shovels in the ground for highways, hospitals, housing and high-speed Internet infrastructure. Without a doubt, Speaker, Ontario's high-speed Internet initiatives will help ensure that every home and business in every community can participate in today's economy.

### COST OF LIVING

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** Yesterday was my first stop on our ice cream tour across Toronto—St. Paul's. We hung out in one of my favourite neighbourhoods, the Winona and Vaughan neighbourhood. We went to Cy Townsend Park. Today, we're going to be at Marian Engel Park, in our Melita Avenue neighbourhood.

It was all fun with the kids. The kids—of course you've got to love the innocence of children; they were not bothered. But I tell you, the adults at the park hanging out with me, the parents, the post-secondary age young adults, their concern was all about affordability. I spoke to a 23-year-old university student literally with tears in her eyes. She feels that there is no moral value, no character left in the province, in this House, because she feels that the government is not listening to her—and many people's—concerns around affordable housing. She, like many of the parents, simply wants to be able to make ends meet, wants to be able to have a better future and wants to be able to live in St. Paul's and stay a while.

What's happening now is we're being besieged by demovictions, by renovictions, by skyrocketing rent increases that folks just simply cannot afford. Even No Frills, on Alberta, where I go grocery shopping as well, too, is becoming more expensive for too many of us. So we really want the government to hear from St. Paul's.

Affordability is a crisis, and you've got to—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** That's all the time. Thank you.

Members' statements?

### SPORT AND CULTURAL EVENTS

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** Being my first time rising in this House, I would like to congratulate all members on their election to this House. I would also like to thank my constituents for their support and for electing me as their MPP for the great riding of Brampton East.

Speaker, just a few short weeks ago, Jessy Sahota and Neil Nijjer represented Canada at the World Police and Fire Games for heavyweight wrestling hosted in the Netherlands. Jessy Sahota returned home with first-place gold, and Brampton East's very own Neil Nijjer returned home with silver. I would like to congratulate these two individuals for making our province and country extremely proud and for becoming exemplary role models for our youth to come.

I would also like to add that this past weekend has been a very eventful week for the residents of Brampton, with various sports and cultural events taking place across the city. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the United Brothers Field Hockey Academy for the success of the Toronto field hockey cup and commend them on their continued efforts on promoting the game of field hockey throughout the region.

Finally, Speaker, I would also like to extend my best wishes to the Pakistani and Indian community and all those celebrating on an extremely happy 75th Independence Day.

### STREET HAVEN

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I had the pleasure of meeting the hard-working staff and board members at Street Haven at their Roxborough site this summer. Street Haven is one of Canada's oldest women's shelters. The shelter provides

temporary housing, food and treatment for mental health and addiction to about 1,500 women a year.

These are high-risk people, people who are homeless, people who've just been released from prison or hospital, people who are deeply traumatized. They need help. And it's the staff at Street Haven that step up to help them each and every day.

But here's the problem: Street Haven also needs our help, because they're seeing a big increase in the need for their services. And there has been a big rise in homelessness, in addiction and in people facing very complex issues and very tough life circumstances.

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Yet government funding for Street Haven's work is being cut by this government. Funding to help people manage their addictions is being cut, and funding to manage the home and provide housing to people in need is also being cut. Street Haven is operating at a deficit. Their hard-working staff—when I met them—are exhausted and underpaid, and the need just keeps growing.

I am asking this government—the Minister of Health, the Solicitor General and the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions—to meet with Street Haven and understand what they do, and commit to providing support to them and other vitally important supportive housing services and treatment programs so Ontarians can get the help they need.

#### TOWN OF TILLSONBURG

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I rise today to recognize a significant milestone for the town of Tillsonburg in my riding of Oxford. Many of you may have heard of Tillsonburg in the famous song by Stompin' Tom, but today is about the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of the town. It was the residents who pushed for the incorporation of their community. There was a population of about a thousand at the time, and several businesses were established. Tillsonburg was booming.

Oxford South's MPP, Adam Oliver, was the area's representative here in the Legislature on March 2, 1872, when the Lieutenant Governor gave royal assent to his bill to incorporate the Town of Tillsonburg.

Edwin Tillson was elected as the town's first mayor. On March 22, council held its first meeting. One hundred fifty years later to the day, on March 2, the town's current mayor, Stephen Molnar, and town council hosted a cake-cutting to mark the anniversary. Though it wasn't an official council meeting, it was the official start of the celebrations. Events wrapped up on July 1 with a community birthday party.

Tillsonburg has a rich history and is still a booming town in south Oxford. With all it has to offer, it's no wonder the town has been listed as one of the top 100 places to visit in Canada.

I am proud to recognize this historic moment in my riding, and I wish all those in Tillsonburg a very happy birthday.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** As a Canadian, I'm proud to call this country home, and our universal health care system is one of the main reasons. Because of great Canadians like Tommy Douglas, residents use their OHIP card for health care—not their credit card.

But this government seems determined to destroy that system by underfunding it. Ignore and underfund our health care system, watch it buckle under the pressure of COVID, and then say the only solution is to find innovative approaches to fix the mess they created.

Unfortunately, those innovative approaches are really just new ways to give health care services to private corporations, whose main focus is to make more and more profit. But there are more problems with this approach. It's been proven time and time again that it costs us more.

The Toronto Star reported yesterday that temp nursing agencies are skyrocketing health care costs. In fact, they're paying as much as \$110 an hour to temp agencies. Front-line health care workers like our great nurses at ONA have said this is already a form of privatization. Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital has spent \$8.2 million this year on temp agencies.

We literally can't afford to continue down this road. Not only will the quality of our health care suffer; costs will become unsustainable. We must stop all forms of privatization, invest in our public system, repeal Bill 124 and start reminding the world why it's so great to be a Canadian: It's our publicly funded health care.

#### RIDING OF ETOBICOKE–LAKESHORE

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** It's a privilege to have the opportunity to rise in this Legislature as the re-elected MPP for Etobicoke–Lakeshore. I want to extend a big thank you to the people in Etobicoke–Lakeshore for your trust in me, and the team of countless volunteers for your hard work and dedication. I would not be here without you. I also want to extend a thank you to my constituency staff for your years of service for the people of south Etobicoke, because we all know we can't do these jobs alone.

Over the past four years, we have accomplished so much for the people of Etobicoke–Lakeshore: securing over \$1 billion for the redevelopment of the Queensway Health Centre, adding over 150 new beds, and another \$1 billion for St. Joseph's Health Centre, adding over 100 new beds; securing over \$100 million to refurbish and build new schools, like St. Elizabeth, St. Leo's, Bishop Allen and St. Marguerite d'Youville, and those who drive up Islington can see the shovels in the ground for the new Holy Angels school.

We announced a new long-term-care home that will provide 256 new beds; new transit projects, such as the Kipling Transit Hub, the Mimico GO station, and for the growing population of Humber Bay Shores, finally the long-awaited Park Lawn GO.

Over the summer, I have been busy attending many events in person and I see the Etobicoke spirit everywhere



I go. It was great to attend the grilled cheese festival hosted by the Lakeshore BIA, and I'm pleased to announce that our government is investing \$60,000 through the Ontario Reconnect Festival and Event Program so we can look forward to a bigger challenge next year.

I look forward to a productive term and will continue to get it done for the people of Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

### MIGRANT WORKERS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** Thank you, Speaker. I want to first congratulate you on being elected to the Speaker's chair. Given your track record, I know we are in very good hands.

On a sombre note, I'd like to express my deepest sympathies to the family of former MPP Bill Murdoch, a member I have fond memories of from my early days as a staffer here at Queen's Park.

Speaker, each year, 20,000 seasonal agricultural workers arrive in Ontario to work on farms and in greenhouses. Roughly 5,000 come to Haldimand–Norfolk, where they play a vital role in ensuring fresh, safe food makes it to our tables. These workers, mainly from Mexico and the Caribbean, leave their families behind to plant, cultivate, harvest and pack. The money is lucrative, and they are very quick to admit they are well-respected on the farm and across the community.

This past weekend, migrant workers gathered at the Simcoe soccer pitch for the annual Farms of Norfolk Football Association Tournament, hosted by the Norfolk Seasonal Agricultural Worker Community Committee in conjunction with the local legal clinic. The tournament developed after workers expressed they wanted additional community engagement. This year, nine teams competed, and it was serious business with a tremendous display of athleticism. These men and women are in great shape, considering their days are physical. Many farms in my neck of the woods are not complete unless they have a practice field, and even after a long day's work, it's common to drive by a farm and see a practice or a scrimmage breaking out.

Sunday morning, farm families were on the sidelines cheering on their team. It was just one of those events that left you feeling good. I invite you all to next year's tournament to witness this significant event and to meet the workers who make our agricultural industry here in Ontario viable.

### TOWN OF WHEATLEY

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Chatham–Kent–Leamington.

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** Speaker, as this is my first opportunity to make formal remarks in this House, I want to congratulate you and thank you for your continued service to all members in the province of Ontario. I also want to offer my sincere gratitude to the residents of beautiful

Chatham–Kent–Leamington for placing their trust in me. I assure them that I'll serve them and all of Ontario with honour and dignity.

Today I want to highlight a special community in my riding whose residents have demonstrated a unique strength, courage, and resilience in the face of adversity. Wheatley is located on the shores of Lake Erie in southwestern Ontario and is home to approximately 3,000 people. It's known as the freshwater fishing capital of the world and is home to the iconic Omstead Foods, a pioneering fishery and processor of fresh foods. Wheatley is the current headquarters of Hike Metal Products, a successful ship-building company whose projects included world-class research and law enforcement vessels, as well as the large, specialized catamarans that tour Niagara Falls. Wheatley is home to many of my dear friends, like Jeff Bowman, the owner of Bowman Feed and Supply, whose family have delivered exceptional local products and exceptional customer service since 1952.

On August 26, 2021, a suspected hydrogen sulphide gas leak that was being monitored by officials in the downtown core suddenly indicated dangerous concentrations of the volatile gas. While emergency personnel worked to quickly evacuate the area, a massive explosion occurred. The blast actually injured 20 people and severely damaged businesses and homes in the area. The heroic actions of our local firefighters certainly prevented further injury and loss of life. For nearly a year, businesses have been shuttered, families displaced, and the heart of the town centre interrupted. Yet Wheatley remains positive, hopeful, patient and eager to rebuild.

Wheatley was the first community I campaigned in and the first community I visited after winning the election in June. The residents of Wheatley are an inspiration to us all. In the face of adversity here and elsewhere, I strive to be Wheatley strong.

1030

### GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** The member for Brampton North here—first day.

It is an honour to rise in this House on behalf of my constituents in Brampton North, and I am humbled by their trust in me to be our voice for our community at Queen's Park.

Mr. Speaker, please allow me to speak on behalf of my community when I say that Brampton North is simply tired of waiting. We're tired of waiting in bumper-to-bumper traffic on Highway 410, Bovaird Drive and Sandalwood Parkway. We're tired of waiting at the Brampton Civic waiting room, where our incredible health care workers strive to keep up with the demands of our growing and aging population.

And quite frankly, we're tired of the committees and the studies and the working groups. We demand action. We demand a government that gets it done. That is exactly what our Premier and our government are here to do.

We're getting it done by building a new Peel Memorial Hospital with a full-fledged 24/7 emergency room.

We're getting it done by building Highway 413, cutting commute times and bringing economic opportunity to our region.

We're getting it done with the TMU medical school where, for the first time ever, Brampton students will become medical students and eventually become Brampton doctors.

Mr. Speaker, we will get it done for Brampton North.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Brantford–Brant.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to see you in the chair this morning.

I would like to welcome my long-suffering wife, Joni Bouma, to the House for the first time in this government; my daughter and former page Ella Bouma; and a special guest, our family friend Tessa Overduin, who, as you can see, is looking forward to the Immersive King Tut later today and going to the ROM and seeing the mummies there.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm pleased to introduce Angela Preocanin, the first vice-president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, as well as Nour Alideeb from the ONA. Welcome to Queen's Park, ladies.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** It's great to rise today and introduce Kyle Reaburn, a public affairs specialist for SE Health, and a good, long-time friend from the great riding of Guelph.

**Mr. Tom Rakocovic:** I'm proud to welcome Society of United Professionals president Michelle Johnston. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I would like to invite our page back—Pania Ghaneian, who's from the riding of Barrie—Innisfil. Welcome today.

**Ms. Lise Vaugeois:** I would like to welcome Brandon Machado, who is sitting in the members' gallery today. Brandon is a member of the Ontario NDP Persons Living with Disabilities Committee and a resident of the great riding of York South–Weston. Welcome, Brandon.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I'd like to welcome members from Mississauga–Malton: Numiara Naseer, Shehryaar Naseer, Shanzay Naseer, Mujtaba Naseer, Murtaza Naseer, Shahid Mughal, Nurguss Mughal, Iqra Mughal, Humzah Mughal, Ahmed Mughal, Faizan Mughal, Ejaz Ahmed, Nafisa Farzana, Aman Ahmed, Zainab Ahmed and Mahdiya Ahmed.

I want to say thank you to the parents for bringing their children to Queen's Park as they're having their summer vacation.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Point of order, Speaker.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to move a motion to allow an emergency debate on the health care crisis this afternoon during orders of the day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Nickel Belt is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion to allow an emergency debate on the health care crisis this afternoon during orders of the day. Agreed? I heard a no.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier. Records from Ontario Health show 1,400 people died while waiting for surgery last year. That's a 43% increase compared to pre-pandemic years and a 30% increase over just a year before. When lives hang in the balance, why is the Premier refusing to invest in recruiting, retaining and respecting health care workers?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank the opposition for the question. The facts are, with recruiting and retaining, we added 14,500 new nurses. That's on top of the 10,500 health care workers, which included nurses and PSWs.

We invested over \$40 billion in 52 projects that were neglected under your government. Under their government, propped up by the Liberals and NDP, they fired 1,600 nurses.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the opposition voted against historic funding, which went from \$61 billion when we came into office in 2018 up to over \$75 billion. That's an over \$14-billion increase. They voted no, against it, for the historic funding. They voted no, against the people of Ontario. They voted no, against the health care system. That's their solution.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Reality doesn't reflect what the Premier is talking about. The Toronto Star has obtained a letter painting a picture of the staffing crisis at St. Joe's in Toronto: a shutdown of ambulatory care due to a lack of nurses; hallway medicine; no functional resuscitation area; and a small, sick child in an unstaffed area.

The staffing crisis is costing people their lives. Why is this government planning to spend money on privatization that will bleed even more staff from our hospitals?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** It's funny you mention St. Joe's. I had a great conversation with Dr. Rutledge this morning regarding that. He is giving me the confidence that we're going to move forward.

And by the way, the backlogged surgeries? We put \$300 million into backlogged surgeries to make sure we get caught up, and we're doing exactly that.

We're building a new medical school that's going to create more doctors in the system—as we did last year: Over 720 new doctors are coming into the system, Mr.

Speaker. We are investing in health care like no other government in the history of this country.

But the opposition? Their answer is the status quo, the status quo that destroyed this health care system under 15 years of their rule, the NDP and the Liberals, that crumbled the health care system. We're fixing the health care system. We're putting in historic funding. We're making sure that we put through processes that are going to make sure that people aren't in emergency rooms for hours on top of hours. We're fixing the health care system, the same system that they destroyed for 15 years, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Again to the Premier: Canadian studies show that for-profit hospitals had 19% higher costs and a 2% higher death rate compared to non-profit hospitals. Canadian medical experts attribute this difference to profit-seeking, higher costs for administration and bigger executive bonuses.

We have a hospital staffing crisis. Privatization would siphon staff out of our hospitals and send them to a for-profit system. Why is this government planning to spend money on privatization that would make the hospital staffing crisis even worse?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Mr. Speaker, no one in this province, as long as our government is here, will have to pay with their credit card. They will be paying with their OHIP card, not their credit card—OHIP.

Mr. Speaker, we added 3,500 beds, and with a historic \$40-billion investment, with 52 regions around Ontario that are either getting a new hospital or a new addition, we're adding another 3,000 beds.

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We're working with the College of Nurses, working with the College of Physicians and Surgeons as well to make sure we speed up the process. As we saw, over 720 internationally trained nurses are now coming into the system. We need a lot more. We're going to continue asking the College of Nurses to speed up the process to bring all these qualified nurses right here to Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we are fixing a broken system we inherited and will continue to have a thriving system moving forward.

## HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** Beds don't equal surgeries, Speaker. A bed without a nurse is just furniture.

At the Ottawa Hospital, we're seeing the many serious consequences of not having enough nurses. Patients are waiting days to be admitted even though beds are available because there's no nurse to staff the bed. Surgeries are being cancelled even as patients are entering the operating room because there's no nurse. And recently, a patient who showed up for chemo was sent home without it because there was no nurse to administer it.

Will the government act swiftly to fill these nursing shortages so that every patient in Ontario gets the care they need?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, once again, the Premier.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Thank you for that question. And by the way, I spoke to Cam Love. What a great CEO—probably one of the best in the province. He assured me as well that they're going to make sure that they have the proper staffing.

How we're helping the hospitals across the province is the Learn and Stay program—that we're going to pay for the tuition of the nurses. We're going to make sure that they're taken care of—any expenses they have—as long as they serve in underserved areas.

With Ottawa—I've got to tell you, I think the world of Cam Love. He drives an efficient hospital. But, again, as he said, and every other CEO that are feeding us information to help the system—every one of them said the same thing: You can't stay with the status quo under the Liberals and the NDP that destroyed the system for 15 years, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue investing into the hospitals, into nurses.

And, again, I just want to remind people of the numbers: We added 14,500 nurses since 2018. Those are staggering numbers.

