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Jeudi
17 novembre 2022

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 17 November 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 17 novembre 2022

The House recessed from 1200 to 1300.

Report deemed received.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated November 17, 2022, from the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Mr. Coe from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal—

Interjections: Dispense.

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

Pursuant to standing order 66(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy will be placed on the Orders and Notices paper.

Report deemed received.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE INTERIOR

Mr. Aris Babikian: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Interior.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Mr. Babikian from the Standing Committee on the Interior reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries be granted to His Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Pursuant to standing order 66(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the Standing Committee on the Interior will be placed on the Orders and Notices paper.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Ms. Ghamari from the Standing Committee on Social Policy reports the following resolutions:

Resolved—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Pursuant to standing order 66(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the Standing Committee on Social Policy will be placed on the Orders and Notices paper.

Report deemed received.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

WOODSTOCK MOOSE LODGE NO. 1141 (HOLDINGS) LIMITED ACT, 2022

Mr. Hardeman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr13, An Act to revive Woodstock Moose Lodge No. 1141 (Holdings) Limited.

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

First reading agreed to.

PETITIONS

NURSES

Mr. Jeff Burch: “Petition to Protect Patient Care in Operating Rooms at Hamilton Health Sciences ...

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas patients requiring surgery have complex care needs, some of which are urgent or life-threatening diseases and under anesthetic can become unstable, unpredictable, quickly change or deteriorate; and

“Whereas a scrub nurse is a member of the surgical team who provides a surgeon with instruments while maintaining a sterile environment, acts on and anticipates their requests, prepares medications, assists with retraction

of tissue, communicates to circulating registered nurses (RNs) patient care needs, and responds in emergencies...;

“Whereas Hamilton Health Sciences’s new surgical model of care is to replace nurses who perform the scrub nurse role in operating rooms, with unregulated operating room assistants...; and

“Whereas the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC) recommends that the scrub nurse role be performed only by nurses...;

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

“Immediately stop operating room assistants from performing the scrub nurse role at Hamilton Health Sciences;

“Stop any further plans to cut and replace registered nurses within the operation rooms at Hamilton Health Sciences;

“Cease the new surgical model of care that replaces scrub nurses with operating room assistants because it does not adhere to Hamilton Health Sciences’s mission to provide excellent health care to the community it serves.”

I will add my signature and send it to the Clerk.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s my honour to present the following petition on behalf of Dr. Wes McCann at Central Optometry. It reads:

“Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it with page Alex to the Clerks.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Stephen Blais: I have a petition on behalf of Mr. Mike Kelly of Orléans, related to distracted driving.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:...

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to invoking a minimum \$5,000 fine, six demerit

points, and immediate confiscation of the driver’s licence and vehicle for 30 days.”

I will affix my signature and present it to page Kennedy for the table.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I’m proud to rise today to present this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario...:

“Whereas two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, gender-diverse and intersex communities face significant challenges to accessing health care services that are friendly, competent and affirming in Ontario;

“Whereas everyone deserves access to health care, and they shouldn’t have to fight for it, shouldn’t have to wait for it and should never receive less care or support because of who they are;

“Whereas gender-affirming care is life-saving care;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the reintroduction of a private member’s bill to create an inclusive and representative committee to advise the Ministry of Health on how to realize accessible and equitable access to and coverage for gender-affirming health care in Ontario.”

I wholeheartedly endorse this petition. I will sign my name to it and send it to the table with page Scarlett.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I want to thank constituents who have been collecting signatures for a petition to protect the greenbelt.

“Whereas the Premier has persistently promised over the last four years not to develop the greenbelt; and

“Whereas the Premier has plans to build Highway 413 that would pave over 400 acres of the greenbelt, including over 2,000 acres of class 1 and class 2 farmland; and

“Whereas the government now has plans to open up over 7,400 acres of the greenbelt to his pro-sprawl developers;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to cancelling Highway 413 and immediately halt all plans to develop the greenbelt and to instead invest in livable and affordable communities connected by transit that protect the nature that protects us, the farmland that feeds us, and mitigates climate pollution.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I will sign it and ask page Havana to bring it to the table.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition in support of the Stay Home If You Are Sick Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is overwhelming evidence to show that paid sick leave significantly reduces the spread of

infectious disease, promotes preventive health care and reduces health care system costs; and

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“Whereas 60% of Ontario workers do not have access to paid sick days, and therefore must sacrifice income to stay home if they are sick; and

“Whereas low-wage and precarious workers who can least afford to miss pay are the most likely to be denied paid sick days; and

“Whereas employers benefit when sick workers can afford to stay home, limiting the spread of illness to co-workers and customers, and allowing workers to recover faster; and

“Whereas during an infectious disease emergency, it is unreasonable and dangerous to public health to make workers choose between protecting their communities and providing for their families; and

“Whereas mandating employers to provide paid sick leave through the Employment Standards Act ensures that workers have seamless, uninterrupted access to their pay...

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately provide workers with 10 annual employer-paid days of personal emergency leave and 14 days of paid leave in the case of an infectious disease emergency.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Hussain.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s my honour to present the following petitions on behalf of Dr. Greg Millar. It’s entitled “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it with page Kennedy to the Clerks.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I’d like to thank the many Londoners who signed this petition.

“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” as follows: “Stop their plans for building Highway 413.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Alex.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s my honour to present the following petition on behalf of Dr. Marja Salminen from Vogue Optical in Masonville. It’s entitled “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it with page Eric to the Clerks.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I’m proud to present this petition to raise social assistance rates in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s social assistance rates are well below Canada’s official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and soon \$1,227 for ODSP;

“Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

“Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens well below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

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

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Camilla.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to present the following petition on behalf of my constituents from New Vista Optometry on Kilally Road. It’s entitled “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure

any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it with page Aiden to the Clerks.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I’m pleased to present this petition on behalf of many Londoners.

“Stop Ford’s Health Care Privatization Plan.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians should get health care based on need—not the size of your wallet;

“Whereas Premier Doug Ford and Health Minister Sylvia Jones say they’re planning to privatize parts of health care;

“Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of our public hospitals, making the health care crisis worse;

“Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to further privatize Ontario’s health care system, and fix the crisis in health care by:

“—repealing Bill 124 and recruiting, retaining and respecting doctors, nurses and PSWs with better pay and better working conditions;

“—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario, who wait years and pay thousands to have their credentials certified;

“—making education and training free or low-cost for nurses, doctors and other health care professionals;

“—incentivizing doctors and nurses to choose to live and work in northern Ontario;

“—funding hospitals to have enough nurses on every shift, on every ward.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Alex.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT À AMÉLIORER LA GOUVERNANCE MUNICIPALE

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

Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 39, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités et à édicter la Loi de 2022 abrogeant la Loi sur la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's an opportunity to get up and provide some comments on Bill 39—I started speaking this morning. Bill 39 is basically an attempt to expand strong-mayor powers, along with other intrusions into the municipal sphere, as well as another assault on the environment. The bill removes the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, opening up more of the greenbelt for development, and I'll have lots to say about that in my presentation.

This morning, when I had a few minutes to start my lead, I talked about the committee that was shut down on Bill 23. I'm happy to see that after the opposition pointed out that that happened—I guess it was a mistake, and it's good to see the government correct that, but that's what happens when we bring forward legislation that's poorly thought out, poorly planned, without proper consultation. I apologize, on behalf of the entire Legislature, to those folks who came to present to committee today and were turned away this morning. I'm happy that that has resumed, as I understand.

I've been standing in the House speaking to municipal affairs and housing legislation quite frequently. If that legislation had anything to do with creating affordable homes, it would be a good thing, but it doesn't. It appears the Premier and his minister can't keep their hands away from municipalities. I fear this bill continues a worrying trend we've been observing for a number of years. The government, in my opinion, is governing by chaos, tabling massive changes and hoping the people of the province will be too tired or too busy to notice.

As we sit here and debate another municipal government change, kids in this province can't get an ICU bed. That's the first time this has happened in history. The shelves in pharmacies for children's pain medication are empty. We have problems in our emergency rooms. We have, as the government points out, a housing crisis. They don't seem to understand that it's an affordable housing crisis.

Just this week, as well, we repealed this government's use of the "notwithstanding" clause to trample over collective agreement rights—another hasty and ill-advised bill by the government. This government almost threw us into a constitutional crisis, and it appears that the wheels were turning for a general strike. Now the clock is ticking on a strike vote because this government wants to sit on \$2 billion instead of investing in education.

We're still debating Bill 23, which removes conservation from conservation authorities, and the government is in the process of removing huge swaths of the greenbelt so that their developer friends can get rich quick on their land banking.

Today, the Premier is expanding minority rule in municipalities. He's appointing regional chairs. I have to say this Premier's outright disdain for democracy could not be more clear. They appear to have no direction. Even a broken clock can get things right twice a day. We know putting forward bills without talking to any experts leads to legislation you need to change later.

We just had a conversation with AMO over the last half an hour, who met with us because the government didn't include them in the consultation on Bill 23. We had to, by Zoom, arrange a meeting with AMO so that they could give us their input on Bill 23, a bill under municipal affairs and housing. I've never seen AMO not invited to consultation on a bill from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It's ludicrous.

How is this bill, Bill 39, important to the people of Ontario? Are my friends on the other side even speaking to their constituents? Have they not heard from parents who are scared for their children?

This government has introduced three housing bills in three months, each consolidating more and more power than the previous bill, and none of them have anything to do with affordable housing. We do have the Premier every month putting his hands in the sandbox, moving around municipalities like they're his toys.

Let's review this government's changes over the years.

Shortly after the 2018 election, this government suddenly tabled Bill 5, to cancel regional chair elections and cut the size of Toronto city council—with the municipal election campaigns already under way. When a lower court found Bill 5 to be unconstitutional and granted a stay, the government passed Bill 31, which invoked the "notwithstanding" clause to bypass charter rights, something this government likes to do. After an appeal court overturned the stay, Bill 5 went ahead. Bill 31 was left to die on the order paper. Bill 5 is still subject to a constitutional challenge before the Supreme Court. We know how much this government loves to fight losing battles in court and spend the public's money doing that.

In 2020, the Ford government tabled Bill 218, a COVID recovery bill, which included a clause that repealed the legislation allowing municipalities to use ranked ballots in municipal elections. We all remember what a crass move that was, including something like that in a COVID recovery bill—another habit that this government has, of sneaking unrelated matters into omnibus bills and hoping no one will notice.

Back in September, this government introduced strong-mayor legislation. For those who may be wondering—why a strong-mayor system? Some of our answers may go back to the Premier's time at the city of Toronto. I've talked about this in the past.

In 2011, over a decade ago, the Premier said in an interview, "I believe in a strong-mayor system, like they have in the States. The mayor should have veto power ... so he has enough power to stop council. The mayor should be the mayor. At the end of the day ... the mayor's responsible for everything." That article gave us a lot of insight into the legislation for strong mayors that we saw a few months ago and into the legislation before us today. Then a councillor, the Premier outlined that it was a challenge to get legislation passed with 23 votes to woo, and he expressed admiration for the mayor in Chicago and for Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion. It would appear that the strong-mayor system is one that the Premier considered for quite some time.

It's interesting to note that the Premier himself seems to understand how important informal powers were to building a cohesive unit on city council.

I'm not sure why the Premier wants to move so far away from majority rule, unless it is to make city councils and regional councils basically a shill for his agenda.

We've heard a lot about the mayoral system in Chicago. The folks on the government benches have spoken about that in their speeches. What's interesting, as I pointed out, is that Chicago is a charter city. They believe in more autonomy for municipalities. To complicate matters, Chicago—which the Premier touted as a great example for municipal governance—is actually a weak-mayor system. It appears the government has not done its homework.

An article by Mari Cohen in the Chicago City Bureau says, "In terms of official structure, Chicago is considered a 'weak mayor' city when compared to other cities.... That's because the city council has certain powers, including voting on the budget that Chicago is required to pass each year and approving certain administrative appointments, that it can use as leverage against the mayor. But despite what's on paper, Chicago mayors have historically exercised significant authority in practice by working the political system."

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"Structure makes the mayor weak, politics make the mayor strong'...."

That is a theme I've heard over and over again from folks in my municipality, all of whom, in the Niagara region, from the major cities, are opposed to strong-mayor powers, and the mayors both before and since the election have come out quite strongly in opposition.

New mayors are getting sworn in this week, and as that's happening, here we go with changes again by the minister.

Another power of strong mayors is the authority to appoint the chairs of council committees and create and reorganize city departments. The power to appoint and dismiss committee and board chairs and vice-chairs already exists in Toronto. However, these powers are currently delegated by council, not granted by a statute.

In Bill 3, a strong mayor gained the ability to veto any bylaw passed by councillors if it "could potentially interfere with a prescribed provincial priority." This would include bylaws affecting housing developments and "critical infrastructure" projects like highways or public transit, as defined by the province. It would take a two-thirds majority vote of council to overrule the mayor within 21 days of the veto.

Bill 39 expands the strong-mayor powers this government introduced just a few months ago. It would allow a strong mayor to propose and pass bylaws with the support of only one third of council.

This bill was tabled yesterday afternoon, and already we're hearing from recently elected councillors.

Josh Matlow, city councillor for Toronto–St. Paul's, ward 12, said the Premier's "Bill 39, Better Municipal Governance Act, 2022, released earlier today, threatens democracy in our city by allowing the mayor to propose

and pass bylaws with the support of only one third of council. If passed, this act would make Toronto, and Ottawa, the only legislative bodies in the country that don't require a 50% + 1 vote to make a decision.

"The Prime Minister, and the Premier himself, have one vote in their respective Legislatures and require a majority of members to pass any bill, including Bill 39. In other words, in a democracy, the majority rules and the minority is heard—the proposed changes undermine the basic tenets of democracy itself.

"The province's stated reason for this legislation is to change zoning around transit stations. This is demonstrably absurd. First, city council already approved moving forward with increased densities around major transit station areas to conform to provincial direction earlier this year and, second, the province already has complete authority to change Toronto's zoning however it wishes through the Planning Act. If the Premier "wants to build housing, he can do it without Bill 39."

The letter continues, "Torontonians just democratically elected their city council. They will not stand for minority rule."

I think the point on minority rule is an important one. I've seen some comments floating around online discussing Toronto's "incredible shrinking democracy."

Prior to the amalgamation of the city of Toronto, there were 102 elected representatives. And then, for a while, there were 44 elected representatives.

In 2018, this Premier cut Toronto city council to 26 councillors—in the middle of the campaign, I may add. It was the first time this government tried to use the "notwithstanding" clause.

In 2022, the province gave the mayor a veto with Bill 5. Soon, the mayor will need only eight votes of 25 councillors to vote with him—eight votes. It would appear that politics and strong-mayor powers were not enough to make the mayor strong to this government; they had to fix the votes too.

Speaker, once again, I'm in this House debating regional chairs; I believe this the third time in four years. One of my first speeches in this House was on Bill 5, at 3 o'clock in the morning. I had been elected a month prior. There were people getting taken out in handcuffs, I believe. That's how we started our 2018 term. The protests were so loud that you could hear chanting and drum beats inside the House.

The bill before us reminds me a great deal of Bill 5. Bill 5 was put forward in the middle of the campaign for the election of regional chairs in four regional municipalities: Niagara, Peel, Muskoka and York. It was the first time these regional chairs would be elected via a public vote as opposed to a vote of the elected regional councillors. The bill stated that these regions could decide to elect their chairs in the future—not so. In the bill before us, not only do the newly elected regional councillors not get to vote for the regional chair, but it is the Premier himself who will be the only vote and appoint this position.

Just after Bill 5, this government announced in January 2019 that they were going to review regional governments.

The review included all eight regional municipalities—Halton, York, Durham, Waterloo, Niagara, Peel, Muskoka district, Oxford county and the county of Simcoe—and their lower-tier municipalities. A total of 82 municipalities were examined, and the province wouldn't rule out amalgamation—something that, as my friend from Niagara Falls will tell you, creates a great deal of anxiety in our region and many other regions. The province appointed two special advisers: Michael Fenn, a former deputy minister under three Premiers, and Ken Seiling, a former chair of Waterloo region. We've spoken a little bit today about the problems this government has with consultation. It appeared, for the regional review, that there was consultation. There were 8,500 submissions from the public. The challenge was that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing never released the results. I'm not sure why'd you consult if you're not going to be transparent—the whole purpose of consultation.

In October 2019, the minister announced they would not “force amalgamation of municipalities.” There was a lot of pushback on amalgamation at that time, and I'll discuss that in a little bit.

The special advisers expressed disappointment that their recommendations weren't followed. The problem is, we still don't know what the recommendations were.

The report arrived on the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing's desk in September 2020.

I'll quote an editorial from the Waterloo Region Record entitled “We Still Want Those Regional Review Results,” Premier:

“For two years, the Premier has carefully squirreled away the results of a sweeping investigation that found ways to make local governments in Waterloo region and other parts of the province more efficient, responsive and cheaper for their citizens.

“The point was to improve life for ‘the people’ Ford and his Progressive Conservatives constantly insist they were elected to serve. But now two years after the investigation was completed and despite repeated requests by The Record for its findings to be made public,” the Premier “continues to deny the people of this province something for which they paid” almost \$130,000.

“We do know that, after eight months of work that included nine public consultations and 8,500 citizen submissions, a final report in the fall of 2019 was packed with ideas for overhauling 82 upper- and lower-tier municipalities. We also know the report's co-author was former Waterloo regional chair Ken Seiling and that he was deeply disappointed the government mothballed the results of his efforts. But he can reveal nothing publicly because he and the report's other co-author had to sign a confidentiality agreement.

“So why won't” the Premier “do it. What's he trying to hide? His government's argument that the report was meant only for the eyes of cabinet ministers is a bad joke. It's more likely” he “was afraid to be swamped by waves of anger if he rocked any municipal boats. But if the Premier is betting most people have forgotten all these things, he's wrong for two reasons.

“First, after a freedom-of-information request filed by” the Record reporter, “the people of this community are finally learning what 1,052 of their neighbours told the province in a survey two years ago about ways Waterloo region could be changed.

“It's true that what” the reporter “was able to obtain—after an unreasonable wait of 441 days and a \$970 bill from the province ... wasn't the report itself. But he did get his hands on 725 documents that included what Waterloo region residents liked and didn't like about their municipal governments. While most of these local residents were satisfied with the current two-tier system of regional government, more than a third of them want the region's seven fire departments rolled into one. Likewise, more than a quarter said the region's eight governments should be amalgamated into one.

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“Let's be clear. No one is arguing the findings of a survey that involved a fraction of local residents justify a radical transformation of this community. But there is an appetite for some changes to a massive regional municipal system with annual expenditures of nearly \$2 billion, a yearly tax bill to the community worth \$900 million and 59 elected officials running it all...

“For the sake of this region, this province and perhaps the future of his own government, it's time for” the Premier “to retrieve that report from some dark storage room at Queen's Park and introduce it to the light of day—and the people for whom it was written. There should be no secrets between people who are supposed to be friends.”

So if we're undergoing another regional review done by a facilitator, the people of this province should be privy to the results of the review they submitted feedback on and paid for.

Now I'll talk a few moments about the spectre of possible amalgamation. A few of us in the municipal sphere have been asking: Why appoint only three regional chairs? Why undergo a regional review with an appointed chair when we already have a report on regional reviews?

Members of my community have already been reaching out by phone, email and on social media. I was just talking to my office this morning. In Niagara, what I'm hearing is that citizens think this is yet another attempt by this government to amalgamate Niagara or perhaps download.

In Niagara, there was large pushback to a possible amalgamation in 2019 and 2022. Back in June, there were rumours in the media and on the campaign trail that this government would once again try its hand at amalgamation. What we heard was that this government had not learned the lessons of amalgamation from the days of Premier Mike Harris.

Some quick history: When the Harris PC government was elected in 1995, there were 850 municipalities in the province. In five years, that number was cut nearly in half, to 444, based on the premise that amalgamation would be more efficient and less costly, with less duplication of services. We have the benefit of seeing if that premise proved true.

In a report from the Fraser Institute, using data from the years 2000 to 2012, from the Financial Information Return published by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, they compared various financial indicator trends for the three subject municipalities and a number of comparable municipalities that weren't amalgamated. What the Fraser Institute found was:

"Our simple analysis suggests amalgamation did not result in cost savings or lower property taxes in the cases we examine. We find significant increases in property taxes, compensation for municipal employees, and long-term debt in both amalgamated and unamalgamated communities, suggesting there was no tangible, financial benefit from amalgamation. In fact, many of the claims put forward by those favouring consolidation failed to materialize. In most of our cases, the per-household municipal tax burden increased. We also find that spending on certain services and remuneration also increased significantly. The data largely indicate that post-2000 intra-municipal trends in cost indicators, such as protection costs per household, have remained stable within the group analyzed, or even increased after amalgamation, a finding inconsistent with the cost savings promised as a result of amalgamation.

"We also analyze primary interviews with those involved in the amalgamation process to provide more context for the data on costs and tax increases. We find that in part this may be explained by the speed with which the province implemented restructuring. The process was quick and received little provincial assistance. As a result, wages were harmonized upwards in this period, which had a significant impact upon the cost of service delivery. Local actors confronted with mandated consolidation found themselves in an unenviable position and made quick decisions about governance and servicing issues without the benefit of time or access to comparable information and best practices. Very little central oversight was provided to those on the ground. Further, there was not enough time to negotiate new labour contracts with public sector workers, further reducing any chance at cost savings. Specific to our cases, we found that, when rural areas were amalgamated with urban areas, residents began to demand more urban services, which further stretched municipal budgets in the years following the initial consolidation. Subsequent policy 'downloading' ... and a change in provincial government in 2003 entrenched these institutional structures."

These are important lessons. This government is moving at breakneck speed. We aren't even finished committee on the previous housing bill, Bill 23. We're seeing massive municipal changes, changes to planning authorities, municipal revenue, with no support or even a heads-up from the province. The association of municipalities didn't even get the opportunity to speak to the committee, as I mentioned earlier, and provide their feedback.

Yesterday, John Sewell, a former Toronto mayor, was removed from Queen's Park by legislative security after he attempted to address the committee studying Bill 23.

The 81-year-old ex-mayor called it "serious anti-democracy."

I've said many times in this House that municipalities are our partners, and we need to treat them like partners. Speaker, truncating consultation and proposing sweeping changes before new councils are even sworn in is not an action taken in the spirit of partnership.

New councils didn't even have the opportunity to pass motions on the bill, to review it, to see what it would mean for their constituents and communities.

Again, today, we see even more changes with no time to review and provide feedback, and not only that, but this government also allotted four days for committee consultation on Bill 23. I spoke already about what happened this morning with the shutdown of that committee.

I'll also mention that during our committee hearings last week, my colleague from University-Rosedale made a motion, supported by all of the opposition parties but not by the government, to add an extra day of hearings. The government wasn't interested in hearing from the folks who weren't getting an opportunity.

Today, we had committees cancelled this morning, and I'm not sure which of these folks are back on the agenda to speak—we had the city of Toronto, which brought 10 people to Queen's Park; Canadians for Properly Built Homes; the Toronto Region Board of Trade; the Canadian Mental Health Association; the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights; the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, which I can tell you had some really interesting things to say about conservation; the Town of the Blue Mountains; and many more. I believe it was rude and disrespectful to invite them to Queen's Park and not be ready to hear what they had to say.

In the spirit of democracy, I'm going to provide the House with some of the feedback we did receive from AMO that this government refused to listen to. They didn't invite AMO to their consultations on Bill 23, which, as I mentioned, is incredible to me. We've been inviting government members to a pop-up meeting with AMO for them to provide their submissions, but none attended.

AMO stated, on the government's recent housing bill, Bill 23—and I'm going to quote AMO for this House since they weren't allowed to present themselves:

"Preliminary analysis of the bill indicates the transfer of up to \$1 billion a year in costs from private sector developers to property taxpayers without any likelihood of improved housing affordability. Similarly, the bill's provisions designed to reduce environmental protection will benefit developers in the short term, with costs to the public and homeowners that cannot be calculated.

"Members of the committee and all members of the provincial Parliament will need to consider in whose interest they govern. Bill 23, as drafted, benefits private interests at the expense of public interests—at the expense of property taxpayers and Ontario's natural environment."

I've been the municipal affairs critic for over four years, and AMO provides feedback as best they can, but you rarely hear them take this strong an approach and use this kind of language. Clearly, they are extremely concerned about the government's bills and actions.

They continue: “Current residents and businesses, the next generation of homeowners and renters, and the hundreds of thousands of newcomers who will make Ontario home will demand livable and safe communities with adequate amenities and a healthy and sustainable environment in which to thrive and prosper. That is not the future that Bill 23 will provide.

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“The province has offered no evidence that the radical elements of the bill will improve housing affordability. It is more likely that the bill will enhance the profitability of the development industry at the expense of taxpayers and the natural environment.”

I bring this up because the minister, in his introduction this morning, spent most of his time talking not about Bill 39 but about Bill 23.

Bill 39, they suggest, is an expansion of strong-mayor powers that will assist in building more housing.

The point AMO makes about housing is interesting. We’re hearing that no elements of the bill will improve housing affordability. Bill 23 at least took a look at missing middle housing, and we commented on that.

