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Mardi
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 6 December 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 6 décembre 2022

Report continued from volume A.

1800

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU
CHOOSE NATURAL GAS ACT
(ONTARIO
ENERGY BOARD AMENDMENT), 2022
LOI DE 2022 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA COMMISSION DE L'ÉNERGIE
DE L'ONTARIO (RACCORDEMENTS
AU RÉSEAU D'ALIMENTATION
EN GAZ NATUREL)

Mr. Hsu moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 29, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 with respect to municipal conditions on residential natural gas connections / Projet de loi 29, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario à l'égard des conditions municipales sur les raccordements résidentiels au réseau d'alimentation en gaz naturel.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Bill 29 is about saving taxpayers money by giving municipalities options. Bill 29 is pro-market, pro-municipal autonomy and pro-climate adaptation. This bill can be an initial step to send the signal to Ontarians that their government is serious about not wasting our money at a time when inflation and cost of living is top of mind and at a time when, for the sake of the young—including my daughters, Ella and Vera-Claire—we must act on climate change.

Municipalities have set their own goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions. They know what's best for themselves. Some will continue with natural gas for a while; others want to move now but face inertia and force of habit.

Section 42 of the Ontario Energy Board Act requires distributors to build natural gas connections upon request. However, the urgent need to address climate change means that these assets may have to be abandoned before their costs are recouped, hence the waste. This stranding of infrastructure assets—abandoning them before they are paid for—is similar to when cameras appeared on phones.

While traditional cameras are still being used today by some people, a lot of them have just been discarded.

Bill 29 clarifies in the Ontario Energy Board Act that municipalities have options to prevent stranding millions of dollars in fossil fuel infrastructure, options to help them address climate change. If it makes sense and follows a bylaw on climate change, then municipalities should not be prevented by the Ontario Energy Board Act's obligation to connect from choosing to impose conditions on new residential natural gas connections.

The motivation for this bill comes from a story from my riding. Kingston city council was asked to pay \$2.4 million for a new natural gas connection, including a connection to new apartment buildings to be built on an old grain elevator pier jutting out into Lake Ontario. It just happened that this matter came before council and became public because the city of Kingston owns the local gas utility. A councillor asked if there was an alternative to spending this much public money on new fossil fuel infrastructure, especially since they would have to supply natural gas for 24 years before recovering the cost—24 years. We don't have that long to deal with climate change. We cannot continue to burn natural gas for that long.

By contrast, these new apartments will sit right on Elevator Bay on Lake Ontario and are likely candidates for an economical heat pump system. Lake Ontario would be a source of heat for the building in winter and a sink for excess heat during the summer. Residents could save a lot of money over the life of the building. This is an example of the kind of more sustainable, cost-effective option which a municipality may insist be considered.

Unfortunately, in this instance, city of Kingston staff replied after several months of study that the Ontario Energy Board Act requires that anybody who asks for a natural gas connection must get one. The obligation to connect is the quid pro quo for Utilities Kingston having a natural gas monopoly. This is a long-established principle. Because the city of Kingston owns Utilities Kingston, Kingston taxpayers were told they had no choice but to pay \$2.4 million for the upfront cost of that natural gas connection. This is directly at odds with the fact that the city of Kingston has formally declared a climate emergency.

Bill 29 simply clarifies section 42 of the Ontario Energy Board Act. Section 42 establishes the obligation of a distributor to connect to somebody who requests a natural gas connection. My bill amends section 42 and clarifies that municipalities have the option of imposing conditions on new residential natural gas connections in accordance with a municipal bylaw on greenhouse gas emissions.

This bill is not just about the case where the municipality owns a gas utility, like in Kingston. Madam Speaker, we can't keep building new subdivisions and automatically connecting everybody to natural gas without considering alternatives which could be less costly over the life of the buildings. We have to ask ourselves, how are we going to slow down and eventually reverse the burning of fossil fuels and the emission of greenhouse gases? What are we going to do?