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

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** It feels like there are two realities here, Speaker: the one the government is living in and the one that my constituents and our hard-working health care workers live in.

The Ottawa Hospital is short more than 500 nurses, and this government's actions to date are a drop in the bucket compared to the scale of the crisis. There are nurses in Ottawa who are working 16-hour shifts, 12 out of 14 days, just to fill nursing shortages. Just imagine trying to provide good care while working that many hours, not to mention the risk of mistakes. No wonder nurses are leaving the profession.

Will the government repeal Bill 124 and address working conditions so that we keep nurses instead of driving them away?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** As you propped up the Liberals and you fired 1,600 nurses, we actually recognized the nurses and gave them a 7.6% increase, a \$5,000 thank-you bonus for doing an incredible job. We're investing another \$342 million to add 5,000 more nurses to the system. We're adding 8,000 personal support workers. We're investing \$57 million to hire 225 nurses to the long-term-care sector that are desperately needed.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to invest in health care. We're going to continue making sure that as long as our government's here, people are going to be using their OHIP card instead of their credit card. But guess what? We can't do the same, status quo. The status quo has been broken. We're going to fix it. We're going to deliver health care in a different fashion through the sector's advice—not through our government's advice—through the experts' advice: the docs, the nurses, anyone involved in taking care of the great health care system that we do have in Ontario.

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

Final supplementary?

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** Well, now I know that the government lives in an alternate reality because I have never fired a nurse or propped up the Liberals in my life.

Last week, I had the chance to sit down with nurses from ONA Local 83 and they told me that every day they go to work feeling scared. They wonder, who will I not get to today, and what will the consequences be? It is only a matter of time until the consequences for someone are deadly. This is an unfair burden to put on our hard-working health care heroes and terrifying to patients across Ontario.

Will this government finally listen to nurses and implement the solutions they are calling for, starting with repeal of Bill 124?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** The member is quite correct: There has been a great burden on health care providers for a long time in the province of Ontario. I know the member referenced the fact that she wasn't here, but the reality is that the NDP and the Liberals did work together for many years, and the changes that they refused to make put us in a very difficult situation.

Now, the Premier, of course, highlighted many of the investments that we're making, but it didn't just start recently. We started with the transition to Ontario health teams because a lot of people told us the quality of care that they were getting is good if they could get into the system. So we started the transition to Ontario health teams. We brought on new nurses. We brought on more medical professionals, a medical school in Brampton, a medical school in Scarborough, so that we could educate more doctors right here in the province of Ontario, keep them here, working in communities across the province. We had a low ICU capacity. The Premier said that had to be changed, so we've increased ICU capacity across the province of Ontario. We're educating more nurses. We're fixing long-term care. It is about building an integrated system that works for all of the people in the province of Ontario, and that's exactly what we're doing.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé.

Minister, in July, you received a letter informing you of the closure of the Gogama nursing station on September 1. Gogama is a small, isolated community. Residents rely on the nursing station as their only access to health care. September 1 is fast approaching. Can the minister reassure the people of Gogama that they will not find themselves without any health care services at the end of the month?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I think it's very clear that the government has continued to invest. The member raises a very, very important point, something that the Premier, the

Minister of Health and, in fact, we in long-term care have been talking about right from the beginning: that discrepancy between urban and rural and remote communities. How do we attract medical professionals into all parts of the province of Ontario? That is something that we've focused on. That is something that the Minister of Colleges and Universities has also focused on. The Premier mentioned how we are starting to ensure that tuitions and those loans that our nurses take will be covered if they serve in those areas that are underserved.

The member knows full well, Mr. Speaker, that it is our responsibility—the responsibility of the government of Ontario and all parliamentarians—to make sure that everybody has access to the top-notch quality health care service that they pay for through their taxes. We will continue to ensure that all parts of this province have the best, highest quality of care regardless of whether they're north, south, east, west, remote or urban.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** There are health agencies in Timmins right now that are willing and able to sponsor the Gogama nursing station. They have a nurse practitioner available and they have a supporting physician. Will the minister make sure that a new agreement is signed ASAP so that the good people of Gogama and area do not end up without any access to care come September 1? The agreement needs to be signed now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Premier.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Thank goodness for the people of Timmins. They have a great representative, George Pirie. The other person was a no-show, but thank goodness for George. He's going to have a loud voice for Timmins and he's going to make sure that everyone in that region is going to be taken care of.

But this is a broader conversation we need. All Premiers across the provinces and territories all have a common voice, and the common voice is: This is not going to be sustainable—making sure that the feds pay their fair share. You know something? They're paying 22%. We're asking for 35%. It will not be sustainable without the federal government stepping up to the plate, making sure that they give us our fair amount to sustain the health care system. This isn't unique to Ontario. I talk to the Premiers every single day. They're facing the same problems. They're facing the same problems down in the US. But we need the federal government to give us our fair share of funding for health care across this country.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Rick Byers:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Under the previous Liberal government, rural communities like mine were left behind and neglected when it came to investments that would support our local economy. Time and again, we saw the previous government make announcements that would be supporting investments only in and around the GTA. That's why I am here to continue

to advocate for my constituents and the abilities they have to lead our province.

**1050**

On that note, I am proud that Grey-Bruce continues to lead the way in female apprenticeships. For the past five years, we've had more female students going into the skilled trades than the rest of the province, by a significant margin.

Speaker, what is the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade doing to help support economic growth in my riding? What is the government doing to tap into the amazing workforce potential we have in our community?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Our government listened to businesses, like those in that riding, and we learned about the support that they needed and all those regional challenges that they had after a decade of Liberal neglect. That's why we launched the \$100-million Regional Development Program to attract investments to southwestern Ontario, southeastern Ontario and rural Ontario. We knew that this would benefit those many communities who could expect to see growth, job creation and economic opportunities for years to come.

To date, those very businesses have invested \$716 million into Ontario and created 1,200 jobs in their own communities. We are demonstrating that small towns in Ontario can sustain and attract those businesses. We're bringing back that lifeblood to these rural communities, all after the Liberals chased those businesses out of the country.

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

**Mr. Rick Byers:** Thank you, Minister.

Speaker, for 42 years under a Progressive Conservative government, Ontario became a manufacturing powerhouse, able to compete with any jurisdiction. Yet, under the previous Liberal government, jobs began to leave when high taxes, red tape and out-of-control electricity prices made Ontario one of the least competitive jurisdictions in North America. The result: 300,000 people lost their jobs when Liberal policies forced manufacturing right out of Ontario.

With growing instability in Asia as China attempts to destabilize the region, businesses now more than ever are seeking strong, stable partners when it comes to manufacturing operations. Now is the opportunity for Ontario to regain our rightful spot as a manufacturing powerhouse. We must be taking every and all necessary actions to get this done.

What is the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade doing to bring back manufacturing jobs to Ontario and to my riding?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Last week, along with the Premier, we buzzed on over to Dundalk, Ontario. There, Greenlid announced a \$14.8-million investment to build a 60,000-square-foot manufacturing plant. This project will bring all of Greenlid's production back from China, right here to Ontario.

Our province is supporting Greenlid's project with a \$500,000 investment through our Regional Development

Program. This is a made-in-Ontario success story. Greenlid produces compostable products like cups and lids and bowls. Their products are found in 14,000 stores across the continent, and they're made here in Ontario. This is just one of the thousands of examples of products that are made in Ontario, and manufacturing that's coming back to rural Ontario.

But we won't stop there. We're going to continue to fix that Liberal mess and bring the jobs back to where we need them most.

## CURRICULUM

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch, Speaker. *Remarks in Oji-Cree.*

My question is to the Minister of Education. We learned recently that Ministry of Education staff were directed to remove parts of the new curriculum that show students the connections between Indigenous and Western science. Can the minister let us know why he directed his staff to remove these links to Indigenous science content from the elementary curriculum?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I want to thank the member opposite for the question. On the contrary, in fact, we have enhanced the mandatory learning within the science curriculum in every single grade when compared to 2017 under the former Liberal government. Every single grade in the science curriculum now has enhanced mandatory learning as part of our commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and our commitments to Indigenous, First Nation and Inuit peoples.

Part of the first response of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission actually called us to complete what the Liberals did not do. In the social science curriculum, we will have mandatory learning in this province from grades 4 to 6, but not grades 1 through 3. I enjoin the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, on behalf of the Premier of the government, to actually fix that gap. And, for the first time this coming September, 2023, students in Ontario will learn—from grade 1 right through 8—about residential schools and what the Premier called “the dark chapter” in Canadian history. We know there is more to do, and I am open to his feedback and his leadership to get this right.

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Speaker, reconciliation is not something that you say differently from what the First Nations are saying. That's not reconciliation. I say that because Mattawa council spokesperson Chief Wayne Moonias stated that Ontario must stop regressing in their relationship with First Nations. Ontario should be working with First Nations educators to add Indigenous science to the curriculum, not remove it in secret.

Minister, why are you not responding to First Nation education organizations? I want to work with you to develop this framework.

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

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** It gives us an opportunity to talk about the hard work that the Minister of Education and my ministry have done to ensure a couple of important things: first of all, that Indigenous students are armed with the fundamentals of a good education that includes science, technology, engineering and mathematics. That's embedded in their curriculum, and we support the Indigenous-led education authorities across this province to that end.

Further, Mr. Speaker, as the minister spoke about that: Since the last curriculum update in 2007, no government has taken the steps, by comparison, that we have to ensure a strengthened Indigenous learning opportunity. For far too long, many of us in this House learned about our history with words like “colonization,” “war” and “conquer.” Today, we are talking about reconciliation, ensuring that our students come home and talk to their parents about some of the darkest chapters of our history and, at the same time, ensuring Indigenous students across this province have a fair shot at a great education and a prosperous community to live in.

#### FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** From gas to groceries, rising prices continue to impact Ontario workers and Ontario families. Food prices have gone up by almost 10% from a year ago and rent prices are also rising. In Brampton, Regeneration Outreach Community's local food bank is seeing a rise in families coming through the door at a time when donations are typically lower. There are nearly 400 families coming to them for groceries—a number that has doubled in the last two years. With Canada's inflation rate reaching a nearly 40-year high, households across the country are facing increasing pressures to make ends meet. According to Food Banks Canada, one in five people report going hungry, meaning some households are foregoing buying groceries in order to pay other bills, including rent, hydro and fuel.

What is the Minister of Finance doing to help provide financial support and relief for the people of my riding and all other Ontarians?

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Congratulations and welcome to the member from Brampton East.

For too long, Ontario had a government that never met a fee increase or a tax that they didn't like. Cap-and-trade tax schemes, licence sticker fee increases, road tolls in Durham—they loved those. But our government knows the best way to support the people of Ontario is to put more money back into their pockets, not out of their pockets. That's why we signed a deal to bring down the cost of child care and enhanced our Child Care Tax Credit to make it even more affordable for families. We have enhanced the LIFT tax credit to deliver an average of \$430 in relief in 2022 for low-income workers and families and we will raise the minimum wage to \$15.50 per hour on October 1. We will never stop investing in our workers, our seniors and our families.

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

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** Thank you, Minister. The increasing price of gas is driving up the cost of everything from food to groceries and services. In Peel region, and in particular Brampton, my constituents are struggling to deal with these increased costs. Interest rates are climbing, putting further pressure on household budgets. The people of this province want to build a stronger Ontario, but you cannot build for the future if you're worried about bills for today.

Under the previous Liberal governments, we saw the price of housing skyrocket. We saw carbon tax schemes devastate our economy and drive up the cost of everything. We saw red tape strangle opportunity for Ontario businesses and Ontario workers. How is this government rebuilding Ontario's economy and keeping costs down for families?

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** Geopolitical tensions continue to shake the global economy, but Ontario has every advantage to lead. With a skilled workforce, critical minerals and the manufacturing capacity, Ontario is becoming a global leader in electric and hybrid vehicle manufacturing.

Mr. Speaker, in uncertain times you need a plan. We know the opposition's plan: more regulations, more red tape, higher taxes and higher fees. This government has cut red tape and business taxes to bring investment and good jobs back to Ontario. We got rid of the cap-and-trade tax and cut the gas taxes and fuel taxes to give families and businesses relief at the pumps. We have removed the tolls the Liberal government placed on Highways 412 and 418 to give drivers relief. Our government's plan will build a stronger Ontario and put more money back in the pockets of the hard-working people of this province.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Lise Vaugeois:** My question is to the Premier. Next month, the government will increase ODSP funding by a mere 5%, or \$58 per month, to just over \$1,200 a month. Meanwhile, Ontario Works recipients will receive no increase, with the government expecting them to live on \$733 per month. Think about that: \$733 a month. When pressed last week, the Minister of Finance refused to say whether he could live on such meagre rates. It is clear that the government members know it is not possible to survive with any dignity on these rates, but they choose to legislate people into poverty anyway. Will this government do the right thing, change course today and double the rates for OW and ODSP?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. The Premier has stated that we will support those in need, and our government is taking meaningful steps forward in this very way. That's why we're implementing the largest increase to ODSP in decades. Ontario is one of the only provinces aligning

ODSP payments to inflation. By aligning ODSP rates to inflation, we will help meet the future needs of individuals facing additional financial pressure. And that's not all. We also brought in the LIFT and CARE tax credits to support individuals with low incomes and we brought in dental care to low-income seniors.

Supporting our most vulnerable requires all levels of government to come together to achieve real change. We are working with our municipal partners to reform social assistance to focus on people over paperwork. We're also working with our federal partners to help them deliver on the Canadian disability benefit.

I will continue to work with Minister McNaughton to make sure that we allow people to become job-ready and get people into the workforce as needed.

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

**Ms. Lise Vaugeois:** That sounds wonderful, except that people need the money now to survive. And as if the situation could not get any worse, we learned this morning of serious issues with the government's contracting out of ODSP mail sorting to a for-profit company. This company, Nimble, has created problems in the ODSP mailroom that have led to delays or suspensions of ODSP recipients' files, meaning people aren't able to access the supports they need for medication, diabetic supplies and wheelchairs. This is right now; this is not something in some distant future.

It's also important to note that the civil service already has a mailroom. Why are we contracting out to another private organization to sort the mail which they are bungling, and then people aren't getting the resources that they need. The question is, will the government stop the contracting out of ODSP's mail sorting today?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question, to the member opposite. We know that Ontario Works was always intended to be a temporary measure. But we are looking, as a government, at how do we get people into the workforce who can work and how do we support those who cannot work. That's exactly why we've created the program that we have done. We're bringing back the central administration into government so that there are more people being able to provide the services at the front line to people who need the job training, the job connections, the network that's going to allow them to become productive members of society in meaningful, purposeful work. That's why the work that I'm doing with Minister McNaughton is so important: to create people over paperwork.

You mentioned very important aspects of efficiencies. We are a person-centred, efficient and responsive transformation process. That's what we're doing: creating a person at the centre of everything we do, to allow people to be job-ready and part of our economy, as we help those who cannot work.

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, who I'd like to

congratulate on being appointed once again. The farmers of my riding tell me they appreciate your attentiveness and your willingness to meet with them.

In my riding of Haldimand–Norfolk, it is proposed that a city of 40,000 be built upon 42 acres of farmland. This farm and woodland serve as a buffer zone around the Nanticoke industrial park near Port Dover. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture warns Ontario is losing in excess of 319 acres of productive farmland each day to development. This is unsustainable. With the announcement to expand powers for mayors, with the ultimate goal to accelerate housing development, Speaker, my question is, what is the ministry doing to protect agricultural lands from developers?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I appreciate the question very much, and I do appreciate how hard the member opposite works on behalf of our agricultural communities in her riding.

With that said, we are all working very, very hard to ensure that we have food security that people can trust across this province, across Canada and throughout North America. And with that spirit, we are working on innovation and opportunities to increase yield right here at home so that good-quality food is available to Ontarians when they need it, at the right price. We're looking to introduce a food strategy plan later this fall that will speak to the importance of secure supply chains so that we can ensure that we're increasing our yields right here at home and intensifying our production so that we can maximize the opportunities that we have in our lands across this province.

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

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** Speaker, this city of 40,000 is a bad idea. Not only would the city be on farmland but it's also in a provincially significant employment zone as it is adjacent to one of Ontario's largest oil-refining and steelmaking greenfield complexes. There was nary a mention of agriculture in last Tuesday's speech from the throne; it did stress, however, the need for an additional 1.5 million homes and the fact more people are arriving in the province. This makes most of us in rural Ontario nervous as we see developers eyeing up productive lands.

In other jurisdictions, Alberta for example, they have a provincial agricultural land commission to ensure land is preserved for the future. If we want one thing grown here at home, it must be our food. Speaker, I'm wondering if the ministry is willing to establish such a committee to preserve the lands that feed us.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** The member opposite knows I'm willing to speak with and meet with farmers anywhere, anytime across Ontario, because this is so, so important. And I'm pleased to share with her that just this past couple of days at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario we had wonderful deputations where we have met with municipalities, because they understand and appreciate the importance of food security.

We're going to have a balanced approach. Minister Clark has a very good path forward in terms of making

sure that we are addressing the housing needs—affordable, attainable housing needs that we have across this province. We'll be balancing it with the importance of food security and enabling our farmers to be the best across Canada. Certainly, that's something that I can pick up in terms of a conversation and follow up with the minister in Alberta to better understand what they have and see if it's appropriate here, in the spirit of making sure that we have the balanced approach to making sure we are achieving our goal to meet housing needs, all the while ensuring that we have food security right here close to home.