This morning, I sat in the chamber listening to the Minister of Municipal Affairs speak about the bill before us today, and he went on about how Bill 39 was about housing. I see nothing in this bill that is about housing. There’s zero evidence that hand-picking regional chairs and imposing minority rule on councils will reduce the cost of housing.

In fact, the fall economic statement indicated that over four years, their housing bills haven’t even built enough housing. Despite a wave of deregulation, including plans to open up more prime farmland and the greenbelt for development, the government has significantly reduced its projections for housing starts. In 2023, projected housing starts will be down from the 84,000 projected in the 2022-23 budget to just 76,900. In 2024, projected housing starts will be down from 87,300 to 77,800. If these stats sound different from what the government has been saying, they are. In 2025, projected housing starts will be down from 87,800 to 85,100. None of these numbers are anywhere close to the average of 150,000 housing starts needed annually for a decade in order to achieve the government’s goal of building 1.5 million new homes.

Why does the government believe homebuilders will build fewer homes after implementing so many policies supposedly intended to increase homebuilding, including its attacks on farmland and the greenbelt? Some answers lie in the feedback we received to Bill 109, the More Homes for Everyone Act, that we debated in this House back in March. Bill 109 had a number of provisions in it, particularly expanding the use and scope of the controversial ministerial zoning order tool. Another function of that bill was that it set timelines for municipalities for rezoning applications, and if they fail to make a decision within 90 days, refunds start at 50% and rise to 100%. There are similar consequences for municipalities that fail to approve a site plan application within the stated deadline. This was interesting, because what we

were hearing from municipalities was that they weren’t having too much of a challenge getting approvals; the issues they were having were developers sitting on municipal approvals and permits and refusing to get started, something called “land banking.”

The big city mayors’ caucus claims their member cities approved permits for 250,000 units prior to 2019 that have not yet been built. The city of Mississauga’s staff report recently claimed that some developers were deliberately constraining supply in order to extract maximum prices for their new homes—something that if the rules allowed them to, you can hardly blame them for. They’re not there as a charity; they’re there to make money. So it’s the government’s responsibility to create conditions that are fair for both municipalities and developers.

AMO outlined their concerns on the emphasis of municipal approvals being a large part of the problem, in their response to the task force report:

“Further, it seems to have been guided by the premise that the solutions are primarily at the local level to address barriers caused by municipalities and their councils....”

“The report does not recognize the insight into local issues that municipal elected officials and staff have in relation to their communities, including how best to achieve housing targets and intensification....”

They’re saying that they’re not being listened to.

“A strengthened and more centralized role for the province in local planning decisions would limit local autonomy and devalue community input.

“The ... report also focuses too much on municipal planning and development approvals. It leaves gaps in areas that were not considered such as the bottleneck at the Ontario Land Tribunal ... which has slowed down housing development and contributed to higher housing and municipal costs. More work is needed to determine how the approval timing creates pressures on municipal planning staff who are pulled away from approval work to focus on OLT cases. We continue to also ask that de novo hearings be removed from the OLT process tool box”—all things that this government is refusing to move on.

“There is also an assumption that municipal development charges and fees unnecessarily increase housing costs, and do not respect the principle that growth must pay for growth. There is no guarantee and no mechanism identified that developers would pass on the savings to consumers to decrease the price of the home or rental unit.

“Another concern is that the broader use of surety bonds has been suggested as long-term solution. The financial risk associated with accepting a different instrument of financial security rests with the municipality and ultimately, the local property taxpayer. The decision to accept the appropriateness of such an instrument should remain a local decision, informed by all available evidence.

“In our view, many of the recommendations put forward were done so without sufficient municipal engagement or consideration. If implemented, they could erode local decision-making and are often punitive in nature. This is not productive when only working together constructively will result in the outcomes we all seek.”

That's AMO commenting on the government's housing initiative.

Even after Bill 108, Bill 109, Bill 3, and now Bill 23 and the bill before us, Bill 39, this problem persists.

Just this week, we heard from the city of St. Catharines. Staff were able to ascertain that there are 2,200 units in the city at the finish line for approvals; however, 1,600 are entirely delayed at the hands of the applicant. That's significant: 75% of the unit approvals are delayed because of the developers, and that can be clearly demonstrated by the city.

I see nothing in this bill that sets a timeline for developers to use their permits or lose them, something we have been consistently advocating for on this side of the House. I see nothing in this bill that would look at the developer side of the delays. The bill before us expands on the notion that the issues in building more homes are solely in the hands of municipalities. This government will let minority rule run rampant and destroy our environment in the process on a faulty assumption.

In the past four years, has this government made housing more affordable? I think we all know the answer is no.

I've stood up in this House many times over the years, alerting the government to the staggering increases to rent and home ownership in my own riding. A modest one-bedroom apartment in the city of Welland is going for \$1,400 a month. A basement one-bedroom apartment in Port Colborne is \$1,300. This is consistent across the province. Rents have risen across Ontario over the past 20 years, particularly since 2011.

Shortly after this government was elected, they eliminated rent control on new units. Think about that for a moment. This housing crisis had been going on for a long time. The government got elected in 2018 and eliminated rent control. There's no legal limit set on how much landlords can charge in rent for new builds that were occupied for the first time after November 2018. How does that possibly make the housing crisis better?

We've heard a lot about renovictions. Nothing in this bill addresses that. My friend from University-Rosedale has risen in this House many times to talk about that issue. This is what we're seeing in Ontario.

When housing costs are more than 30% of a person's income, that housing is unaffordable, according to the federal government. In Niagara, we're seeing people spend upwards of 60% of their take-home income on housing.

And it's not just rentals that are unattainable; it's nearly impossible for the people of this province to enter the housing market as a first-time homebuyer without support from friends and family.

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The answer lies in the financialization of housing. The Bank of Canada says that one in five people buying a house are doing so as an investment. As our housing market continues to get hotter and hotter, investors are seeing houses as an investment as opposed to a home, and this mentality is becoming more and more prevalent. The

government has not brought in the measures necessary to curb that.

Recent data suggests that people who own more than one property in Ontario make up more than 25% of buyers in the province. So one in four people who still buy a home in this province are investors, not people looking for a home. In contrast, just 10 years ago, investors made up the smallest percentage of residential real estate transactions; they now make up the largest segment. Speaker, if you've spoken with anyone who has tried to buy a house over the past few years, they'll tell you that it's an incredibly frustrating process. How is an average Ontarian supposed to compete? The risk is that investors continue to push the price higher and higher.

In an interview with CBC, Ron Butler, one of the founders of Butler Mortgage, spoke about his experience with his clients:

"We've seen our clients forced to the upper limit of their affordability. But that's the only option they have is to be at the highest point that they can possibly achieve from a borrowing point of view...."

"That's not going to have a great ending.... It's just not...."

"It's either going to result in a generational shift of people leaving the province or it's going to result in eventually some kind of price deterioration that's going to catch a lot of people offside."

It's a problem that we know is getting worse and worse, but the government keeps passing bills that do not address it.

Speaker, this bill isn't just about the Premier's seemingly one-sided love affair with municipalities. We're going to talk about legalized corruption in Ontario.

The bill before us repeals the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act. Major PC donor and political ally Silvio DeGasperi owns 1,500 acres of greenbelt farmland within the preserve this bill seeks to repeal. This bill will make Mr. DeGasperi much, much richer, all without building even a single home. How much richer? Under the DRAP Act, these lands can only be used for farming, which greatly reduces their value. Mr. DeGasperi reportedly acquired these lands about two decades ago for next to nothing. But outside the greenbelt, with the act repealed, these lands will be worth much, much more. For comparison, in 2016, the Ontario government sold about 425 acres of farmland located nearby for nearly \$400,000 an acre. The main difference between these lands is that the protected lands are currently located within the greenbelt and reserved for farming, whereas the Seaton lands are located outside the greenbelt and have been reserved for development.

A few days ago, I was in this House discussing the government's proposed greenbelt changes. For those of you at home, this government is proposing to remove approximately 2,995 hectares of land across 10 municipalities from the greenbelt. The greenbelt was created in 2005 to permanently protect agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands in the greater Golden Horseshoe area. This government promised the people of this province that they

would “not touch the greenbelt,” only to turn around and once again attempt to carve it up like Swiss cheese.

Well, it turns out that the DeGasperis family won't just financially benefit from the bill before us—and TACC Developments CEO Silvio DeGasperis has given tens of thousands of dollars to the Ontario PC Party. Four companies controlled by members of the DeGasperis family own 20 properties on the land this government is opening up for development.

Of course, these moves don't just benefit the DeGasperis family.

An investigative report done jointly by the Toronto Star and the Narwhal was published just this morning, in an article entitled “They Recently Bought Greenbelt Land That Was Undevelopable. Now the Ford Government Is Poised to Remove Protections—and These Developers Stand to Profit.

“Of the 15 areas slated to be removed from the greenbelt, eight include properties purchased in the four years since the election of” the Premier.

“It appears that nine of the developers that stand to benefit most from Ford's greenbelt land swap have donated significant sums to the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, totalling more than \$572,000 since 2014, the earliest year in Ontario's political donations database.”

The Star says companies controlled by DeGasperis bought at least 24 properties totalling over 1,300 acres of land within the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve, for a total cost of \$8.6 million, which is about \$6,600 per acre. The properties were bought about two decades ago, mostly in 2003, but there was also a purchase in 2016. This shouldn't surprise us. Of the 15 areas slated to be removed from the greenbelt, eight of them include properties that were purchased in the four years since the government's election, when, famously, the Premier was caught on film and audio telling a private group of developers that he would “open a big chunk” of the greenbelt, should he become Premier.

I'm going to quote the Premier, from 2018, after he faced a massive backlash: “The people have spoken ... I'm going to listen to them. They don't want me to touch the greenbelt, we won't touch the greenbelt.” Those are the Premier's exact words.

In 2020, the Premier said, “We won't build on the greenbelt.”

Speaker, it appears it's promises made, promises not kept. The Premier's insider developer friends are going to benefit from lies and broken promises.

One parcel of land this government is opening for development was purchased just weeks ago by the Rice Group. It was listed as a prime opportunity for land banking. A report from the Narwhal found lobbying records revealed connections between the party and five landowners who will benefit most from the proposed changes. The land purchased by the Rice Group was bought for \$80 million and could be worth much, much more if these changes go through. The Narwhal said, “The timing is raising questions about whether the landowners

knew the lands would soon become developable and profitable—or if they simply took a gamble and won.

“Nobody would pay this amount of money for land if they didn't think it was going to be open for development,” said Phil Pothén of the non-profit Environmental Defence.”

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority wrote a letter in response to the changes in this bill, and this is what they said:

“In 2005, the province introduced the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act to ensure that the city of Pickering honoured agreements to permanently set aside the land for agricultural purposes.

“The Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve includes about 4,700 acres of prime agricultural lands in north Pickering. These lands were recognized as prime agricultural areas and lands to qualify them for restriction to agricultural or farm-related uses under the region of Durham official plan, the provincial policy statement, the Greenbelt Act and the Greenbelt Plan.”

Keep in mind, Speaker, that we're dealing with the loss of over 300 acres of prime farmland per day. COVID just showed us the problem with supply chain issues, our concerns about food security, and here we are swallowing up the last farmland in Ontario that has been protected, that the Premier promised he wouldn't touch.

“In 1999, the regional municipality of Durham, the town of Pickering ... and the province agreed to several measures that would enable the sale by the province of previously expropriated preserve land west of West Duffins Creek.

“As a condition of the sale, the purchaser of the land was required to agree to a conservation easement under the Conservation Land Act that would protect the land for agricultural uses in perpetuity. The province sold the lands for a nominal value, as the price was based on the lands being used for agricultural purposes....”

“The province's proposed removal of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, combined with the area's proposed removal from the greenbelt and the elimination of the central Pickering development plan, could result in large-scale, unplanned urbanization in this area which would negatively impact efforts to protect and restore the Petticoat and Duffins Creek watersheds and the nearby Rouge National Urban Park.

“Unlike the typical process followed for other urbanization proposals there has been no watershed plan or subwatershed plan and supporting environmental studies completed for this area involving Toronto and Region Conservation Authority....”

What's worse is that this government doesn't even need the land. In a section of the government's own Housing Affordability Task Force report titled “Making Land Available to Build,” the government's own appointed experts said, “The greater Toronto area is bordered on one side by Lake Ontario and on the other by the protected greenbelt. Similarly, the Ottawa River and another greenbelt constrain land supply in Ottawa, the province's second-largest city.

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“But a shortage of land isn’t the cause of the problem. Land is available, both inside the existing built-up areas and on undeveloped land outside greenbelts.”

That’s on page 10 of the report. I have a copy if any members on the government side would like to read it.

Availability of land is not the problem.

The task force put forward 55 recommendations. To date, the government has still not ended their limits on inclusionary zoning, they haven’t fixed the Ontario Land Tribunal, and they haven’t set up a plan to actually build affordable units.

When the opposition or experts point out that you don’t need to build new housing on a wetland or sacrifice the greenbelt to build housing, this government yells the word “BANANA” over and over again. It’s starting to get not only irritating but a bit absurd.

Speaker, we’ve talked a lot about development, democracy and the environment. I’ve been in this House for over four years now, and each year this government gets more brazen in its utter contempt for the people they’re supposed to serve. As I stand here today, this province is little better than developers pretending to line their pockets—under the guise of building affordable homes.

For folks in this House who may have skipped a civics class or two, a core principle of democracy—in fact, one of its founding principles—is majority rule, minority rights. Governments throughout the history of time have been able to hold the balance of achieving their goals while respecting this principle. What does it say about a government that cannot find that balance, and instead of working and improving, they impose minority rule?

I’ve been surprised a few times in this House, but today, hearing the other side of the House somehow claim that appointing regional chairs and allowing bylaws to pass with one-third support is in any way meant to spur housing is just ludicrous.

Developing on an agricultural preserve when it is widely known and accepted that additional land is not the problem is not a solution to the housing crisis.

The government has hit a wall. Their housing plans are not working, but instead of examining why, they steamroll ahead, tinkering with half-baked legislation and rushing it through with the hope that the people of this province will be too tired or too distracted to stand up.

I’ll end with a quote from a Conservative idol, Stephen Harper, who we all know the government House leader served under. He said, “Having hit a wall, the next logical step is not to bang our heads against it.”

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It is now time for questions.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member opposite for speaking today. I would certainly not agree with much of what you said, but we’re here to listen and debate.

Our province’s population right now is about 15 million, and it’s projected to grow by about another two million over the next decade. For too long, we know that

previous governments have failed to adequately plan for this growth, whether it’s infrastructure, housing, hospitals, education—it’s across the board. That’s why the demand has fast outgrown our available housing supply and Ontario is now facing a critical shortage.

Through this legislation, our government plans to empower our municipal partners and give them the tools they need to plan for future growth.

Does the member opposite not agree that we need to provide municipalities with the tools they need to help facilitate this growth? As much as we can suggest things, we need municipalities onside. They need the tools they need to get things done.

Mr. Jeff Burch: I thank the member for the question. I agreed with everything he said up until he started talking about the bill that we’re discussing today.

The bill that we’re discussing today does absolutely nothing to build affordable housing. It seems to be about setting up municipalities to follow provincial directives in a way that the Premier can control, to turn councils into an environment where the majority no longer rules, where the mayor and a third of council can do the Premier’s bidding, or else. I don’t see how that, in any way, is going to have any impact on housing, except possibly to create confusion and chaos, and I don’t think that that is going to contribute to any kind of housing, especially affordable housing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank my colleague for his very insightful speech, sort of connecting the dots in what this government has been doing.

Certainly, from the day they were elected, this Premier has seemed to be obsessed with meddling in municipal affairs. We saw it in my community in London, which ended up costing the city money, when they prohibited any future ranked-ballot elections and the city had to undo the system that had been successfully used in 2018.

Given the new powers in this bill to allow the minister to appoint regional chairs, I wonder what this member thinks about how the government views local decision-making and local democracy.

Mr. Jeff Burch: I thank my friend for that great question.

In Niagara, this issue of governance has been going on—I can remember it being an issue when I ran in a municipal by-election when I was in my late twenties, which was a while ago.

Currently, I can tell you that there were a number of candidates running for chair of Niagara region, in a system that everyone understood—when they ran for municipal government—would exist after the election. This is a total shock to everyone. To go from the situation where the people of Niagara wanted to elect their chair at large and that was in the works, to the government cancelling that and going back to elected councillors electing the chair, which is not as good, in my opinion, but at least somewhat democratic, to now, the Premier just declaring and being the only vote saying who the regional chair is—I think that’s completely ridiculous, and I don’t see how it can lead to anything but confusion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Rob Flack: I appreciate your comments.

The last time I looked at this bill, the greenbelt is expanding, not diminishing.

And I think my friend from London West would also acknowledge that part of London's problem is that it takes too long to get building permits and shovels in the ground. We need to change that.

I know everyone doesn't like to hear it, but we have significant demand for housing in this province and we have a supply problem, big time. When supply and demand get out of whack—we all know this—we either have prices lowering and we have houses that are worth too little, or they're worth too much, like they are now. And our kids are feeling the pain.

All types of houses need to be built, whether they're affordable, rental, residential or condominiums, and we need to build up, in, and repurpose. I think we all agree with that. There are two million more people coming.

Does the member opposite acknowledge that we need a minimum of 150,000 new homes of all types built in Ontario per year over the next 10 years to meet demand and make life more affordable for all Ontarians?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you for the question.

I think we need more housing, especially more affordable housing.

I have learned not to trust the government's numbers on anything.

I would like to address one of the things he said about expanding the greenbelt. In Niagara, we had a preposterous situation about four years ago, when some Conservatives who took over our Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority thought that they could build on top of a wetland and just create a wetland somewhere else. It was called "biodiversity offsetting," and this reminds me an awful lot of that—where they think they can swallow up prime farmland and green space and just re-create it somewhere else or protect another area that's already under protection. That's not what preserving our green spaces means in any of the legislation, or the intent, of any government I have seen up to this point.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I want to congratulate MPP Burch from Niagara Centre on his one-hour lead—a great job. Thank you very much for doing it.

How will this bill help the Niagara region take on the financial hardships they will likely face from Bill 23 and the reduction of development fees? How will they end up paying for policing, corrections officers, ambulance services, long-term care, retirement homes, water?

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Mr. Jeff Burch: I thank my friend from Niagara Falls for the very good question. We're all very concerned in Niagara. In my friend's riding, I think the wait-list for Niagara regional housing is 14 to 18 years. It's out of control.

The answer to the question is, nobody knows. As I mentioned in my lead, the government has buried the last governance report that they came out with, and this is a

surprise to everyone. They're doing things by confusion. The things that my friend raised are some of the questions I'm getting in my office from my constituents as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: To the member: I certainly appreciate your comments. I know we were both former municipal councillors, and I respect your take on the legislation even though I don't particularly share it.

At the core, this legislation is very simple: It will help us support efficient local decision-making and give elected officials the tools they need to remove the many barriers stalling development on the housing, transit, infrastructure that Ontarians critically need.

Speaking to my community of Windsor: Undoubtedly, the two mayors who represent my constituency, Drew Dilkens and Gary McNamara—I do have the utmost of faith that they will do a great job should this legislation or similar legislation ever apply to them.

The proposed legislation, if passed, will give the local legislators elected by Ontarians the extra tools they need to get shovels in the ground and help us prepare for future growth.

Does the opposition trust Ontarians with their municipal choices and choosing effective and efficient local leaders?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I thank my friend for the question, and I respect his municipal experience as well.

I would say that if you're looking for efficiency, we could just make the Premier the councillor and mayor for the entire province in all 444 municipalities, and he could just make all the decisions. There is such a thing as democracy as well. Just because putting someone in charge and not listening to anyone, not consulting with anyone and making decisions quickly is efficient doesn't mean that it's democratic, doesn't mean that it's right, and doesn't mean it respects the people in that community, which I think is more important.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That's all the time we have for questions and answers; I apologize.

Point of order: I recognize the member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that tonight's evening sitting is cancelled.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate? I recognize the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's great to see you in that chair.

I want to mention that this morning, I had some guests come to Queen's Park from the Ontario Native Women's Association, and they provided me with a medallion. I wanted to just say thank you. I'm honoured and humbled to receive it and to wear it in the House today.

I'm pleased to rise today to speak about the bill we are debating. My thanks to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the associate minister and the parliamentary assistant to the minister for their continued work and advocacy on this pressing issue.

By 2031, as has been mentioned, our population is expected to grow by two million people. Consider as well that 1.5 million of those people will settle in the greater Golden Horseshoe. In addition to that, the federal government has recently committed to adding 500,000 new residents per year. We know that most of these people will come to the greater Golden Horseshoe area, not only looking for homes, but filling jobs that are much needed here in the southern part of the province.

Moreover, we all know we have an insufficient supply of homes for the people already living in the province of Ontario. We see signs of it in the skyrocketing cost of buying a home and the cost of renting. Ontario's housing supply crisis is a problem that has been decades in the making. It will take both short-term strategies and long-term commitment from all levels of government, the private sector and not-for-profit associations to drive that change. Gradual measures could have solved this over the previous Liberals' 15-year tenure, but because they hesitated and neglected the problem, our government must now take bold, decisive action to address this issue. We can't remain asleep at the switch. Everyone in this House knows that. This is why we've committed to building 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years. It is ambitious, but it must be done, and we must start this process now and not wait to start it sometime in the future.

The More Homes Built Faster Act was the first step, but it must be supported by the Better Municipal Governance Act, which I'm proud to stand in support of today. These two bills work in concert with one another to reduce the red tape and administrative overhead that hamper the construction of new homes in Ontario.

Even before a shovel hits the ground, several expenses get added onto the price of building. Municipal fees add an average of \$116,900 to the cost of a single-family home in the GTA. If one considers that the cost of a home in Toronto can be about a million dollars, it's shocking to think that fees could add 10% more to the overall cost of a home. But that's not the only fee that a new build could be subject to. Government fees and charges can add up to \$200,000 to the cost of building a home—one fifth of a million dollars, and not a single post has been set, a pound of concrete poured or a tradesperson hired.

Fees have already been on the rise since 2020. A study by the Building Industry and Land Development Association notes that these fees have increased by an average of 30% to 36%. Home builders, and by extension their buyers, are charged an average of \$53 per square foot for low-rise housing and \$99 per square foot for high-rise housing. The same report notes that municipal fees for high-density housing are double that of low-density.

Madam Speaker, consider for a moment that the vast majority of affordable housing and supportive housing is high-density. These fees are seriously hampering our ability to provide housing options for the most vulnerable Ontarians amongst us. Changes to legislation like the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act will freeze, reduce or exempt fees, to spur the supply of new-home construction and help address Ontario's housing

supply crisis. This includes ensuring affordability, and inclusionary zoning units, select attainable housing units, as well as non-profit housing developments—these are all exempt from fees incurred by municipal development charges. Rental construction would see reduced development charges, as well, and conservation authority fees for development permits and proposals would also be temporarily frozen.

You might be asking why I support these changes. As the minister responsible for mental health and addictions, I have a personal stake in seeing high-density affordable and supportive housing units being built. I will return to this topic later, as I go through my remarks.

Madam Speaker, as I've established, fees present a major obstacle for builders and buyers alike.

Another problem plaguing the construction of new homes is delays in the approvals process. The same report from the Building Industry and Land Development Association noted severe problems with approvals processes. Since 2020, average approval times have increased by 41%. This led to construction delays of up to 16 months in places like Milton, Whitby, Barrie, Oakville and Brampton—that's the best-case scenario; at their worst, delays can be more than 27 months. If we're going to build 1,500,000 homes, no one in this House can accept that kind of a delay. We can't wait two years just to start building what we need to build.

In high-density projects such as apartments, delays lead to an additional \$2,600 to \$3,000 in additional costs per unit. We cannot punish the developers of apartment buildings, one of our best means to increase the housing supply in the most time- and space-efficient way, with these delays in the approvals processes. Time and time again, these projects have been fought by opposition from local councils enamoured with NIMBYism. These objections may have been based on a myriad of reasons, but the status quo is no longer working, and as a result of that, it requires that more needs to be done. We must empower the mayors to ensure the housing supply will meet the increasingly steep demand of their constituents now and in the future. We must start in the municipalities where demand is projected to be the greatest: Toronto and Ottawa.

The Better Municipal Governance Act will empower the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to propose and amend bylaws to the greatest degree.

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The legislation will permit the appointment of facilitators who will make sure the governments of Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York are equipped to deliver on our government's commitment to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. These facilitators will help us access how to best prepare these municipalities for the growth they will soon face and deepen an exchange of information and expertise between them and the province.

Madam Speaker, as I previously mentioned, the bill will not only do a great service to the first-time homebuyer or the senior looking to downsize; high-density housing,

mixed-use complexes and multi-unit residential complexes all make for fantastic supportive housing projects.

As the minister responsible for mental health and addictions and an accredited addictions counsellor myself, I cannot understate how important having access to safe housing is. Perhaps the most critical period of one's journey to wellness, and continued wellness, is post-treatment housing. Being reintroduced to an environment that may have prompted their substance use so abruptly can prove challenging. Triggers for one's substance abuse rarely disappear by the time they leave treatment. Supportive recovery housing is a fantastic means to transition a client back into a complex world at a gradual pace.