This bill prevents municipalities from being handcuffed when they craft their own local strategies to fight the climate emergency. It's time to think twice rather than automatically spending money on fossil fuel infrastructure, especially in these times when we're trying to save every penny.

Natural gas has served us well, but it's mostly a transition energy source. Let's not get in the way of communities who are ready to lead the way to a sustainable energy future in Ontario. We don't have to look too far at other communities around the world who are ahead of us in transitioning away from natural gas.

Speaker, it is my sincere hope that the majority government sees the necessity of voting in favour of saving taxpayer money, voting in favour of a market economy, voting in favour of municipal autonomy and voting in favour of making climate adaptation choices as soon as possible. It is my sincere hope that the majority government does the right thing for both the Ontarians of today and the Ontarians of tomorrow. To not support this bill is a waste of a generational opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Ms. Jess Dixon: Speaker, I'm standing today to make absolutely sure that every single person in this House and those very interested persons I am sure are listening from afar are fully aware of the negative impact that Bill 29 would cause to Ontario and to Ontarians.

The member introducing this bill tells us that Bill 29 is about choice. I must say, I can't understand how creating the power to ban a form of home heating, particularly the most commonly used and most affordable form of home heating, could possibly be spun as providing more choice to Ontarians.

Superficially, we're here to debate a bill that impacts customer choice, but let's not allow the safe and mild little phrase of "customer choice" to wrap up in cotton wool the sharp edges of what the member is proposing. This legislation is about taking away one of the main options Ontarians have when it comes to an incredibly basic need: staying warm in the winter.

The member opposite has tried to tell us that giving municipalities the power to ban natural gas connections will somehow mean more choices for Ontarians when it comes to heating their homes. As far as I can make out, he argues that allowing municipalities to ban natural gas on what appear to be purely ideological grounds will in turn force an increasing diversification of home heating methods and, in so doing, somehow create more choice for customers.

1810

I would ask, what kind of expansion of choice begins with the removal of choice? What the member opposite really means is this: "Let us allow the Liberal Party of Ontario to facilitate the removal of the most popular, the most commonly used and the most affordable form of home heating, after which Ontarians will have the wonderful privilege of picking from the costly ranks of what is left over, that which the government says they are allowed to select from."

The member also tells us that this bill is about giving municipalities tools. That said, I have not heard anything about how useful a tool box this will really be, given that it would be missing one of the best tools we have when it comes to keeping heating costs down for families and businesses, that being the availability of natural gas.

Let's look at some numbers. Take the natural gas expansion program: Since its launch in 2019, the natural gas expansion program has supported projects that are expected to connect a total of 17,750 customers in 59 communities to the vital resource of natural gas. For residential customers, by way of example, making the switch to natural gas can mean saving up to 55% in their annual energy costs.

But natural gas isn't just about affordability; it's also about offering a cleaner alternative. Many of the communities being connected to natural gas once had to rely on more carbon-intensive fuels like propane and heating oil—home heating sources that this bill does not propose banning.

Another interesting thing to note about the natural gas expansion program, especially when we're apparently speaking about customer choice, is its popularity. The expansion program receives far more applications for new natural gas connections—applications from very willing and very eager municipalities—than we can possibly accommodate at this point. These municipalities know that being connected to natural gas makes them more attractive for job creation while reducing both the cost to customers and emissions. In fact, it's this overwhelming interest in natural gas that has led to our government announcing via the spring budget that we will begin consulting on a third phase of the project to connect even more families, businesses and communities to natural gas.

I myself spent a significant amount of time with Minister Smith at the AMO conference this summer and can bear personal witness to the sheer number of municipalities and delegations that came before us time and time again, frankly, pleading to be allowed access to the natural gas expansion program, to the point that that was what we more or less expected to hear every single time a municipality arrived.