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### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** During the last election, the Premier was very clear: He promised to increase ODSP rates. Can the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services confirm here today that, in fact, we will be helping the most vulnerable and we will be increasing the ODSP rates?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question. Our government is supporting those who need it most, addressing this current period of economic uncertainty and preparing for future ones. That's why we're making the largest increase to ODSP rates in decades. We understand that, due to global factors, inflation is rising. That's why, in our 2022 budget, we are aligning ODSP rates with inflation so that when the cost of living increases during times of high inflation, rates will too.

It is important to our government that the people of Ontario are able to pay for life's essentials, especially our most vulnerable.

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

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Thank you to the minister for that answer, and she knows that it's really only part of the equation. While it's a very welcome announcement for the most vulnerable who will be receiving an increase, the minister will know that inflation continues to rise and affect not only Ontarians but everyone in Canada.

Higher interest rates, carbon taxes which are leading to higher fuel costs, which lead to higher costs at the grocery store, are wreaking havoc on the budgets of the most vulnerable. Can the minister highlight what actions she will be taking to ensure that those who rely on ODSP can expect more stable consistency on fiscal outcomes, and will the minister confirm that she will be considering making inflation part of the equation with respect to how we govern ODSP rates and how we pay them out in this province?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you again for the question. It really is an honour to stand here in the House and speak to this historic investment in social assistance that ties into our work to modernize social assistance to better support the people who rely on it.

Our investment to align ODSP with inflation means that annual spending to meet inflation will occur, and that's on

top of regular annual funding like the \$8.9 billion in payments issued in 2021-22. This is more money in the pockets of people who need it most to spend on the essentials of life.

Upon passage of the budget, the increase of ODSP rates and their alignment with inflation would be implemented for September, with recipients receiving the new rates from then on. Thank you for the question.

### HOME CARE

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is for the Premier. Last week, a heartbreaking story of a mom and her daughter was published in the Hamilton Spectator. Nicole is the mother to 10-year-old Alexa, who has a rare neurodegenerative condition and is receiving palliative care at home. Nicole has had to perform complex, specialized care that neither she nor her husband are trained for because they can't get the hours of care that they need to care for Alexa. Instead of spending time with their daughter, they're filling the gaps of this broken home care system.

Can the Premier explain why a child who needs, and is eligible, for 24/7 care is not eligible and able to get it?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I do understand what the member is saying. Obviously, we all want to ensure that we have better outcomes for all people, including her constituent. That is why—we really started back in 2018—we recognized that not only the home care system but palliative care, and in fact the greater health system, was facing some severe challenges.

That is why we made that move to Ontario health teams. It was so important in beginning the transition of our health care system. It then led to the Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act, which was passed in the last Parliament, which has also led to further investments in home care.

We understand how important home care is, not only to those who need it, but in ensuring that the health care system is in good shape, whether it's alternate-level-of-care, which occupies some of our hospital beds, or whether it's seniors having access to quality care. We are making significant investments.

As you will know, Mr. Speaker, the members will have the opportunity soon. The throne speech highlighted a \$1-billion investment to improve home care across the province as we modernize the system so that people are not left behind by a system that should have been upgraded many—

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

The supplementary question.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Back to the Premier: The government's failure to act on the health care crisis is being felt across the board, including home care. Parents are taking on specialized medical care which they are not trained for in order to keep their child at home and safe.



Nicole should be spending this valuable time with her daughter just as her mom, not as her nurse.

Families like Nicole's are being expected to just deal with it and figure it out on their own because they don't have a choice. This is completely unacceptable.

When will this government properly invest in our health care system so families can expect to receive the promised necessary hours of care that their family members need?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Again, Mr. Speaker, the transition really started right from the beginning, right? In 2018—in fact, before, when the Premier talked about ending hallway health care. We knew that if we were going to end hallway health care, we had to make investments in long-term care, we had to make investments in home care.

But the member is absolutely right. Obviously when people need care, they should have access to that care, and that is why we are making significant investments in home care. As I said, the member will have an opportunity very shortly to support that \$1-billion investment that we're making so that her constituent—all of us. How many of us in our riding have heard the exact same challenge—people having to do more?

While we're always prepared to do more, it is our responsibility as parliamentarians and as the government to ensure that we have the best possible system available. That is why we are moving so quickly, whether it's on home care, the transition to Ontario health teams and putting the money behind the policies that we're bringing forward so that constituents like yours can have a better future, and all Ontarians can share in that better future.

#### GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment has been talking a lot about green steel. I wonder if the minister can tell this House, what is green steel and what is the electric arc furnace? How will this change the way steel is produced in both Hamilton and Sault St. Marie, and what impact will this have on jobs and economic growth in both of these municipalities?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Rising for the first time, I would just like to thank the hard-working men and women, the incredible people of Northumberland–Peterborough South who have elected me.

Speaker, under the leadership of Premier Ford and our government, we've become a leader in clean, green steel. With our government's significant investments, Ontario's manufacturing sector is breathing new life. Why does this matter? Because in Ontario, it's not through punishing taxes on hard-working families that we'll ensure a prosperous clean, green future, but it's through working with and leaning on the ingenuity and work ethic of the men and women of our Ontario steel sector—men and women like my grandfather, who got off the boat and worked in the steel sector to provide opportunity for my family.

Thanks to the electrification of the arc furnace, thanks to working collaboratively with all levels of government, this Premier has ensured, through the electrification of the arc furnace, that we are going to see a six-megaton reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, ensuring jobs for our future, jobs for men and women who choose to choose Ontario for a more prosperous, cleaner future.

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

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Thank you for the minister's response.

The minister well knows, greenhouse gas emissions are how we measure the impact of climate change. As the minister knows, there are many people who believe that only a carbon tax can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, what we have seen is this: High gas prices lead to higher costs, higher inflation and the cost of everything going up. Speaker, as you know, there are also many members in this chamber on the opposition benches who advocated for a \$200 carbon tax per tonne.

**1120**

My question to the minister is this: How will this change impact greenhouse gas emissions in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Thank you to the member opposite for that question. This Premier understands that it's not through the all sizzle, no steak talk but no action of the previous government's platitudes; it's through meaningful action that we're going to find solutions to the climate change problems that face us. It's through working with the steel sector that we've seen significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. It's through moving beyond NIMBYism to getting shovels in the ground for record investments in public transit so that moms and dads, so that seniors are getting on public transit, putting the keys to the car down, to make it easier to get to work, and through investing in roads, bridges and highways to reduce gridlock, to support a manufacturing sector that's breathing new life—electric vehicles that are powering a cleaner, greener future. Through partnering with Indigenous communities in the north, we're seeing a renaissance critical mineral strategy that's going to ensure Ontario is a manufacturing powerhouse in the clean, green cars of tomorrow. I'm proud of that, Speaker.

#### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** The Ex is opening on Friday. Every year, TSSA safety inspectors and engineers are at the Ex inspecting every nut and bolt to ensure that people are kept safe. But now, OPSEU inspectors are on strike, and the society engineers are in conciliation. The people are rightfully concerned about their safety.

What is the Premier doing to get TSSA back to the table to negotiate a fair deal so families can feel safe again?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

**Hon. Kaleed Rasheed:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. My ministry is aware of ongoing union negotiations between the TSSA, OPSEU and the

Society of United Professionals. The union negotiation process is an independent process between the TSSA, OPSEU and the society.

Unlike the opposition, the safety of Ontarians is our top priority. The TSSA has already assured me and my ministry that the operations of the CNE will not be impacted and that all safety inspections are being conducted on time and will be completed ahead of its opening. It is my sincere hope, Mr. Speaker, that both parties can reach an agreement soon so that Ontarians can continue to benefit from the work of the TSSA.

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

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Their contingency plan is not working, and a contingency plan can never replace a safety plan.

Since inspectors have been on strike, there have been multiple issues at amusement parks across the province: a miniature-train derailment, a fire, multiple ride failures. And it's not just amusement parks. There has been a propane blast in Sudbury, multiple elevator failures. New condominium and other construction is delayed. The list goes on. These inspectors and engineers are also responsible for the safety of so many things, including our nuclear power plants.

The public are worried for their safety. What is this government waiting for?

**Hon. Kaleed Rasheed:** Our government is building a stronger Ontario from the ground up, recovering from the pandemic and 15 years of NDP-backed Liberal mismanagement of our province. That is why, as part of our pandemic response, our government gave \$2.4 million in financial support to the TSSA, providing direct relief to businesses who faced significant operational and financial impacts. We also reduced permit and licence fees by 75% for 163 businesses operating almost 1,000 amusement devices across Ontario until the end of 2022.

Mr. Speaker, I will be heading to the CNE with my family, my kids. I encourage all Ontarians, all members, to visit the CNE. Let's go to the Ex.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Last week, the minister said that the government understands the need for advanced manufacturers to invest in the talent and equipment they need to be global leaders. While that is strong advocacy from the government, Ontarians want to know more about exactly how we are achieving these aims. Just as important as investing in our advanced manufacturers is, it is also critical that we ensure that we have a robust, end-to-end manufacturing supply chain. My constituents and all Ontarians want us to ensure that materials and production of advanced manufacturing remains in Ontario as much as possible and that we're rebuilding the strength of this sector once again.

Will the minister please explain how the government is attracting investments in advanced aerospace manufacturing supply chains and how exactly our government is

making connections with international markets and getting the message out that Ontario is open for business?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, the member is absolutely right; we can't just wait on companies to invest in Ontario's advanced manufacturing supply chain. The Liberals tried this. They lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs by doing that.

That's why our government led the Ontario delegation to the Farnborough air show just a couple of weeks ago. That trade show draws leading aerospace innovators from around the world for groundbreaking collaboration. Our delegation showcased our aerospace and our advanced manufacturing capabilities, but mostly we outlined how Ontario has reduced the cost of doing business by \$7 billion annually.

It's really simple: Ontario is open for business, and we are the gateway to world markets.

We'll continue building on the over 660,000 men and women who go to work every morning in a manufacturing job.

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

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** Speaker, many advanced manufacturing sectors in our province are facing immense global competition—automotive, chemical, medical, transportation and aerospace, just to name a few. In order for us to continue to be a manufacturing superpower once again, the government will need to step up and support these sectors as they innovate and grow. No longer should advanced manufacturing feel abandoned or neglected like they were under the previous Liberal government and the destructive policies that they implemented.

Would the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade please describe what impact the aerospace industry has for the Ontario economy and how Ontario is leading the way in terms of supporting this vital sector and its hard-working men and women?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Aerospace is a vital part of Ontario's advanced manufacturing sector and our supply chain. Bombardier, Airbus, De Havilland, MDA, Mitsubishi and hundreds more proudly call Ontario home. The industry has 200 firms and employs 38,000 people. There are only five countries in the entire world that manufacture commercial aircraft, and Ontario is one of those jurisdictions. Last year, we exported \$3 billion worth of aerospace products to 186 countries over six continents. We will see this industry continue to provide great jobs in R&D, engineering and advanced manufacturing.

Just last week, we announced that Cyclone Manufacturing invested \$21.4 million to reshore 22 jobs to Mississauga and Milton from the US. That's proof that we are open for business.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** My question is to the Premier. Last week, parents who are both health care workers in Hamilton reached out because they are unable to find child care for their son. Families all across Ontario are still

unable to access the \$10-a-day child care that was promised by this government. Our health care system is in crisis, and it's absolutely ridiculous that health care workers can't find child care during a staffing crisis.

When will this government ensure that child care spaces are available for important health care workers and for all parents?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Of course, Mr. Speaker, the government has been working very diligently. I know the Minister of Education, guided by the Premier, ensured that Ontario had a better deal than any other jurisdiction in the country. That is a reflection of the fact that Ontario had a much different system—a system that we inherited that was far more expensive, that was far more convoluted.

We have seen, of course, during the pandemic, that the government did step up, the minister did step up and make child care available for all of those essential workers, including our health care heroes and a number of other heroes who worked so hard during the pandemic.

Again, I know the minister has ensured that Ontario families will have a better deal, a longer deal, and will be supported in a way that I think Ontarians expected. Now, of course, for those colleagues who are new, you will remember it was the NDP who wanted us to sign the very first deal, and we said we're not going to do that, that we could do a better deal. And the Premier ensured, along with the Minister of Education, that we got that better deal for Ontario families.

1130

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

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** That answer is not reassuring to any health care worker or any parents in this province that are seeking child care now so that they can go to work in our health care system. These health care workers share that in Hamilton the hospital where they work is at a breaking point, that the wait times for surgery are well, well above the guidelines from Cancer Care Ontario and that the emergency department is unable to keep up with patient volumes. This is alarming because it's resulting in more and more code zero ambulance events.

When will this government prevent their failures in one sector, child care, from bleeding over into the health care sector?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a challenging question, because on the one hand, the NDP have been here the entire time that I've been here since 2018, and have voted against every single measure that we have brought forward to improve the health care system. They voted against the creation of Ontario health teams, which would give us seamless access to health care. They voted against hiring more nurses. They voted against 58,000 new and upgraded long-term-care beds. They voted against 28,000 additional PSWs. They voted against initiatives that brought 14,000 more nurses into our health care system. They voted against a new hospital in Brampton. They voted against a new hospital in Niagara.

They voted against a new hospital—the largest hospital investments—in Ottawa and in Mississauga. They voted against all of those things. They voted against the measures that the minister just talked about to support small, medium and large job-creators in the province of Ontario, and they voted against every single measure that the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade has brought in to keep our economy moving, to create jobs, to support health care and all of the things that the people of the province of Ontario think are so important.

So I say to the member—

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

The next question.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is to the Premier. It has been months since I approached the government about the serious doctor shortage communities are facing in Algoma–Manitoulin. In Thessalon, the hospital has been trying to recruit permanent physicians since last year. I raised this with the Minister of Health during the last session and presented her with a plan from Huron Shores Family Health Team to create an integrated care model to help recruit and retain new physicians in the area.

I ask the Premier: When will this government start working with northern communities to end physician shortages?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, again, I don't know where the member has been. I know the member asks the question in sincerity because I know how hard he works for the people in his community, and I do appreciate the challenges that we've been facing. But we started right from the beginning. We understood—and we're very passionate about this, because we understood that health care shouldn't just be for urban centres. It shouldn't just be the University Health Network and people in Toronto who have access to the best quality health care. It has to be urban, it has to be rural and it has to be remote, Mr. Speaker. That is why we are putting so much investment into the health care system. That's why we're building new medical facilities to train more doctors here in the province of Ontario. That's why we're supporting nurses and asking them, "If you will provide service, if you will work in underserved parts of the province, we will be there for you; we will cover your tuition." It is a program that was brought in by the Minister of Colleges and Universities that has been so successful. We brought in training for PSWs so that they—27,000 additional PSWs just in long-term care alone. And we are bringing massive investments in long-term care, including in the member's riding.

We are doing everything that we need to do to ensure that the balance is equal across the entire province and I hope the member will join with us in that.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Speaker, doctors across the province are burnt out right now, especially those working in the north. Their rosters are overloaded, and in small communities they are the only point of care immediately available to residents. In many cases, doctors are leaving these communities because they simply cannot keep up with the workload they are expected to take on day after day. This has been going on for years and the government has failed to make the necessary investments to address the problem in the north.

Where is the Premier's plan to train, recruit and retain physicians in northern Ontario?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** The member will know that he voted against some of the specific investments that we did make to help bring physicians to the north. An over-\$7.3-million investment to bring 77 new physicians to the north is something that the member voted against. The member has voted against all of the investments that we're making in long-term care. The member has voted against the 27,000 additional health care workers we're bringing in just for long-term care.

It is something that the Premier said before he was even elected—that we had to fix health care in the province of Ontario. We are spending billions of dollars to do it, but as the Premier said, it's not just about billions of dollars; it's about making a system work better for generations to come. That is what we're focused on, and that's the job we will get done for the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Point of order?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** During question period, I used the word "reconcili-action." You won't find this in the Oxford dictionary with its over 600,000 words, reflecting a thousand years of English history, nor will you find it on dictionary.com. It is, in fact, inspired by a friend of mine, Jack Trudeau, a member of Serpent River First Nation, and I appreciate his inspiration for that word.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Question period is over. This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1136 to 1300.*

## PETITIONS

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Dave Smith:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas our government was elected on a promise to the people of Ontario to rebuild the economy after the devastating impact" of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

"Whereas the creation of new jobs, new opportunities and bigger paycheques will enable Ontario workers to bring home more money for their families and to their communities; and

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government is seizing on opportunities in industries and fields that the Liberals and the NDP gave up on; and

"Whereas we are investing \$1 billion for critical mineral infrastructure, such as all-season roads to the Ring

of Fire and the implementation of our very first Critical Minerals Strategy; and

"Whereas through the hard work and good policies building an environment for economic growth we have attracted more than \$12 billion in new investment in electric and hybrid vehicles, including Canada's first full-scale electric vehicle battery plant in Windsor; and

"Whereas our plan for driving economic growth includes building an end-to-end supply chain for electric and hybrid vehicles from mining to processing to manufacturing, all of which will happen right here in Ontario; and

"Whereas our government has delivered an estimated \$8.9 billion in cost savings and supports for Ontario employers, especially small businesses, who are the backbone of our economy; and

"Whereas the province has created more than 500,000 new jobs since 2018, 500,000 new paycheques and opportunities for families in every corner of the province;

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

"To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue to build on this progress and rebuild Ontario's economy."

I fully endorse this petition, will sign my name to it and give it to page Pania.

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Linda Benoit from Foleyet, in my riding, for sending hundreds of names on this petition.

Save ambulance services in Foleyet:

"Whereas the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board is considering removing the paramedics and ambulance services (EMS) from the community of Foleyet;

"Whereas this service is vital, paramedics are front-line heroes in emergencies and often the reason people in life-threatening situations survive, because of the quick and responsive actions they are trained to take under pressure;

"Whereas if this social service is removed, the community of Foleyet and the surrounding area will be at risk in the case of an emergency due to the extended travel and wait time to access medical services through Chapleau or Timmins," both at least an hour drive away;

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: "to oppose the removal and relocation of the ambulance and paramedic services (EMS) in Foleyet... We want the emergency medical services in Foleyet to remain in full operation to service Foleyet and the surrounding area."