As I mentioned earlier, a vast majority of these projects are high-density units, but they are also developed and run by non-profits—organizations that must monitor the use of every penny to ensure it goes towards their chosen goal. These non-profits should not have to pay exorbitant fees to municipalities, and they certainly don't deserve to wait longer for approvals. Frankly, building supportive housing should be considered a service provided to municipalities. Housing those with mental health and addictions issues can save a township thousands of dollars in costs to first responders; it can free up hundreds of hours of emergency room wait times. But most importantly, they provide homes to those who need them most.

Homes provide stability and security. Without these two things, we find ourselves more susceptible to stress, sickness, injury and morbidity. Housing is a significant part of staying safe and well. These indicators refer to what the experts call the social determinants of health. Put broadly, they're conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age. They're a wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of life. I like to refer to them as the human health rights.

As a government, it's our responsibility to ensure that the social determinants of health are met for the people who entrusted us with power. Adequate, accessible and affordable housing must be constructed in great numbers, and quickly, if we're to guarantee that all who move to Ontario have an equal opportunity at prosperity here. That begins with acknowledging that an adequate supply of housing is crucial to ensuring the social determinants of health—a fundamental human right. This is true not just here but in every community.

When I was preparing my notes, I was reminded of a story that I'd read about a child who was—just after a storm on a beach, a whole bunch of starfish had been washed up onto the shore. The kid was standing there, tossing them back into the ocean. An older gentleman was walking and came up to the boy and said, "Son, you will never be able to put all these starfish back in the ocean. There are millions of them all over the beach, and they would all die in the hot sun." But he bent down and picked up another one and threw it into the ocean. He said, "I just saved another one."

When you think about what we're trying to do, when you think about the reasoning behind this legislation to

build more homes, think of the number of people who need a roof over their heads, the number of people who are coming to this province and who are going to want a place to live.

I think back to my parents: What would have happened if they would have come here when they first arrived to Canada and not had the opportunity to have a home? They rented, they saved, and eventually, they bought their first home, and that provided us the place to be nourished and grow and become good citizens. Why should we deny that right to anyone? If we have the tools to provide those opportunities, it is our responsibility, it is our job to ensure that we do.

Madam Speaker, we speak at length about the current-day housing crisis and how it may become worse with inaction. Despite this dour rhetoric, it is spoken for an awe-inspiring, heartfelt reason. The truth is that we live in an incredible place. Canada, Ontario, has become a place of great promise for people across the world to begin a new life, build a family and live prosperously; even more inspiring is that a majority of the people want to call this province, Ontario, home. There is something for everyone in our province. Families, migrants, young professionals, retirees and people from every culture, ethnicity, religion, creed and gender want to be in Ontario.

I have travelled the world in my capacity as a lawyer, as a speaker, as a master in the martial arts, as a student, as a father, and as a person who loves to look at and learn about other cultures. I can say that, no matter where I have gone in the world, bringing people together in a country like Canada, a province like Ontario—without the opportunity of housing, how will that dream ever be fulfilled? I can tell you there are people from all over the world who look to us for our leadership and for how we manage to live peacefully with so many different cultures and ethnic groups coming together, converging in one place and making it work in a beautiful way.

To be blunt, bills like what we are putting forward are designed to build bridges, not walls. In listening to the debate and what we've heard so far, I ask myself—but what is being proposed here makes logical sense. We need to build. We need to expand. We need to provide this housing for generations who are born here and for future generations who want to come here so that we can fulfill the dream of so many: home ownership. I believe that passing this bill will give us the ability to make the dream accessible to many, many more people.

I am in full agreement with the Minister of Municipal Affairs on this: Given the critical need for housing and the intensity we seem to be hearing from the opposition, this can't be a matter of NIMBYism any longer. Despite their protest, I'm proud to be part of a government that is ready and willing to take bold action.

Madam Speaker, prior to coming to government, one of the things I did was work with people who had addictions. Many times they came from different parts of the country. Many times they came from families who were not able to deal with the specific issues of that young person. When they came in, the biggest concern I always had—these

programs ran for 24 months, so for 24 months they were safe; they were in a place where we could provide them supports and services. But I knew that one day they were going to step out of where they were, and if we didn't have a place, whether it was for supportive housing or transitional housing, these individuals would end up going back, potentially, into toxic environments—so all that work, all that effort, everything we did to help that individual move along, all of a sudden was lost, and that individual would find himself relapsing and going back into the system, once again, repeating all that work to hopefully one day achieve his goal, his dream, his independence, a roof over his head.

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Recently, I spent a week in Portugal and I had the opportunity to visit one of their housing authorities. What I learned from the housing authority was that we need to look at the social determinants of health if we're going to help people with addictions or people who are living on the streets. We need to provide them with the supports. The Portuguese model is an amazing model of housing, where an individual is given wraparound supports and services—which is part of our Roadmap to Wellness—and then that individual is given a job, and the jobs are created through social enterprises. I went to a restaurant that was created by them and overseen by them, and I had dinner served to me by a gentleman who had been homeless for 11 years. I spoke to him, and then the chef came out, who had been homeless for three years. We talked about their dreams, we talked about their futures, and I saw in them what change can be brought about when you provide that continuum of care. But the most important piece is the housing, and that's the piece we need to look at in the province of Ontario. I can tell you that not from reading books, but from having lived 10 years in the system where we worked with individuals and had nothing but problems trying to find the supportive housing they so desperately need, to ensure that that continuum of care finished with them entering into a home, providing them with wraparound services so that they had a job and they had something that was gone from many of their lives, a four-letter word: hope. When you instill that hope and provide that person with the supports they need, which is what we are trying to do with building these homes, adding to the inventory, providing the opportunities for them to have homes—that's how we're going to make a difference in people's lives.

That is the reason why I support this legislation. I think it's extremely important that we take this very seriously, and our government does take it very seriously.

This legislation is being put in place to build, to provide opportunities for my kids, so that one day they will have a home; to provide the opportunity for seniors who want to live in the same community that they lived in and raised their families in but who need to downsize. It's going to provide housing for people who come to this country from other jurisdictions and need a place to start. It's going to provide supportive housing for people who are not necessarily able to live without social supports around

them. This is what it's all about. This is why I stand today and am here to support this bill.

Another very quick story: A family from Afghanistan came to Toronto, who had worked very closely with the Canadian and the American governments. He came over with a family of five kids. The first issue they had to deal with was, "We need a home." Unfortunately, there were no homes, but they managed to find something and they managed to move into it. This guy—the husband, the father of these children—and his wife came into the home, set themselves up, and within six months he's now running international engineering projects and making a six-figure income. We need to give these opportunities to more people like him. We need to bring more people to this country, but we can't do it if we don't have the housing to support these individuals.

For that reason, I'm rising today to speak about this bill, to support it and to encourage the people who are sitting opposite us to think about what I said today: that we need these homes built. I don't see any other solutions coming from anywhere, and simply criticizing a good plan is not enough.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for questions and answers.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the associate minister for his comments. While, indeed, they were heartfelt, I would also mention to this government that you draw a distinct link between Bill 39 and Bill 23, unsurprisingly, but within those there is no provision for affordable housing and there is no promotion of affordable housing. Really, cutting apart the greenbelt and weakening the conservation authorities will not magically create affordable housing, no matter how many times this government says it. We've heard about BANANAs, we've heard about NIMBYs—but that doesn't make it accurate.

The government refused to meet with the Association of Municipalities Ontario, a very well-respected body. Why did the government block them? Is this government afraid of accountability? Is this government afraid of the Association of Municipalities Ontario?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for that question.

To be afraid of something—we've made bold statements. We are going to build 1.5 million homes, 150,000 homes a year. We're going to create the opportunity to look after future generations, to look after individuals coming from other parts of the world. This legislation is supporting that ability to build, to develop and to provide those opportunities to people who are desperately in need of homes. Again, I'm going to repeat that as part of their mental health, they're required to have a place to call home, because without that, there isn't going to be mental health, and we know what the cost to our society is. When there isn't mental health, there isn't physical health and everything—our justice system, our health system—suffers.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: To the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions: One of the things that keeps

getting talked about by the opposition is that we're not talking about affordable housing. In Peterborough, in June 2018, when I was first elected, the average home price was \$314,000. In 2019, they issued five single-family-home building permits—five; in 2020, they issued zero. The average home price in Peterborough last month was \$766,000. If we want affordable housing, we have to build houses.

How does this bill help us provide that affordable housing by actually getting housing stock built?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for that question.

It's very simple: We're going to increase the supply by creating the opportunity to build these homes. At that point, supply is going to step in; the demand will take over in terms of the opportunities. That will provide the homes that are necessary.

We've seen rental units increase, in terms of construction. We know that single-family homes—I constantly meet with different groups who talk about the need for additional supportive housing and the talks that they're in with developers who are looking to support that, but the conditions have to be there, and the conditions are—we need to deal with all the costs associated before you even put a shovel in the ground, and we're addressing that. So that is going to help with the affordability, and it will provide an increased supply that will go to where the demand is. We know that there's a huge demand in the supportive housing and transitional housing as well as for the first-time homebuyers.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you to the member for Vaughan–Woodbridge for his remarks.

Of course, Vaughan–Woodbridge is in York region, which is one of the fastest-growing parts of the province. With all those new homes, there comes the need for new infrastructure, new water and waste water systems, new roads etc. And I might point out that York region is actually one of the most indebted municipalities in the province. Their debt is so high they need a special provision from the government to exceed the legislated maximum of 25% of own-source revenues. Over the next 10 years, they're going to issue \$2.3 billion in additional development charge debt. By waiving development charges, you're going to actually reduce revenues in a municipality, making it harder for them to service that debt, which means they're going to have to take more debt on or they're going to have to raise property taxes.

So my question to the minister is, why does he support crushingly high property tax increases in York region or crushing debt which will make it harder for young families to buy homes in the future?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for the question.

The reality that we have to face today is that we have a housing shortage. The fact that we have so many people who are looking for additional homes and opportunities—these opportunities are only going to present themselves if we have the ability to expand. Expanding the number of homes that are available for individuals also increases the

tax base and brings additional revenues to the municipalities.

Again, we've got to look at this from the larger perspective. There is a need for housing. We have a plan that is going to build that housing over 10 years, and the supportive housing component of that is an important part for me, from the standpoint of ensuring that we have the housing necessary to help individuals.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I always listen to my colleague over there. I actually met with him many times on mental health issues.

But if you really care about the kids who just left here, you don't pave over the greenbelt; you don't take away the quality of their air and their clean water; you don't take away their food supply. That's something you could think about.

I'm going to ask you the same question I asked my own colleague—and the Liberal member asked a similar question: How will this bill help Ontario take on financial hardships they will likely face from Bill 23 and the reduction of development fees?

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As anybody should know—I'm not saying they do, but they should—in a region like mine, we pay for policing, we pay for corrections officers in jails, we pay for ambulance—we have code zeros, and they're understaffed. We pay for long-term care—although the government didn't want to talk about it when we were in committee the other day. We take care of retirement homes, water, sewer. If you don't have the development fees, what are we going to do? How are you going to pay for it?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: First of all, the greenbelt is being expanded, not contracted—just to set the record straight on that issue.

When we talk about what's happening in different municipalities, let's remember: When you're talking about policing and you're talking about all the other services, that is generated from the tax base; it's not just from development charges. So there are other sources of income to municipalities.

Again, I have to ask the question—because I have had many conversations with the member opposite. We're in a crisis in terms of ensuring that we have sufficient housing for individuals. What are we going to do? We aren't building.

We have a plan. We have a focused plan—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: We know, based on the existing developments surrounding these areas, we are going to be able to build homes quickly. That's what we need right now. We need an immediate response to the housing—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I was listening intently to what the minister said, and I couldn't help but reflect on my own journey of immigration to Canada and when, 20 years ago, my mom bought our humble townhouse in Mississauga. At that time, the price of that townhouse was around \$200,000. Fast-forward to now:

The price of that same townhouse is around \$800,000, and my mom has about five years left in the mortgage.

When I looked at the housing market a few years ago, when I, as an MPP, earning a very decent salary, was looking for a home to buy, or even a condo, I myself was priced out of the market.

So what does it have to say—that as an immigrant, my mom, a single mom, was able to afford to buy, put a down payment on a home 20 years ago, but myself, working as an MPP in this Legislature, I was unable, as a single woman, to purchase that same home? What does that say about the state of our market?

Minister, why is it so important that we are doing the work that we are doing to increase the supply of housing in this province?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Back to the associate minister: You have about 40 seconds.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you.

That was a great question, and I know exactly where you're coming from because that was my parents' story as well.

It's tragic that we live in a jurisdiction where we should be able to do so much more. We're talking about development charges that have gotten out of control in many municipalities, and it has made the cost of housing that much more unaffordable.

What we need to do is to focus back on that dream that so many immigrants had, the dream that so many individuals growing up want to achieve, like their parents. We need to focus on that, and our plan is doing exactly that. It will build those homes and provide the opportunities to the generations to come and to the people who are coming here from other parts of the world.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for further debate.

Mr. Joel Harden: It has been a fun time, as a member of provincial Parliament in Ontario—and the leadership of this particular government, now on version 2.0.

Sometimes when I'm in this place, I think I'm living in a novel written by George Orwell—something is called something, but its intention is rather different.

Our daughter, actually, at home, is reading the book *Nineteen Eighty-four*. We will remember, of course, *Nineteen Eighty-four* being Orwell's rendition of the Russian Revolution—that famous line that some animals are more equal than others, pointing out the inequity and the corruption that led to the deaths of so many people in the name of freedom.

But I think we've moved, with this bill, Bill 39, *Better Municipal Governance Act*, from Orwell to Bertolt Brecht, the great German playwright. And why do I say that? Because it was actually Bertolt Brecht, in his sarcastic poem called *The Solution*, who said the following, which I think is indicative of the motivation for this legislation—not motive; motivation for this legislation. Brecht wrote sarcastically, "The people had squandered the confidence of the government and could only win it back by redoubled work. Would it not in that case be simpler for the government to dissolve the people and elect another?" The

point Brecht is making here is that sometimes the capriciousness of government is—one thinks one is living in their own world, one thinks that their world view must be right, and if people are resisting you, they must be wrong.

So here we are debating a piece of legislation which basically says that mayors, with a third of their city council, can adopt legislation, as the government has said, crucial to their objective of building 1.5 million homes in 10 years. But there's a step that just got skipped there. I don't recall a moment in this place where a third of the members of this assembly were able to pass legislation. It is true that the government won 18% of the possible elected votes. It is true that that's more than us—10%—and our colleagues in the Liberal caucus—an additional 10%—but one would think that that outcome would confer a certain sense of humility, that despite having the most votes won, the preponderance of progressive voters in the province of Ontario was greater than you. That's not what I've seen in my time here. What I've seen, often, is a government in a big rush to do things—but now for the first time telling us that it's appropriate for major decisions at the municipal level to be made not with the 50.1% majority.

Speaker, I'll try a little exercise here. Can I move a motion of unanimous consent that, notwithstanding the rules of this place, any future decisions can be successfully taken with a third—that we don't need a 50.1% majority? Can I do that, through you, and see if I have any support for that here? No? No one is going to take me up on that? Good. That's called accountability. There's good sense in this place—that ruling legislation in this place with a third of the folks who could vote would be a big mistake. So why is there a different, double standard for Bill 39?

The newly elected mayor of our city, Mark Sutcliffe, has said unequivocally that he does not want to use the powers given to him under Bill 39 and under another piece of legislation I'm currently at committee debating and which is related, Bill 23. All of the candidates for mayor who recently sought office in the city of Ottawa were unanimous in basically saying, "This is not a power we need." Why did they say that? They said that because the mayor in our current system already has considerable power—but it has to be done collaboratively, through persuasion, through argument, certainly through a trading of issues that are important to the mayor's office and to city councillors' offices. Twenty-four people are empowered to sit as decision-makers back home in the city of Ottawa. The mayor is just one of those voices—a very important voice, but not the only voice.

So what I fear here is that we are moving into minority rule because our friends have decided, as Brecht once said, that it's time to dissolve the people and elect another. What are we looking over as we do that? Who's in that tiny third of people who are being served by this legislation? Well, let's think about that for a moment.

As the government has talked about—I think, in this case, correctly—the fact that we urgently need more homes, absent from this conversation for me has been a

very serious discussion of rental housing, deeply affordable rental housing.

I understand, and it's certainly a dream that my partner and I were able to earn—and we were lucky, blessed by affluence, to own our own home. But 53% of the people I work for in Ottawa Centre are not homeowners; they're renters, and they're renting in a market which is absolutely careening out of control. We have a situation in which the cost for a one- or two-bedroom apartment feels like a mortgage payment.

What we fought really hard for in Ottawa, through a fantastic organization I'm sure many members know about, ACORN—full disclosure: I'm an ACORN member. Before I was a politician, I supported the great work ACORN did to help tenants, low-income tenants in particular, persons with disabilities. ACORN was the organization in our city that constantly went to city hall and made the case, with residents directly impacted, that we needed to allocate funds for deeply affordable housing. What did “deeply affordable housing” mean to ACORN members? It meant that 30% of one's income was being spent on housing, the definition that comes from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. Many experts, including experts who have deputed to the committee I've been serving at this week, agree that that's the definition that makes sense. The market can, as it has, balloon in cost, but most people's salaries—unless they're a parliamentary assistant with this government—have not dramatically increased in recent months and years.

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ACORN went to the city of Ottawa with their members for years and won a fund, gradually, of \$14 million for deeply affordable housing. So if non-profit providers like the Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corp.—which is our landlord back in Ottawa Centre for our constituency office; it has over 17,000 tenants connected to its network—wanted to embark on a new project, they could make application to that \$14-million fund. ACORN mobilized, the community supported it, city councillors found cause with it. They got a fund earmarked. But the question any reasonable politician would ask is, where did that \$14 million come from? Many people in this House have served as city councillors. They will know money is often hard to come by at the city. It came from development charges.

When one of the big developers in the city of Ottawa—and our city is not unlike this city; go around the downtown and you will see cranes all over the place. Those cranes are not building affordable rental housing. By and large, they're building luxury rental or luxury ownership housing—beautiful glass buildings, but not affordable. The cost, the trade-off for those developers is that they have to make sure that the development charges they pay go to the city fund, and then our community has a discussion and a conversation about where that money goes—and \$14 million goes to affordable housing right now. But if a piece of legislation which is related to this legislation, Bill 23, passes, what the city officials have told me is that Ottawa stands to lose \$26 million—\$26 million.

I just said a moment ago that we spend, in the city of Ottawa, \$14 million on deeply affordable housing. So you can imagine what this means to people back home who are afraid of losing their home—and this isn't a tepid fear; this is a real fear.

I want to talk about Alison Trowbridge. Alison Trowbridge is an ACORN member. She lives in a community called Manor Village. Manor Village is not in Ottawa Centre; it's actually in the member for Nepean's riding, in Barrhaven. But I've worked with Alison and other advocates in Manor Village, about 113 residents, because initially their community was going to be demolished and relocated to make way for an important project in our city that I know you've heard a lot about: the light rail transit system, stage 3. Alison, with her neighbours, came to city hall and said, “Let's make a variance for our community.” This is one of the last standing builds of affordable rental housing where people, for \$1,000—in Alison's case, she's a single mom with a seven-year-old—can actually survive. It's a good Canadian story—because Alison, with her neighbours, convinced the city of Ottawa to do that variance, to not demolish Manor Village.

I want to read Alison's story that she told at the time, just so people in this House can feel the emotional power of her story. When she talked about Manor Village, she said this: “I've lived here for almost seven years with my seven-year-old son. This is our home. It's a safe place. It's where he can battle his mental health in a safe location. He's a runner, and having this property to defend against that—you know, I have a whole community that will stop him in his tracks and helps me when I can't get to him. They keep him safe. This is a neighbourhood that he knows. I know that if he does get away and he's having a meltdown, he's still safe. He knows the streets. He knows where to go and where not to go. It's that reliance of the neighbourhood I call and use at the drop of a hat. They will be there no matter what.

“This building is set up for his mental health. We've battled that for the last seven years. If I lose this home, we end up on the street. We become another statistic. We can't afford to live anywhere else. We can't afford the new rates in the rental housing market. This is the rate I can afford to pay and get by on and put food on his table, lately, schooling, his mental health—and now have to worry about losing our home and food on the table and his school and his community and his safe place. It is heartbreaking.”

That's the story she told the mayor of Ottawa and the developer involved, Smart Living. And she and her neighbours won that argument.

Here's my worry with this legislation: That's a great Canadian story of somebody standing up for themselves—a single mom of a seven-year-old boy with mental health challenges. The mom is an ODSP recipient making a very fixed income of \$1,200 a month, supported by her neighbours to maintain their housing. What legislation before this House is also contemplating is getting rid of rental replacement bylaws. Rental replacement bylaws are

what can help a family like Alison's. If you demolish a community like Manor Village, there's an obligation on the developer to find comparable housing for a determined period of time. That's what was won here in the city of Toronto in 2007. It hasn't been fully won in the city of Ottawa, but we've had some interventions in the past. Other legislation before this House related to what we're talking about today would get rid of rental replacement bylaws.

Despite the fact that Alison and her neighbours won that initial battle around the demolition of her community, I regret to tell you, Speaker, that Smart Living, the developer that owns Manor Village, is now engaged in a campaign to renovict the community, demovict the community anyway, regardless of the LRT. The owner, Mr. Tamer Abaza, refuses to meet with the residents collectively. He will only meet with people one on one, and those who have been able to get a meeting with Mr. Abaza basically hear an excuse: "This is where the market is going. You're paying an artificially low level of rent. I can't maintain the property as it is." This is a highly profitable property owner in our city. I understand that all those organizations have a margin they need to make to stay viable—but not at the expense of affordable market housing.

When I think about Alison, who I've met, I think about Peggy, her neighbour, who said this about Manor Village: "I've lived here for 30-plus years, and due to the LRT, we've been told we're going to lose our homes. Let me tell you why we shouldn't lose our homes: We are affordable. We're a great community. I've raised both my children here. I'm now a grandma, and I enjoy having my grandchildren here. I pay \$1,132, all inclusive, and to move now—I mean, rents are atrocious, and homelessness is out of control. Where are we supposed to go? They would be destroying a community."

"But it's not just the city that wants to put us out; our landlord, Smart Living, Mr. Abaza, is trying to push us out. They've stopped maintenance. They're not fixing things. And they're offering tenants money to leave just so they can paint and raise the rent. I won't take the money, because it won't last long. This is my home. I have roots here, and it would hurt to leave."

When I look at the housing market and at the legislation before this House, it concerns me—leaving the discussion of the rental housing market and deeply affordable housing for a moment—that individuals like Mr. Abaza, who have significant influence, can try to reverse a decision that we collectively made as a city, that it was important to maintain Manor Village as one of the last standing affordable rental housing units in that part of our city; that Mr. Abaza, for whatever reason he believes is important, can just run roughshod over that, can not fix things, can try to gradually push people out or can buy people out.

I also think about someone like Michael Rice, who, in September, paid \$80 million for two parcels of land—700 acres of land—that would be released by what's before this House opening up the greenbelt for development. It's

2,995 hectares of land touching 10 municipalities. Mr. Rice bought two parcels of land in September for \$80 million that are now going to be worth massively more than he invested.

I have a simple question, through you, to the government, Speaker: What did Mr. Rice know when he made this purchase? What did he know about the future of that greenbelt land? Did Mr. Rice know that there would be development possible there? What is the impact on our climate obligations?

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We had the derecho, the big windstorm that hit our province in May. It absolutely slammed our city, in Ottawa. It knocked power out in buildings. Seniors were trapped in their homes, with no energy, no water service above the seventh or eighth floor in some of the larger buildings. We spent, through Ottawa hydro, \$23.8 million. All those first responders—all those lines folks, police, fire—who were there did a fantastic job working with Ottawa hydro to fix it. Premier Ford, at the time, said that he had our backs, that we were absolute champions, that he was going to make sure we were made whole on any of the costs that we had from the derecho. Well, the costs were, according to Ottawa hydro, \$23.8 million, and they still haven't been paid. We still have six months—we haven't a cent from the provincial government.

When we think about how we make sure that our built infrastructure can adapt to the climate emergency in which we're living—we can go back, as MPP Blais has said on a couple of occasions in this place, to historic floods we've had, once-in-a-century floods, twice in the last five years, impacting Cumberland, where MPP Blais is, and impacting Constance Bay, where I know the Premier visited, with the flooding that happened. What did we offer those residents? We offered them a provincial damage relief program covering \$250,000 per application, with a \$500 deductible. I've talked to those community leaders, because we visited there, we helped sandbag, we helped those folks. Most of the folks who applied for that funding didn't get a red cent from the province. Some of them are still waiting for that money.

So the question I have, when you are contemplating building on ecologically sensitive areas that may make Mr. Rice or Mr. DeGasperis or others very wealthy: What legacy are we leaving for those communities?