But enough, for the moment, about natural gas. Let's pause and consider the Liberal Party of Ontario's track record when it comes to energy policy. The Liberal Party caused the price of electricity to skyrocket and drove out our manufacturing jobs. According to Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer, if their plan was still in place, bills would go up 6% this year and every year until 2028. They

sold off Hydro One, creating new, long-term costs for our energy system. They signed over 33,000 long-term energy contracts at well above the going rate for power. While the Liberals held government in Ontario, we had contracts that paid 80 cents per kilowatt hour when our nuclear fleet provides it for only nine cents. Under their watch, and thanks to their decisions, families had to choose between heating and eating.

It certainly seems as though some habits die hard for members of that party. In fact, many may remember a time when the previous Liberal government wanted to take the natural gas furnaces right out of peoples' homes, even though initial estimates indicated it would raise heating bills for everyday families by \$3,000. Why any member in this chamber would be inclined to support an energy bill coming from that party is entirely beyond me.

Compare that to the record of our government. That same Financial Accountability Officer report I referenced confirms that our plan is the best one for Ontario's ratepayers. Under our government, bills will be 12% lower than they would have been under the Liberals by 2025. What's more, the FAO also states that bills will be 23% lower by 2029. We also took action to reverse the trend of skyrocketing rates, cancelling as many of those long-term, entirely unneeded power contracts as we could, and saving ratepayers nearly \$800 million.

Speaker, our government isn't just bringing costs down for the overall system; we're also giving families and businesses more tools—not less, as the member opposite is advocating for—so they can make their own decisions on how best to lower their bills. This government is continuing to provide an 11.7% reduction on electricity bills through the Ontario Electricity Rebate.

We're also increasing transparency on those bills, so Ontarians can see the true cost of electricity and make informed decisions on their electricity use. We're giving customers the tools they need to save money and choose the electricity pricing plan that makes the most sense for them. We've introduced the new ultra-low overnight rate that will benefit shift workers and incentivize electric vehicle uptake with lower costs for overnight charging.

We've also implemented the Green Button standard, which can help households reduce emissions and save up to 18% on their energy bills by giving them the data that they need to manage their heating right from their phones. Green Button is proving popular, with now over a dozen local distribution companies across Ontario implementing it, so their customers can have the tools they need to take control of their monthly bills.

We've also launched the Clean Home Heating Initiative. This program explores how the electric air-source heat pumps, mentioned by the member opposite, with smart controls, can actually work in tandem with existing natural gas furnaces. This type of hybrid heating provides an accessible and affordable solution for customers to reduce their utility bills, but it also has dramatic consequences as far as reducing carbon emissions.

We've also invested an additional \$342 million to expand Ontario's Conservation and Demand Management Framework, bringing the total value of the framework to

\$1 billion. This additional funding increases the impact of the energy-efficiency programs that are already helping Ontario families and businesses manage their energy use and save money on their bills. It also helps the province meet emerging electricity system needs by reducing the need to build new energy infrastructure. Within that conservation and demand framework lies a new program by which customers with existing central air conditioning and smart thermostat can actually lower their energy use at peak times and, again, lower their bills.

Programs like these don't just offer customers choice, affordability and reliability; they also give customers more opportunities to commit to green initiatives and to commit to a greener Ontario. These are the programs that are going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Altogether, the estimated reduction is three million tonnes over the lifetime of these energy-efficiency measures. Speaker, this is a win not just for customers, but also so very clearly for the climate as well.

It should be clear that our government is absolutely committed to finding innovative solutions by which we can keep costs down, our energy reliable and our province clean, and we're doing all of that while giving customers more choice and not less.

To finish, I will not be supporting the bill of the member opposite. I won't be throwing my vote behind the idea that government—any level of government—can simply prohibit Ontarians from relying on a commonly used and readily available heating source to heat their own homes. This is especially true when the option the member opposite is proposing to restrict is natural gas, which is, for many, by far the most affordable option.

And this government? Well, we are quite happy to stay on the path of practical and innovative action. We're giving customers the tools they need to reduce both their costs and their emissions, the tools to make their own decisions and, ultimately, the tools they need to stay warm.

The member opposite or the party may be kept toasty by the fires of an ideological fixation, but I think it's very clear that that will not prevent the pipes from freezing.

I'll be voting against this bill.