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

### HOME CARE

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s seniors deserve high-quality, patient-centred care and our government is making significant strides toward better meeting the needs of long-term-care residents by hearing directly from them; and;

“Whereas people, including seniors, should have the option to stay in their homes and receive the care they need, if they choose and if it is possible; and

“Whereas home and community care keeps people healthy and at home, where they want to be, and plays an important role in the lives of more than 700,000 families annually; and

“Whereas a strong home and community care sector is key to the government’s plan to end hallway health care and build a connected, patient-centred health care system; and

“Whereas home care supports will prevent unnecessary hospital and long-term-care admissions and will shorten hospital stays; and

“Whereas our government plans to invest up to an additional \$1 billion over the next three years to expand home care, improve quality of care, keeping the people of Ontario in the homes that they love longer; and

“Whereas the additional funding is intended to support home care providers, address rising costs and support recruitment and training, as well as expand services; and

“Whereas these types of investments and other developments, such as virtual care options, care at home, can become a choice that seniors, recovering patients and their families make instead of only relying on more traditional venues of care;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to build on the progress this government has made on building a patient-centred home and community care system.”

I proudly affix my signature to this petition, and I will give it to page Zane.

#### ENTRETIEN HIVERNAL DES ROUTES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J’aimerais remercier Cassandra et René Grenier de Hanmer, dans mon comté, pour ces pétitions :

« Améliorer l’entretien des routes du Nord en hiver...

« Alors que les autoroutes jouent un rôle essentiel dans le nord de l’Ontario;

« Alors que l’entretien des routes en hiver a été privatisé en Ontario et que les normes contractuelles ne sont pas appliquées;

« Alors que per capita, les décès sont deux fois plus susceptibles de se produire sur une route du nord que sur une route du sud de l’Ontario;

« Alors que la classification actuelle du MTO influence négativement la sécurité des routes du Nord; »

Ils et elles demandent à l’Assemblée législative « de classer les routes 11, 17, 69, 101 et 144 comme autoroutes de classe 1; exiger que la chaussée soit déneigée dans les huit heures suivant la fin d’une chute de neige et ramener

la gestion de l’entretien des routes en hiver au secteur public si les normes contractuelles ne sont pas respectées. »

J’appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer et je la donne à Adam pour l’amener à la table des greffiers. Merci.

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas our government was elected on a promise to the people of Ontario to rebuild the economy after the devastating impact” of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

“Whereas the creation of new jobs, new opportunities and bigger paycheques will enable Ontario workers to bring home more money for their families and to their communities; and

“Whereas the Progressive Conservative government is seizing on opportunities in industries and fields that the Liberals and the NDP gave up on; and

“Whereas we are investing \$1 billion for critical mineral infrastructure, such as all-season roads to the Ring of Fire and the implementation of our very first Critical Minerals Strategy; and

“Whereas through the hard work and good policies building an environment for economic growth we have attracted more than \$12 billion in new investment in electric and hybrid vehicles, including Canada’s first full-scale electric vehicle battery plant in Windsor; and

“Whereas our plan for driving economic growth includes building an end-to-end supply chain for electric and hybrid vehicles from mining to processing to manufacturing, all of which will happen right here in Ontario; and

“Whereas our government has delivered an estimated \$8.9 billion in cost savings and supports for Ontario employers, especially small businesses, who are the backbone of our economy; and

“Whereas the province has created more than 500,000 new jobs since 2018, 500,000 new paycheques and opportunities for families in every corner of the province; **1310**

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue to build on this progress and rebuild Ontario’s economy.”

I support the petition, affix my name and send it down with page Noella.

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** This petition is entitled, “Stop the 413 GTA West Highway.

“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;

“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;

“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 kilometres away;

“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;

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop their plans for building Highway 413” to nowhere.

I proudly support this petition, I will affix my signature to the petition and I’ll hand it to Natalie for tabling.

#### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas today Ontario is facing the largest labour shortage in a generation with over 300,000 jobs going unfilled, 300,000 paycheques and opportunities for families across the province; and

“Whereas our previous work in expanding the employment services transformation builds on the success of the first three integrated regions in Peel, Hamilton-Niagara and Muskoka-Kawartha, where 87% of clients completing their employment plans have found jobs and 81% are working more than 20 hours a week; and

“Whereas the second career program has traditionally helped laid-off unemployed workers access the training they need to become qualified for in-demand, well-paying jobs; and

“Whereas in Ontario’s 2022 budget, Ontario’s Plan to Build, we introduced the Better Jobs Ontario program; and

“Whereas the Better Jobs Ontario program is another major step in our mission to work for workers by:

—providing access to the program for people with limited or non-traditional work experience, including gig workers, newcomers and the self-employed who need training to get a job;

—investing \$5 million in new funding in 2022-23, in addition to the nearly \$200 million invested over the last

three years, paying up to 28,000 for short-duration, job-specific training, including those on social assistance, those who are self-employed, gig workers, youth and newcomers;

—expanding on the current second career program, more applicants will be eligible for up to \$500 per week in financial support for basic living expenses, improving client experiences, supporting short-duration training, increasing funding for wraparound supports and prioritizing supports for laid-off and unemployed workers in sectors most impacted by COVID-19.

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the progress being made in support of workers through transformative programs such as the Better Jobs Ontario program.”

I am very happy to sign this petition and provide it to page Julia.

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Ernest Lefebvre from Onaping in my riding for these petitions.

“911 Emergency Response....”

“Whereas when we face an emergency we all know to dial 911 for help; and

“Whereas access to emergency services through 911 is not available in all regions of Ontario but most Ontarians believe that it is; and

“Whereas many Ontarians have discovered that 911 was not available while they faced an emergency; and

“Whereas all Ontarians expect and deserve access to 911 service throughout our province;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To provide 911 emergency response everywhere in Ontario by land line or cellphone.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to my good page Adam to bring to the Clerk.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### STRONG MAYORS, BUILDING HOMES ACT, 2022 LOI DE 2022 POUR DES MAIRES FORTS ET POUR LA CONSTRUCTION DE LOGEMENTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on August 17, 2022, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to special powers and duties of heads of council / Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les pouvoirs et fonctions spéciaux des présidents du conseil.

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

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Mr. Speaker, it’s truly an honour to rise for the first time in the Legislature to debate

a bill here—and I just want to thank the people of Carleton and my constituents for voting for me to represent them once again—in the 43rd session.

I rise today in support of Bill 3, the government's proposed Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act. Our government trusts Ontarians to elect the right local leaders, and that's why our government is introducing legislative changes that would, if passed, give the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa new tools to advance provincial priorities. That includes building 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure to help build housing faster. Key municipal staff and departments help advance work on shared municipal-provincial priorities. The proposed changes would give the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa—which includes the riding of Carleton, which I represent—the flexibility to appoint their municipality's chief administrative officer themselves, or delegate the decision, such as by asking their councils to make this decision. Mayors would also be able to hire certain department heads. This does not include the clerk, treasurer, integrity commissioner, chief of police, chief building official or the medical officer of health. The mayors would also be able to delegate this power, whether to the council or the CAO. When making any changes, the mayor and municipalities would be expected to follow existing collective agreements or contracts.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities and their councils are often supported by committees and local boards. If passed, these changes in Bill 3 would allow mayors to create new identified committees and appoint the chairs and vice-chairs of identified committees and local boards. These changes would also allow a mayor to change the makeup of a committee in order for it to best support a municipality.

Provincial priorities, such as building more housing, need to be achieved in partnership with municipalities. In my riding alone, there is a desperate need for more housing, and that is one of the top concerns that I have heard from constituents in the area. There are not enough homes being built fast enough. These proposed changes would empower mayors to direct items to council that could potentially advance a provincial priority. Our provincial priority, one that we campaigned upon and one that Ontarians entrusted us to accomplish, is to build more homes. This proposal would also empower a mayor to direct staff to develop proposals to be brought forward for council consideration.

**1320**

Municipal budgets help define priorities for their communities when they deliver services and prioritize projects each year. If passed, this legislation would make a mayor responsible for proposing the municipal budget for council consideration. As part of the budget process, council would be able to make changes to the mayor's proposed budget, which the mayor could then veto if necessary. Council could override a mayoral veto with a two-thirds majority vote. So there is still accountability within the entire process. The result at the end of the

process would become the municipality's budget for the year, with oversight and accountability.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why I'm proud to support Bill 3 is that these proposed changes would give a mayor power to veto council's passing of a bylaw if all or part of a bylaw could potentially interfere with a provincial priority. Those provincial priorities are set by the people of Ontario, the ones who voted us in with a historic super majority to get things done. They voted us in to build Ontario. That's what we are going to do. We're here to ensure that there is no abuse of power, and if passed, council could override a mayoral veto of bylaws related to provincial priorities with a two-thirds majority vote. The mayor would remain as a member of council for council decision-making with one vote.

There are times when a mayor's seat may become vacant before a regular election. If passed, these changes would require a municipality to fill the mayor's seat through a by-election. The existing rules for how by-elections are run would still apply. These new changes would mean a municipality is not required to fill the position if a mayor's seat becomes vacant within 90 days before voting day in the year of a regular election. That's going to save taxpayers a lot of money. If a mayor's seat becomes vacant after March 31 in the year of a regular municipal election, the municipality would be required to appoint a mayor, who would not have these new powers. Therefore, this would not impact the flexibility that these municipalities currently have in deciding how to fill other vacant council seats—they would have the choice to appoint someone or have a by-election.

If Bill 3 is passed, the government plans on making accompanying regulations to set out our current provincial priorities. Priorities could include building up to 1.5 million new homes in 10 years to address the housing supply crisis, something that we campaigned upon, something that Ontarians expect us to do—and that's one of the reasons we have a historic super majority here in the Legislature. It also includes the construction and maintenance of infrastructure such as transit and roads to support new and existing residential development.

The people of Ontario spoke in the last election, Mr. Speaker. They voted. They spoke their minds. That's one of the reasons that there are so many members of government here today, that there are 10 of us on this side of the House, because there is not enough room for all of the government members on that side of the Legislature. That's how successful Premier Ford was, and that's the mandate the people of Ontario have given us.

Je veux parler en français un petit peu. Le gouvernement de l'Ontario propose des modifications législatives qui, si elles sont adoptées, donneront aux maires de Toronto et d'Ottawa de nouveaux outils pour faire avancer les priorités provinciales, y compris la construction de 1,5 million de domiciles sur les 10 prochaines années ainsi que la construction et l'entretien de l'infrastructure permettant de bâtir des habitations plus rapidement.

L'Ontario avance vers ces objectifs en proposant des modifications de la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités, de

la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et d'autres lois pour appuyer ses partenaires municipaux, lesquels jouent un rôle crucial dans la détermination des politiques et des processus locaux qui influencent l'offre de logements.

Le personnel et les services municipaux clés contribuent à l'avancement des travaux liés aux priorités municipales-provinciales communes. Les modifications proposées donneraient aux maires de Toronto et d'Ottawa la possibilité de nommer eux-mêmes le directeur général de leur municipalité ou de déléguer la décision, par exemple en demandant à leur conseil de la prendre. Les maires pourraient aussi engager certains responsables de services, sauf ceux dont le poste est prévu par la loi, comme le secrétaire, le trésorier, le commissaire à l'intégrité, le chef de la police, le responsable du service du bâtiment, le médecin hygiéniste, etc. Ils pourraient également déléguer ce pouvoir, notamment au conseil ou au directeur général. Lorsqu'ils feraient des changements, les maires et les municipalités seraient tenus de respecter les conventions collectives et les contrats en vigueur.

Dans l'éventualité où les modifications sont adoptées, le gouvernement prévoit prendre des règlements connexes pour énoncer les priorités provinciales actuelles. Ces priorités pourraient comprendre la construction de 1,5 million de domiciles sur 10 ans pour atténuer la crise de l'offre de logements, ainsi que la construction et l'entretien de l'infrastructure, comme les transports en commun et les routes, qui soutient les aménagements résidentiels, nouveaux et existants.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, 35% of Ontario's projected growth to 2031 is expected to happen in Toronto and Ottawa. I know that in the Ottawa region, the majority of that growth is going to happen in my riding of Carleton. Communities like Findlay Creek, Riverside South, Stittsville, Richmond, Manotick, North Gower, Kars, Osgoode, Greely are growing exponentially, and I look forward to seeing more homes being built in my riding of Carleton. That is why addressing housing supply issues in these communities such as mine and across Ontario is absolutely critical.

This government is committed to cutting any red tape that would stand in the way of anyone in Ontario wanting to fulfill their dream of building a home. These purposed measures are intended to support efficient, local decision-making to help cut through unnecessary red tape and speed up development timelines.

Mr. Speaker, we promised to get it done for the people. We promised to put shovels and boots in the ground. This government intends on keeping its commitment to the people.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Questions.

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** I would like to thank the member for her comments.

The member talked a lot about housing in Ottawa, and we do, in fact, have a real crisis and a shortage of affordable housing in Ottawa. It's something that we heard a lot about at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference in Ottawa this week. Another thing that we heard at AMO was mayors saying that they weren't

consulted on this legislation, that they don't want this legislation and that they didn't ask for this legislation. That includes Mayor Jim Watson of Ottawa, who said he learned about this legislation from the news and that this legislation is not required to actually address the affordable housing crisis.

Mayors made it clear that their priority is addressing the health care crisis and getting our ambulances back on the road, instead of being tied up at hospitals waiting to off-load patients.

So my question to the member is: Why is this bill this government's priority when mayors are saying, "Please fix the health care system"?

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa West-Nepean for the question. Congratulations on getting elected. I look forward to working with you to serve the people of Ottawa in the next four years.

**1330**

With respect to your question, the reason that we're putting this bill forward is because this is literally what we campaigned upon. This bill is one of the reasons that we got a super majority, with a historic 83 seats in the Legislature, and one of the reasons I'm sitting on this side of the House, because there's not enough space on that side for the entire government majority.

Mr. Speaker, further in response, as Ontarians are facing the rising cost of living and a shortage of homes, our government was re-elected with a strong mandate to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and their budget. What we have done so far is producing results. In 2021, we broke ground on a record number of new homes, with more than 100,000 new homes in only 12 months—the highest level of new housing starts in a single year since 1987. We also reached a 30-year record last year for new rental housing construction, with the most units built in a year since 1991.

Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. In the past four years, we acted, and the people of Ontario saw that. That's why we're here today, and that's why I'm proudly supporting this bill.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank the member for Carleton for her speech today. I listened to hers and I listened to speeches earlier today as well, and I just find that the NDP over there are tripping over one another to try to condemn and demonize all developers—"The developers are all going to hell." But the homes that we need in this province will not be built by the three little pigs. They're going to have to be built by people who actually build homes. So we need to work together with our municipal councils, with our municipal partners, with developers and home builders all across the province. If an opposition continues to demonize the very people—they're talking about how we need more rental properties. They have to be built, too. And they stand in the way every time we do something to try to increase the housing supply.

I ask the member for Carleton, how can we build 1.5 million homes in this province in the next 10 years if we



don't have the co-operation of the obstreperous opposition?

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I'd like to thank the member for his question. I agree with the member. At the end of the day, I find it very confusing that the NDP and even the Liberals find that building homes is a partisan issue. To me, building homes shouldn't be partisan. Every Ontarian deserves to be able to afford a home and to buy a home or to afford to rent a house. Basic economics says that there's a supply and demand issue. If there's huge demand with not enough supply, prices go up. It's economics 101, and I'm glad that we're teaching that in our curriculum now because I think financial literacy is very, very important as well.

So to answer your question, the reason that we are doing this is because Ontarians deserve to have homes. We need to get through the red tape, we need to get through the administrative delays, and we need to make sure that we can get homes built quicker.

I hope that the members of the opposition support this bill and support Ontarians so that Ontarians can actually buy—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

**Ms. Lise Vaugois:** Thank you for the comments on both sides of this room.

First of all, our objections are not about building homes or not building homes; they're about responsible development and observing democracy.

During your last term, you undermined the ability of regional conservation authorities to manage the lands under their trusteeship and that are part of their mandate responsibility, and because of that, developers are able to go in and build where it is not necessarily wise to build. In other words, they can ignore the local knowledge, which is the best knowledge of every place, and build regardless.

So what we are looking for is responsible development. When the members talk about red tape, they forget that environmental protections are often brushed off as a form of red tape.

The question is, will this government guarantee that environmental protections will be observed when local people with local knowledge will be silenced by not consulting fully with municipal councils?

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I'd like to thank the member for the question.

Mr. Speaker, as outlined in our government's More Homes for Everyone plan, we're establishing a Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team to provide advice on market housing initiatives. At the beginning of this year, our government did extensive consultations with municipalities, with experts, with stakeholders and with people across Ontario. The Premier and Minister Clark hosted the first-ever provincial municipal housing summit. The government also held a rural housing round table with smaller rural and northern municipalities. We held public consultations which received thousands of submissions from people across the province.

To answer the member's question, we have already done the work to make sure the voices of everyone across Ontario are being heard, and that is why we've brought this legislation forward. It is based upon the input we have received from the people of Ontario.

I would hope that the opposition supports the voices of the people of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I'm a little bit confused by this. The opposition, in their election platform, said that they wanted to build 1.5 million houses—as well as what we have said, that we want to build 1.5 million houses over the next 10 years.