I can tell you, if you go to Constance Bay, if you go to Cumberland, if you go to Britannia—these are communities that have seen significant flooding.

As I'm sure Minister Piccini would say where he is right now, in Egypt, at the COP27 conversations, extreme weather is going to be part of our present. What do we intend to do about it? What is in Bill 39 to address it?

All I've seen from the government, when I think about significant moves the province could make about dealing with the climate emergency and how we procure our energy, are huge steps in the wrong direction.

Our neighbours in Quebec are begging us to take their power. They have surplus power drawn from hydro-electricity—zero emissions, zero waste. We just made the

decision, according to Minister Smith, to not renew our energy agreement with Quebec in April 2023. We're ripping it up. We're going to fire up gas-fired electrical plants that cost, depending on the expert, two or three times what we spend in our agreement with Quebec. We'll massively balloon our emissions.

Again, with Bill 39, who are we serving? Are we making decisions by minority? Who are we helping? Are we helping low-income tenants? And what are we building? Are we building ecologically and sustainably? These are the big questions I think any politician of substance has to ask.

I look forward to questions and answers from this government.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for questions and answers.

Mr. John Jordan: Thank you to the member from Ottawa Centre.

This bill is building on the recently passed Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, enabling the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to propose bylaws related to provincial priorities, including new homes.

Speaker, my riding borders on Ottawa. We have seen homes more than double in price and rental units, affordable rental units as well, become virtually unavailable, partly due to people flowing out of Ottawa, looking for affordable housing and affordable rental units.

We heard earlier from the PA to the minister about the \$300-million to \$900-million cost increases in housing across this province because of delays.

This bill will increase the speed that houses will be built at and will increase the supply and help address the problem in your riding and my riding.

Mr. Joel Harden: It's my first chance to take a question from a neighbour, so thank you for the question. I love your community. I drive through it on Highway 7. on my way down here.

I will just tell my friend this, through you, Speaker: There is nothing in the legislation before us that will ensure that more affordable housing will be built—nothing that I can see. It's a developer-written bill that will help developers make highly expensive housing in the downtown and elsewhere. But the member raises a great question.

I know people from Ottawa who have moved out to your beautiful community. When I drive down Highway 7, particularly when I get to Tweed, past where you are, I see so many trees cracked in half from the derecho that have yet to be cleared, that are deep in the forest—so many maple sugar farms. I have a relative in Tweed. The front of her home and the porch was ripped off by the derecho. She's still working with the insurance company.

My question to you, friend, is, what is in this bill to make sure that what we build isn't just going to line Mr. Rice's pockets and is going to help people find affordable homes?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: To my colleague, about Mr. Rice buying land two months ago for \$80 million: It's probably

going to be worth four or five times that much. It's amazing that he was just so lucky that he bought that land two months ago. He should run out and buy a lottery ticket or buy a ticket to a Leafs game or something.

Anyway, my question is going to be the same as I've asked everybody, because I want to be fair on this: How will this bill help the Ottawa area take on the financial hardships they will likely face from Bill 23 and the reduction of development fees? As we know, in my area of Niagara we pay for policing, corrections officers, ambulance, long-term care, retirement homes, waste water. So how is that going to affect the municipalities across the province of Ontario?

Mr. Joel Harden: As I said in my remarks, to my friend from Niagara Falls—a \$26-million loss in our revenue, and where is that going to come from? I guess if one was a true student of Ayn Rand and Milton Friedman and one really believed in the power of the market for everything—the idea is that it's just going to drop from the sky, that Mr. DeGasperis or Mr. Rice or Mr. Malhotra at home, who runs Claridge, a big development company, are just going to, out of the goodness of their heart, build deeply affordable housing for people. But the experience of ACORN and affordable housing advocates has been vastly different: Nothing is going to happen unless you work hard for it, unless you struggle for it—and they did, and they won an affordable housing fund. It's not enough, but they won a \$14-million fund; unfortunately, this bill and legislation related to it will take it away. My question is, why are we doing that?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the member for Ottawa Centre for speaking today on this legislation—legislation that I believe has spurred a very important conversation here in the province of Ontario about the need to address our housing shortage.

Of course, 1.5 million homes don't build themselves, and when we're aiming for this type of an increase in the housing supply, it's important that we're all taking actions to increase that supply. That looks like different things in different parts of this province, but we know—whether it's the missing middle or so many other pieces of housing that are needed.

I got the sense from the member's speech this afternoon that he doesn't plan on supporting this legislation, and I respect his decision at the end of the day. He's a member of the opposition, and he's going to have to answer to his constituents as to why he's not supporting this legislation. I think he's not supporting it, I think he's going to vote against it, because he doesn't feel it's going far enough. But I'm wondering how voting against it will actually address any of the issues that he's talking about.

Mr. Joel Harden: I appreciate the member's intervention in this place.

I'm going to give you a straight answer. What could be done in Ottawa—because there's a debate going on right now because of the largely unused office space in our city that potentially may continue to be minimally used. What do we do with skilled trades organizations, progressive

developers, non-profits, to actually repurpose and revitalize some of those spaces the people of Canada have invested in to very quickly create affordable homes? I share the member's impatience about wanting to build affordable homes quickly. Giving more profits to Mr. DeGasperis and Mr. Rice and Mr. Malhotra—whom ever—to build high-priced housing is going to help some people, but it's not going to help the vast majority of need. So I would welcome working with this government back home. The Treasury Board Secretariat has said this is something they're interested in doing. It's a golden opportunity in Ottawa to take seriously. That is something that if you want to hasten the target—it's existing land and purchased property we have—we could actually do it to get to where we need to go quickly, if that's the objective.

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The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you to the member from Ottawa Centre for your comments.

Two of the fastest-growing parts of our city are Kanata-Stittsville and Barrhaven, represented by the MPP from Nepean and the MPP from Kanata-Carleton and the MPP for Carleton, all members of the government side of the Legislature.

You've already mentioned that the derecho has cost something like \$25 million; the estimate of the DC impact is going to be \$25 million—so let's call it \$50 million, for the sake of math. What do you think the residents of Kanata and Barrhaven and Stittsville are going to say when their taxes have to go up by three or four percentage points to cover \$50 million and their elected city councillors from Kanata and Barrhaven and Stittsville might not have any say in that decision? What do you think they'll say about that dramatic increase in property taxes?

Mr. Joel Harden: They're not going to be very thrilled.

Also, it's important to say that all of the elected municipal councillors for these provincial ridings have been unanimously saying to the government, "We do not need Bill 39. We do not need Bill 23." We do not have, I believe, in Ottawa, a massive problem of NIMBYism that will stop the intensification of building in the downtown. That's not what I've seen.

I do know communities that want to be consulted though, who want to be at the table, who do not want to be banned from going to the land tribunal, which the legislation related to this has proposed to do. So it's setting it up to be more adversarial precisely when we need it to be less adversarial. It's setting it up to be more expensive, as the member is saying, when we can make smart investments that actually build homes quicker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Dave Smith: It's interesting listening to the member from Ottawa Centre talking about this. We had a record year in 2021 with 100,000 housing starts, the highest that we've had since 1987, but that is 50,000 short of what our goal would be or what our need is if we're

going to reach 1.5 million in 10 years. He just said we don't need this. Obviously, the status quo is not working, yet he's saying we don't need this bill. If we don't need this bill and we had a record build of 100,000 home starts last year, how do we get the math to get to 1.5 million in 10 years, when the most built since 1987 was 50,000 short?

Mr. Joel Harden: Let me be very clear: I like the idea of building 1.5 million homes over 10 years. But what the decision-makers in the city of Ottawa are saying is that we don't need this legislation and Bill 23 to get there.

Let me just give you an example, Speaker, to put it on the record: The government is a significant property holder. If you think about single-level LCBO stores and the infrastructure that the province already has invested in in several communities across Ontario—what's stopping the government from working collaboratively with progressive developers to build housing on top of those places? Absolutely nothing.

And what's stopping the provincial government from working with the federal government, as I understand MP Fortier is doing, to think about, how do we repurpose federal buildings to move quickly, as the member says—not to vote by a third, but to move quickly in the right direction?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. Stephen Blais: I would say that it's an honour to rise to speak to this legislation today, but in fairness, I don't think this legislation is befitting an honour that this place should provide. This is yet again an attack on democracy from this government. They are fixated on peeling back the layers of what a democracy is, one piece at a time, and they've demonstrated that over the last four and half years of their rule.

Let's understand what a democracy is. A basic definition of democracy—put it into Google right now in your phones and this is what will come up: "control of an organization or a state or a group by the majority of its members." It's a basic, fundamental definition of democracy. This legislation proposes to reduce that to "the minority of its members." One third of council will now be able to decide on spending billions and billions of dollars for transit and other priorities; only one third of council will be needed. So that's one attack on democracy. The most recent attack on democracy is the reduction of the need for a majority.

Of course, the first attack on democracy—perhaps not the first, but the biggest that I remember—was the use of the "notwithstanding" clause to limit freedom of speech during an election. They used the "notwithstanding" clause to reduce freedom of speech during an election, and now they're proposing minority rule over major projects in our largest municipalities. And let's not forget that they used the "notwithstanding" clause two weeks ago to limit freedom of association or collective bargaining.

This is a government that is committed to, piece by piece, layer by layer, removing the value and protections and institutions that make up our democracy. That's what this bill does.

Let's talk about the package of bills that they've introduced more recently under the guise of wanting to build housing faster.

They claim that there is a housing pace problem in the city of Ottawa, as an example. In the last 10 years, the city of Ottawa has doubled the number of building permits it has issued, every single year. In 2010, something like 6,000 or 7,000 building permits or units were created by building permits; last year, it was something like 12,000. Maybe that's not enough. Maybe there need to be more. But it's not low or slow because of two thirds of council voting against projects. It's not low or slow because the \$30,000 development charge on a single-family home in Orléans or any part of suburban Ottawa is making the cost of housing too expensive. That might be a problem in the GTA, but it's not a problem in the city of Ottawa. Those development charges pay for water and waste water systems. They pay for recreation centres and parks and sidewalks and roads and public transit. These are the things that this government claims to be wanting to invest in to get the province moving. In the city of Ottawa, this is going to punch a \$24-million hole in the city's finances. That's a very quick estimate done by staff, in a rush, the week after this legislation was introduced, to try to provide the new council with some sense of the hole this is now going to punch in their budget, after they've just run an election. I suspect it's actually, in the long term, going to be substantially higher than that, especially because of this undefined or yet-to-be defined "attainable housing" definition, which is soon to come. I suspect that "attainable housing" will be applied to most suburban tract housing in our two big municipalities. That will punch an enormous hole in city finances.

So we've got a government that is slowly peeling back the protections of our democratic system, attacking our institutions, attacking fundamental freedoms like the freedom of association and the freedom of speech, and now they're attacking the fundamental freedoms of our democracy, which is to be ruled by the majority.

Some say the end justifies the means. I would argue: How far do you take that? What end justifies those means? What means are acceptable to get to that end? How much further are you willing to go?

I think the voters in Ottawa and the voters in Toronto and, potentially, voters in other large municipalities across the province are going to be interested to see just how many rights this government wants to peel back, how many rights this government wants to take away in order to get to their goal.

The other interesting factor is that in the last three or four months—this is now the third bill, I think, about housing starts—I haven't seen any information about how any of their efforts today have increased housing starts in that time.

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In fact, the official plan for the city of Ottawa, which was only just approved by this government, sat on the minister's desk for a year. That means that for a year, all of the new land that was going to be added to the city boundary—the democratically elected council used a

majority to approve additional land; I think it was 1,500 hectares or something—sat on the minister's desk for a year. You're telling me that didn't slow down housing growth in Ottawa, when thousands of hectares weren't being built on, because it was sitting on the minister's desk for a year?

Interjection.

Mr. Stephen Blais: They're talking a lot about LRTs, and of course it was a Conservative mayor in Ottawa who cancelled the Ottawa LRT and cost city taxpayers \$100 million in penalties, fines and settlements. It was a Conservative-backed mayor, backed by the member from Nepean and other Conservatives in the city of Ottawa, who did that. So if they want to talk about the LRT, we can have a debate on the LRT. We can have a debate about how late the Eglinton Crosstown is. We can have a debate about how over budget the Ontario Line is going to be. That's a debate I'm looking forward to.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: You're in Ottawa.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Yes, let's talk about the city of Ottawa right now, where our mayor has said that he doesn't need these powers to get more housing built in the city of Ottawa. It's interesting that the mayor of the city of Ottawa, the second-biggest municipality in the province, doesn't need these powers to get more housing built. This was, of course, the mayor who was endorsed by the Conservative establishment in Ottawa. Every major Conservative in Ottawa, every operative, every Conservative elected official who came out publicly endorsed this mayor, and this mayor, who was endorsed by Conservatives, is telling us that he doesn't need these powers in order to get the job done. So where are these powers needed?

So we're going to attack our democracy, we're going to force municipalities to raise property taxes or increase debt—I know the Conservatives love debt; they ran the biggest deficits in the history of the province. Now they want the cities to do the same thing. Municipalities like York region, which are already over—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The government side will come to order.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Municipalities like York region, which are already over the provincially legislated limit on own-source revenues to debt, are going to have an increased pressure of—what—\$2.3 billion?

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery will come to order.

Mr. Stephen Blais: And you know that they have problems with their bill—you can tell that they themselves see how this is going to affect property taxes and debt—because they're chirping all the time, Madam Speaker. They can't help themselves. They're trying to proactively get ahead of the fact that their residents are going to pay higher property taxes, that debts in their municipalities are going to go up, and they still have not shown us how any of their legislation is actually going to build a single new house.

In fact, the government refused to even consider an amendment that would require reporting on the building of new homes, because it was out of scope. Imagine, reporting on new home construction being out of scope on a housing bill—just another way they're peeling back democracy.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for questions.

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member opposite for his remarks.

The previous Liberal government had 15 years to plan for growth and build up the housing supply that we so desperately need now. Unfortunately, they stood idly by and allowed the problem to get out of hand. As a consequence of their neglect and inaction, Ontario's housing supply is now critically low and the dream of home ownership is out of reach for many hard-working Ontarians, young families and new Ontarians.

On this side of the House, we understand the need for working diligently with our large municipal partners to build more homes. Does the member not recognize that the province has a role to play in ensuring we can plan for that growth?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Certainly, the province has a role. They had a role to play in approving Ottawa's official plan, which sat on the minister's desk for a year, holding up development for almost a year in the city of Ottawa.

As a councillor in the city of Ottawa, as I mentioned, building permits went from something like 6,000 or 7,000 a year to 10,000 or 11,000 a year, and we did that without any of these extra powers for the mayor. We did that with a majority vote. We didn't need a one-third minority to get that. We were able to prioritize reducing red tape and other aspects to accelerate housing construction without any of these powers. I'm quite confident that the mayor of Ottawa, the mayor of Toronto or any other mayor would be able to put that same process together in their municipalities.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you to the member from Orléans for his comments today.

You started off talking about democracy and that this bill is a fundamental attack on the very principle of democracy, which is that the majority rule. But this is not the government's first attack on democracy. You also mentioned Bill 28, where the government suspended the fundamental freedoms and the legal rights of education workers. You didn't mention—and I want to give you a chance to comment—they also, in Bill 28, suspended the Ontario Human Rights Code. Because most of the education workers they were attacking with that bill—70% were women; they were largely people of colour. The Human Rights Code protects people from discrimination. By stripping them of the Human Rights Code protections, this government was actually giving themselves the legal power to discriminate against education workers—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Sorry; point of order: I recognize the member from Barrie.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: [*Inaudible*] imputing motive or not. I'll call on you, Speaker, to make that—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I don't believe so.

I will let the member continue with your question. Please ask the question.

Mr. Chris Glover: By overriding the Human Rights Code, this government was giving itself the power to discriminate against education workers based on their gender and their race. This bill is another attack on our democracy.

Do you want to comment on the Human Rights Code violation?

Mr. Stephen Blais: I appreciate the question.

Democracy is something that is precious and something that we need to protect. In human history, when democracy has been there and then ceases to exist, it rarely happens overnight. It rarely happens with a coup d'état or something big that shows up on the news as a "breaking news" alert. You lose democracy one peel at a time: first, it's suspending civil liberties about freedom of speech; then it's reducing civil liberties about freedom of association; then it's going to minority rule; and then it's reducing the institutions of our democracy, like the Human Rights Tribunal. Slowly but surely, the peels that make up the onion of our democracy are being peeled away. This is typical of this government. They have consistently tried to peel away the authority of institutions and the value of democratic aspects of our society. To what end? I don't know.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Final question?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: The member opposite was asking about housing starts and how we know that the work that we're doing is actually going to increase the supply. We know that last year, this province of Ontario had 100,000 housing starts, which is the highest level since 1987; the highest level in the last 30 years was last year. But even simple math will show us that 100,000 over the next 10 years will not add up to 1.5 million homes, which is the commitment—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response? I recognize the member for Orléans.

Mr. Stephen Blais: There is, of course, a difference between cause and effect. Just because something happened doesn't mean the effects were because of that thing—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That is all the time we have for questions and answers.

Further debate? I recognize the member for Mississauga–Malton.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you, Madam Speaker—
Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Will the member for Orléans come to order? The House will come to order.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The member for Orléans will come to order.

I apologize to the member from Mississauga–Malton. Please continue.

Mr. Deepak Anand: No apologies required, Madam Speaker. You're doing an incredible job. I just want to thank you. You're doing incredibly. Peers, if you want to clap, you can always clap for her.

Interjections.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, first of all, I just want to say thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak about an important topic, about a bill which is going to bring relief to our next generation, to the generation we are going through right now, through the Better Municipal Governance Act.

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We are at a crucial turning point in Ontario, an era where there are not enough homes to house the great people of our Ontario. We have a government that is working hard to make sure—I call it Team Prosperity—to bring a lot of opportunity for Ontario. We have a federal government that is going to be bringing in about 500,000 new Canadians—if you add them together and add to it that, in the last five years, we've seen approximately 615,000 international students coming to Canada, making their home here. With Ontario being the best place to live and thrive, we get 60% of those people here.

I just want to take a moment to thank each and every person who has come to Ontario for choosing Ontario as your new home, the same way I chose this place on January 15, 2000. And I want to say thank you to each and every Ontarian for all their hard work before we came. It is because of your hard work that we, as newcomers, are able to thrive in this province.

Madam Speaker, this bill represents something that our government had already started in 2018 and many steps we have taken so far to make sure that we are able to fulfill our ambitious mandate of building 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years—again, it is 1.5 million new homes in 10 years. We have seen the data; I remember the member from Mississauga Centre just was talking about the data. If we look at the last 30 years, we in this province have constructed an average of 67,500 homes. If we're going to remain with the status quo, we're not going to be able to achieve our bold goal of 1.5 million homes in 10 years. It is simply a fact that our government is committed to ending this, to making sure that the data is improved and the real homes are constructed and we're able to meet our goals.

As I said, Ontario is a prosperous and growing province, the best place in the world to call home. But increased demand for new homes and the lack of supply has been driving prices out of reach for too many Ontarians who are struggling to find the right home. This is true for younger people, eager to start a family in the community of their choice. Often people come to me and say to me, "You already have a home," so I remind them, yes, I do have a home, but I have two children and they're growing up. I'm a father of a university-going son, and my daughter is in high school. Soon they will be looking for a home, so we have to make sure they are able to afford to find a home of their choice, as they build their families the way I built my family with my wife, Aruna Anand.

For newcomers ready to put down roots and begin a new life here in Ontario, we want to make sure they have a house of their choice, in their new home, something which we had when we came here in 2001—as our first home. And for seniors looking to downsize but wanting to stay near their family, community and loved ones—our government, along with all the members of this caucus, understand and know that we need to tackle this problem. We know what must be done to get it under control. That is why we remain laser-focused on policies that will get us more homes built faster.

I just want to quickly talk about the data. It's not a hidden secret; we all know about the baby boom. We know about the era between 1945 and 1964. If you look at the data, in 1971, Canada's worker-to-retiree ratio was 7 to 1. Today, if you look at the numbers, it's much less. And if we fast-forward and we look at 2035, this is going to be 2 to 1. If we don't do anything, it's going to be a 2-to-1 ratio, and that's not sustainable.

What we need to do is, we have to look and we have to rely on the immigration—and this is the province which understands that the newcomers face many barriers, such as social issues, language and employment barriers. If we want our province to grow, we have to make sure that our newcomers can succeed and they're able to build their career and give back to Ontario. That is why we took action and passed the bills that ensured the provision of a \$90-million investment for the newcomer settlement, adult language training and bridge training programs. We also passed the bill, Working for Workers Act number 1—for those who were here in the previous Parliament, if you remember, we passed the Working for Workers Act that directly addresses the barriers to support the newcomers on foreign credentials. All newcomers are eligible for these services, including permanent residents, naturalized Canadians and even refugee claimants. We made the investments to attract the much-needed immigrants, and we are working hard to ensure that the people in Ontario, the newcomers and the long-time residents, can find the right home for their needs and their budget.

We know the government bureaucracy and red tape all too often stand in the way of much-needed housing, and we are taking steps to fix this issue. I'm confident that this bill will bring about rapid and positive changes, enabling key municipalities to act quickly, effectively, and in tandem with the provincial goals.

So, what are we doing, Madam Speaker? Before I start talking about that, another thing which I want to talk about is why we're doing this: The current projections say that Ontario is expected to grow by more than two million people by 2031, with approximately 1.5 million new residents in the greater Golden Horseshoe region alone—and that's not even talking about when the immigration goals are going to go up, which was supposed to be 300,000 and was increased to 400,000 and is expected to be 500,000. If you take 60% of 500,000, that's 300,000 people—way more than what we're saying here is going to be coming to this province. What does that mean? Unless we act now, it will put more pressure on our housing supply.

We already have our young ones who are struggling. We already have newcomers who are struggling. We have our seniors who are struggling. And if we won't take the action today, it will be too late, and we don't want to put more pressure on them.

That is why our government is proposing that Ontarians act now rather than wait for the consequences of our inaction. This government has been clear that we will expand the strong-mayor powers to shovel-ready municipalities and commit to growing their housing supply and infrastructure. We'll provide them with the tools so that they can be supported, as well.

The previous strong-mayor cities, Toronto and Ottawa, are single-tier municipalities, so the province is appointing facilitators in some of our fastest-growing regions to help facilitate the best way to extend these powers and the responsibilities into the two-tiered municipalities. These regions with facilitators will include Durham, Halton, Niagara, Waterloo, York and, of course, my home region of Peel. To make sure that we are laser-focused on our goal of building 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years, our government has announced our intention to reappoint the existing chairs in Niagara, Peel and York if this bill passes. In doing so, we will continue to ensure stability and continuity.

Madam Speaker, this is further evidence of our government's determination to address the housing supply crisis by ensuring that the local governments have the tools to build more homes faster. This new bill builds on the success of the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act by bringing forward changes that would enable the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to propose certain municipal bylaws related to provincial priorities. And our government, under the leadership of the Premier, has been clear from day one: Our priority is building new homes and community infrastructure faster for the people.

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We often hear about consultation. We just had our election, and all the members of this House reached out to Ontarians. Ontarians, loud and clear, said that we have a province that's doing a great job, but we have a housing crisis. The result, as you can see, is that we have 83 of us right here. The reason we have 83 of us here is because the people of Ontario believe that we have a government that will support them, that will make sure that we'll be focused on their growth. And to ensure that, it is our moral responsibility to make sure we live up to our commitment to build more homes faster and fix the housing supply crisis.

But that comes with another issue, the labour shortage. I always talk about the labour shortage because we know that today one in three journeypersons are over the age of 55. They will be retiring soon—with great uncertainty about who is going to fill those shoes. The average age of an apprentice is 29—an age that's far too high for an apprentice. That is why we are urging—if you have a son or daughter who wants to go into a skilled trade, start from grade 9 and look at the OYAP program.

Over the next decade, Ontario will need over 100,000 workers in the construction industry to keep up with market demand and, of course, our demand for new, affordable homes. It is the construction workers who will be necessary to make sure Ontario has the labour force required to build homes faster and Ontario's future better. Careers in the skilled trades are exciting, in-demand, and they come with good pay and benefits.

We are getting things back on track at the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and through our agency Skilled Trades Ontario. We have started a Skills Development Fund. Under this, we have seen the results: Over 388 projects have resulted, and it has helped 400,000 people around the province upgrade their skills and take the next step in their career.

I just want to say, if you know anyone who is looking to expand and get into the skilled trades, reach out to our ministry. We want to make sure that if you want to work in the skilled trades, you have the tools necessary to get into the skilled trades.

Just as an example, Madam Speaker: One such project that our government was proud to invest in was an investment of over \$300,000 for LIUNA to give over 8,000 members of Local 506 as well as construction craft workers free access to a wide range of online skills and safety courses they need to do their jobs safely.

By increasing our investments through the Skills Development Fund, we will continue to make investments that form a critical part of our fight and make sure more people get into the skilled trades and end our labour shortage so that we can build these homes.

In introducing the Better Municipal Governance Act, we are continuing to propose changes to help make Ontario's economy better. Together, we are going to build Ontario so that it is the best place in the world to live, work and raise a family.