1820

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West to participate in this debate on Bill 29, the Think Twice Before You Choose Natural Gas Act.

I want to comment on the remarks we just heard from the Conservative member about the lack of trust in municipalities' making appropriate decisions. On the one hand, they are empowering municipalities to go ahead with only one third of the support of council to make decisions on behalf of people in their community. On the other hand, they don't trust municipalities, with this bill, because what this bill does is, it allows municipalities to have the option of imposing conditions on new residential natural gas connections in accordance with a municipal bylaw on greenhouse gas emissions.

Currently, section 42 of the Ontario Energy Board Act requires distributors to build natural gas connections upon request, and the cost of building those natural gas connections falls onto the municipalities. So allowing the municipality to have a choice to regulate new residential natural gas hookups is something that respects municipal decision-making, which we know from past actions of this government is not something they believe in.

But, Speaker, we are in a climate crisis in this province, in this world. We are seeing forest fires at a scale we've never seen before—flooding, intense heat, extreme weather events occurring on a regular basis. We're seeing more heat-related deaths, and we're also seeing the health consequences of not taking action to address the climate crisis. My colleague the member for Toronto—Danforth debated a private member's bill just a couple of weeks ago called the No Time to Waste Act that talks about the urgency of having a pandemic preparedness plan in connection with a climate action plan, because we know that there is a very significant likelihood of another devastating pandemic in the wake of climate change.

We have to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and natural gas is almost entirely composed of methane. That is the most potent greenhouse gas. It has 70 times the warming effect of carbon dioxide. So reducing natural gas emissions, if that's what municipalities choose to do, by regulating these natural gas connections, these hookups, would be something that would contribute to reducing GHGs in our province.

The other important aspect of this bill—as I mentioned, the costs of providing those natural gas connections fall onto the municipalities, and municipalities have made very clear the financial consequences of this government's actions in Bill 23. In my community, the city of London, they have estimated that Bill 23 is going to create a \$97-million hole in the budget over the next five years.

Municipalities are already struggling with the cost of inflation, the impact of inflation on city budgets. In London, London city council just earlier this week was debating the 2023 draft budget, and they are looking at a 3.9% increase to the property tax rate. They are going to hold public input and look at what cuts can be made to try to bring that tax increase down, but this is the reality that municipalities are facing across the province. And so allowing municipalities to have the option to regulate new residential natural gas hookups would avoid the cost of those hookups falling upon municipal taxpayers.

We also know that the cost of natural gas is going up. I had an email earlier this month from a constituent who told me that he had experienced a 79% increase between June and October in his monthly natural gas bills. That's a 79% increase, Speaker, over a period of just four months. Natural gas is going to become increasingly valuable as an export, which means that consumers' energy bills are going to go up as exporters look to take advantage of those emerging markets for natural gas. So the notion that natural gas is automatically a cheaper option is really not true.

We know from research that the best way to lower greenhouse gas emissions to save households money is

through conservation measures. Investments in conservation can really reduce electricity demand and therefore save households money on the bottom-line budget for their energy costs.

When we look at the sources of energy used in my community, in London, the city issued a report recently showing that 47% of energy used in London comes from natural gas; 21% comes from electricity. So, yes, there is a reliance on natural gas, but as I said, the CO₂ emissions associated with natural gas are significant. In fact, there was a study done in 2018 that showed that more than 60% of CO₂ emissions related to home heating came from natural gas, which is more than all other sources combined—that's gas, oil, wood, coal and propane. So if we can reduce our use, our reliance on natural gas, we can really take the action that we need to deal with climate change.

This is something that I think all Ontarians expect their government to do. They have seen this government drag its heels, rip out charging stations—one of their first actions when they came to office was to rip out electric vehicle charging stations. We have seen the lack of planning, the lack of any kind of coherent climate plan, from this government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

I have to say, Speaker, that our support for this motion really aligns with commitments that the NDP made in the last election on our Green New Democratic Deal. This was our action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to get Ontario to net zero by 2050 and to reduce our fossil fuels by 50% by 2030. So the actions that are proposed in this bill are consistent with some of the actions that we had outlined in our platform. We had also committed to ensuring that electricity is affordable, because as you will recall, under the Liberals we heard a lot about energy poverty, about the sky-high electricity bills that consumers were facing following the Liberal sell-off of Hydro One.