In your speech, you said that we had a record number of housing starts, around 100,000 last year, and that was a record from 1987 or 1991—I can't recall which it was. There was also a record number of apartment starts from either 1987 or 1991.

Over the next 10 years, how do we get to 1.5 million if what we have always been doing is not going to get enough for us? Should we be doing something different, and does this bill allow Ontario to do something differently than we have been doing that obviously hasn't been working?

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I'd like to thank the member from Peterborough—Kawartha for the question.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** God's country.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** God's country; yes, it is.

That's an excellent question.

I'd like to think that imitation is the best form of flattery. When I first read that the official opposition was also promising 1.5 million homes, after we had already announced it, it came as a bit of a surprise to me. I had to go back and read it, and I thought, "Oh, I guess they like our idea. I guess they like our plan." And yet here they are today, opposing it. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make any sense to me, because at the end of the day Ontarians face the rising cost of living and a shortage of homes. We committed to helping more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and budgets.

This problem didn't happen overnight. This problem happened because of 15 years of neglect from the Liberal government, supported by the NDP. They ignored this problem. The people of Ontario elected us to fix this problem, and that's what we're doing. We're looking at the system. We're figuring out what works, what doesn't, and we're moving forward because, ultimately, we are here to support the people of Ontario.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** No, just a quick question, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** There isn't going to be time.

Further debate?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** The birth of my sons, Aleksandar and Ilija, has been my life's greatest joy, but it has been my life's greatest honour to represent the people of Humber River—Black Creek. I thank the voters of my

community and all those who supported me to make my re-election possible.

Speaker, the more things change, the more things sometimes stay the same. Once again, it's just after an election. We're debating a bill that was not discussed in the PC platform and again, contrary to the title, that has nothing to do with the title. What does this bill have to do with building more homes? It is not clear whatsoever from the actual bill itself. But what it does is strengthen mayors and give them the ability, almost unilaterally, to do whatever they want so long as it is the bidding of this provincial government, a government obsessed with control.

So today I am joined by some esteemed gentlemen from the ATU, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113. We're joined by the president, Marvin Alfred, and board members Aleem Tharani, Matthew Chau and Brian Connolly. They know a thing or two about transit, and they're concerned, just like we are all concerned, that one of the addictions of this government is an obsession with privatization. And so if you are giving municipalities—their mayors—all sorts of power to do whatever it is within your bidding, privatization is always that.

**1340**

As such, ATU 113 has provided me a submission that it is my honour to read today, that addresses this legislation and their concerns. It reads as follows:

“The Premier is proposing to give the mayors of Ottawa and Toronto extraordinary new powers. It's not exactly clear what problem he believes is being solved by this. We have followed city of Toronto politics for many years and we do not remember Mayor Tory ever losing a single significant vote. And here we are, in the middle of a municipal election campaign, proposing to make fundamental changes to the structure of the local government.

“These kind of changes and issues should be debated in an election, and they weren't. If stronger mayors are important for the province, the Premier should have raised the issue in the election. If stronger mayors are important for municipal governments, should they not also campaign on the issue? If there is some kind of impasse, some important issues that just can't be addressed through the normal process, shouldn't someone be able to tell us what they are?

“Items at council pass overwhelmingly through consent. Mayors already have a tight grip on city staff and unwavering support from their executives and council by controlling committee appointments. The more control a mayor gets, the more public engagement in local politics will decline. Election turnout will continue to drop as people feel cut off from their political leaders. Decisions will increasingly be made behind closed doors, with no transparency or public input.

“We knew the province would propose legislation to break the TTC apart. Mayor Tory and Toronto city council were petitioned to allow public input on the city's position, just to hear from the public through normal channels. They were refused. We know the TTC is planning to break the

transit system apart and contract it out piece by piece.” That's what they believe.

“We have asked for the decisions and the supporting decisions to be made in public, with scrutiny and debate. Local leaders are refusing to allow public debate on these important issues. A stronger mayor will only make this worse. Regardless of who occupies the job, more decisions will be made in secret, well-connected friends and lobbyists will have more power, and public institutions will continue to decline.

“Four former Toronto mayors of every political stripe recently wrote a joint statement opposing these changes. They have nothing to gain from their position. They are writing because they know how much the city has to lose. They know how effective municipalities can be when they work together transparently and in good faith with other governments.

“In the past, the province and city, along with Metrolinx and the TTC, worked together to expand transit. The relief line subway and several light rail projects were agreed to through transparent dialogue and engagement. The mayor was elected on his SmartTrack proposal to have Toronto pay to add stops to GO lines. The province went along with it. Light rail lines were slowly being extended across the city and the relief line was ready to be built. This steady progress did not end because the public or council opposed the mayor's will. It stopped when the Premier decided he did not have to listen to anyone.

“Now, the province does not present data or evidence to the public to support these decisions. Doug Ford”—sorry, the Premier—“made it illegal for the city of Toronto to do any studies on any transit projects in which the province declared an interest. In the next few years, city streets will be ripped up and binding contracts signed with private, for-profit builders before the public gets to see the real data and design decisions. We have seen in the ongoing disaster in Ottawa with privatized light rail line that, years later and over budget, still doesn't work. This government is bringing this to Toronto and opening the door to even more on bus service. Riders will lose services, the public will lose billions of dollars, but well-connected corporate friends will even get richer.

“Worse, the TTC privatization doesn't just help corporations make more money; it reduces wages and opportunities for workers. The TTC has always been a way for people, especially from equity-seeking groups, to gain access to entry-level jobs, get training and then advance. The current TTC leadership's contracting-out plan will turn every TTC job into a dead-end, low-wage job.

“These undemocratic changes to municipal government mean privatization could be rammed through even if a majority of elected councillors oppose it. John Tory was mayor through all these changes. He has seen how carefully studied and negotiated transit plans have been radically transformed in secret by this Conservative government. He has seen Toronto lose the legal right to comment on its own transit plans. Toronto has already been weakened by key decisions being moved out of

public debate and into secret backrooms. This proposal will only move more decisions into secret negotiations.”

This is what they have to say—it is an honour for me to read this—and they are concerned because building homes is not prescriptive in this legislation. What does this bill actually do? The mayor of Toronto appoints chairs. If you look, there is one mayor and 25 councillors who sit there. The mayor plus the executive committee is eight. He has control over a third of council, and he has not lost a single decisive vote. But that power is not enough—and I don't believe it was asked for. What is going to be allowed is that mayors will be allowed to appoint the heads of every single division. Again, a government obsessed with control and power will want appointments like these, or hope that they get doled out to people who will do their exact bidding. That is what the result of this is. Rather than have councils come to a decision, they want to make all those votes that go to city councillors go to nothing. Does that make any sense? Is this democratic in any way, shape or form? Consider the pressure on the CAO of the city, consider the pressure on division heads—that their job is on the line if they don't do what the mayor, whoever it is, says that they have to do. Budgets are already created by executive committees and mayors. Now, with this proposed veto power, which will ensure the mayor wins every vote—and they're winning them already—any amendment made to a budget can be simply turned down. How is this democratic at all?

Since, again, this debate and this bill do not specifically address building more homes, other than the title—what it really addresses is empowering mayors to do the bidding of this government, and it is all about control and their priorities.

I want to talk a little bit about their priorities and the words they use.

When it comes to the environment, they will never use the words “crisis” and “environment” together. You won't hear that. That's why, under their last term, they weakened the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and authorities across this province, who protect our water supplies, endangered species and many different important things. They thought that this wasn't necessary. Certainly, what's happening to the climate is not a crisis for them.

Health care: When Queen's Park resumed and we heard the minister speaking, the health care crisis was referred to as a “situation”—not a “crisis,” but a “situation.” They refuse every morning—as the NDP opposition tables bills for unanimous consent to call it a crisis and work on an emergency plan, they ignore it.

Housing: That's a crisis—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I apologize to the member, but I have to interrupt him.

Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will, therefore, be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader or his designate directs the debate to continue.

The Associate Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Stan Cho:** We'd like the debate to continue, Speaker.

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

We'll return to the member for Humber River–Black Creek to continue his remarks.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Thank you very much.

Why did we read this submission? Because the bidding of the government, the will of the government, is to seek privatization.

Let me go back to the health care situation. As questions were raised here in this House, they referred to our public health care system as simply status quo. And when pressured on the issue of privatization, even on our sacred jewel, our public health care system here in our province and across the country, they play coy. They are not willing to speak directly against it. In fact, we know what they think when it comes to the privatization of everything, including health care.

That is why ATU, its president, members of their board joined us today to share their concerns and the real spectre of what this will allow mayors to be able to do. This legislation would even go so far as to allow municipalities that have regional chairs that are not even elected to have these mayoral powers. Think about what kind of backroom control this could have, to give unelected members, who are politicians, in a sense—to get up there and make unilateral decisions, and the ability to veto those decisions and to have complete control over everything. It does not make any sense.

1350

When we talk about the crisis that exists in housing, there are many ways to deal with that.

This government likes to pat itself on the back so much that I think they may need to seek physiotherapy at some point.

I can say this: All of the stuff we heard about building and construction has been going on for a long time. As of 2015 until now, Toronto has had the leading number of cranes since 2015—that's before your government, by the way—and we've seen a continual year-over-year increase in the number of cranes. In this current time, last year, Toronto was home to 43% of all cranes in North America—that's Toronto. That was done under the current mayor and city of Toronto who, for the most part, control their own planning decisions. But again, this government wants complete control.

So a municipality like Toronto, where we are today, has huge teams of experts, planners who, when a submission is made—a developer comes along and says, “This is what I want to do”—go to the public and consult with the public. Again, that's something that this government doesn't like to do. They consider many factors such as: What is the impact on infrastructure? Do we have the existing infrastructure to support this development? Is it in keeping with the neighbourhood that's here? Does it make sense?

In fact, municipalities like Toronto have plans for neighbourhoods, where they take time, they look ahead and they propose what makes sense, so that if a developer

comes in and builds a new condominium, new homes, whatever it is—will the schools be able to have a place for new students to be able to learn; will the roads be able to deal with it; will we be able to get water to that property; will we be able to get waste away from that property? The list goes on and on.

We know that developers come with plans, very often, not in keeping with what the municipality hopes for, what communities hope for. In my own community alone, we have a development that's coming in where what would be adequate or what would make sense to the planners and even the community would be, let's say, 12 storeys, and developers want to come in with 30. Because of this government, they can bypass everything and go directly to the land tribunal, which, by the way, this government has weakened to not allow for community input or voices. And, certainly, outside of Toronto or in protective ravine systems they have weakened the TRCA even to have a voice.

So does this government really care about good housing, good development? No. We know that this government is all about their relationship with developers.

And when we talk about housing prices, does this government want to pursue other solutions? There are many ways to deal with it. They're going to get up and they're going to tell you, "Just continue to build more," rather than deal with the issue of the fact that rent in the city of Toronto is at \$2,000 a month on average. You still find vacancies in buildings. It's not like every single rental unit is taken and so the people are being turned away. But they don't have the guts or will to be able to address the fact that rent is out of control—so many different places, vacancies. The fact that you have properties out there that stand vacant while people are hoping for homes, other investors—the list goes on and on and on. They don't want to address any of these things.

Speaker, in the time I have left—this was something that was mentioned in the ATU submission to me that I read out. It was a letter that was written by former mayors of the city of Toronto, of all political stripes—and, yes, a conservative is in there. This is an excellent article and, I think, is required reading. If you haven't had a chance, well, here's your chance to hear it right now. They are speaking unilaterally against this legislation. It's in the Toronto Star, Monday, August 15. It's called "Former Toronto Mayors Warn 'Strong Mayors' Act Will Harm Local Democracy.

"Bill 3, the Strong Mayors, Building Housing Act, proposes a radical change to local government in Toronto and Ottawa, that risks ending meaningful democratic local government in these two cities.

"The legislation assigns the mayor, regardless of who that person might be, the power to do almost everything—from preparing and approving the budget, to appointing the chairs of committees, agencies, boards and commissions, the hiring and firing of city staff—and the power to direct them to do what he or she wants.

"Such a proposal eliminates any meaningful role of city councillors and therefore the voice of the local residents who elect them.

"It gives the mayor almost complete power—and by providing a veto to the mayor over decisions thought to 'potentially intervene with provincial priorities' (often defined in secret by the provincial cabinet)"—we heard that before—"the province is ensuring that the all-powerful mayor becomes accountable to the province, not to the electors in their city.

"This is profoundly undemocratic and a formula for poor decisions made in the interests of those very few who have access to the office of the Premier.

"Toronto and Ottawa are large, cosmopolitan cities: in Toronto's case, with a population larger than that of most provinces, whose residents must have the right to make democratic decisions about who represents them, and how their city government should work.

"The nearly three million residents of Toronto and the one million of Ottawa deserve better: local governments responding to their needs where decisions are made publicly and transparently.

"It is through the efforts of a local city councillor that residents can be engaged in the day-to-day business of building a city. There are numerous issues the city confronts that such public engagement supports—from development proposals, to transit routes and stops, to community facilities like libraries, to public health, housing, protection of nature and much more.

"There is no preordained answer to these questions. They are best answered by the community itself, brought together by someone they elected who is directly accountable to them—listening to each other, asserting their needs and supported and empowered by the public service, which in turn is accountable to the community through city council. Engaging people in such processes produces better answers, builds community, and helps create an engaged public, who are aware of their rights to participate in democratic processes, and use them frequently.

"Provincial and federal governments are marked by political party control, tight messaging, extreme reliance on polling and slavish adherence to the party leader. Municipal government has always been different—a place which, at its best, engages residents in the decisions that affect their lives and has debate among varying points of view, often reaching compromise on difficult issues, at council.

"The proposal to allow a mayor to have a veto on issues of provincial concern and set the budget undermines exactly that and gives the province far too much influence over decisions that should be those of the residents of Toronto and their elected officials. By doing so, it will lead to worse outcomes, and far less opportunity for residents to have a real voice.

"There are substantial risks to the proposal: A mayor who has such significant power will be subject to enormous pressures from lobbyists who want public decisions to go in their favour.

"Secondly, giving the mayor power to hire and fire senior staff destroys one of the basic principles of demo-

cratic government, which is the separation of the legislative and executive function, and eliminates the effective check and balance that exists today, where council as a whole has ultimate responsibility for the public service.

“Furthermore, taking away all effective influence from members of council means that it is far less likely for individuals of merit to want to run for an already challenging role—discouraging exactly the kind of forward-looking and publicly minded people who we need on council.

“It’s the kind of proposal that no party would run on in an election, because it has so little merit. Perhaps that’s why we didn’t hear of it until after the election was over.

“Collectively, we have been mayors of Toronto for more than half of the last 50 years. We all worked with systems where, like every other member of council, we had one vote. The mayor does not need the powers proposed in this legislation: The prestige of the mayor’s position provides more than enough of a platform for the mayor to provide leadership and have a strong influence on city council’s decisions on the city-wide issues on which they were elected.

“We urge all members of the Legislature to reject this legislation.”

I thank former mayors David Crombie, Barbara Hall, Art Eggleton, David Miller and John Sewell for writing this incredibly important opinion piece, and I thank the Toronto Star for publishing this so that we could all hear it today and read it.

They and all of us have laid it very clear: This has nothing to do with building new homes. This is all about power, tabled by a government that’s obsessed with control and power. Now they have a means to reach out to the mayors in every municipality—because it’s not going to end with Toronto and Ottawa—to say, “You do our bidding.” This is absolutely and undeniably undemocratic. It should be voted down. The members of this government themselves, if they take the time truly to understand what’s at stake here, I believe would be voting against this in that sense.

I thank the ATU Local 113 and its members for being here, and I thank all of you who have fought against this.

1400

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** The member from Humber River–Black Creek offered a quotation. I’d like to offer this chamber a quotation from the Toronto regional board of trade—the type of people who actually build houses, the type of people who actually build rentals. They say, “Toronto faces numerous city-wide challenges, from housing, land use, transit, transportation, budget, economic development and climate. Effective, timely solutions require a chief executive with clear authority to set an agenda, appoint senior city staff, and bring forward policy solutions to council with greater influence over outcomes....

“The board has advocated stronger powers for Toronto’s mayor for nearly two decades. Now is the time to act.”

That, Mr. Speaker, is what the Toronto regional board of trade says.

My question is as follows: While we are in a housing supply crisis, why does the member opposite oppose the Toronto regional board of trade and why does the member not believe that now is the time to act?

1400

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** [*Inaudible*] a single vote that the mayor of Toronto has not won, not a single vote. Mayors I have read out from the city of Toronto, who represent half of the last 50 years, have spoken against it, and here you are citing the board of trade. The mayor already has the control to be able to do what it needs to do. The city of Toronto has 43% of all cranes in North America and approves, year after year, thousands upon thousands upon thousands of new housing units that they carefully consider with all parameters.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, I’m quite happy that you ended talking about housing. We all agree that it doesn’t matter where you live in Ontario; there are many, many people facing difficulty finding housing. One part of this would be to have more affordable housing projects going up throughout Ontario, including in my own riding.

Could you tell me, after having read Bill 3, Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, how many times do they talk about homes in the act? Do they specifically talk about affordable housing in the act, and how we will make sure that the people who actually need housing get housing through this act? I haven’t been able to find it, but you usually read those things better than I do.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I would disagree on one fact: You know the material here very well. And it’s an honour to work with you.

We have already demonstrated that this, other than the title, has nothing to do with housing. It is about giving more power to already powerful mayors. I have noted in the speeches made by government members that they tend not to group the words “affordable” and “housing” together. What they have said a lot of is “market housing,” and we are facing an affordable housing situation. Governments have the ability to create non-profit housing, co-operative housing—there are many solutions to this, like implementing rent control. They are not interested in any of those. Not at all. Not one.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank the member for Humber River–Black Creek for his address to the assembly today.