Madam Speaker, another way we can bring in more people and help Ontario is through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program—another example to make sure our government is seeking common-sense solutions to Ontario's labour shortage. By attracting more talented people, we will be able to address our historic labour shortage.

The need for new workers varies from province to province. That is why our provincial governments across Canada need a better deal with the federal government to tailor our immigration pool to best suit the labour demands in our towns and cities. And that is why we want to make sure that we have a good number of people working, living here and getting trained for the skilled trades.

Our government is on a mission to help newcomers get better jobs and bigger paycheques so that they can build strong families and strong communities here in Ontario. This bill will go a long way to helping fight for Ontario's future. As we know, our municipalities have been tied up with red tape for many years, and if this bill passes, the municipalities would be free to get to work, build the projects necessary for their communities and help end the housing shortage in Ontario.

For all these reasons, I encourage everyone in this House to support the Better Municipal Governance Act. This bill is one of the best examples of how we can all come together and build a better Ontario. Through empowering our municipal partners to help fix the housing shortage, increasing investment in the skilled trades and harnessing the power of economic immigration, our government is paving the way towards a better future for our kids and our coming generations.

That's why I'm supporting this bill, and I'll encourage everyone to do the same. When we support this bill, we are following through on our government's mission to make Ontario the best place to live by building 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for questions.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciated the comments from the member opposite, but as we heard in his remarks, there was a great repetition of what we've been hearing all day—that somehow this bill is necessary if the province is going to meet the target of 1.5 million homes. I have to say, Speaker, I'm not the only Ontarian who wonders how authorizing the minister to appoint the regional chairs for Niagara, Peel and York has anything to do with reaching that target.

So can the member explain how undermining local democracy, overriding local decision-making, has anything to do with reaching that target of 1.5 million homes?

Mr. Deepak Anand: First of all, I want to say thank you to the member opposite for the question.

Again, as we heard it, as members said that too—we heard it from the other members that we are laser-focused and making sure that we went to Ontarians, we promised them that this government will stand and will make sure that we'll take you out of housing crisis. That status quo is not going to work. We will make sure that we will build 1.5 million homes. That is why we are doing everything to make sure that we are able to do that. And that is why our government has announced our intent to reappoint the existing chairs in Niagara, Peel and York—because we want to make sure that there is stability and continuity.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Nolan Quinn: We've heard from the opposition a lot that the 1.5 million homes that we want to build—we don't need to change what we're doing. The last time we built 100,000 homes since last year was in 1987. I was four years old. What we're doing isn't working. We need to change it. My youngest is five years old, and I would like for her to be able to purchase a home when she gets older.

My question for the member from Mississauga–Malton would be, can the member explain or elaborate on why the government is moving on Ontario's housing supply crisis so quickly and introducing yet another piece of legislation that the opposition thinks isn't needed?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to my colleague for that important question and sharing the data and talking about your children. You're no different than many of us. I have two of my own, and I want them to grow and I want

them to have their own families. I love both of them. I'm not worried about—I'm not concerned about the responsibility I have, but it's a natural process.

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As we know, Ontario's housing supply crisis is a problem which has been there for decades. And what has been done? The answer is still there. We went back to the Ontarians. We asked them what they need. They said, "We need out of the housing crisis." That is exactly what this government is doing—we're making sure we're able to build 1.5 million homes in 10 years so that we can fulfill our commitment and get out of the housing crisis.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Malton for your comments.

I'm going to ask you a very hard and direct question. You are part of a government that over the last four years has been stripping away our democratic rights, piece by piece. You have introduced three pieces of legislation that use the "notwithstanding" clause to override the fundamental freedoms and the legal rights of the people of this province. Your government introduced legislation that overrode the Human Rights Code. The current legislation undermines our local democracy by changing regional chairs from locally elected to appointed by this government, and it even undermines the fundamental principle of majority rule, so that only one third of councillors will be able to make decisions in Ottawa and Toronto. How can you stand there? What further action is your government planning on taking to undermine our democracy? And when will you, as an MPP, stand up for the democratic rights of the people of Ontario?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, thanks to the member opposite for that question.

He talked about what kind of government we are. We are the government who is rebuilding Ontario's economy. We are the government who is working for workers. We are the government who is building highways and infrastructure. We are the government who is keeping the costs down. We are the government. We went to the people of Ontario in June. We asked them what they need. They want us to get out of the housing crisis. We are investing. We are making sure we're using every tool so that we can build 1.5 million homes over 10 years so that children can have their own house and feel good in this province of Ontario. That's what democracy is.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Rob Flack: One of the things I like about this bill is, I think it's going to open up a wonderful pathway for multiple residential buildings—whether it's normal residency, affordable housing, condominiums, rentals.

My good friend from Mississauga–Malton, how does this proposed legislation, if passed, help incentivize our private sector for not-for-profit and continue to invest with our not-for-profit partners in affordable and attainable housing across this province and help us meet our goal of 1.5 million homes that we need to do in the next 10 years?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to the member for a wonderful question.

I want to remind you that many of us want to buy a house, but not everybody can buy a house. I remember, when I came to this province of Ontario as a newcomer, I rented. For example, my son rented when he went to university.

We're trying to make sure that everyone has a roof over their head. That is why we're making sure we are supporting our not-for-profit partners, by making sure to continue to invest in building up critically low affordable and attainable housing, by building on our previous legislation and continuing to streamline approval processes, getting shovels in the ground faster and building houses faster, providing more supply so that they can have—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the member from Mississauga–Malton about this Bill 39.

I want to reiterate something that my colleague for Spadina–Fort York said. This bill and what we are so deeply opposed to is that it flies in the face of the most basic democratic principle, which is that a decision made by a majority in an elected assembly would win out—it would be a majority in an elected assembly, not a minority. A minority is what this government is proposing—anyway, I'm tired. It has been a long day.

I want to appeal to the members opposite for a moment, because I know that you've been told that this bill is about housing. But I want to tell you that this bill is about revenge. The member from Toronto Centre said it very well recently in their comments on a previous piece of legislation.

I want to ask you to consider what this bill does to override democracy in the communities that you represent and ask you to consider, please, urging your minister to withdraw it now rather than make the same mistake they did with the last bill, the “notwithstanding” clause.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, I'm just trying to understand the question. The member opposite asked a very simple question: Why are we having this bill? What are we trying to do here? The answer is simple. We went to Ontarians in June. We asked them what they need. They said, “We're in a housing crisis. Let's fix the housing crisis.” And that is exactly what we're doing through this bill, Madam Speaker. We're going to make sure that we build 1.5 million houses in the next 10 years. We will build the homes faster so that there is higher supply and so that the people can buy—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): There's time for one last question.

Mr. Dave Smith: This is one of the things that came up during the election a lot: the price of housing, getting kids into homes, getting our youth into homes. The price of the average home in Peterborough rose from \$314,000 to \$762,000 in the course of four years. What it seems like, and I'm aging myself when I say this, the NDP solution is—clap, clap—and the houses are going to get built.

How is this going to actually help build those houses and help make it affordable?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): A 20-second response.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, the answer is simple: When we stay laser-focused, we make sure that, what we committed to, we deliver. It's going to happen. The status quo is not going to work, so we have to take action, and we have to go back to Ontarians and we have to deliver 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for further debate. I recognize the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Well, it's about time, Madam Speaker. I've been waiting all afternoon. I got to listen to this debate all day.

I'm going to start, before I get into my formal remarks—because this goes on all the time, and I don't think it's fair, Madam Speaker. I got told about the bill yesterday afternoon, and here we are this afternoon debating a bill that I think is very, very important. And I'm going to be clear. I heard one of the member talks about how he's got young kids. Well, I've got three daughters. I've got five grandkids. You don't think I want my kids to own a home? And what's the best way to get there? My opinion, which disagrees with yours, is I don't think we should touch the greenbelt. But do I think my kids should have the same opportunity that I had? I think every parent in this country will say that they want a better life for their kids than what they had, and part of that better life is owning a home, raising a family, making sure the kids and grandkids are taken care of when I'm long gone.

So what bothered me about this—because this is important, and I believe it's an attack against our democracy, there is no doubt about that. I think the “notwithstanding” clause was. But what happened with the “notwithstanding” clause is the unions said, “You're not doing this to us. We've had enough.” So from coast to coast to coast, they rallied and took on this government. They backed down, there's no doubt about that. They backed down because the unions said, “You take one of us on, you're taking us all on.”

So that was undemocratic as well. What they didn't understand during that was that unions would stand together, but even bigger is that those union members would risk being fined \$4,000 a day and say, “No, you are going to get rid of that.” And they did. It took them a week later, but they did.

But what bothers me is when I come in here—and they can disagree with me, they can agree with me, they can yell at me, do whatever they like—all I want to do, when I'm talking to a bill, is I want to make sure I've got the opportunity and the time to talk to the people that it's going to affect. This bill is obviously going to affect Niagara. It's going to affect other locations too, but it's really going to affect Niagara.

So I called the chair last night, who just found out about this bill maybe a few hours before that. I was able to get a hold of the mayor from Fort Erie, who was in my riding:

Mr. Redekop, who is a lawyer, so I respect him. I mean, lawyers are usually pretty sharp. I don't know if there any here but—

Interjection: Not all of them.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Not all of them, but this particular one is, and I trust him. I asked him about this, so I had a chance to talk to him.

1610

Out of all the councillors that are elected, all the mayors that are elected, I've been playing phone tag here—not phone tag, but texting back and forth to the mayor in Niagara Falls. That's all I've been able to talk to. I didn't get a chance to talk to AMO and say, "Where are you guys at on this?" None of that happens.

And why is it not happening? It's because you rush it through; you kind of sneak it through. If you're proud of what you're bringing forward, you would think they'd give us at least enough time to investigate whether it's good, bad or indifferent, what our position is, and give us a chance to talk as a caucus. You guys don't do any of that. So I'm standing up here for 20 minutes without having the opportunity to say to AMO, "What do you think of this?" Or to say to the mayor of Niagara Falls, who I haven't talked to, "What do you think of this?" Or Niagara-on-the-Lake—because a lot of people don't know that my riding is relatively big. It covers all the wine areas: Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake. So I have three mayors; I have a lot of other smaller communities, but I have three mayors. I would have liked to talk to all the three mayors and tell them what I think, because I think we should build houses. I believe the mayors believe it should be infill and not done on the wetlands.

I don't know why I've got my glasses on; I'm only talking.

If I'm the government—and we heard about the Rice family, which I really didn't know a lot about; I don't know the Rice family. Obviously, they're rich. They just paid \$80 million for land that was basically worthless until this bill came in, until they're able to build on the wetlands, if it gets passed. That land will go from \$80 million to—and I'm guessing—I would think, about \$500 million almost overnight.

What looks bad on the government—and my colleagues can correct me if they like, if one of them wants to correct me. They paid the \$80 million, which is a lot of money for worthless land, two months ago. Who tipped them off? Who did they have an in with, in the government—whoever it is, whether it's a minister, whether it's somebody that works within the government, that said, "Go buy that land because we're bringing a bill forward that's going to make that property worth X number of dollars." Then, it doesn't look like it's ever about housing; it looks like it's about developers. It looks like it's about how we can take care of our developers that are going to make lots of money. I know they don't like to hear this, but a lot of developers donate to their campaigns. We know that.

I can tell you, I run a golf tournament trying to raise money. When I say I'm a worker, I'm a worker. I charge \$99 for my golf tournament. That includes the golf, the

meal, everything, and the prizes. I'm not making a lot of money on that golf tournament. Now, we're getting together, we're having some fun; a few guys might have a couple of pops. But this government will have the same golf tournament or the same dinner for \$1,000 a golfer. My friends aren't coming. And if I had a \$1,000 golf tournament, nobody would show up but me. They don't have that kind of money.

So, we know who is supporting. It's developers. In this case, with the Rice family, you look guilty.

What I'm saying here is, whether I agree with you or disagree with you, I don't think it's fair to the opposition and I don't think it's fair to the Liberals or the independents—and, quite frankly, in some cases, maybe you guys, but maybe you get all this stuff long before we do—that we don't have the opportunity to at least talk to people, to go over the bill: "How is this going to affect you? How is it going to affect your community? Is it okay for Fort Erie? Is it okay for Niagara-on-the-Lake? Is it okay for Niagara Falls? Can you live with this?" I don't get that chance, so now I've got to stand up here for 20 minutes and do a speech, really, without talking to my community, without talking to the people that this is going to affect.

Now, do I think in my heart that we should stop attacking democracy? That's what we're about. We're a free country. I hear your message over there that you've got a majority government, but he doesn't stand up and say that 18% of the voters who voted—and that's another problem; we don't get enough people to vote in this country, in this province. But you had 18% of the 43% or 44%, or whatever it was, that voted. To me, that's not quite a majority.

I was in the labour movement, and you know this. I think I've walked one of your picket lines with you, once or twice. When I got elected in the plant, I had to have 50% plus one, and if I had less than that, I lost. Well, here you can get a majority government at 18% of the voters and go after our democracy, saying that it's about housing.

It's not about housing. I wish it was about housing, because I'm going to be clear with you—I love all my kids, and I'm lucky. My two oldest daughters have had a house for a long time. My youngest daughter bought a house in January; she's 24 years old. She and her partner, they bought it in January when it was a little high. That's all I'll say without getting into details. But she bought a house. So I understand that every young person would like to buy a house. Their parents want them to buy a house. And we all help our kids; that's what we do as parents. So what's the best way to get there? That's the issue here.

I don't believe we should be ever touching the wetlands. I gave an example—I think you were in the Chair. I gave an example about Houston that did relatively the same thing that you guys are thinking of doing. What they did is they got rid of all their wetlands—got rid of them. Do you know what they did? Anybody know? Help me out. Did you guys listen to me two weeks ago?

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Maybe not? Well, you should. I would if I were you, considering that I listen to you, from Peterborough, once in a while.

But what happened is they built on the wetlands, and, as my colleague has said, once that's gone, it's gone forever. I'm sorry, you can't pick a wetland up and say, "I'm going to go deliver it over here and make it a wetland." It doesn't work that way. It doesn't work that way. We all know that. Certainly the environmentalists do.

What I'm saying to everybody here: If we're going to bring bills forward here, give us the opportunity to at least talk to the people it's going to affect in my riding, and it really affects Niagara. It's undemocratic. There's lots of things I could do. I should get into a little bit of my speech. Hopefully you guys understand that. I'll get into some of this other thing.

Okay, I'll read this out, just because I wrote it down: I'll give you an example that there was no consultation with the mayor of Fort Erie. We got notified yesterday; no time to talk to stakeholders. AMO—we've heard some of the comments from AMO, but I haven't had a chance to talk to AMO. I don't know if what's being read is accurate. I haven't seen press releases. I've been in here all day, right? So I'm not out looking around—no time to talk to the regional councillors. I believe, off the top of my head, there's 31 of them. I didn't talk to one before I stood up today. There was no time to talk to councillors in any of those municipalities.

As I said, I have Fort Erie that I represent. I'm very proud to represent Fort Erie. I'm very proud to represent Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake. I never had a chance to talk to them, never had a chance to talk to the mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake—the new mayor, by the way. He just got elected; congratulations. I never had a chance to talk to him. I think that's a mistake.

I'm going to get on with what I wrote here. In schedule 3 of this bill, it states that for the term beginning in 2022, the minister will appoint and fix the duration of the head of council for several different municipalities, including the regional municipality of Niagara. I want to focus on two key words in that language—time goes quick when you're talking, eh? I took 10 minutes—"appoint" and "fix."

I'm sure the minister is aware that we just had municipal elections in Niagara and across the province. The people of Niagara democratically elected their elected officials, including regional councillors and their mayors. I think most voters went to the polls with the understanding that they would vote, that whoever got the most votes would win and that in four years' time the people of Niagara and the people of the province of Ontario would get the chance to vote again to pick their representatives.

Well, this bill says the province has the power to appoint and fix the duration of the head of the Niagara Regional Council. Does that mean that this bill gives the provincial government power to overturn the democratic choices of our citizens in 2022? I understand the government has made the decision to reappoint the previous chair right now, which is Jim Bradley, who has served here for over 40 years by the way. Over 40 years he's served here. He was up in the gallery the other day with four or five

others. But this language is concerning, Speaker—Speaker, I guess you're that way.

Next I want to talk about the changes this bill makes to local procedure. The bill states, "If the head of council is of the opinion that a bylaw could potentially advance a prescribed provincial priority, the head of council may propose the bylaw to the council and require the council to consider and vote on the proposed bylaw at a meeting."

Now we know that these strong-mayor powers will likely be further handed out across the province. I don't think they're stopping in Toronto and Ottawa; it's not where this government is headed. Now we know that these strong-mayor powers will likely be further handed out across the province, but we don't know where that will stop. How many mayors or heads of council will have power? Where does the power stop? Well, we know it stops right over here. That's the ringleader. We all know that—Premier Ford. Will this happen in Niagara? How will it affect the decision-making of our regional government?

1620

Speaker, now I want to be clear: I trust the people of Niagara. I trust the people of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake to make their decisions about who they want to represent them at regional council. I then trust that those elected councillors will make decisions that best reflect the interests of their constituents. That's how it's supposed to work. That's democracy. If you have an issue, you call your councillor and they help you fix the problem. That's how it works.

When I was a city councillor, guess what? If enough people called me and they were all facing the same issue, then I would put a bylaw forward to address the issue. It's not to be that a different part of government appoints someone, potentially not even someone the voters elected, and gets to choose what's on the agenda for council.

Madam Speaker, I think the people of Niagara and the people of Ontario deserve to know, in no uncertain terms, exactly what changes this bill is going to make and how they're going to work. According to my understanding, having read over the changes this bill makes to the Municipal Act, 2001, schedule 3, this bill gives the government to pick and choose the head of council, and the head of the council will have a provincial facilitator to assist in advancing provincial priorities and ensuring regions are prepared to deliver on the government's commitment to tackle the housing crisis.

I suppose we could all keep our fingers crossed that this doesn't go beyond just our housing crisis, but now what does that mean? Who gets to decide what advances a provincial priority? Who is in charge of determining what it will take to determine if regional council and government is prepared to deliver on the government's priorities or commitments?

So not only does the government get to appoint the person in charge of Niagara regional council, the person they pick will be under the direction, to some extent, of a provincially appointed facilitator. And we know that the facilitator is not an elected rep right now and will largely

be the arm of the provincial government at regional council. Think about that: Everybody else around that table is elected, in Niagara, except the facilitator.

I'm only guessing—I may be wrong—but I've seen it with the parks commission, I've seen it with the bridge commission, I've seen it with all these different organizations in Niagara. Guess who normally gets appointed? A Conservative, who may have run for the party or lost for the party. Is that what's going to happen here? I don't know. I haven't had the chance to look into it.

This is what the people of Niagara voted on in October: They voted to have a chair appointed by the province and then be under the direction of a provincial facilitator—it's not what they voted for; I apologize for saying they voted for it. It isn't what they wanted. In my humble opinion, to all you guys listening, and ladies—sisters and brothers; I don't know which way to say it so I can get you guys to smile, even though it's late Thursday—this isn't what the people voted for. This is a disgrace. It's a slap in the face to our democracy. Imagine, this bill gives the government the power to undermine the election we just had, that the people of Niagara just voted on.

I'd like to ask anyone in this House: How does democracy work? What's the most fundamental aspect of democracy? Our communities come together and they vote for their local representatives based on the commitments that they made. That's how it has always worked, but it's not how it works under this Legislature. It's supposed to be that the people of Niagara vote and the people who get the most votes get on council.

Do you know what? I lost seven times, by the way. I ran as an MPP, as an MP, I ran for city council, I ran for regional council, and I lost. Do you know why I lost? Because the people in my community had their democratic right to vote, and they chose not to vote for me. But I never gave up. I kept running, because I thought I had a good message, and then what happened? They started to like my message, and now I've won the last five or six in a row.

But I had to lose. I had to take those steps. I had to respect that the people in my community didn't want me. I had to work harder. I had to get a message out. I had to do all that, and I think that's fair. But it was done by the people, democratically.

It makes no sense. Getting to pick and choose who is in charge, what bylaws get voted on, how many votes it takes to pass, social assistance—they make our communities function. So we have to ask the question, what will this heavy-handed legislation do to all those important services the region provides?

I've only got a couple of minutes left, so I'm going to talk about the one thing that I haven't had a chance to talk about at committee. The region provides something that's really, really close to my heart: long-term-care and retirement homes. And with Bill 124, we know they don't have the staffing to do their jobs properly. But we know that 5,000 people have died in long-term-care facilities. We can argue—because that's what people like to do on that side—whether it's one to 20 people who are dying every day in long-term-care facilities, that's what's happening.

It's somewhere in that range. It depends on how it's reported. It depends if they change the reporting. But we know seniors are still dying: our moms, our dads, our grandparents, our aunts, our uncles. The region takes care of that. They take care of retirement homes.

But I can tell each and every one of you, if you're sending your family member to a for-profit home, the chances of that person dying are greatly increased. Yet if you send your parents or your grandparents, your aunts or uncles to a regional-run home, they're going to have Proper staffing, because it's going to be about care. They're going to have enough staff on shift in a regional home. In for-profit homes, it's about profit. So I'm advising everybody—you don't have to take my advice. Sometimes you guys do, actually. I think you've passed a few of my motions once in a while. I'm saying it to you, if you care about your family members, put them in regional homes. Do not put them in for-profit homes. They're more likely to have a bad outcome.

I guess my time is up. I really appreciate you not having to interfere and stop my speech. I think it's the first time in nine years that's happened, so thank you very much. I appreciate it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I don't know if that's a good thing or not.

Questions?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Industry experts across Ontario are in clear consensus: Rising home prices are driven by a root lack of supply. Despite the overwhelming evidence, the members opposite have too often been unwilling to even acknowledge this basic fact. The member for Toronto—St. Paul's has even stated in this House that more houses is not necessarily the answer. Speaker, how can Ontarians trust the opposition to fix housing when they don't recognize the root problem?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Listen, I appreciate the question. I think I've been very clear. I have young people like this, young grandkids these kids' age. As a matter of fact, I'm trying to get my granddaughter to come here.

It's not the issue about the housing. We all believe we need housing. We need all kinds of housing and different types of housing. We need affordable housing. We need all that. What we don't need, in my humble opinion, is to do it on our wetlands, because—we thought we should have learned something from COVID. Do you remember COVID when it first started? We didn't have masks; we didn't have gloves; we didn't have aprons. That's what's going to happen to our food supply. And if you think China is going to bail us out and give us food to feed this nation, it's not going to happen.

So all I'm saying to you: Infill. And if there's any municipal councillors here, you know what I'm talking about. There's lots of land within the community to stay away from the greenbelt and make sure we protect our farmers, protect our air, protect our quality of water and protect the flooding, quite frankly. I didn't finish the example of Houston. I'll try to do that in the next question. How's that?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls for your comments today. The government keeps talking about the need to build housing, and there is the need to build housing; we're all agreed on that. But there are other issues that you need to address in order to make it affordable. You need to address money laundering. You need to address the real estate investment trust. But is there a need—this government, with this bill, is undermining our democratic rights. They're changing the regional chairs from elections to appointments, and they're also undermining the way our councils run so that a third of councillors will be able to make decisions. Do you think there is any rationale for undermining our fundamental democratic rights with the excuse of building housing?

1630

Mr. Wayne Gates: I know there are a few people from other parts of the world here today, and the reason why they come to Canada is because it is a democracy. It is the greatest country in the world, quite frankly, in my humble opinion, and we shouldn't attack our democracy.

If you're talking about in Niagara in specific, they were just elected—just elected. They put their platforms out there. They should be there for four years. We should not be buying into the fact that we need to make sure—I don't know. I lost my train of thought. I apologize. I'll leave it at that. Sorry.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: In the early 1960s to the 1970s, the community of Bramalea was built, allowing for many people, including immigrants from the Caribbean like my family, to have the opportunity to set roots. Then fast-forward a little bit, you have in the 1990s an area called Springdale in Brampton that was developed; 59.7% of immigrants represent there. The thing is, I just need to find out—because I've heard you say and members say this bill is an attack on democracy. Well, you know, being a former councillor and hearing about NIMBYism and knowing that our council is taking a long time to finally have BIPOC representation, status quo over the years has discouraged diversity and inclusion and democracy of councils.

We are going to have many new immigrants coming to Canada, and this means families like mine cannot move into neighbourhoods and cities that are not diverse, therefore giving the opportunity to see councils in the future be diverse. So are you saying that families like mine shouldn't be allowed to have the opportunity for home ownership in Ontario?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Wow. That's certainly a stretch. I think I said earlier in my comments that I believe that everybody in this great country, in this great province, should have the right to own a home. It's how we get there; it's how we get there. This bill, going after democracy so they can control—it's all about control. It's all about telling councils what to do. So you are going after democracy.

To your question around, do I think people that come from all over the world should have the same opportunity

that my dad had and others had before them on owning a home? Absolutely. I agree with that. And there are ways to do that. There are all different types of ways that we need. But what we have to do to make sure that we reach that goal is we have to say we're going to infill; we're not going to do it on the wetlands.