So, yes, we need to ensure that electricity is affordable. That means expanding hydro capacity; increasing intermittent renewables, including wind and solar power; creating more grid-scale storage; rooftop solar capacity on buildings; and major grid interconnection with Quebec and Manitoba to enable electricity imports. But as I said earlier, conservation really is the least expensive energy resource, and that's why we had committed to a conservation-first approach to electricity planning. That is something that has been sorely lacking in this government's climate actions.

1830

I want to also recognize the city of London. I had talked about some of the implications of this bill for my community, but London is one of the municipalities that officially declared a climate emergency back in 2019. The climate emergency action plan was developed with extensive input with Londoners and was approved in July 2022. London has also committed to 50% less fossil fuel use by buildings by 2030 and to reduce GHGs to net zero by 2050—bring GHGs to net zero by 2050.

Municipalities like London that have made those commitments, 50% less fossil fuel use by buildings by

2030, need tools to enable them to move forward with those actions, and that is what this bill will do. As I said, it will give municipalities the option of imposing conditions on new residential natural gas connections in accordance with a municipal bylaw on greenhouse gas emissions.

I do recognize that there are parts of the province that don't have access to other forms of cost-effective energy, but that is something we can look at through other means.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I am wholeheartedly supportive of the private member's bill, Bill 29, Think Twice Before You Choose Natural Gas Act. It's well-thought-out and researched, as is everything the member from Kingston and the Islands does. That's his mantra—being meticulous in details and research. He's a physicist, a graduate PhD from Princeton—so quite knowledgeable there as well, and a lot of credibility. I have a lot of respect for him, and we all should. His community was asking for this, and many communities are asking for this. What they're asking for is options. I think the member from across the floor was a little confused, because it's about options, actually, for Ontarians. It's the smart thing to do, especially in a climate emergency. It's necessary climate action.

We also, as the member to the side mentioned, need to heavily invest in renewables and conservation—easy things to be doing as well—because it's going to take every tool in the tool box to help mitigate this. There's a high cost to inaction.

I know this government prides itself on being for the people and fiscally responsible, so I'm sure you would want to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 29, and I want to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for bringing it forward.

Speaker, we are facing a cost-of-living crisis and a climate emergency, and the Conservative member opposite's opposition to this bill will likely make both worse. Let me tell you why. Contrary to what the member said, this bill does not ban fossil gas. It simply gives a municipality the option to allow alternatives to natural gas, especially if they are lower-cost. I don't understand why the members opposite would oppose something that would help people save money and reduce their cost of living while at the same time reducing their pollution and helping address the climate crisis. The only thing I can understand about that is, the government opposite was the government that cancelled all the conservation programs that helped people save money by saving energy. So I guess they don't want to address the climate crisis, nor do they want to address the cost-of-living crisis that people are facing. All this bill does is give municipalities an option.

And let's be clear: The International Energy Agency—a very conservative, mostly pro-fossil-fuel organization—has made it very clear that if we are going to meet our

climate obligations, we cannot expand fossil fuel infrastructure. So the least we can do is give municipalities the option to explore alternatives, especially when it saves their residents money.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I rise today also in support of Bill 29, a very innovative proposal from my colleague from Kingston and the Islands to make small but sensible amendments to the Ontario Energy Board Act that, when used, have the power—forgive the pun—to save taxpayers money and help municipalities reach their climate goals faster.

Upon actually reading the bill, it is very clear it is not an attack nor a ban on natural gas. Small amendments give residents and municipalities the flexibility to simply say “no, thank you” to implementing a natural gas connection when there is an alternative to use a greener energy solution. That has the power to do two important things: save residents money and reduce greenhouse gases.