I was intrigued by the letter of former mayors—none of them running for mayor today. All of them, with the exception of David Crombie, would have credentials that are anything but Progressive Conservative or Conservative—but David Crombie has certainly identified himself as otherwise recently. David Miller was one of the first proponents of a strong mayor, and now, of course, every one of them would be signing on most enthusiastically to anything that was opposing Premier Doug Ford. This is their mantra: “It’s Doug Ford, so we will oppose it.”

What Doug Ford stands for is building 1.5 million homes in the province of Ontario, and by having the strong mayors, that is going to accelerate and break down some of the barriers.

I've got to tell you, the NDP love to take these positions—"There are other ways to build homes." Every time there's a protest against a development, if it's against the developer, the local NDP member will be right there, along with those protesters against the development. They say they want to build things, too, but every time there is an opportunity to be against building, the NDP are there. That's not how we're going to get 1.5 million homes built—

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

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I don't think we got a question with the mike on, so that's fine.

What I'm going to say—and I'm going to say it again: This is a government obsessed with control, not just of its own members, not just of everything that happens here, obviously, in the province of Ontario or here in this House; this is a government of control that extends all the way down to municipalities. They are tabling legislation where—we already have mayors who have power through appointments and other ways. We have a mayor in the city of Toronto who has not lost a single important vote. These mayors have not asked for this legislation whatsoever.

We've reviewed the legislation, and it shows nothing to do with building new homes. I've shown that the city of Toronto builds thousands of new homes. We have 43% of all the cranes in North America here.

What exactly is this legislation about if it is not rewarding mayors who listen to your bidding?

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to thank the member from Humber River–Black Creek for his comments on this particular bill.

There has been a pattern that we've been seeing that has been rising from this government for the last—it's continuing in this term, but it was evidently there in the last term, and that's keeping the public out in the dark. The consultation we see where we have a lot of legislation that is going through committee is not going out to the public—we are not engaging with them. They are not being invited—sorry. They are being invited, but the windows are very limited; they're very short. It's very difficult for people to engage as far as this process.

This is one of the things I heard, while I was at AMO for the last three days, from some of the mayors: "Where does this come from? Why wasn't there any engagement with us? What does it mean for me? What does it mean for the mayor of Sudbury or London or North Bay?" This is a piece of legislation that could potentially impact them.

In the member's opinion, why wasn't this broadly consulted with mayors across this province?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** They didn't consult with mayors. They didn't make it part of their platform. We literally just came out of an election, and then they talk about a mandate

on issues they didn't put in front of the public whatsoever, which is giving all this power to mayors.

There is no interest by this government to give any sort of power to those who dissent from them. They're not interested in consultation. They're interested in affirmation of everything they do. That is the interest of this government. We saw it for the last four years, and at some point it has got to stop.

Last session, we saw member after member leave this government. We had probably one of the largest groups of independents because they could not take the amount of control imposed even internally on them. And they're now trying to control all the municipalities in Ontario. It has to stop.

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I thank the member opposite for his contributions to this debate, although I'm very disappointed by the drive-by smears that have been happening in the speech. I don't usually expect that to hear that from this member, who is a member I respect greatly. Maybe it's the influence of the election; I don't know.

There are two main reasons why Tory gets his agenda through in Toronto city hall. It's because his staff works very hard behind the scenes and, frankly, he doesn't bring forward things he's going to fail on because that wouldn't be good for him as a mayor.

Municipalities are creatures of the province. We're trying to make municipalities work better, not to control them. We're offering the mayor new powers.

I would ask the member opposite if he doesn't think it's important that the person who runs and offers a vision for the city of Toronto be able to get his points across and be able to achieve the vision that he ran on, which I think in the last election some 500,000 people voted for, and not be opposed indefinitely by people who are trying to veto any progress that this city can make.

I would refer you to Chris Selley's article where he asked the city's progressive faction to put on their dry Pull-Ups and try to engage on the issue.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** We have already demonstrated that the mayor has power. No one on the side of the government members has been able to give a single example. Now you're saying, "Well, he didn't put forward things he couldn't win." You can't name a single one.

The mayor of Toronto has lots of power and has won every single vote. That's just simply the facts. Don't take it from me; take it from the many mayors I read in my submission today.

1410

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** It's certainly my pleasure to rise on this beautiful summer day to speak on Bill 3, the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, as introduced by our Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

As the Premier stated in his remarks this week at the AMO conference, Ontario unfortunately is in a housing crisis, full stop. I agree with the Premier, and the real answer to a housing crisis, to the problem we have, is really more supply. I think there's a consensus on that.

Ontario must build homes. We must build them faster than we have been building them. We need to do something different, and we need to keep the housing costs down when we're doing the building so that people can afford those homes.

Mr. Speaker, I will speak plainly: Housing is an issue impacting all Ontarians, and the best way to solve it is to build. We will build Ontario, so all Ontarians have a place to call home. This was our commitment to the people of Ontario in the last election, and we're going to get it done. With renewed vigour and an enhanced mandate, we're using time in this chamber to put in place measures to fulfill our promise, and this government will ensure that housing gets built across the province of Ontario.

Attainable housing is important for everyone—seniors who are looking to downsize but cannot find a suitable home; a young Ontarian unable to step onto that first rung of the housing ladder; new immigrants looking for a place to start their life here; and families who cannot move up to a larger home to accommodate and raise their children. These are real people with real problems, housing problems, and they need real solutions. The homes they need will not all be the same, but we know they need more homes, and when the demand is so great, the solution has to include more supply.

Bill 3 introduces concrete measures to address these problems. The government's housing task force made five key suggestions, and this bill focuses on two of them. The task force recommended ending exclusionary municipal rules that block or delay new housing, often adding significantly to its cost, and depoliticizing, as well, the housing approvals process. Simply put, there is too much politics in housing. I know it's funny for a politician to say there's too much politics, but there is too much politics in housing, and as a result of politics, entire projects are abandoned or diminished, as often happens. It certainly happens a lot in my city, the city of Toronto.

We cannot have desperately needed housing projects being stopped due to political considerations. The needs of a local candidate for city council or a local councillor should not be prioritized over the needs of the community they are meant to serve—the seniors, those young people, those new immigrants, those growing families I just mentioned. Simply put, when councillors prioritize saving parking lots over building homes, things need to change—and that is an example that happened in my riding recently.

Our housing crisis has real costs. In my home, in Toronto, the C.D. Howe Institute has calculated that delays for housing approvals add \$168,000 to the cost of every single new detached home which is built—\$168,000. It wasn't that long ago—I'm not that old, I don't think—when that amount could have paid for the cost of an entire home, and that's just the cost of the delay. In Toronto, the median household income is about \$85,000—or at least it was in 2020. So we can all do the math. The delay means that the average family will have to save all of their income for two full years to cover the cost of the delay. Well, that's prohibitive and requires families to save for years and years on top of that to cover the cost of

the actual home. This is ridiculous. These delays cost families significant, significant money, which adds unnecessary stress to their daily lives and prevents them from being able to do what they do, to live where they want to live, and to raise their families in the way that they would like.

When young Ontarians look at the price of homes, many give up on their dreams of home ownership. Some even look to move to jurisdictions where housing is more affordable, thereby depriving Ontario of their much-needed contributions to this economy. Remember, we have 375,000 jobs looking for people to fill them. So expediting and removing the political logjam adding so much to the price premiums on housing is a good first step in getting this housing crisis under control.

As I said, this is an issue that affects all Ontarians. It is also an issue that can be exacerbated at the local level. We were elected to solve this problem, and I am happy to speak in support of solutions to these important problems. Our government, of course, trusts Ontarians to elect the right local leaders. At the end of the day, it is a local issue as well as a provincial one. Unlike the suggestions from the members opposite, we do trust Ontarians to elect the right local leaders. The province sets the standards, but municipalities, especially in our largest cities, where most of the population is, have to act.

That's why we're setting the bar higher for mayors and making it easier to hold them accountable based on the decisions they make. After all, as the Premier has said, mayors are “accountable for everything. But they have the same single vote as a single councillor.” So how can they achieve their agenda? They're one vote. They can try to be persuasive, but they don't have a lot of power to make sure that they can achieve the agenda that they ran on, and that is an agenda that the people of Ontario—the people of Toronto, in this case—would like to hold them accountable for achieving.

If passed, Bill 3 would give the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa the tools they need to move forward on provincial priorities. It would give the mayors the tools they need to take action on behalf of their constituents to achieve the agenda that they ran on. People expect their leaders to take this crisis seriously. However, our current system often stymies implementation of the solutions Ontarians expect.

Ontario residents, our constituents, expect their leadership to get things done. They expect mayors to get things done. However, on this issue, without any reforms, progress has been entirely too slow. This is why our government is empowering mayors so they can do what their and our constituents expect and work on building more attainable housing.

Another tool that Bill 3 offers is that it will also allow mayors to select municipal department heads and deliver budgets. These new powers would help our municipal partners deliver on priorities the province shares with them, such as housing. Strong-mayor systems will empower municipal leaders to work more effectively with the province to reduce timelines for development, standardize processes and address local barriers to increasing

the housing supply. These new powers will be especially relevant as the province works with its municipal partners to expand the footprint of our transit-oriented communities so that more people can live, work and play near the convenience of public transit. This is critical to build the kind of sustainable communities that I think we all want. This is why Toronto and Ottawa must go first. Over a third of all of the anticipated growth will happen in Toronto and Ottawa. With Toronto and Ottawa leading the way in growth, Toronto and Ottawa also need to lead the way in housing development and process reform.

Furthermore, the leadership in these cities has already shown a commitment to building sustainable communities, building transit, building amenities and, importantly, building homes. The province needs empowered partners. As the Premier likes to say, this crisis requires an all-hands-on-deck approach. That's why it's so heartening to know that the leadership of Toronto and Ottawa is willing to work with the province and this government to get shovels in the ground and get people into homes.

Our government is keeping costs down. It's building 1.5 million homes over 10 years to help address the housing supply crisis. This crisis is locking generations of Ontario residents out of the housing market and locking others into housing that does not meet their current needs. Our government understands that we can only succeed in this by working with our partners. We know that empowered mayors will be better placed to collaborate with the province on housing and other initiatives that are critical to their communities. Our government trusts Ontarians to elect the right local leaders to prioritize their needs, like housing. As the population of Ontario grows, housing needs to keep up, and we need our municipal partners to help us make that happen. The government looks forward to working with our municipal partners as we tackle this crisis. People expect action on their priorities, and with this legislation, we are giving our municipal partners, the mayors, the opportunity to address the priorities.

1420

The time for action on housing is now. It's time to build Ontario, and the province and our municipal partners, Toronto and Ottawa, need to all work together to ensure housing is more attainable for all people.

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

**Ms. Lise Vaugeois:** I have heard about empowered mayors, but I've also heard about disempowered councillors and disempowered communities who will be losing substantial access to their voice at council. There's also nothing to say that any family will be able to afford any single one of these homes, because there is nothing in the bill that addresses this.

So how does the bill, or how does your government, intend to address accessibility and affordability?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North for your question.

Obviously, our plan is to build more housing, as we've said—1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. Part of that will be rental housing. I think we've already made

clear that some of our plans from earlier, our More Homes for Everyone Act and our housing supply action plan etc., have resulted in historic numbers of housing being built—the most in 30 years, both rental starts and housing starts. We believe that if we have more supply, the price of housing will come down and that there will be more available for more people. That's why we're looking at attainable housing. We think this is really important. It is the way that Japan, for example—Tokyo was able to address their expensive housing crisis and get prices to a more manageable level for their population.

And honestly, the other solutions that we've had in place over the last 30 years have not resulted in more housing for anyone, and it has become more expensive.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank the member for Eglinton–Lawrence for her address today.

The opposition always talks about how we need to make it more affordable—that it's too expensive, that people can't afford it—yet they always support the things that lead to a \$168,000 increase in the cost of building a home. It only stands to reason that some portion of that will fall to any rental property that is built in a building that is purposely built for rental—and particularly those at lower incomes. So they continue to do the things that actually add to the cost of building housing, whether it's rental, whether it's high-rise rental units or individual homes, and then they complain that people can't afford to rent them.

I ask the member, when will the NDP and the Liberal opposition understand that all they continue to do is to add to the cost of a home? Be it free-standing, be it rental—it doesn't matter what it is—they always standing in the way of trying to get the homes built only does one thing: It makes them more expensive—which is completely, again, what they claim to believe in.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for his excellent question. I couldn't agree more.

I do think that we have to look at history and what has happened. The policies that we've had over the last 30 years have resulted in housing prices going up and us not having a supply of available housing for anybody. We can see that this is what happens with those same policies in many other jurisdictions. In New York, for example, it's the same result, but apparently—I have to agree with my friend—the opposition don't seem to realize that. They don't seem to like to look at the facts to find out. What I'm concerned about a lot is young people who just cannot find an affordable place to live, anywhere. We need to address this situation.

We're giving the mayors tools. They don't have to use them. They can choose not to use them. But they have tools. So it isn't an assault on democracy. It's an opportunity to make our municipal departments work better to build more housing, which people need.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Kiiwetinoong.



**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** The housing crisis is a mental health crisis. The housing crisis is a suicide crisis.

I know the government talks about “all Ontarians,” and I know that sometimes we are left out—as First Nations, as Indigenous people—in the policy approaches of this government. They talk about real people.

If you're not going to invest in Indigenous, First Nations housing, what is your plan, on-reserve, to address the housing crisis in our communities?

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

As Ontarians face the rising cost of living and a shortage of homes, our government was re-elected with a strong mandate to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and budget. That, of course, includes Indigenous Ontarians.

Our policies have delivered historic results in getting more housing built faster, and complement, really, our more than \$4.3-billion investment over the past three years to grow and enhance community and supportive housing for vulnerable Ontarians and for Indigenous people. We're working hard to make the housing available, in all the types of housing needed.

I was just speaking with the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services about the need for more supportive housing. It's an important priority for a lot of people in our government.

We're going to make sure that we build all kinds of housing for all the people who need it in Ontario.

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

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** Thank you, my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence, for your presentation on giving more powers to the mayors.

Sometimes the mayor and council can't even make a decision on a zoning application or building application, and sometimes they have to fight with the bureaucracy and red-tapeism at city hall. This legislation will give a little bit of power to the mayor to move a little bit more projects—small developments in terms of zoning applications, building permits, not only the official plan amendment. They had to go through too much red tape.

My question to the member: How would these proposed changes affect our housing supply? We talk about supply and demand based on the market economy. How will this proposed legislation at least help to increase the supply?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member opposite, my colleague for Markham–Thornhill, for the question.

The way that the bill helps improve supply is, it gives the mayor an opportunity to drive policy forward. Mayors—and I think Mayor Tory would agree—know that we need more housing in this city. But the mayor has one vote. He's one vote amongst all of the city councillors, even though, if you think about it, about 500,000 people, as I indicated earlier, voted for the mayor, and only around 10,000 vote for most of the councillors—for some, as many as 30,000. We have 25 city councillors. So it's very hard for the mayor to be able to get the agenda through. But I think it will help.

This is what I would like to say: The mayor takes the broader picture for the whole city. Who speaks for the city, when each individual councillor, of course, is speaking for their own area? I think it's important to have that broader perspective for the city, to say, “These are the things that matter to our city. Let's improve the city as a whole. Let's look beyond our own little corner of the city and think broadly about what's good for the city as a whole.”

**1430**

**Mr. Tom Rakocvic:** I want to congratulate the member on her re-election and for her submission and speech today.

She said, for instance, the mayor of Toronto has 500,000 votes. But councillors receive cumulatively, across the city, the same number of votes, essentially, as the mayor does. People vote for councillors and expect them to have the paramouncy on local issues, the understanding of local issues. When you're in a city of millions, you don't expect a response from a mayor when something goes wrong.

So what is it about this government? Why do they want to weaken local councillors in their ability to make decisions when the mayors of municipalities already have overwhelming powers to be able to get their agendas across?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to my friend the member opposite from Humber River–Black Creek. It's an important question.

I think you said yourself that what the mayor has is stature, as the mayor, to try to influence folks, but the mayor doesn't have a lot of powers per se.

At least in your speech, you talked about his stature being influential etc. I think that isn't sufficient, in a big city the size of Toronto and a big city the size of Ottawa, to realize the vision the mayor has run on and which people would like to hold them accountable for. The mayor has not got the tools to be able to achieve those results for the city.

I think that people running for council—yes, they are also democratically elected to represent their area, but the mayor is the one person on city council who has to look at what is good for the entire city. I think that part is so important that we need to give the mayor more tools to realize a broader vision and to make a better city.

I'm certainly looking forward to passing this legislation and having the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa be able to avail themselves of more powers to achieve their vision to make better cities here in Ontario.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** This is the first time I've had had the opportunity to stand and speak freely since my re-election, so I'd like to take the time to thank the constituents of Hamilton Mountain for giving me the opportunity to, once again, serve your interests here in the people's House, the Ontario Legislature, and the many people who helped on my campaign, ensuring my re-election. I'm eternally grateful to all of those people who truly put their sweat, blood and tears on the line, talking to the people of Hamilton Mountain, and making sure that I

had the ability to stand here and to represent them. Thank you.

Speaker, speaking of being out and knocking on doors and talking to constituents, the number one issue that I heard, for sure, was affordability; it was the cost of housing. It was, “Where are my kids going to live? Where are my grandchildren going to live?”

Young people not being able to afford to buy a home, people not being able to afford to pay the rent in places that they were staying, renovictions happening on a regular basis so that landlords could bump up the rent—those are the types of things that we can control.