I'll give the quick example of Houston, just so you know. They got rid of all their wetlands, they put homes down, and guess what happened? They had the worst flooding in their history. Their flooding was halfway up—and these are high-rises—halfway up the high-rises. Go look it up. It was Houston that did that. And the reason why they had the flooding? It was because of the wetlands being taken.

Leave the wetlands alone. Leave our farmers alone. We've got to feed ourselves. We've got to have clean air. Infill, infill, infill. As a councillor, I know there are lots of places to do it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Next question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I appreciated the member from Niagara Falls's comments. The member talked a lot about his own history as a councillor, as a candidate, as an elected official—a lot of experience there. There are, as I was saying earlier, a lot of members in this House, among the government members in particular, who are newer; they're newer. I wanted to very respectfully ask the member if he would share a little bit about what he thinks those folks are going to hear when they go back to their ridings this weekend and they say, "Hey, guess what? Our government, a bunch of people in a big house—consider this a big house—in Toronto are going to tell us what to do with our local council and our democracy." I wonder if you wouldn't mind commenting a little bit on what you think they're going to hear.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I think they're all going to be upset. I think any time that you—in particular, the timing of this is really interesting to me. They didn't come out before the elections to say this; they came out after the elections. So everybody went to debates—well, the Conservatives didn't go to debates when we were running. You guys weren't allowed to. But in Niagara, they went to the debates and they listened, and then they made a decision on how they wanted to vote. And they said, "I wanted this person to be our councillor. I wanted this one to be my regional councillor." They checked their name off. That is the way it should work.

And I believe when they go back and they're being told exactly what's going to go on, they're going to say to them, "Why? Did you stand up and speak against it? Did you have any comments on it?" And the comments are—I think they're going to get beat up, the same way—I'm not going to get beat up, but I'm going to be questioned on it. I'm going to absolutely be questioned on it. When I go to the Santa Claus parade on Saturday night, this will be a big issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Ms. Jess Dixon: I've listened to the members opposite. I hear the word "infill." I agree, infill is an important part of that, and it's certainly something that you've seen in the bills that we have been delivering in this House when we talk about the accessory dwelling units and removing zoning restrictions.

I live in a little wartime house that was probably built on farmland. It was built at a time where there was a massive explosion in population and all of a sudden we had to find houses. And it's a great little house. I got it in 2015. I've spent a ton of time on it. I've got a beautiful garden that I love. I pick out my front door wreath. I buy flowers. I love trees. I love farmland. I live in Waterloo, and I love where I live. But I look at my house and I think, who am I to say that somebody can't have what I have, and what argument would I have? I pose the same question to you: Who are you to say that they can't have that and what arguments have you got to other young families and immigrants that they can't have what I have?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Back to the final response from the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Yeah, I honestly don't have a response to that because I don't know the issue in Waterloo. But what I do know, and I'll say it again, is everybody should have the right to home ownership, different ways of home ownership, but also, everybody should have the right to affordable renting too. And that's another issue. A lot of people that were building houses are getting into the renting market because they can make more money than they can on building houses.

I don't know if that answers your question, but I really don't have an answer for it, so I apologize. I'm not going to stand up here and say something that isn't answering the question if I can do it. So I apologize for that. I just don't have it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That's all the time we have for questions and answers.

Further debate?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: It is my pleasure to rise and speak about the government's proposed Better Municipal Governance Act. Before I make my remarks, I would like to thank both ministers—the Minister for Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Associate Minister of Housing and the PA—for their wonderful job on this file.

I will reiterate the point made by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in saying that Ontario is the best place to live in the world. Also, Ontario is the economic engine of Canada. Here I will ask this question: Why is finding the right home all too challenging in Ontario? I'm just asking a simple question. Why is it too challenging in Ontario?

Ontario is in a housing crisis. The housing and homelessness crisis in Ontario continues to be a serious and widespread issue. Finding a place to live in Ontario is a struggle for many due to low vacancy rates, limited supply and insufficient mix of housing options. The costs of housing ownership and rental rates are rising much faster than incomes, and people experiencing homelessness are in desperate need of a roof over their heads.

The crisis has both a social and economic cost for people and communities. Housing is a key social determinant of health and essential to finding and maintaining a job. In many areas, local employers struggle to attract and retain employees who can afford suitable housing near the job.

Affordable housing—we all talk about affordable housing, attainable housing. Mr. Speaker—I like to see you in the Chair—these are the buzzwords these days: affordable housing, attainable housing, building more housing that people can access, that people are able to afford to buy. But we've had enough talk. This is a time to do more action. That is why our government under the leadership of our Premier, our ministers and our wonderful caucus members from both sides are giving a voice to bringing more housing supply into our neighbourhoods.

1640

Affordable housing contributes to the economic and social well-being of Ontario's communities, our province and the country. During the housing crisis, there have been sharp increases in rental and real estate prices, and an increased rate of homelessness in the province.

So, what is causing this crisis, Speaker? People are competing for the same few homes, driving up costs, according to the Canadian Urban Institute in 2019. This housing supply problem is often emphasized as the main cause of the housing crisis: for example, the Canadian Urban Institute's report, released in 2019; the report of the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force, released in 2022; and also Scotiabank's analysis in 2022 talking about the provincial structural housing deficits etc. All the studies upon studies were talking about the housing supply crisis.

You know, I'm coming from the most ethnically diverse riding in all of Canada: Markham—Thornhill. The city of Markham is a wonderful and beautiful riding. According to the census, it's the most ethnically diverse riding. The demography moving in and the high level of demography and the intergenerational families—they are seeing the housing crisis through basement apartments and also second suites; they call basement apartments second suites, even though second suites are not legalized in the city of Markham. If you don't legalize the basement apartments, what does that mean to the people who are moving into the basements or second suites? The house owners are not meeting the building code and fire code. It's dangerous. The people who are living under—it's a safety issue. They are facing a lot of safety issues.

Simple economics: increasing supply to lower demand. It's a simple rule of economics. Many economists will agree with me on this principle: Increase the supply to lower demand. Build more houses to lower the cost. This will lower the ever-rising cost of houses.

Let me elaborate further, Speaker. What are the factors which are hindering the supply? Delays, delays, delays and more delays in approving housing projects has caused a shortage in housing supply. These delays in building housing drive up the costs. Delays are contributing to the housing supply shortage, even as we try diligently to make

up the time we lost when the pandemic first hit. We all know that if we reduce the delays and get the cost of building homes down, we can lower the price of a home for the average buyer. Simple math dictates to us that we need to significantly increase the speed of new home building to meet the demand and lower the costs for Ontarians. Let's put an end to the delays in building new houses.

So, we talk about bureaucracy and red-tapeism. Study after study has found that development approvals and appropriate zoning are often delayed or hindered because of the opposition from some members of local municipal councils. In my former life as a municipal councillor—I could talk about it for hours and hours—I could see first-hand how the red-tapeism and bureaucracy, delay after delay and the regular study upon studies, did not put shovels in the ground. Sadly, some projects are even abandoned altogether. Even if the project finally gets the go-ahead, a lot of damage has already been done.

A study released just last month by the Building Industry and Land Development Association reports that costs can increase substantially each month a permit is stuck in the approval system. They found development application timelines in the GTA have gotten 40% longer over the past two years and that each month of delay in a typical high-density project would cost somewhere around \$2,600 to \$3,300 in additional construction costs per residential unit. These are all adding to the housing unit prices.

In fact, the Ontario Association of Architects also investigated the cost of delays and concluded that the total cost of site plan review application delays could range between \$300 million and \$900 million every year in Ontario, in the building industry. That is a scary number. It's a staggering number, that \$300 million and \$900 million—almost a billion-dollar cost for the building industry. Think about this, Mr. Speaker. It all adds up to shoot up the housing costs. This drives up the cost for builders, for renters and for homeowners alike.

Our government has already taken steps to mitigate this problem, while our new housing supply action plan, currently before the House, addresses many of the barriers that cause housing delays.

The changes we are proposing in the Better Municipal Governance Act take additional steps. These progressive proposals reflect the severity of Ontario's housing supply crisis and the government's commitment to act decisively to remove barriers to new home building at both the provincial and municipal levels.

Municipal councils play a crucial role in determining the housing supply. For example, they must approve the zoning changes necessary to increase the density in a given area. We believe that our proposed changes will help municipalities better meet the needs of their rapidly growing communities.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. The legislation we are proposing today is one of the many bold actions our government is taking to address the serious housing supply crisis.

Initiatives in the past: Let's take a few minutes to remind some members of the House of some previous initiatives we have taken to address the housing supply crisis:

(1) More Homes, More Choice, our first housing supply action plan to increase the supply of housing.

(2) In December, last year, our government created the Housing Affordability Task Force, which was made up of industry leaders and experts, to recommend additional measures to increase the supply of market housing.

(3) We created our second housing supply action plan, called More Homes for Everyone, which was launched earlier this year. This initiative addressed Ontario's housing crisis—steps such as accelerating approval timelines and protecting homebuyers from unethical business practices.

(4) As the Associate Minister of Housing previously stated, we also introduced the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, which received royal assent in September. This legislation gives the mayors of Ottawa and Toronto more tools to deliver on shared provincial-municipal priorities, including increasing the supply of housing.

(5) Last month, we introduced the More Homes Built Faster Act in the Legislature. Our goal is to introduce almost 50 new changes to legislation and regulations that will support our newest plan to speed up housing creation in Ontario.

Exploration of the expansion of strong-mayors tools in certain regions—how to best extend strong-mayor powers, reduce municipal duplication and deliver on shared provincial-municipal priorities, primarily the building of 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years.

1650

Appointing the chairs of Niagara, Peel and York regions: The PA to the Minister of Housing explained earlier today that the legislation we are proposing would give the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the authority to appoint the regional chairs of Niagara, Peel and York region—including my region, the city of Markham, in York region.

Municipal-provincial collaboration: We clearly need strong local government to help us make the dream of home ownership attainable for Ontarians. We are geared towards implementing policies that would provide the groundwork for growing the housing supply by:

—reducing the bureaucratic costs and red tape that are delaying construction and pushing home prices even higher;

—promoting the building of more homes near transit and creating more gentle-density housing;

—protecting new home buyers and consulting on ways to help more renters become homeowners—rent-to-own programs are very, very important;

—using provincial lands to build more attainable homes; and much more.

We need much-needed homes built more quickly. It is clear that without an increasing housing supply to match the rising demand, housing prices will keep going up and affordability will worsen. Through our proposal, we will

offer housing that is affordable and housing that provides buyers and renters with more meaningful choices on where to live, where to work and where they can raise their families. Our plan cuts the red tape to make it easier to build the right types of housing in the right places, especially the transit-oriented developments.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities remain the driving force in getting housing projects through to the finish line, but that finish line is getting longer and longer. To address the housing crisis, we are taking decisive, bold action—action that addresses the housing crisis in Ontario's fastest-growing communities, like Markham.

The House leader's Markham–Stouffville is also one of the fastest-growing municipalities in York region, along with other municipalities in Ontario.

Our government will build more houses for the people of Ontario so the people of Ontario turn these houses into homes for their families and loved ones, and so everyone can find the homes they need and can afford.

I have three children. They are in the process of buying houses, and one day their dreams and hopes will come true because of a bill like this. That is a great thing we are trying to do after the decades and decades of stagnation in the housing supply and the lack of leadership from the previous government.

In closing, why I'm supporting this proposed bill: I support it strongly, because this bill will bring the hopes and dreams not only for the next generation of Ontarians and Canadians, but also the demographics moving in—the new Canadians—and our seniors. I mentioned earlier that a lot of seniors are looking for affordable housing, affordable rental units in Ontario, in our neighbourhoods.

Especially for the first-time homebuyers, the next generation of Ontarians and also the new Canadians, I will ask the members of this House—please, from both sides; everyone in this House—to support this important bill. It is a historic bill—after the decades of negligence by the previous government, for a long time. We heard enough talk about housing supply plans, bringing more affordable housing, attainable housing, into our province and our neighbourhood, but it never materialized.

Thank you for allowing me to talk on this important bill, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for all the support from our members who passionately talked about this wonderful bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Deepak Anand): It's time for questions.

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank the member from Markham–Thornhill for his speech. I know that he was a regional representative in the area. I've known him as a student, actually, when we used to organize something with an organization called Power Unit Youth Organization. His leadership and support helped us organize and showed us that political representation is so important, especially when it comes to community empowerment.

One of the things that we in the official opposition are having a really hard time accepting right now is the impact it has on democracy. My colleague from Niagara Falls talked about this as well. I want to hear the member's

thoughts on this. How does he really feel about this legislation and what it does to our local democracy across our province?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the member for Scarborough Southwest for the great question.

In my former life as a councillor—as I clearly said in my previous comments, even the local government is at the forefront of the housing supply action plan. The local government is the one that's the backbone of bringing more affordable, attainable housing to the neighbourhood, but I've seen, year after year, that it got delayed by the council. Even though we were wonderful councillors with a wonderful administration and wonderful senior officials, the file was stuck somewhere; we couldn't move it. That's the challenge. What we are doing—the more mayor powers are really needed to push the plan going. We cannot leave the—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The member from Markham–Thornhill gave some comments and he outlined that the problem we're experiencing today is a result in part of delay, delay, delay. And of course, we all know that to be true, so we need to get rid of this delay. I have home builders in my riding who tell me the same thing. They want to build homes, but they get stopped because of delay, delay, delay. We've got to get rid of the delay.

So my question to my friend from Markham–Thornhill is, what does this bill do to get rid of all that delay so that the builders in all of these places can build the homes they want to build?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to my colleague for that important question.

The Ontario housing crisis is caused by the serial lack of supply—a serial lack of supply and also it's a housing crisis linked to so many factors. That is why the newly introduced Better Municipal Governance Act, if passed, will take bold and decisive action to address the housing supply crisis by working together with our municipal partners on shared provincial-municipal priorities, primarily building 1.5 million new homes over 10 years.

Delay upon delay and study upon study, and we haven't seen—through all levels of governments. I came from two tiers of government. There's a local level of government and—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?
1700

Ms. Marit Stiles: I would say to the member from Essex first: You want to talk about where the bottleneck is for things like official plans and for school buildings and stuff? It's on the desks of your ministers. That's where it is.

Anyway, to the member for Markham–Thornhill: I was listening to your comments. I believe you said you were a municipal councillor. I know a lot of people here have been councillors in their communities, elected previously.

Do you think that a municipal council should—say there are nine councillors. Should three of them be able to win a vote, or should it be five?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: We want to get things moving. There is a lot of housing supply that is delayed by lack of

action—it's all levels of government, whether it's the direct one-tier system or it's the regional system. We have seen, through my eyes, how it's taking a small project, a turnkey operation, from buying the land to putting the shovel in the ground—how it's taking six to seven years to put the shovel in the ground. It's unacceptable. We've had enough. How we can move the housing supply—and I think this proposed bill brings a lot of hopes and dreams to Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Aris Babikian: I'm happy to say that across our province, many of our vibrant communities are growing. Ontario's population has surpassed 15 million for the first time ever this year, and this growth is predicted to continue, with another two million new Ontarians projected to arrive in the next decade.

As many of the members here know, the federal government has also recently announced a target of 500,000 new immigrants per year by 2025. Many of these new arrivals will no doubt choose our province to settle down and lay down roots.

Can the member explain how this new legislation, if passed, will help us continue preparing for future growth and welcome new Ontarians looking to lay down roots in our province?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the member from Scarborough—Agincourt, my great colleague, a hard-working MPP, for that great question.

The newcomers and those immigrating to our province play a vital role in our province, enriching the social and cultural life of our communities as well as building up our local economy. They play a key role in making Ontario the best place to live, start a business and raise a family. That's why we can only build on our success if all present and future Ontarians and their families can find a home they can afford.

Thank you for that important question.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Nolan Quinn: I'm looking for the member from Markham—Thornhill to explain a little bit further, if we pass the legislation, how it would help incentivize our private sector and not-for-profit partners to continue to invest in affordable and attainable housing across Ontario to help us meet our 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: That is one of the great things about the bill—we encourage a lot of community-based projects, especially the seniors' homes. For example, in Markham, in Vaughan, we already got the approval to put the shovel in the ground—it's a culturally sensitive, affordable home especially for seniors. With the community or other stakeholders, partners, we could be able to bring affordable seniors' housing supply. For example, in Vaughan, we gave the permission to build a culturally based seniors' home that would include independent and assisted living. Those are the things that we're trying to achieve through this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for one quick question and response.

Mr. Chris Glover: We all agree in this House that there's a need to build housing, and the 1.5 million. Do you think it's necessary to undermine our democracies in order to build that housing?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Quick response: 50 seconds.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the member for Spadina—Fort York. Yes, we have to get things moving, and so many projects got delayed by the red-tapeism and bureaucracy. The proposed legislation is going to give a lot of hope to bring 1.5 million homes within 10 years. That is a great message. That is a good-news story for Ontarian and our neighbourhoods and the country.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It is an honour to rise to speak on this bill. I'm not happy about speaking on it, but I'm happy to speak on behalf of the people of Toronto Centre, my home community.

Bill 39 is obviously a recent bill. It was just dropped as of yesterday. It was, again, dropped into the House without any announcement or prior notification—certainly not to the voters who went to the polls only in June to vote for the provincial election, and certainly there was no notification during the municipal election that just took place in this province. So it's a bit of a surprise that we are here again.

And what is this bill about? It's got a fancy title. It is called the Better Municipal Governance Act, Bill 39. Sounds lofty enough; I like it. Upon closer inspection, what is it? It actually works on an axis, and the axis that it works on is three bills: Bill 3, the strong-mayors bill; Bill 23, which is before committee today—and it might be pulled and might go back to committee; it's unclear how far the consultation will go. But that's the government's so-called housing bill, and then we have now Bill 39, as I mentioned, dropped as of yesterday. The three of them come together almost like the axis of evil.

Interestingly enough, I had a conversation with a couple of developers who are in my community for a ribbon cutting. When the strong-mayors bill came out, they said to me, "That's just the beginning. There's going to be more, and you're not going to like it, unfortunately, but it's going to bode well for the industry. We even think it goes too far, but we're not going to say no, because it's a free gift to us." I am not speaking verbatim, but it's pretty darn close to what was said to me, and I couldn't at that time get it out from them what was coming next.

Now that I see it all put together, all three of these bills work together in harmony to do what? To build housing as the government claims? To build 1.5 million homes over 10 years? No, it doesn't. You wish, because if it did, in those bills, you would have opportunities for funding. You would stipulate how much money the government is going to put into those bills to build the 1.5 million homes over the 10 years. You would talk about the type of reforms that

are needed to actually make those homes affordable. None of that is contained in the bill.

So I'm going to get back to that in a bit, but I do want to speak about Bill 39. I'm going to focus most of my comments on Bill 39. We know that it was a surprise. We know that it was crafted in the backrooms, in a secret deal without any consultation with the voters of Ontario. We know that even members of the House are surprised by the bill. I heard that. "I didn't know it was coming. Did you know?" I'm standing in the elevator, waiting with everybody else. "Okay. It's here."

So interestingly enough, we also know it's anti-democratic, it undermines local democracy, but worse than that, it actually blows up local government. You might as well just be a terrorist, run in with a bomb and just blow it up, because you're saying you don't need it anymore. So—

Interjection.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Did someone just say "true"?

Mr. Nolan Quinn: No, you called us a terrorist.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Okay.

Now, I recognize that people do run on platforms, and for sure, we just went through a vigorous debate. Voter turnout was low. We all know that. We need to do more in making sure that our citizens are engaged and that they trust the democratic process, they trust the institutions and they trust their elected officials.

But how can they trust their elected officials when this happens time and time and time again? It really is hard to explain to voters why they should care when they put their voice and their vote and their trust in their elected officials, they cast their vote, they go through voter education, and then we tell them days later, "No, just joking. We're going to take away your councillor's voice, because now the mayor of Toronto doesn't need a majority vote anymore. Actually, he can rule by minority vote. He can rule by super-minority vote, with just one third of the vote."

1710

There is not a democratic institution or house anywhere in this country where you can actually pass laws, create programs and services for your community, with one third of the vote. That is such an affront to democracy, and the fact that the members of the House and this government are so proud of what they're doing and hiding behind this guise of housing is mind-blowingly—it's mind-blowing. I'll stop there, Speaker. Thank you.

I apologize if I'm getting worked up, but I care so deeply about the democratic institutions of this country. People have fought with their lives to make sure that we have rights and freedoms here, and look what is happening. It is absolutely shameful.

What do we hear the newspapers saying about this new surprise legislation? Here's a title from the Toronto Star: "The Strong Mayor Legislation Is a Shameful Act Committed by Shameless People." It's not strong-mayor powers anymore; it's strongman power. "It's a disembowelling of Toronto's local democracy." It's close to a dictatorship, akin to a dictatorship, similar to a dictatorship.

Bill 3, as we know, was passed to create a veto for the mayor to override council. Bill 39 takes away all of that, and actually just overrides council and local communities. Residents are now asking, "Do we still go to our councillor? Do we go to our mayor? Where do we stand in all of this?"—residents, not just in my community of Toronto Centre, but in Toronto, in Ottawa and coming soon to a town and a city near you.

I want to focus on this, because it's so critically important that we don't lose sight of what really matters and what counts. I cannot imagine for the life of me what the purpose is of Bill 39. Why on earth would this government pass such a bill, or even dare propose it? Why not do that in this House, in the standing order papers? Why not just change the rules here? "You only need one third. Pass whatever bill you want, whatever law you want." Yeah, you like that? Start smiling. It's a joke, isn't it? It's not a joke. Our democratic institutions mean everything. It's what defines us as Canadians. It's who we are. It distinguishes us from North Korea, Iran, Iraq and other totalitarian states.

I'm going to share with you some comments from local councillors in Toronto. I think that it's important that they're heard in this House. You may think that they're not important, but they certainly are. From one councillor:

"Doug Ford's Bill 39, Better Municipal Governance Act, 2022, released earlier today, threatens democracy in our city by allowing the mayor to propose and pass bylaws with the support of only one third of council. If passed, this act would make Toronto, and Ottawa, the only legislative bodies in the country that don't require a 50%-plus-one vote to make a decision.

"The Prime Minister, and the Premier himself have one vote in their respective Legislatures and require a majority of members to pass any bill, including Bill 39. In other words, in a democracy, the majority rules and the minority is heard—the proposed changes undermine the basic tenets of democracy itself.

"The province's stated reason for this legislation is to change zoning around transit stations. This is demonstrably absurd. First, city council already approved moving forward with increased densities around major transit station areas to conform to the provincial direction earlier this year and, second, the province already has complete authority to change Toronto's zoning however it wishes through the Planning Act. If Doug Ford wants to build housing, he can do so without Bill 39."

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Sorry, just a reminder to the member that we are not using full names, of the member or the Premier. Thank you.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Sure. I'll just replace "Doug Ford" with "Premier."

"I am calling on Mayor Tory to stand on behalf of the residents of Toronto, and demand that our local democracy is protected. The mayor of Toronto should be the leader of our city, not a servant of Queen's Park.

"Torontonians just democratically elected their city council. They will not stand for minority rule." That came from councillor Josh Matlow of Toronto—St. Paul's.

Alejandra Bravo, a brand new city councillor, represents the great riding of Davenport. This is what she had to share—this is a new councillor, and there are a few more:

“The people of Toronto just elected 25 local representatives. Last night, we learned from the mayor of Toronto and the Premier of Ontario that they believe only eight of those voices should matter.” They elected 25.

“The mayor went to” the Premier “to ask for the power to set policy and funding decisions without the support of two thirds of council. There is no precedent for this undemocratic move. It would mean the end of government decision-making by majority rule.

“The time to propose and debate a change like this” would have been “before the election. The people of Toronto were not informed and have not been heard in this fundamental change to how we are governed in the city.”

She finishes: “Local government is built on collaboration and trust”—there’s that word “trust” again. “I urge the mayor to rescind his request to Premier Ford.”

Jamaal Myers, a smart, capable new councillor in Scarborough—this is his statement:

“Our city deserves a place to call home. That being said, we cannot trade away our local democracy for the sake of convenience.

“To be clear, Toronto is in a housing crisis and I strongly support using all reasonable tools to end it. However, allowing for the passage of bylaws with the vote of only nine members of council”—that’s eight, plus the mayor—“is not the way to do it. It’s particularly disappointing that the mayor requested this power while making no mention of it during the campaign....”

For all these reasons, “I strongly urge the mayor to reconsider his request.”

Ausma Malik just won to represent the riding of Spadina–Fort York. This is her statement—

Interruption.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the member, but if you wouldn’t mind, I believe your cellphone may be buzzing. Thank you.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you, Speaker.

Ausma Malik. This is her statement on Bill 39:

“Allowing for approval of new bylaws by only one third of members of council is fundamentally undemocratic. From boardrooms to Parliament Hill to Queen’s Park itself, having decisions made with less than a majority is out of the question....

“Premier Ford’s Bill 39 isn’t about housing. It’s a clear attack on local democracy.

“I’m disheartened at Mayor Tory’s request for this overreaching power. I’m also concerned that this request was made in private, without any prior discussion in public” or consultation “or conversation with city councillors. We have a new city council ready to work” and do so “collaboratively to deliver on our” local “shared priorities. The mayor can work with us. He can protect our local democracy, build more housing, and strengthen our community voices.

“There is a better way and I urge the mayor to reconsider this request.”

This bill is about blowing up local government. It’s about undermining the voices of our community and, as I mentioned, it works in sync with Bill 3 and Bill 23.

I’m going to come back to Bill 23 because I think we need to talk about that, as well; we’re going to connect them all together now. There are all sorts of claims about this being a housing issue, and then now I’ve heard, of course, “Where are the newcomers going to go? Where are the immigrants going to live?” I’m hearing a new narrative that pits citizens of Toronto, citizens of Ontario, with potential new people coming in. These are false statements that make no sense whatsoever, because no one is putting a fence around our city, or any other city, as far as I can tell. People have the freedom to go as they choose and, if the settlement service organizations wanted such a bill—whether it’s Bill 39, Bill 23 or Bill 3—they would have certainly asked for it. I did not hear a single settlement service saying that we needed to give the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa strong powers to build housing for them. I didn’t hear that. I never heard a single newcomer settlement agency talk about stripping away the protections of the wetlands, undoing the authority of the conservation authorities. I’ve never heard a single settlement service talking about undermining local city council, where only one third of votes gets you a law passed.

1720

Many people are fleeing countries that are run in such a manner, and yet they’re coming here and this is how we roll out the mat to welcome them. The worst of all is that you’re doing it in their name. You are saying you’re doing it for them. I’m telling you right now: I don’t think so. If you can find me a single settlement service, a single immigration service, a single newcomer who says that this is what’s going to build them housing, give them access to opportunities, give them access to rights of citizenship and access to a sense of belonging, by giving the mayor of Toronto more power, you bring them to me. I would like to be convinced that I am wrong.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing likes to patronize Toronto a lot. Lately, I think he’s saying a lot of things about how every municipality is mired in red tape—that, somehow, municipalities have a monopoly on red tape—and he does this from his seat in Brockville. The member likes to talk about how it’s so inefficient there: “Look at how they do things over there. But if I can fix it, let’s fix it this way.” And this is his solution.

What he always seems to ignore is that a city like Toronto continues to lead in the crane index, an index that’s been around for decades. Toronto has led in the crane index since 2015. We have over 251 cranes working on construction projects in our city. You didn’t do it; city council did it. This far outdistances the second-place crane index, Los Angeles, which had 51. So compare ours—252—to Los Angeles, second in place, with 51.

The city of Toronto’s population growth is on track because we’ve already met and exceeded the urban growth strategy, A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater

Golden Horseshoe. Yes, there's always room for improvement, absolutely, but there's not a single instrument in this bill or Bill 23 or Bill 3 that guarantees that the housing is to be built, nor that it will be affordable. What you're doing is deregulating land use planning and you're stripping away development charges. You're actually cutting taxes and you're shifting all that responsibility for growth onto the municipalities themselves.

AMO, who tried so hard to be heard by this government, actually had a lot to say. I had a chance to tune into their sort of impromptu submission to anybody who would pipe in this afternoon at 12:30. The media was there, the NDP caucus was there, and I suspect there were other members of the opposition. I didn't see a single government House member there whose name I recognized on the screen.

What did AMO have to say? Let's see: AMO reminded us that growth pays for growth. AMO said that the preliminary analysis of Bill 23 indicates that there will be a transfer of up to \$1 billion a year in costs from private sector developers to property taxpayers, without any likelihood of improved housing affordability. You know that they're just an advocacy think tank; right? That's what they do. They look at policy. They respond to policy. That's what AMO does, and they're usually pretty tame. But if you read their submission, they're anything but tame. They're hot under the collar. They are so ripping angry. Even if they're wearing very nice suits, they're telling you right now, "This is going to be a disaster for municipalities. You are going to bankrupt them. You are going to erode life and livability for your own residents, because your residents live in cities. Every one of us live in some type of city, town, hamlet." That's what they're saying—that the bill's provisions designed to reduce environmental protection will benefit developers in the short term, with costs to the public and homeowners that cannot be calculated. You're on a course to disaster.

I'm going to really recommend that you think long and hard over the next few days, over the next few weeks, about how you want to proceed with Bill 39 and Bill 23. They should be withdrawn. And while you're at it, get rid of Bill 3.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It is now time for questions and answers.

Mr. Rob Flack: I appreciate the member opposite's comments; however, I would disagree with a lot of what she says.

I come from a world where government creates an environment for success. We don't run everything. We are reducing bureaucracy and red tape, and ultimately it's the results that count. I think we have to all agree: We have not been getting it done. Some 100,000 homes this year; we need another 50,000—and this is the best since 1987. Whether you're looking at the Scotiabank report that says we need 1.2 million new homes now to meet the G7 per capita rate, or the 10-year target that the task force and our government have set, the need for change is clear.

I would ask the member opposite: Does she not agree that urgent action is needed to address Ontario's housing crisis?

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

I do agree that we need to take action to address the housing crisis; where we disagree is on the instruments of how do so.

I believe that we can meet the housing crisis and address homelessness by actually building more deeply affordable housing, by making sure that the government invests in housing. It comes with investments.

By way of example, the city of Toronto has a HousingTO plan. It is a \$24-billion plan. It's asking for three orders of government to participate. We see that the federal government is there with some dollars; we certainly see that the city is putting up their money; but time and time again who's missing? It's the provincial government.

If you want to build housing, if you want to address the housing crisis, we can also enforce Airbnb rules, which I know will put 6,000 units right back into the market today. Things the province can do that the municipalities can't do—that would be helpful too.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank my colleague the member for Toronto Centre for her comments. It was very helpful to hear the perspective of currently elected municipal officials from the city of Toronto with regard to this bill.

Like many Ontarians, I've been struggling to try to understand how allowing Toronto city council to pass votes with only one third of council in favour, and how allowing the Minister of Municipal Affairs to appoint regional chairs in Niagara, Peel and York—how those measures have anything to do with building housing.

I wonder if she understands how the government is justifying these measures in terms of building housing in the province.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you for that question.

It is really difficult to get into the head of this government. I'm thinking about this from a civil-society-benefit perspective—therefore, the commons. What do we want to build in our community so that it can be livable, so it's safe, where we can grow a family, where we can be able to grow in place? There's really nothing in this bill that even gives you a pipeline to those outcomes.

What we do know is that it's a bill that's about deregulation. It's about the concentration of power. It's about upending local democracy. And this is the worst part of all: It doesn't guarantee any of those outcomes that the government speaks to, because what you say and what's in the bill are two different things, unfortunately.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: I'm going to quote the member opposite directly—because I know she was quoting a lot of people in her 20-minute speech: "Good luck trying to build your tower or your condo if we don't give you the road occupancy permit. Good luck if we don't give you

that permission to remove that single tiny little tree. It is simply not going to happen.”

When will the members opposite stop saying no just for the sake of saying no—as I just quoted—and stop standing in the way of building more homes to accommodate Ontario’s growth?

1730

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you so much for raising that. I know that it has been raised before in the House. It’s taken out of context. When we talk about building good and good planning and respecting local planning, including planning decisions and official plan policies and secondary plans that are crafted through our city planning department—that comment was entirely tied to what constitutes good planning. There are good developers who follow the rules, and there are other developers who don’t care about the rules. So that comment was specifically tied to: How do we reward good developers who will follow the rules and work with city planning to get the job done? Because they will tell you that they don’t need to go to the OLT or the OMB, or whatever we’re calling it these days. They can actually get it done through the planning process. Bad developers—the ones who build and disregard the rules, the ones who actually upend the planning rules—are the ones I was speaking to. If you don’t follow the rules of the city of Toronto’s planning department, then you’re going to have a harder time getting through.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to thank the member from Toronto Centre for their comments today on this legislation; it was excellent.

I think we can all appreciate in here that you have probably been responsible for more housing development and good planning than any other person in this room, as a city councillor. Thank you for the amazing work that you’ve done to build housing and make sure that there is also deeply affordable housing.

You mentioned, in your comments, the impact of getting rid of an education development charge—and this being something I think that AMO had raised earlier today as well. I wonder if you could speak a little bit more about the impact that citizens, residents of communities in some of the ridings of the government members opposite—what kinds of issues they could be raising when these services disappear.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you for that question.

When we’re building and intensifying, which we do in cities all the time—and you’re right by noting that we have built more in Toronto Centre than many, many communities combined together. What residents are looking for is, they’re looking for the livability of it—and I’ve raised this before, because our chief planner has spoken about this, and I know he spoke in the committee today and raised exactly the same thing.

Meeting the growth target hasn’t been our problem. The challenge for us now is that we have a struggle in making

sure that the cities are livable and the neighbourhoods are livable, because the pace of development has outpaced livability. Therefore, our wait-list for recreation centres, our wait-list for libraries, our wait-list for swimming classes, our wait-list for every single possible service, including the fact that our classrooms are now 40 in size, including the fact that we don’t have enough playground spaces that have been properly built—we are the most parkland-deficient in all of Canada right here in Toronto Centre. We just don’t have enough because we weren’t able to keep up with the pace of demand, and you’re about to make it worse by taking away the development charges.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Mr. Aris Babikian: Speaker, at its core, this legislation is very simple. It will help us support efficient local decision-making and give elected officials the tools they need to remove barriers stalling developments on the housing, transit, and infrastructure Ontarians critically need.

From my personal experience as a resident of Scarborough–Agincourt for 32 years—the residents of Scarborough are frustrated with the decision-making process in the city of Toronto. The downtown councillors hold the rest of the city hostage for their whims.

The proposed legislation, if passed, will give local Legislatures elected by Ontarians the extra tools they need to get shovels in the ground and help us prepare for Ontario’s future growth.

Why doesn’t the opposition trust Ontarians to choose efficient local leaders?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you for that question.

When city council was a larger council in 2018, before the ward boundary changes came in, there were 44 seats on council plus one for the mayor. Three city councillors represented the downtown core—hardly what I would call “running the town.” After the ward boundaries changed, we had 25 members of city council, and there were still only three members of the downtown core. It is categorically untrue that the downtown city councillors are somehow running Scarborough or any other part of Toronto, simply because, mathematically, it doesn’t add up. So if Scarborough is unserved, it’s because it has not been keeping up with the pace of investments, and that has a lot to do with the legacy city—when that city was more deeply invested in building roads and infrastructure that supported roads and less so in libraries, community centres and swimming pools.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It’s now time for further debate.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: It has been interesting listening to the debate on Bill 39 today.

Often, you think about how Ontario markets itself to the world. We know that we are accepting more newcomers into Canada, with the federal report saying how many newcomers we need to welcome into Canada to help us with our labour demand. However, one wants to think: When these people do come here, like my family came in

the 1990s, where are they going to live? We know already that the amount of landed immigrants who are in Canada, according to Statistics Canada, that came out with new data a few weeks ago—23% of landed immigrants are going to be here, and it's the largest since Confederation. So if you think about the things we've had to do since Confederation—lift a lot of weight and get things done—we have a lot to go.

And right now, if you think about it, why come to Ontario? Well, one thing we don't have going for us at the present moment is that—we are building the least amount of homes in all of the G7, and as a province, we've got to keep pace internationally if we're going to attract immigrants to our country to work. We have a huge labour shortage. Do you know what would be great to pull people in—for them to choose Ontario as their home? We could say, "You're choosing this as your home or residence. When you come here, you're actually going to get a home." But right now, if you're coming here, what do we have to offer?

So this is what this government is doing. Not only are we helping the people who currently live in Ontario by reducing the cost of living; we're reducing the cost of them doing their day-to-day tasks and their errands and going to work—but we're also thinking ahead, because from day one, everything this government has done is to put the people first, and we're thinking ahead with our vision.

We know that some of the things we've proposed have helped so many people—and they've set a clear mandate for our government, but it did not come easily.

We know what red tape has cost individuals: It added \$17,520 to the average home cost over six months. In addition, it added over \$11,640 to the average condo over six months. These are prices that people cannot afford, let alone if you are a new immigrant family coming to find a new place of employment, a new home here in Ontario. The reality is, you have to start to rent and save those dollars.

So, after much consultation, after speaking to many people, we realized we have to tackle all these challenges. Every year, we're building upon our progress and updating our housing strategy—including the bill that we're updating and debating today.

I quoted some of the statistics in terms of the amount that delays cost us—but it's not just us who are talking about it; the Ontario Association of Architects has also found that the total cost of delays in site plan reviews was between \$300 million and \$900 million per year. And guess who is going to bear the brunt of the cost? The homeowner. Whatever that looks like, whether you're going into a rental, whether you're going into an apartment, a condo, a home, a duplex or a townhome—that's going to add to their cost of living. "Welcome to Ontario. But guess what? You can't afford a home." That's not a very good place to start.

And if the people who are coming here can't afford a home, well, what are the folks who are just graduating and starting a life supposed to do? What about those employers who are trying to find employees in their community?

The city of Barrie used to be the fastest-growing community, many, many years ago—we were building homes left, right and centre, and people had a place to go. Our manufacturing sector was able to attract a lot of people, because they also had a place to live. But now, when I talk to our manufacturing folks—and I spoke about him in this House yesterday, because we talked not that long ago; Jerome Horowitz, the president of Brotech Precision Inc., said, "We employ 40 people, including many young people who struggle to become homeowners. Because of poor availability of housing, some of the people are" moving "40 kilometres north of Barrie to find a reasonable house to live in. Any help these people can have to build their own equity and to prevent the market from being artificially inflated is helpful to our community."

1740

So our employers would benefit from things such as building more homes—and those people who are trying to start their new lives. It's an all-of-economy approach that we're trying to take here.

In 2022, a Building Industry and Land Development Association report found that for each unit in a typical high-density development, each month of delay cost anywhere from \$2,600 to \$3,300 in additional construction costs.

Speaker, in short, our employers, our newcomers, our Ontarians, people who have lived here for multiple generations, our seniors who are looking to downsize—they cannot afford the red tape and the delays. So it's time to act swiftly, and we have, from day one, building upon our plans with housing and treating our municipal partners—and yes, they're partners—as a mature level of government, and letting them have that extra authority that they will need to achieve projects.

If you look at Toronto, most recently—we look at transit-oriented development. Well, transit-oriented development, as many folks who have a municipal background in this Legislature know, is not a new concept. In fact, 15 years ago, whether it was in the Places to Grow regional growth plan or Metrolinx's The Big Move plan that dated back 15 years, they talked about transit-oriented development. This has been a concept for over 30 years.

What did this government do with the concept of transit-oriented development? Speaker, we had a vision. We went from transit-oriented development to transit-oriented communities, and there's a huge difference. Don't just take it from me; you can take it from the academics. I know the members of the opposition love their academics. There's a recent paper put out by the Munk school of public policy, and they said there is a "subtle distinction" highlighted "that the goal is not merely to spur any development adjacent to transit, but rather to create complete communities." They noticed that, "recently, the terminology at Queen's Park has shifted from transit-oriented development to transit-oriented communities." It has been recognized by many, including, again, the academic community, the fact that government has taken

that into account, because we want to create whole communities.

Earlier today, we had the minister for mental health speak about the social determinants of health. Well, isolationism is very much a big thing that we found out from COVID.

Our seniors who are looking to downsize want to be in a community where they have activities, where they have that social atmosphere. They're living in homes that are a little bit too big for them and they want to downsize, but guess what? The next thing they want to downsize to is too expensive, given the market, because we're not building for that market demand.

Speaker, you cannot legislate market demand, but what you can do is to create the conditions to allow it to happen. That's something the opposition definitely does not believe in, and they're definitely shaking their heads, but that's the reality. So if we want to be able to create—we have old stock of housing that currently exists for people who want to downsize. If they're able to afford a condominium or an apartment building to downsize, then that allows for a new family to be able to live and to move into a home that has many more rooms for them to grow their family in. So you have that market exchange between those who are downsizing and those who are getting into the market—again, cooling things down despite what's happening with inflation with supply, and that takes a big effect.

Going back to our transit-oriented communities, the fact that in our latest update, just before the election, through our Minister of Infrastructure—it talked about how we're building these communities and talked about the green space around these communities and how it's going to increase ridership. And for people who are just getting into being a homeowner of any kind—if it is an apartment building, likely, their priority is not to buy a car because, frankly, they're focused on putting a roof above their head. But how great is it if all their amenities are close to them? We can see, if we embrace these types of communities, what is possible with that potential.

You don't have to look very far from where we are today. We have a lot of members from the Toronto area who are here. CityPlace: That is a saga, how that thing came to be. It took years upon years. They never thought it would be as big as it is today. In fact, when they originally proposed CityPlace—actually 10,000 more people live in it today than they had predicted when they planned that community 40 years ago. And now it's this government that's developing more infrastructure around CityPlace by building something like a school, because again, we recognize that housing comes with all kinds of mixes, including those who are raising their family in places like CityPlace, in high-rise apartments. That's their choice, because again, they're living around amenities that they like. It's a lifestyle choice. They're by the water and, of course, they've got their place of work very close to them. They're close to transit routes; they don't have to worry about paying car payments, especially with the price of gas. And so that works for communities.

But what we're talking about here is the opposition depriving that type of lifestyle from other people who choose to do it. They want to have that 15-minute walkable community that all city planners are raving about, but you can't do it if you have red tape. Again, we look at projects that are currently successful to this day, but they took decades to come to fruition.

I look at my own backyard. When you look at Innisfil and what we're trying to do with our transit-oriented community, we're trying to give people that meaningful, attainable community aspect, where they have all their amenities close by. They have a transit route, whether they're going to be working in Innisfil or whether they choose to commute. The reality of my community is that over 80% of people do commute. That's the reality.

That's why this government has a bigger vision. It's not just about building homes; it's also building employment, investing in our manufacturing sector, investing in our employment lands, another very key piece of this. But you have to have the vision, and it's sad that we have an opposition that's so myopic in their view. It's just this tunnel vision. But you've got to look at the whole big picture: Yes, we're creating employment lands, so people have a place to work. It causes them to commute a little less.

We see what's happening now with, again, my quote from Jerome Horowitz about people who drive until they qualify. They're moving farther north, but their jobs are farther north, and that's actually creating more sprawl, something I know the opposition is vehemently opposed to. The very thing that we're trying to prevent by embracing these types of communities is being stalled with red tape, delays and driving up the cost of living. Of course, that's not a win for anyone.

I spoke about it earlier in this House, but we also talked about rental units. Well, the more you build, the more supply—of course, if you're living in these communities—you're able to provide a different mix of housing, but also whether it's ownership or rental.

I spoke about him earlier before in this House, but Chris Franco, who runs Franco Investments in Barrie, sees it. He talks to his clients all the time in terms of being able to get into the housing market. In speaking to him, he said, "As a rental housing provider in Barrie, over the past four years we have hit municipal red tape." Referring to our previous housing bill, "With this new housing bill, power will be brought back to the homeowners to be able to streamline more houses to be built." He recognizes this, Speaker, and he talks to folks day in and day out. I have an opportunity to speak a lot with him, as well.

But you hear it, knocking on doors. You're knocking on someone's door, and yes, you recognize they're a homeowner, but they care about so much more than just their circumstance. I ran into a lot of "yesbies"; I know we have a lot of NIMBYs in this House, but I want to talk more so about the yesbies, the people who want to embrace creating more housing in their community.

Most recently, in part of my team I have a great gentleman named Andrew Valler, and he is going to go

into the skilled trades in the new year to be an electrician. He was trying to find a home. He was living with his parents—a great situation living with them, not paying much rent, but you want to be able to move out on your own. And so, he was actually able to find a place that had a garden suite, and how great was that, that somebody said “yesby”? They had their house, and just right behind their house, totally detached from that home—because that’s what a garden unit is; people forget. And now he lives in this garden unit with his girlfriend. How great is that, right? That’s some independence. That’s someone who embraced “yesby” and is providing a housing unit to someone who is, again, wanting to be in the housing market independently, away from their parents. Of course, they’re renting, and it allows them that independence.

But, Speaker, that is too far out of reach for so many people, because we don’t have those units being built. That’s why this government recognizes that we need to provide different mixes of housing and, again, provide municipal partners the tools.

When I talk to Ashley Polischuk, who I’ve mentioned in this House before, she often says, “It’s great the Ontario government has these plans you’ve passed—it’s wonderful—but guess where the red tape was?” We had the Associate Minister of Housing in Barrie probably a month ago now, and we had a nice round table with people from different parts of the housing sector, and they all said the exact same thing: “You know, it’s great that you’re doing this, but do you know where all the red tape is?” It even came up when the Minister of Red Tape Reduction, Minister Gill, was in Barrie, too. In the municipality. It’s just being tied up. It’s driving up the cost, and it’s not even—the developers have the land. Certainly, if they don’t use it in time, we also have penalties in previous bills we introduced where they can’t just sit on land. They’ve got to build, because we need housing today. But it’s the red tape at the municipal level that causes grief for a lot of people.

1750

I talked about this round table we had. The CEO who chaired the round table is from the Barrie and District Association of Realtors, Julia Price-Greig. She said, when we talk about housing and building houses quicker, that “the Barrie and District Association of Realtors applauds” the government’s plans to build homes faster, as “a needed step to tackle the ongoing housing crisis in the province. As Canada’s fastest-growing community, the Barrie–Innisfil area has grappled with a lack of affordable housing ... due to red tape, lengthy approvals, and development charges. This plan enables our region to build more and better homes, and our community members to achieve their dreams of home ownership. We look forward to working with MPP Andrea Khanjin and her colleagues to ensure everyone’s housing needs are met.” Again, she’s someone who recognizes it, who’s in that industry.

But you also want to talk about folks outside of the industry. I talked about the manufacturing sector, how this would actually benefit them as well. Stephanie Gourlie, who everyone knows around the Barrie–Innisfil area, is a

business owner and entrepreneur, and she’s part of the Barrie chamber board. I want to congratulate her on 10 years in business at Discount Granite Plus, which is a huge accomplishment. She said this when speaking with me: “We know we are in the midst of a housing and economic crisis, and we cannot afford any more delays.

“Barrie–Innisfil has the resources to support these builds!

“Developing a plan to help families afford homes should include streamlining interest rates and allowing businesses and citizens to have access to these resources needed to support home development and stimulate the economy!”

So there’s a bigger picture here, Speaker. It’s not just about streamlining red tape in the development process, but how it interacts with our economy. We want to say to people, “Hey, welcome to Ontario. This is what we have to offer.” We want to be able to say that we can also offer them a home, in addition to stabilizing our electricity rates, in addition to creating options for day care, in addition to providing affordable day care, in addition to building schools for growing communities, in addition to building transit opportunities for people who are coming to Ontario, in addition to hospitals, bridges, all of that infrastructure. It’s so important. When we’re marketing ourselves as Ontarians, we should be proud of the province we represent. We want to be able to say, “Yes, come to Ontario. This is what we have to offer. Here’s all the great economic opportunities in terms of employment. We really believe in equal opportunity.” But we have all these other great things to offer as well, Speaker.

It’s a shame that, time and time again, when we talk about these types of initiatives, when we want to build up our province, when we want to be able to say, “Yes, Ontario, we should be proud of this province because we are building communities, we are building transit, we are building hospitals,” time and time again, this opposition has voted against it. I really hope they change their minds and they do come around because, whether you talk to folks in the home building industry or those who are interested in affordable housing, they all have the same intentions, which is that they want to be able to provide that liveability here.

We talked about retention of employees. Well, again, I talked about Jerome Horowitz, but it’s not just him. James Cheatham, the VP and operator of Linear Transfer Automation—a growing sector in Barrie—one of their struggles is talent retention. But actually, the root of it is also housing. Speaking with James, he said, “One of our struggles is hiring young talent as our current housing market is difficult, if not impossible for young people starting their careers. If we could increase the available housing in our area, this would help alleviate the high housing costs we are currently facing.”

Speaker, even folks that are looking to employ 40 people tomorrow recognize we need more supply. They would love to hire more people—high-paying jobs, jobs that come with great pensions. They recognize that we need to build homes. And no, they’re not developers.

They're folks that want to employ more people. They're folks in the manufacturing business. They're folks in our small business communities. They're folks in our rental-housing community. They're farmers who want to be able to say, "Hey, we actually need more people working in the Holland Marsh."

I talked to Boris Horodinsky, a great onion farmer in Barrie. He's always bringing in folks to live, and he's of course providing them housing, but he needs more of those people, which means growing our communities, attracting people to Ontario, making this a great place to be, a great place to work. But guess what? When you work here, you've got to have somewhere to live. So that's what takes us to this bill, being able to provide more places to live for people, giving the municipalities the tools they need to make it possible, listening to the folks in our communities like—I quoted a few folks in Barrie–Innisfil—but always also recognizing the challenges ahead in terms of the economy and being able to address the cost of living.

So, Speaker, I'm thrilled that what we're doing here is a great vision for the province of Ontario. We are a place to grow; we're a place to be proud of, whether it's our housing market attracting more people to live here, more people to work here—no matter what sector they choose. And this bill is one step further to going in that direction.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We now have time for questions and answers.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay. I just want to correct something that the member from Barrie–Innisfil said. She said that no one knew how big CityPlace was going to be. Actually it was a master-planned community. There's 12,000 units and 21,000 residents there, and it was planned between the developer and NDP councillors Jack Layton and Dan Leckie. They asked the developer, "Look, you can build 31 towers here, but you've to set 12 acres aside for parkland, you've got to build two schools—a public and Catholic school—a community centre, daycare centre, child care centre." All those things were part of this master plan.