Good legislation could be brought forward to this House to help those matters, to stop the renovictions, to make sure that there is real rent control in place so that they cannot flip a home or an apartment into the hundreds of dollars, pushing people onto the streets, pushing people into the unscrupulous, awful conditions that we’re hearing on a regular basis.

There was an article in the Spectator, I believe it was two days ago, talking about McMaster students not being able to afford to eat. They were struggling just to be able to find a place to live. One quote from a young person talked about having a room the size of a closet that was just big enough for a single bed, at an enormous cost to that young person, and the maybe \$50 a week that they were going to have to be able to eat for that week. I’m quite sure that when we’re sending our young people to university, and we’re looking at them to be the next leaders in our communities, to be the next doctors, to be the next lawyers, to be the next engineers—why are we doing that to them, with such a struggle? They can’t afford the housing, they can’t afford to eat, they’re barely getting by, and we’re expecting them to be the next leaders of our communities.

When we talk about housing, we should be talking about the issues that actually could be addressed. This bill that has been put forward, Bill 3, which was an absolute priority for this government—we have a major health care crisis happening in our province, and the number one bill that this government brings forward is powers to give the strong-mayors powers. The title says “Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act,” but if you look through this bill, which I just did as we were sitting here talking—I’ve looked through it and cannot find the word “housing” at all, except in the title. That is not how we address the housing crisis in this province. This should not be the priority for this government coming back into the 43rd Parliament. This is not the message that I know the members across heard while they were knocking on doors—if they knocked on doors, if they talked to their constituents. This is not the message that was sent back to this Legislature. We’re not even quite sure why this is the first bill being brought back.

My colleagues who have spent time at AMO the last few days come back with the messages that the mayors they talked to—nobody wants this. Nobody wants these super powers.

Quite frankly, as I read through it and try to understand what this bill is doing, it seems quite dangerous. It seems so dangerous to give one person the power of hiring and firing the executive people like the city managers, the directors of departments. Who are those people going to be beholden to? What kind of answers and solutions do you expect out of those people if they’re beholden to a single mayor? To me, that does not make any sense whatsoever. And then to put it under the cloud of affordable housing, of ensuring that you’re fixing a housing crisis, something that people are so desperate for—they’re so desperate for help in housing, and you provide a bill that gives one person super powers.

How is it that this is the first act of business from this government in the 43rd Parliament? Is it coincidental that one of the first acts of this same Premier in 2018 was to change the Municipal Elections Act then, in the middle of an election? What is it that this Premier—what’s it going to take for him to give up on the past, on his past life at the city of Toronto and all of his hurt feelings for himself and his family during that time? What’s it going to take for him to stop imposing his power over our Municipal Elections Act during an election? That’s the question. That’s the question that people of this province want to know. They want to know why this is a priority when we have a health care crisis. They want to know why this government is talking about housing, when that’s a pure crisis, but the only thing that they’re doing is talking about it. They’re putting nothing in legislation to actually correct the issue of housing. Nothing. Do builders have issues? Are there problems with the Planning Act? Absolutely. There is no denying that. But giving mayors powers of hiring and firing over their executives—that doesn’t fix the Planning Act. Nothing in there fixes the Planning Act.

Is there stuff in here that helps encourage council to do better by the Planning Act, to do better by ensuring that we have multi-residential homes, that we have rent control? Is there anything to support a council to do those things? No, there is not. What this bill actually does is take power away from councillors, who know their area the best and who were elected by their communities, to the beholding of one person who has all the power. That’s not how we fix the housing crisis in this province—and I’m sure all of you know that, but that seems to be the case anyway.

**1440**

I want to share—one of my constituents sent a voice mail, and my office transcribed it. He says, “This is horrible and forgoes democratic principles. It is terrible. It should be illegal.” He doesn’t know what I can do but “hopes that the opposition is strongly against this.”

He goes on to say, “We should not even elect a city council if the mayor has so much power.” This is what’s coming back from our average constituents. I have no idea who this gentleman is, but he felt empowered enough to make sure that I understood that his feeling on this was that it’s wrong.

People’s priorities in our communities, as you all know, if you knocked on a door, are health care and affordability.

It wasn't about mayors' powers. There was nothing talked about that included the mayors' powers. And quite frankly, none of you talked about the mayors' powers either during the campaign, nor did the Premier while he was running. Nobody talked about this. This was a surprise legislation after the campaign. Nowhere during the campaign did it talk about the strong-mayor powers to ensure that this would be the number one issue coming back to the Legislature in the 43rd Parliament.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It should have been health care.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It should have been health care, and it should have been housing for real—real issues to fix housing, real issues to ensure that those same students I just talked about are not sleeping in closets with a single bed and less than \$50 a week to eat. I'm sure none of your kids are doing that. Let's make sure other kids in this province have the opportunity too.

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

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Last week, the Toronto Star columnist Martin Regg Cohn wrote in support of Bill 3. He wrote that the Premier “got it right with” our stronger mayors plan:

“A weak mayor system keeps Toronto weak..... municipal amalgamation, paired with mayoral emasculation, equals political gridlock.

“By restoring balance to the equation, Ontario can help Toronto balance its budgets, sparing us the” usual fiscal crisis on council.

I want to give the member an opportunity to comment on the article that Martin Regg Cohn wrote.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It sounds like the staff wrote that question. The member, quite clearly, wasn't clear on what he was even saying. What we need to be talking about—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the government members to allow the member for Hamilton Mountain to respond.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you, Speaker. Making sure that we're actually having a fulsome debate in this Legislature should be really important, right? Talking about what we're hearing on the street, how does the member think that this act is truly going fix the housing act when it comes to our students, when it comes to our kids? How are they going to be able to afford a house? How are they going to be able to afford the rent? Maybe the member can point out to me where it says in this legislation, in Bill 3, where it actually talks about fixing the housing crisis in our province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Further questions?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I want to thank the member for her submission today. I want to draw a parallel to what this bill would be like if this was the province. I would like all people to consider this fact: The Premier of Ontario, arguably the most powerful person in Ontario, has one vote in this chamber—a single vote, no veto power—and yet despite this, through appointments and through the power that he has over his own government, he's able to win every single vote in this chamber. He doesn't require

these other additions to his power; he's able to do it in all the same ways that mayors do it to win all their votes in their own municipalities. Now, super powers are being given to mayors only if they fall in line with what the Premier of this province wants, who already gets everything he wants.

Do you see any concerns, given the priorities this government has shown to give these powers to mayors who are not even asking for it?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you to the member for Humber River–Black Creek. Yes, I have great concerns with these kinds of powers going to a single person. We definitely have seen what the powers of this Premier can do to the province and what it does to people, and the position that we're in today.

His priorities are backwards. We should be talking about health care. We should be talking about real solutions to housing. We should be talking about affordability. There are so many things that we could be talking about instead of increasing the power of a couple of mayors, which aren't even going to cover the whole entire province. How are they going to deal with regional chairs? How are they going to deal with those unelected folks who are appointed to these positions? I guess we're going to have to wait until we see the regulations to actually understand fully the impact that this legislation is going to have on the people of this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Sault Ste. Marie.

**Mr. Ross Romano:** My question is really—a bit of a confusion that I'm sensing here in the members opposite. The member referred to the 42nd Parliament; we started off with a bill at that point in time that reduced the size of Toronto city council. I'm not sure if anybody can help me, but I don't think the sky fell when that bill passed. In fact, as far as I remember, it seems like things actually worked out a lot better.

Now we're proposing another measure to deal with a crisis that is out there. We need the million and a half homes we want to build in Ontario over the next eight to 10 years. We need a lot of housing right across the country, and we are really, really struggling with being able to find that housing, so we're trying to [*inaudible*] a measure here to try to remedy that situation, and all I hear is “no.” All I hear is complaining from the opposition.

Now, we went into this last election, and the opposition party has been reduced to the teeny, tiny little caucus that we see before us today. I'm just wondering if the member opposite will ever learn to say yes. That's my question, Mr. Speaker.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Listen: I'm pretty sure that the 18% of the province who actually did vote for you didn't vote for you for a mandate to bring this bill forward as your first action. There were a lot—do you know what? I can't even say there were a lot of promises that happened on behalf of this government during the election, because really, nobody ever heard from them. They didn't show up to debates, they kept quiet, they hid from the media, and now we know why. We know why, Speaker: because they

had an agenda to come here to increase the powers of the mayors, so that the Premier could probably make sure he kept control of those mayors as well.

So he's looking for more power. This is all this is about. There is nothing in here that benefits the people of this province. The only thing this bill does is benefit the Premier.

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

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for her comments. Like the member from Hamilton Mountain, I heard a lot on the doorsteps about the need for affordable housing. I heard it from families of all types and sizes, whether they owned their own home or they were renting. Another thing I've heard a lot about was tenants who risked being evicted from the housing that they had, because their landlord was trying to push them out, knowing that the landlord could jack up the rent to whatever they wanted for the next tenant.

What I did not hear anything about from any of my constituents—I did not hear it from my Conservative opponent, either—was a demand for any additional powers for the mayor. Even the mayor of Ottawa said he's not interested in additional powers. So I'm wondering if the member can comment on whether it would have been a better option for the government to in fact introduce real rent control and vacancy control to address the housing crisis, rather than giving mayoral powers nobody is asking for.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you so much for that question, because you're absolutely right. I knocked on thousands of doors during the election, as I know you knocked on doors for, I believe, a couple of years before the election—which is exactly the reason why she's here: because she was out listening to her constituents, hearing that the issues were affordability, housing: "How are we going to get our family into a housing market?"

The rental market is a big enough problem. We have people who are literally piling up into rooms to be able to have a roof over their heads. We have tents that are building up and building up and building up, because people do not have affordable housing. That could have been the first measure that came before this House—making sure that we were dealing with the renovations, that we were dealing with rent stabilization, rent control. Instead, this government has removed any protections that there were in front, and then their first course of action is to provide the strong-mayors bill, which is nothing—I'm curious, actually. I would hope that maybe with the next question that comes forward, the member could take the time to tell me that their constituents specifically asked for this bill over health care and housing.

1450

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

**Mr. Amarjot Sandhu:** Mr. Speaker, as someone who came to this country as an international student, I can tell you from experience how difficult and challenging it is to buy a house in the province of Ontario because of the

inaction of the previous government, because they didn't do anything to fix this crisis. We are the government that believes in action and that is why, this past election, we made a commitment to the people of Ontario that we would keep costs down and build 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years, so that more people can afford to buy a house in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why the opposition continues to say no and oppose giving the tools to our local leaders to get things done. Why?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** One of the things that I've definitely been talking to constituents in my riding about—because I border onto Mohawk College and McMaster is right there, and we have a lot of international students who are paying the highest tuition rates in the country right here, and this government has done nothing to support that. They also have to be able to afford to pay the rent. There is nothing in this legislation to support that. They're barely able to keep up with meals and food. There are food fridges on campus, there are food banks being put up on a regular basis to help support these same students.

Why is the member supporting legislation that's going to do absolutely nothing to address the concerns that he knows that he himself, his constituents and other international students who come to our country are also facing?

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

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** It is really an honour to rise to speak on second reading of Bill 3, the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022. This legislation will provide the city of Toronto and my beautiful city of Ottawa with the additional tools needed to advance provincial priorities. We've heard many of those issues over the last few days of discussions at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and I believe if we were listening, as my side of the House was, that we understand those problems that were brought to us.

One of the provincial priorities is to create more housing in this great province of Ontario. During the election campaign, it was loud and clear that we need to address the housing shortage Ontario currently faces. We heard that message and that's why our government has a plan to deliver more housing, and the legislation will help us reduce red tape and allow municipalities to remove barriers to creating homes. We know that too many families are frozen out of the housing market, particularly younger families, and we believe that everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

Under the leadership of the Premier and my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, our government passed the More Homes, More Choice Act and More Homes for Everyone Act in the last Parliament. Our government has an ambitious goal of increasing the housing supply in Ontario by 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. The most populous province in Canada will continue to grow, and our government needs to ensure that new housing is created to meet that growth. It is expected that one third of this population growth will take place in the city of Toronto and the city of Ottawa.

For example, my riding, Kanata–Carleton, is home to approximately 110,000 people. We've grown by 10% between 2011 and 2016, according to the Canadian census, and neighbourhoods continue to grow. At 10%, our growth is above the average provincial growth of 4.6%. If passed, this legislation will give the city of Ottawa's mayor the strong powers they need to ensure that housing demands are met.

I have to emphasize that this is a tool that mayors have the choice to use or not. It is a tool in their tool box; it is not a super power. This tool will provide an additional array of supports in terms of the creation of housing that can be developed more quickly and deliver on the shared municipal and provincial goal to increase the supply of housing. We will empower the newly elected Ottawa mayor and city council to work more effectively with the provincial government to reduce timelines for development, standardize processes and address local barriers to increasing the housing supply.

Mr. Speaker, speed matters. To this effect, implementing the strong-mayor system in Ottawa will allow the mayor some level of autonomy and, if needed, to veto bylaws that would obstruct broader priorities, like the creation of new housing, to take one example. Again, I want to emphasize the importance of a home being foundational for a stable society and for stable families and individuals. And again, I'm going to point out that mayors do not have to use this tool. It is a tool in their tool box. Our hope remains that mayors and councils work together to proactively enable the conditions to increase the housing supply which we so badly need. Bill 3 is intended to support the mayors of Ottawa and Toronto to get it done for their communities.

Mr. Speaker, we're elected here as voices for our communities. People are depending on us to do what is necessary, to take sometimes difficult decisions, to address some very complicated issues of our society, and to continually work to make progress. That's what we're doing. Bill 3 is also intended to give mayors the flexibility to fix things faster, to achieve better outcomes in the housing crisis. We've seen the impact of COVID on the supply chain and the impact that it has on prices. We know that every day, every month, every year that goes by that a house does not get built, it will cost more in the future—when the demand is now.

If they choose to, mayors would be able to create and reorganize departments, as well as appoint chairs and vice-chairs of committees and local boards, if any are identified by regulation, and establish committees. Our democracy is built on checks and balances, and that's what this is. We're creating a bill in an effort to create a supply of housing that is going to help people in our society across the board.

Additionally, the mayor could bring matters before council consideration related to provincial priorities. Implementing strong-mayor powers in Ottawa and Toronto would provide the tools these two communities may need to break the barriers that have historically slowed down progress—and I'm going to say it again: Speed matters. A house not built this year is going to cost

us more. It's going to be harder for young families to afford a place to live, and a place to live is a foundation for a stable society.

If passed, the proposed changes will come into effect on November 15, 2022, so that the new mayor and city council can utilize these powers accordingly.

By increasing the housing supply with the support of our municipal partners—and it is a true partnership—we will ensure that there is a good mix of housing available for all Ontarians. This must be the goal. This must be what we are dedicated to achieving. And we must create the environment in which that can be achieved.

Speaker, we must acknowledge that our communities are growing, and we must acknowledge that growing communities need places to grow. Many young people are choosing to move to Ottawa, as they know our community is an incredible place to live, work and play. There is opportunity here, and people see Ottawa as an ideal place to have families, with access to good schools, great jobs and strong essential services and, more than that, to have a community they can call home.

There are other people who are looking to downsize, like seniors or soon-to-be empty nesters who want a home that meets their needs without the need to move far away from the people, the communities and the places they cherish.

#### 1500

Many residents, young and old, have chosen to live, work and raise families in Ottawa because it is a beautiful place to live and a great place to work that is a hub for innovation. We have many great neighbourhoods like my community of Beaverbrook where I grew up, Glen Cairn, Bridlewood, Emerald Meadows, Katimavik-Hazeldean, West Carleton, and that diversity is appreciated.

Kanata–Carleton is home to Silicon Valley North, home to Canada's largest tech park, and this requires talent. It requires people. It requires skills that need to be brought to the community by our talented workforce, and they need places to live.

With that said, Speaker, I'd like to focus the remaining remarks on people who choose to rent, and not everyone is able to afford a home or wants a home. For some people the maintenance of a home is too much. They want the benefits of renting, and our government has been steadfast in supporting people with a choice.

Renters make up 34.3% of residents in the nation's capital. They're finding it increasingly difficult to secure housing as prices soar to record-breaking heights while the number of listings available to rent continues to drop. Currently, the average monthly price for a two-bedroom apartment, condo, townhouse, duplex or house in the city of Ottawa is approximately \$2,100 per month. Rental listings for two-bedroom units have half the supply they did just a year ago with 130 listings compared to 310. Last October, the vacancy rate of Kanata–Carleton for a two-bedroom rental unit was 2.2%. All of this is without even touching on the supply of affordable housing.

Meg McCallum, the interim executive director at the Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa said fewer than half

of those rental units are affordable: “There’s not enough rental stock to begin with. And when people are looking for affordable homes, there’s so much competition.”

With increased housing supply, the cost of home ownership and renting will decrease, giving more opportunities for the people in our community to call home. Giving strong-mayor powers to Ottawa and Toronto will ensure housing will be created in a timely manner. Mayors can choose to use it or not.

Speaker, I am supporting this legislation and ask all members of this House to pass Bill 3. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Questions and answers?

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** I’d like to thank the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services for your remarks. The minister noted that we have a housing crisis in Ottawa, and we certainly do. I’ve heard from many constituents over the course of the last year of the challenges they face in obtaining affordable housing, particularly rental housing.

The people I heard these remarks from the most are people who are receiving Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program payments. A person on ODSP gets only \$1,169 per month. The person on Ontario Works gets only \$733, when the cost of an average one-bedroom apartment in Ottawa is now \$1,100. So someone on ODSP has only \$69 left after acquiring housing. A person on OW doesn’t even get an income the level of rent in Ottawa.