With Bill 39, your government is telling developers, "You don't have to negotiate with the city; you don't have to negotiate with councillors, because the councillors are disempowered." So CityPlace would have been built without any park, without any schools, without any community centres, and it would be a travesty compared to the wonderful community that it is today.

Why is your government stripping city councils of the power to plan entire communities, really healthy communities, like CityPlace?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: To quote again, the community I was talking about—in fact there was an article done not that long ago reflecting upon this development, and the very guy, Macdonald, said that there were about 10,000 more people living in CityPlace than planned 20 years ago, which put pressure on the community services in the neighbourhood.

Again, you could have an official plan, you can plan the best things ever, but you've got to be nimble, and we're

providing those nimble tools as a government because we recognize things constantly change.

But my point, Speaker, was that if we were able to reduce the red tape back then, how great would it be to be able to have that type of community online faster, so that people could have gotten into the community much earlier than they did? We're only at the point today where we're building a school there, when we could have been there 10 years ago.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you to the member for Barrie–Innisfil. I heard you speak earlier about costs that get passed down to purchasers, things like development charges, increased labour costs and increased costs for construction materials. I wonder if the member might comment on some of the challenges that a first-time homebuyer might have trying to pay those additional costs through a mortgage over 20, 25, 30 years.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you to the member for the question. That really brings it back to why we need more supply, because we know that when you're building a new subdivision or you're building a new subdivision of townhouses, for example—and we see a lot of those in my area—the longer we wait for those subdivisions to come online, especially with the interest rates what they are—that town could have been one price, but of course the cost of materials is now going up. So for someone who now wants to buy into this development, it's out of reach; they can't attain the financing. That's why we're so focused on the ability to have the supply.

Academics and economists—Scotiabank, you name it, RBC—have all said the same thing. We do need more supply on the market, again, for those couples who are looking to get into a new build to be able to afford to do so.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Unfortunately, that is all the time we have for questions and answers.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

1800

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

NO TIME TO WASTE ACT
(PLAN FOR CLIMATE ACTION
AND JOBS), 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LA NÉCESSITÉ
DE NE PAS GASPILLER DE TEMPS
(PLAN EN MATIÈRE D'ACTION POUR
LE CLIMAT ET L'EMPLOI)

Mr. Tabuns moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 14, An Act to enact the Climate Crisis Health Action Plan Act, 2022 the Ontario Climate Crisis Strategy for the Public Sector Act, 2022 and the Select Committee

on the Climate Crisis Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 14, Loi édictant la Loi de 2022 sur le Plan d'action sur la crise climatique et la santé, la Loi de 2022 sur la Stratégie du secteur public de l'Ontario relative à la crise climatique et la Loi de 2022 sur le Comité spécial de l'action relative à la crise climatique.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity. As you well know, Speaker, we here in Ontario and people around the world need to take action on the climate crisis, and we need to take it now. I'm very pleased to bring forward this bill with the title, No Time to Waste Act for climate action and jobs. I'm bringing it forward with my co-sponsor, the MPP for Parkdale–High Park, Bhutika Karpoche, who unfortunately wasn't able to be here this evening.

People want a future for themselves. They want a future for their children and they want a future for their grandchildren. And they know that having that future depends on taking action now, because the climate crisis isn't something far and distant in time or in space. It is happening now.

You're well aware of the fate of the town of Lytton in British Columbia that was burned to the ground after an extended period of heating unprecedented in British Columbia. You're well aware of the flooding in British Columbia that at one point cut off Vancouver from the rest of Canada. You're well aware of floods and droughts and extreme forest fires happening around the world. You're well aware of the impact of hurricanes that have already gone through Canada so far this year, and you're well aware of the impact that all of this will have on food prices, on our ability to maintain an infrastructure for transportation and communications. You're well aware that we will be seeing novel diseases that will have huge impacts on our daily lives.

Ontarians want their government to protect them from this climate crisis. They want resources to be invested in developing plans that will effectively take on the crisis, plans that will allow us to adapt to the climate changes around us and, hopefully, to cut back emissions so that we can stabilize our climate.

We've all gone through two years of COVID. We know what it's like when our lives are disrupted, when our ability to connect with friends and family has been dramatically damaged. We know what happens to our economy; we know what happens to our services. COVID was a window on the kind of disruption this crisis can bring on to us.

In the early 2000s, the British government did a study of the impact of climate change, not just on Britain but on the world as a whole. One of the findings was that the economic impact in terms of destruction of value, destruction of the wealth of society was equivalent to World War II. That is a very dramatic finding.

We don't need to continue this government's program of deny and delay. The Premier dismantled the province's

cap-and-trade program. The program he has replaced it with is dramatically less effective. This Premier effectively ended the funding for climate action in retrofitting our buildings, in changing our transportation system and retrofitting our schools and our hospitals. He ripped electric charging stations out of GO stations. He had a wind farm demolished that would have provided emission-free electricity. And he would have demolished a second one, but he lost in court.

Two years ago, the report of the Environmental Commissioner revealed that this government had wasted its first two years when it came to the climate crisis. It does not have a coherent plan, and I had an opportunity to question the ministry about that in estimates the other day. It does not have a coherent plan. It does not have a coherent structure for delivering what elements of the plan might be useful.

The government could have changed the building code, cutting our emissions, cutting our need for electricity and other energy sources—a change that would have had no impact on the provincial budget but which would have dramatically changed things going forward in Ontario. It didn't do that. It could have helped people cut their natural gas bill, cut their electricity bills, but it didn't do that. What we have is a provincial government that rails against the federal government and then presents plans that in fact are ignored by other ministries; the Ministry of Energy, for instance.

As we've seen from COVID-19, a pandemic can uproot and upset everything. You have to plan in advance to deal with these kinds of crises. You have to have pieces in place, people in place to actually deal with this kind of crisis. Actually, the best thing of all is prevention of the crisis. This government has failed to both prevent and to take the necessary measures to deal with the impact of that climate crisis.

People are well aware of the line of thunderstorms—the derecho—that came through Ontario in May. Eleven people died. In Ottawa, a record number of hydro poles came down. The head of Ottawa Hydro said he had never seen anything like it in his life. The number of poles that came down were far more than they actually planned to put up over a series of years. That is going to be the norm for us. Being in the dark without power is going to be a far more common occurrence in this world.

Speaker, we in Ontario can do this—we can revamp our society, and we have done it before. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was Ontario, through the building of public power, provincially owned power—Ontario Hydro—that industrialized this jurisdiction in a way that was unprecedented. We developed the products and the know-how that allowed us to ship that expertise and those products around the world. We developed the industrial infrastructure so that when we were challenged by World War I and World War II, we were able to ramp up industrial production, not only to supply all of the material but the ammunition that allowed us to overcome in both those conflicts.

The bill before you has three parts. One part is setting the stage for preparing our health care system to deal with the new world that we are entering into. The other part is to set up an all-party select committee so that we can gather the best ideas from all of those in the House and come forward with a plan that can have buy-in across our society—the whole idea of making sure that our operations as a government lead the way so that we can show that it is possible to dramatically cut your emissions, dramatically change your operations, change your purchasing policies so that you can have an impact and actually protect the society and set the stage for a future that is far more promising than the one that we're looking at right now.

Speaker, we need to use the powers that are already at our disposal. We can use the public sector to accelerate the response to the climate crisis and make that transition to a net zero future. The retrofit of the buildings that we as a provincial government own or use, the revamp of practices and equipment, the change of our vehicle fleets and the use of our purchasing power to accelerate the adoption of low- and no-carbon products will allow us to ramp up our efforts and meet our targets.

We can set in place purchasing policies that will drive companies to cut their emissions dramatically and cut the carbon embedded in their products. If we are able to do that, we will be able to drive innovation throughout society as a whole. We will create the markets for those products that will change the world, just as, at the beginning of the 20th century, our publicly owned hydro gave us the opportunity to develop the expertise so that our engineers and builders went around the world developing hydro.

We're in a position provincially to set targets for cutting our emissions 5% a year to show that it is possible over 20 years to get to zero. We need to do that for the wider world. We need to do it for our own operations.

We consume a huge amount of energy in the public sector in Ontario right now. By cutting the use of that fossil fuel energy we can save \$100 million a year in our public operations. We need to do that, not only to deal with the climate crisis but to actually make our financial position stronger than it is now.

I want to talk briefly in the time left to me about health-related matters. We learned a lot from COVID, and the price of those lessons was very high. The virus revealed some deep divisions in our society, revealed how disadvantaged a number of communities were based on race, based on gender, based on income. And although I hope that's the last health crisis that we face for a long time, the sort of novel diseases that COVID-19 represents is, unfortunately, not something that we can discount for the future. It's one of many health threats coming at us.

1810

According to the World Health Organization, the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Public Health Association, climate change is the greatest global health threat of the 21st century. It will cause more disease. We will see tropical diseases moving into Ontario that we are not familiar with. Malaria will become a

problem again. Dengue fever, yellow fever will become a problem. We will have a climate much more like that of the southern United States, and the southern United States is seeing more of those tropical diseases moving into their areas. The forest fires, the flooding, severe storms, degradation of air and water quality—all of those will have a severe impact on our health. Those immediate impacts will also be echoed by impacts on the social determinants of health.

When housing is damaged and people are forced to move out into more crowded conditions, their health suffers. When food and the production of food is cut back so that people can't afford to buy the food they need to eat nutritiously, you have an impact on people and you have a mental health impact. Obviously, we saw through COVID the impact on people's stability, their sense of self, their sense of possibility. It was damaging.

Well, when people see their standard of living dropping substantially, when they see climate chaos and extreme weather events becoming more and more a part of their daily lives, that is going to have a huge impact on people's mental health.

We have to try to prevent that damage from happening and we have to put in place the health care system that can deal with those mental health challenges and those physical health challenges. We need to understand now what's coming at us, prepare for it, and allocate the resources so that we aren't caught flat-footed the way we were with COVID.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I stand in the House this evening to discuss the members' bill, Bill 14; specifically, to address schedule 1.

Madam Speaker, our government is laser-focused on bringing innovation to our health care system that will provide a patient-centric model ready to respond to any future pressure which our health care system may face. To achieve this, our government has made it its top priority to strengthen Ontario's health care system through health infrastructure funding and investments in health human resources, as well as a complete health care sector supply chain transformation.

Ontario is committed to building a health care system that puts patients first, front and centre. To support growing demands on the health care system, the investments over the next 10 years will lead to \$40 billion in health infrastructure across the province. These investments will increase capacity in hospitals, build new health care facilities and renew existing hospitals and community health centres. As part of our government's plan to build a stronger, more resilient health care system that is better prepared to respond to crisis, the Ontario government is implementing the most ambitious plan for hospital expansion in Ontario's history. This includes supporting more than 50 major hospital projects that would add 3,000 new beds over the next 10 years. By increasing capacity in hospitals, building new health care facilities, and renewing

existing hospitals, we are preparing the health infrastructure to ensure Ontarians have access to care when and where they need it.

In addition to investments in creating more beds, the government is making renewal investments to ensure existing health care facilities across the province are properly maintained. Just this morning, the Minister of Health announced that our government is investing over \$182 million this year to support critical upgrades and repairs at 131 hospitals and 65 community health care centres across the province. The government's record investments in hospital renewal and expansion will address the increasing need for health care services in growing communities and provide essential care to patients and their families across the province.

While Ontario's unprecedented infrastructure spending will bolster our health care system, our government is working with patients, providers and the entire health sector to create an integrated and resilient supply chain for products and services. We are building a clinically informed supply chain that will enable health care providers to deliver the highest-quality possible care to their patients in the most appropriate setting. Through the supply chain centralization initiative, the government will streamline operations, integrate business systems, foster innovation and use advanced data analytics with greater visibility across the end-to-end supply chain. As a government, we have a vision for supply chain centralization. This is a critical part of the health sector transformation, as we need to focus on modernizing the supply chain to optimize procurement practices, achieve greater value, improve patient care and reduce red tape for vendors and providers.

Fact: An analysis between 2016 to 2018 suggested that Ontario's public sector spends approximately \$29 billion on goods and services. The health sector alone accounts for over \$12 billion that fails to optimize provincial purchasing power, take advantage of modern supply chain practices or deliver services in alignment with the government's vision for integrated patient care.

Improvements to the health sector supply chain will enable stronger clinical and patient input; provide value-based strategic sourcing; ensure a modernized, digital procurement system, providing robust analytics to improve patient outcomes. The bonus here is a reduction of red tape and an equitable distribution of supplies and equipment that brings care closer to home, as well as an alignment with integrated health technology assessment, funding and other functions at Ontario Health to support value-based procurement and innovation.

Madam Speaker, we cannot continue having the same approach to health care while expecting a different outcome. Through an innovative approach to modernizing the supply chain and upgrading infrastructure and investing in our health human resources to enhancing existing programs so that hospitals and the entire health care system have the staff they need to support additional capacity, our government is focused on improving Ontario's health care system to ensure that every Ontarian receives the health care they deserve, when and where they need it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. Chris Glover: I am so thankful to my colleagues the members from Parkdale–High Park and Broadview–Danforth for bringing forward this bill today, the No Time to Waste Act.

The climate crisis is upon us. We've had two floods in the Great Lakes in this area alone in the last few years. In 2018, we've had six tornadoes touch down in Ottawa and flatten houses. We've had forest fires and floods in British Columbia. Australia and California have been burning up. Last summer, 30 million people in Pakistan were displaced through flooding. So we know that there's an environmental crisis—and it's not some distant future; it's actually happening now, and it's happening locally as well as nationally as well as internationally.

1820

The Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Public Health Association have both said that climate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century. They warn about contagious and vector-borne diseases, the negative impacts to air and water quality, dangers posed by forest fires, flooding and severe storms, and food insecurity.

Unfortunately, this government's response on the environment has been abysmal. This government has dismantled Ontario's cap-and-trade system, opposed the federal carbon tax, cancelled the 50 Million Tree program and abolished the office of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, and they are destroying farmland at an ever-increasing rate. When they came into power, in 2018, there were 190 acres of farmland per day paved over in Ontario; it's now 320 acres per day. The government has got Bill 26 before this House, and Bill 26 will actually accelerate that by adding another 7,000 acres of the greenbelt that will be paved over.

There are seven young people in the province of Ontario who have sued the government because this government's climate plan fails to protect them and future generations. They argue that Ontario's lack of action on the climate violates sections 7 and 15 of their charter rights—the right to life, liberty and security of person, and the right to equality under the law without discrimination. They say that your actions in not addressing this climate crisis are actually discriminating against the young people of this province.

What should we be doing? What is this bill asking us to do? The first principle of emergency preparedness is to be prepared. This bill asks the government to develop a plan to deal with the health impacts of climate change, to create a climate crisis and health secretariat to assist the Minister of Health, and to develop a science advisory board to advise the minister. The bill asks the government to listen to public health and science and to prepare. They are asking the government to reduce public sector emissions of greenhouse gas emissions by 5% per year, to retrofit public buildings to net zero, to set green purchasing guidelines for the public sector, and to make an annual

report so that we can evaluate the government's progress on these environmental goals.

The most important thing that we do in this House, I would argue—the goal of all of us in the House—should be to leave Ontario with a strong democracy, with a strong green economy and a healthy environment. That's our obligation to the next generation.

I'm on the progressive side of the political spectrum—and the progressive side means that the next generation should have better opportunities than the previous generation, yet we see the opportunities for this next generation keep being taken away. Their post-secondary education is four or five times the cost it was when we were there. The cost of housing has become completely unaffordable. And this government is accelerating the race toward the environmental crisis that's before us.

So I ask the government members: Please support this No Time to Waste Act. There is no time to waste. We must support the next generation. We must prepare to mitigate the environmental crisis that's upon us and to prepare them so that they don't bear the full brunt of our actions today.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of our Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, who is at COP27 at the present moment.

Our government recognizes that climate change is a generational change, and our government is getting it done when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, Ontario is the leader in all of Canada when it comes to progress on emission reductions, and Ontario is responsible for almost all of Canada's progress toward the Paris Agreement goals.

This was only made possible because of our real progress, our real, concrete actions that we've taken when it comes to fighting climate change; for example, making gasoline that drivers use every day cleaner by becoming the first province to require fuel suppliers to increase the amount of renewable content in regular grade gasoline to 15%, which is the equivalent of taking 300,000 cars off the road. While we're doing this, we're also reducing gas prices, because we recognize the fact that we can balance a healthy environment by making sure we still take into account folks' pocketbooks and that it's about environmental policy and not taxation policy. We can be global leaders in Ontario by reducing greenhouse gas emissions without taxing Ontarians.

We also listen to and we partner with industry when it comes to achieving these goals. For example, our government partnered with industries—like our investment in clean steelmaking with AM Dofasco in Hamilton, equal to taking about one million cars off the road.

We also created new emissions performance standards for large industrial emitters and introduced new fines to hold polluters accountable. In addition, Speaker, we've restored 1,200 hectares of wetland and created 25 hectares of new wetland through the Wetlands Conservation Partner Program, in partnership with Ducks Unlimited, which I work with quite closely in my riding of Barrie–

Innisfil. I want to thank Lynette for all her help with those projects. Our wetland restoration is an area equivalent to 6,166 football fields, or the riding of Don Valley West.

While our government continues to fight climate change, we're working on new initiatives. We're embracing the green revolution. I ask the opposition to join us in our green revolution. The fact that we are the cleanest electricity grid in the entire world—over 90% of our electricity generated is free of emissions. We are significantly lower in emissions when it comes to places like the United States or even European countries such as the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

Why is this all possible? It's our government's actions and initiatives. We're embracing things like attracting \$12.5 billion in electric-vehicle production, setting Ontario up to be a world leader when it comes to manufacturing electric vehicles. Again, we're working with all our partner industries, and as a result Ontario is leading the way to helping to clean up industry with our investments in all kinds of sectors, Speaker, and our government is driving the majority of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions—and we will continue to take a balanced approach that protects our environment, our economy and jobs for all Ontarians.

But it's interesting, Speaker, that the opposition says it's time to act. Well, I agree it's time to act. That's why we've been acting from day one. In fact, we introduced our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan on November 29, 2018. It protects our air, land and water, and we're updating it constantly. It also talks about litter and waste, something the opposition knows I'm passionate about.

But the member who has introduced this bill waited 699 days before the first introduction of his No Time to Waste Act in 2020, and then he waited 1,371 days in total before reintroducing the No Time to Waste Act. The members opposite waited 829 days before introducing the Green New Democratic Deal since our government introduced our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan. That's the equivalent of two years, three months and seven days, or 27 months and seven days, however you like to do the math, Speaker.

I agree: There is no time to waste. That's why this government is wasting no time. I ask the opposition: Join us, be progressive. Join the green revolution, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and recognize that Ontario is leading us nationally in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Ms. Jessica Bell: I want to thank the MPP for Danforth and the MPP for Parkdale–High Park for introducing this motion, the No Time to Waste Act, a motion to have Ontario come up with a public health care plan to prepare our health care system for the impacts of the climate crisis.

The climate crisis is the greatest threat facing Ontario and facing the globe. It is not a future event; it is happening now. Over the last few years we have seen the impact of the climate crisis here in Canada. We saw it with the heat dome that hit BC last summer, where over 600 people died. The people who died were our most vulnerable. They

were our elderly. They were people living alone. And the government wasn't prepared. People were not prepared.

We saw that in Alberta, with the extreme fire events that razed towns. It was devastating. We're seeing that with disruptions to our food supply, with the escalating price of food caused by global events as well as extreme weather events.

We're also seeing this with the largest increase in mass migration happening around the world because of extreme weather events. There are now parts of the world that are becoming uninhabitable for periods of time in the year. Pakistan is one example that is happening right now. This is a crisis, and we need to respond accordingly.

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I look at what the government has done in the last few weeks in terms of improving our health care system and addressing the climate crisis and I am dismayed. With Bill 23, this government is choosing to double down on sprawl, which is completely unsustainable and will lock us into unsustainable, soul-destroying commutes and a car-dependent lifestyle, which is not the way to go if we want to address the climate crisis.

We have seen this government double down on turning farmland into suburban sprawl, even though we are one of the few places in the world that grows more food than we need. We're a very special and unique place, but we want to pave over it, even though your own Housing Affordability Task Force says that land isn't the issue and we know how to meet the need without impacting our farming system and our food supply system.

We are seeing this government double down on unsustainable fossil fuel production by investing in gas plant infrastructure, which is going to destroy all the progress we have made to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity sector, which was caused by the phase-out of coal power plants. Most of the members of this government weren't even here for that decision, so it's very interesting that you like to take credit for that, given what else you've done.

We're also seeing this government, in the fall economic statement, slash the amount of money they are putting into climate change programs from \$2 billion, which is what existed with the cap-and-trade program Ontario had, to \$15 million. That's pathetic. There's no other word to describe it.

What we know is that the climate crisis is also going to become a health care crisis, and then when I look at this government and what they are doing with the health care system, I am honestly appalled. I have seen the impact of privatization on the health care system in Australia. I saw the establishment of a two-tier health care system, and it is not the way we want to go.

It is unconscionable that there are children in Ontario and their parents who are worried that if they go to an emergency room right now, they are not going to be able to get the care that their children need. That is not a health care system that is ready for the climate crisis.

I support this bill because it makes sense. It means we have a plan, and that we are going to act on that plan to

respond to the climate crisis that we are facing and strengthen our health care system, so that it is ready and we are ready. I urge you to support this bill. We are the provincial government. We are legislators. We have a responsibility to show leadership. We have a responsibility to guide and steer humanity so that we don't just survive, but we thrive. Please support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in the House, and especially today to support the MPP from Toronto–Danforth, our leader, on his bill that he put forward, the No Time to Waste Act (Plan for Climate Action and Jobs). I've heard a bit of partisanship on both sides—this is a partisan place—but the impact of climate change isn't a partisan thing, because it's not going to wait for anyone, regardless of if you're Conservative or NDP or anything in between.

There are things that we are doing currently as a society that we could all do differently, and yes, we think there are things that the government is making mistakes with right now. One that I'm particularly concerned about is wasting our food production capacity by covering it with houses. We need houses. There are places in Ontario right now that are approved for housing, that could help solve the housing crisis. Your own housing task force, created by the Premier, said so. You choose to disregard that. Keeping farmland, keeping wetlands so that we can actually protect cities and protect people—because wetlands protect people and farmland actually feeds people. Climate change is going to make places in this world that are now food baskets—it's going to make it so their capacity is going to go down.

We are so fortunate to be one of the places on the planet where our food capacity is, at the very least, stable and could increase, yet the government says, "Oh, yeah, but it doesn't matter because we're getting more efficient." Yes, we are, but why pave over something that is going to be worth more than gold or than the Ring of Fire, potentially? Why are we doing that?

I encourage everyone to vote for this bill and actually look at this bill seriously and create a select committee to talk about what's really happening and how to attack it, on behalf of our children. If not on behalf of ourselves, on behalf of our children, not only support this bill but actually look at what we can do—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The leader of the official opposition has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker. I want to thank the members for Newmarket–Aurora, Spadina–Fort York, Barrie–Innisfil, University–Rosedale and Timiskaming–Cochrane for rising and addressing this bill.

I want to say to the member for Newmarket–Aurora, I don't think I heard you say the words "climate change" or "climate crisis"; I might have missed it. But if you're talking about a health care system, I didn't hear anything about a malaria strategy. I didn't hear anything about a program for dealing with mass trauma when thousands lose their homes either through fire or flood. I didn't hear

anything about other new emerging diseases that are going to be huge problems for us. Simply building hospitals but not having a strategy to deal with emerging tropical diseases in this country is not a strategy for a new world; it's a strategy to make sure a lot of people get sick and don't get attended to.

I have to say, with regard to the member for Barrie–Innisfil, it's quite correct Ontario is a major contributor to reductions in emissions in Canada because coal was shut down, but that had nothing to do with your government. It just didn't happen. You came in after that had been done. But I will say something that you need to note: You are actively setting things up to reverse that rollback of emissions. You are ramping up greenhouse gas emissions from our electricity sector so that at least half of that reduction will be gone. So what was the largest single contribution to reductions in Canada is going to be cut in half by your government. I don't see how you can be proud of that. You've pursued a course since elections undermining conservation, undermining renewables, undermining the steps necessary to actually deliver the goods.

I was in estimates the other day, questioning your ministry. You don't know what you're doing. I actually had a

chance to ask. You don't have a framework in place. You don't have the money in place. You're not doing what needs to be done.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

MPP Tabuns has moved second reading of Bill 14, An Act to enact the Climate Crisis Health Action Plan Act, 2022, the Ontario Climate Crisis Strategy for the Public Sector Act, 2022 and the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Act, 2022. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House adjourns until Monday at 10:15 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1839.

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
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Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

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Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
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Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	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	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	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
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

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Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	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	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	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	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	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	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	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	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	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	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	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	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	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	