We’ve already heard this afternoon that mayors across Ontario are saying they didn’t want this legislation. They didn’t ask for this legislation. They don’t need this legislation. It won’t make a difference for housing.

Doesn’t the minister agree that it would be better to double social assistance rates in order to actually increase the supply of affordable housing rather than legislation nobody is asking for?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. As I said in my remarks, a home is foundational for a stable society, and if I look at, really, the time under the previous government, and supported by the NDP, there was no emphasis on building homes in general. There was no emphasis on building hospitals. There was no emphasis on building long-term care. There was no emphasis on building the skilled trades workforce that we needed to address this very, very necessary endeavour of creating more homes for people. In fact, I really don’t know exactly what we have to show for all the billions of dollars that were spent.

Look at the situation that we’re in with the homeless. Again, we look at families to try and make things affordable for them. So we’re building the skilled workforce. We’re building the homes. We’re building the hospitals. We’re building the long-term-care homes. I think about ODSP and I say, we’re creating historic amounts for ODSP. It’s the largest increase in decades.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Questions?

**Hon. Stan Cho:** I listened with great interest to the minister’s debate. She touched on some figures, and I think that was very important. She talked about some of

the supply and how that affects the values of rent in Ottawa.

Rent is an important discussion. We don’t need to think back very far to actually think about how numbers affect that rental market. Think back to the spring of 2020 and all the way through to the following year in the spring of 2021. We weren’t talking about rent prices in this Legislature. Now, why was that, Speaker? Because the demand cratered, and that supply-demand imbalance corrected it, albeit temporarily. But the point is, supply and demand is the fundamental part of this equation that is leading to the high rent prices that we see. There’s no doubt supply is important on the rental side.

Two million more people are coming to this province in less than a decade. If status quo was working, we wouldn’t need changes. Can the minister talk about some of the urgency required in correcting this imbalance in supply and demand?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** I appreciate that comment. I see young people unable to afford a home because of the competing groups for that space. I look at that and I think, how do they start a family? How do they have stability in their lives? And it all goes back to the supply and demand, because the previous government did not invest in the programs necessary to create more homes. It didn’t invest in the skilled workforce. It didn’t invest in the programs that were so necessary for a healthy community. And that’s what we’re doing, not only faced with the issues surrounding COVID, but understanding that with more homes, we can manage the demand-and-supply balance and create the balance that’s necessary for affordable and attainable homes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Questions?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** I know that throughout Ontario, people need a place to live. People need a place to grow, grow their families. And I keep hearing “crisis—the housing crisis.” The housing crisis, I said earlier, is a mental health crisis. The housing crisis is a suicide crisis in our communities. I know, in far northern Ontario, the First Nations, the 49 First Nations in NAN territory, their backlog of homes is 4,500 homes. How does this plan address the housing issue so we actually can have affordable housing?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Of course, in dealing with the issues surrounding homelessness, we need to have a lens on all areas of Ontario, including the north, including Indigenous communities, and understanding how the unique nature of those regions and those communities lend themselves to, sometimes, solutions that need to be somewhat different.

I am very proud of the effort that we have made as a government acknowledging that Indigenous communities may have different needs. Our government’s policies have delivered historic results, getting more housing built faster, and complement our more than \$4.3-billion investments over three years to grow and enhance community and supportive housing for vulnerable Ontarians and Indigenous people and address homelessness.

So this is something that everyone deserves: a place to call home. Everyone deserves to live in dignity and

respect, and we must continue as a society to work towards that. I'm very proud of our government's efforts in that regard.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Further questions?

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**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I listened to the minister's speech intently. I want to thank the minister for sharing her thoughts. My question to the minister—who also happens to be a neighbour of mine in the great city of Ottawa—this past election, we made a clear commitment to the people of Ontario that we would keep costs down and build 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years so that more people can afford to buy a home. So how would the proposed changes in this legislation lead to more shovels in the ground?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** When we look at the legislation, you understand that our checks and balances are very important for our democratic system, but the complexity of problems has increased. I think if we look back to 100 years ago, the issues surrounding those people and those who came before us would seem complicated as well, but the level of complexity that we're dealing with nowadays is increasing, and so time matters. I said that before. By streamlining this process and making sure that the checks and balances are there with the mayor and the council, we can get more shovels into the ground.

I just want to comment because it's been a bit misleading. It's making it sound like the councillors have no control in this at all, and that just isn't the case. This includes robust safeguards and an important role for municipal councillors. We know councillors have a critical job representing the interests of their constituents, which is why this legislation gives council the ability to override vetoes with the support of two thirds of council members. This is an important check and balance.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** The member for Hamilton Mountain.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm happy that I have the opportunity to ask the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services why she thinks this bill will actually help the people she has sworn to serve. She is responsible for ODSP. She's responsible for Ontario Works, and those folks cannot afford a single apartment. They can't afford the rent currently. What is it in this legislation that is going to help people on ODSP, people on Ontario Works, to be able to have safe, affordable housing?

We've heard about housing. We've heard about market rent. We've heard about everything. We have not heard the words "affordable housing" out of this government's mouths. Could the minister please tell me what in this legislation is going to create affordable housing?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** I will correct the member opposite. I did thank her for the question, but if she looks back in the record, she'll see that affordable housing was mentioned.

In any case, if you understand supply and demand, these are basic economic principles, and as my colleague on this side mentioned, it is supply and demand, and if we

cannot create an environment where homes are affordable because the supply exists, it won't matter how much we give people; the supply still won't be there.

The supply must be created. Time matters. That's why the process that we go through at the municipal level to approve developments, to get shovels in the ground—as my colleague across the hall just mentioned, it is absolutely critical that the supply be there, that we're training people to be—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It's my first opportunity to rise in the House and speak on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitowlin, and I wanted to go through a process that I go through every single time when a new bill is introduced here in the House. I have to thank the previous member, Gilles Bisson from Timmins, who actually guided me in doing this exercise because it sets the tone for the legislation that we're going to be discussing.

The bill we're talking about today is Bill 3, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to special powers and duties of heads of council. It's introduced by the honourable Minister Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Okay? I want to go through this, and I'll ask, Speaker, for a little bit of leniency here. I want to read it.

Schedule 1 says the "City of Toronto Act." It says:

"The schedule amends the City of Toronto Act, 2006 by adding a new part V1.1 which sets out the special powers and duties of the head of council. The following powers and duties are assigned to the head of council under this part:

"1. Powers respecting the chief administrative officer, as described in section 226.3.

"2. Powers respecting the organizational structure of the city and employment matters, as described in section 226.4.

"3. Powers respecting local boards, as described in section 226.5.

"4. Powers respecting committees, as described in section 226.6.

"5. Powers respecting meetings, as described in section 226.8.

"6. Veto powers, as described in section 226.9.

"7. Duties and powers respecting budgets, as described in section 226.14.

"The new part contains various other related provisions, including rules respecting delegation, immunity and transition. Authority is provided to the Lieutenant Governor in Council to prescribe provincial priorities and to the minister to make other regulations."

That's schedule 1.

"Schedule 2

"Municipal Act, 2001

"The schedule amends the Municipal Act, 2001 by adding a new part ... which sets out the special powers and duties of the head of council in designated municipalities. In those designated municipalities, the following powers and duties are assigned to the head of council:

“1. Powers respecting the chief administrative officer, as described in section 284.5.

“2. Powers respecting the organizational structure of the municipality and employment matters, as described in section 284.6.

“3. Powers respecting local boards, as described in section 284.7.

“4. Powers respecting committees, as described in section 284.8.

“5. Powers respecting meetings, as described in section 284.10.

“6. Veto powers, as described in section 284.11.

“7. Duties and powers respecting budgets, as described in section 284.16.

“The new part contains various other related provisions, including rules respecting delegation, immunity and transition. Authority is provided to the Lieutenant Governor in Council to prescribe provincial priorities and to the minister to make other regulations.”

That’s schedule 2.

“Schedule 3.... The schedule amends the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act. New section 5.3 sets out the duties of the head of council when they have a pecuniary interest in a matter and a power or duty under Part VI.1 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 or Part VI.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001 respecting that matter. Various other consequential amendments are made.”

All right, we’ve gone through that exercise. I’m going to ask everyone here in this House if you can tell me how many times that I said “housing,” outside of identifying the role of the minister and his ministry, versus “powers”?

Speaker, you have a guess? Give me a guess.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** Zero.

**Interjection:** Zero to 40.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** All right, it’s zero to 19.

This bill is about powers. That’s what it’s about, and it certainly is scary. Again, I have always committed to bringing a different lens to the floor of this Legislature and I always want to bring a lens from northern Ontario and how this is potentially going to impact mayors across northern Ontario, because they have not been consulted. They don’t know exactly what this means. And they are quite concerned in regard to, when you see language contained within this that says—excuse me, where’s my notes? I had notes. I have my notes. My notes are somewhere around here.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** This paper-clipped one?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Is that the one? No, that’s not the one.

Anyway, in no uncertain terms, it’s going to be up to the government to designate—they’re designating Toronto. They’ve already identified that they’re going to be designating Ottawa. And then it’s pretty much in their decision-making as to who else is going to be designated.

What does that mean? Because there are a lot of them, particularly in my riding, saying we need housing. We want to move ahead with housing. However, we’ve got some huge concerns. How do we proceed if we want to do this? How do we attract those developers to coming into

our community? Because our communities are growing, as well, maybe not to the tune of—and I’ll use an example. I had a discussion with one of my colleagues a little bit earlier. If you are looking at a housing development project—in one that I’m actually working on right now, we’re looking at about 25 to 40 houses in Espanola. Well, for many of you in the larger centres, my goodness, that’s like a blink of an eye. But for me, that’s huge.

**1520**

What does this mean for them? How is this potentially going to impact their ability, and are they going to be the one that is going to be designated? How would they find out? This is one of the questions that keeps coming up from people.

Why wasn’t this part of your campaign? Why is this coming up now? Why is this a priority of this government?

I’ve always said that I want to bring the voices of individuals from Algoma–Manitoulin to the floor of the Legislature. I just got this email from Marlene. I won’t give you her last name. Marlene is at every one of my constituency clinics that I have in a particular community in my riding. This is her message she just sent to me this morning. She said, “So pleased to hear you are not letting up on the crisis with health care with the Ford government. Dissappointed”—oh, by the way, she is a card-carrying Conservative; I just wanted to let you know that. But I just love this lady. Anyway, she’s “disappointed, like so many others, that he is not overly concerned by his financing. And now the Minister of Health talking about possible more privatization? No thank you. We should know by now that doesn’t work except for the profiteers. I believe that is what is wrong with the PSW program. ParaMed and others being paid should be local hospitals, especially smaller places here in”—I’m not going to tell you. “PSWs need a living wage rather than monies going to ParaMed, and it would help the hospital finances as well, as they know local problems and caregivers. Why is Premier Ford using a personal agenda to increase mayors of larger centres’ control? Get on with health care, not your previous Toronto council concerns. It’s ridiculous.”

Thank you, Marlene.

It’s right on point, as far as what we have been raising in this House. Yes, housing is important. But housing is important to everybody in Ontario, not just in two communities. We need to do it in a way that does not infringe on the democratic process that we have by granting immunity—or what was the word that was used in here? Yes, “immunity” and “veto powers.”

We can do a lot better than this, and we need to do a lot more work as far as consulting with people here across this province. Our mayors are asking for it. Our councillors are asking for it. Our communities are asking for it. Ontarians are asking for it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Questions and answers?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I want to thank our friend from Algoma–Manitoulin for his comments and for bringing the perspective of Algoma–Manitoulin to the Legislature, which is always appreciated.



I think this is an important piece of legislation. I know that the member carefully went through the explanatory note and read it out to us. I suspect former House leader Gilles Bisson would have asked you to actually read the legislation, not just the explanatory note, but thank you for sharing that with us.

What I'd like to raise is how we're not really getting to solutions if we don't make some changes to the status quo. Plenty of progressive Ontarians over the years have seen the wisdom of strong-mayor systems. Former Mayor David Miller, at least in 2008, was an unabashed advocate for these powers, saying that it's about the success of Toronto. The Toronto Star's editorial board was a fan of it, and former Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty—who I think you guys supported all the time.

I just wanted to ask: When did you become supporters of the establishment, those already on the property ladder, as opposed to those trying to buy homes? I thought the NDP was supposed to be advocating for those trying to buy homes.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** To my colleague across the way: I would never put words in your mouth, so I would expect the same courtesy from you—by not putting words in my mouth. I did not express myself in any way saying I was supportive of one thing or another. What I did actually say is that there are real concerns out there from many municipal leaders who have not been involved in the decision-making or the drafting of this legislation and the impacts of it. What does it mean?

Let's set aside "good" or "bad" on this legislation. Why wasn't there greater consultation on this? Why weren't communities like Espanola, Chapleau and Wawa, who are desperately looking for housing in their communities—their communities are booming as well, as far as new mines that are opening up, new employment opportunities. There are a lot of migrant individuals who are moving to those communities because there are cultural centres there that are supportive of their wants and their needs. So why did we limit it to just the two? Why wasn't there greater consultation that was done broadly across the province?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Further questions?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** The balance of this debate, I think, has really shown us that:

(1) Once again, this government is debating legislation that they did not discuss during the campaign, no matter how substantive or how much of an impact it could have on municipalities.

(2) This is legislation that was not made in consultation with or even asked for by those it affects.

(3) It has nothing to do within—its title doesn't reflect the bill because, as the wonderful member stated, it really just is about giving power that's not even asked for to mayors who already have the power to win every single vote which they ever do.

(4) What they're doing at the city of Toronto is, they're approving thousands of units of developments that are at or above all the targets that are listed, but they claim that's

going to enable more of it to be built as long as the mayor does what the Premier says.

Again, knowing that this is a government that's about power and control, knowing that they want to put power in the hands of fewer people, why do they want to give more power to mayors? Is it just so that they'll do the bidding of this Premier?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** The member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to thank the member for the question.

When you're looking at this legislation, the answer is yes. You look at the track record in the 42nd government: Can the Speaker tell me one time that a piece of legislation didn't go forward by this government and the likelihood—I always enjoy when the government members stand up and they're talking about their piece of legislation and say, "If this piece of legislation goes forward." They've got a majority; everything's going to go by. They're going to make sure everything goes by. They have the powers on committee. They have the power of a majority government. The answer is, yes, they have that ability.

Our role is one which is going to be significant in this House: to bring up these shortfalls, bring up the cracks that are within the legislation. It's a role that we're going to take very seriously. Yes, we will be opposing often. Get used to it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Further questions?

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** Thank you to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for your presentation.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say one thing that I heard from my son all week. He just graduated. He's an automotive engineer, born in Markham, raised in Markham. He asked me: "Daddy, I don't want to leave Markham. I don't want to alienate from Markham. I want a roof over my head. Can I get my condominium?" It's just a small condominium.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that this dream of owning a house is going far away for the younger generation, especially the next generation of Canadians.

I asked the member—we are in a housing crisis. I've seen so many—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Question?

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** We are giving more power to the mayors—not for our benefit, not our government's benefit, it's not our Premier's benefit. It's for the benefit of the people. They're not gaining anything—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Thank you.

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** —which is supposed to increase our housing supply, to supporting this legislation—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** The member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I'm probably going to get a lot of heck for this, but I want to talk about my partner's daughter, who as well just came out of school a couple of years ago, and she's looking for a house. She's staying over at her mom's right now.

The aspiration of owning a home, as for your son, is a dream for them. My kids—we've had this conversation numerous times. You come out of school, and you're faced with anywhere between \$80,000 to \$160,000 in debt from your schooling. You come out, and you get your first job. You want your vehicle, so you get a vehicle because you have to get to and from work. Then, you go to the bank and the bank tells you, "Oh, sure, we're going to approve you for a mortgage." The maximum amount is maybe \$160,000. It's impossible to find a home at that rate. So their dream, their aspiration, their want, their idea of owning a home is almost impossible. They can't reach it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** Questions?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I truly enjoyed your entire speech, but the beginning of your speech where we heard, 17 times in a row, the word "power"—

**Interjection:** Nineteen.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sorry—19 times in a row, the word "power" and zero times the word "housing," except when you read the title of the bill—that was the introduction to the bill.

If you were to read the entire bill, would you say that supportive housing is found in that bill? Would you say that housing is a big part of the bill? We know that it's not in the intro, because you read it out for us. But we all know, in your riding, like in mine, affordable housing is something that's very important. It's something that we hear about no matter which communities we go into. There are people who cannot afford a place to live. Is it in the bill?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** The simple answer, the direct answer is, no, it is not. I did find the word "home," but

again, it's in the title of the bill. It's on page 3. I tried to look through the bill, and it has been difficult to find anything about "housing," "home," "affordable housing." It's one of the concerns, and it's a missed opportunity from this government. If you're going to be talking about housing and developing housing—affordable housing—a home to some is not what it means to others. We do not have a variety of actions here that are within the context of this particular piece of legislation. That's really what's missing from this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Smith):** We have time for a very quick exchange. Questions?

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I want to ask the member if they're renaming their party, because, from my understanding, you're in the New Democratic Party, and the word "democracy"—"demos" is "people" and "kratos" is "power." We're very much empowering democratically elected people in order to get better chances, but you do not support that. So will you be renaming your party?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** No, I will not be renaming the party. I'm amazed that you think I have that power. But, no, I don't have that.

There's more we could do. There's a lot more we could have done, first, by engaging. This is a wholesome discussion. I want to go back to what I opened up with: This is one of those bills that should have gone out to communities so that we have greater engagement and have a wholesome discussion, because some of the best legislation is because we've reached out to communities, organizations—took the time through committee to have that wholesome discussion.

*Report continues in volume B.*





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Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutilla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
<b>Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)</b>	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	