As the calls from citizens, investors and young people grow to take urgent action to protect our environment, this Conservative government would be voting against those calls if they vote against this bill.

I urge the government side to consider this good idea from this side of the House and support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate? Thank you.

The member for Kingston and the Islands has two minutes to reply.

M. Ted Hsu: Merci, madame la Présidente. Ce projet de loi ne s'agit pas d'une interdiction, contrairement à ce que mon honorable collègue la députée de Kitchener-Sud-Hespeler a dit. It's not a ban. Et, à mon avis, c'était évident, évident selon ses paroles : « As far as I can make out.... »

So I'm going to be generous and I'm going to assume that my colleague the honourable member for Kitchener South-Hespeler hasn't really read the bill or has been given a speech to read.

This bill is not about a ban; it's about giving municipalities the option to do something about climate change, to say, “Hey, is that heat pump going to cost you less over the life of the building?”—and do something about climate change. That's what the bill is about.

I don't believe that the Conservative side understands this bill. The points they made, to me, are nonsense. There is no sense that we have to do anything about climate change from this Conservative government, which is consistent with their actions over the last few years of cutting conservation programs, cutting renewable energy programs, delaying development of energy storage. This is what we've seen from the government. It's a government that the people of Ontario cannot trust to take care of their energy future, to take care of their environment. It's a government that they can't trust to even read bills carefully and safeguard their democracy. So I'm very disappointed in what the government has said.

I want to express my appreciation for the supportive remarks from our colleagues over at the NDP and the Green Party and from my own colleagues here in the Liberal Party.

I understand that there are communities that will continue to use natural gas because it's the right thing for their community, but many communities want to move ahead and lead on climate change.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Hsu has moved second reading of Bill 29, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 with respect to municipal conditions on residential natural gas connections.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, 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.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

LAND USE PLANNING

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We now have a late show. The member for Ottawa South has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant, as the case may be, may reply for up to five minutes.

1840

The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, I was truly dissatisfied with the answer that I got from the minister last week. I just want to rehash what my question was about.

I want to remind people that in 2018 the Premier was caught on video telling a room full of developers, "We're going to open up big chunks of the greenbelt." And then in May of that year, he said, "Do you know what, people of Ontario? Unequivocally, I will not open the greenbelt." And this is important: Since that time, the Premier and the minister have said 19 times—19 times—that they weren't going to open up the greenbelt. Guess what? Here we are, December 2022, and the greenbelt is wide open, even though the government's own commission said, "You don't need to do this."

The Premier said we should do our homework. So I'm glad you're all here, because we can do our homework.

I know the members on the other side keep chirping and saying, "You opened up the greenbelt 17 times." Well, here's what happened when that happened—maybe you didn't read. Here we go, folks. Listen up. In 2015, the review added 21 urban river valleys, and 17 removals were approved, totalling 56 hectares—remember, you guys are

opening up 47 hectares. In the 2017 plan, we expanded by 9,000 hectares, which is about 22,000 acres. There were small changes that came out of the process.

Here's a statement from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation:

"The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation congratulates the province on their commitment to protect farmland and nature with today's announcement that only minor, technical changes will be made to greenbelt boundaries.

"The Minister of Municipal Affairs, Bill Mauro, has led a thoughtful, evidence-based review process, and he should be commended for his work in delivering this important achievement for Ontario. With this proposal, the province is reaffirming its commitment to protecting farmland from sprawl and preserving natural heritage in the rural countryside. This decision ensures the protection of 161,000 jobs and \$9.1 billion in annual economic activity in the greenbelt."

Other history lesson—greenbelt, two million acres. It happened in 2006. The Premier I worked for started the greenbelt. It's not the government's greenbelt. It's not the minister's greenbelt. It's not the Premier's greenbelt to give away to his friends. It's the people's greenbelt; it belongs to them. In fact, it's the people who come after us—our sons, our daughters, our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren. That's why the greenbelt is there. Actually, Progressive Conservative governments like Bill Davis's understood that. This government doesn't understand.

Here's the other challenge: This thing smells. It stinks. Why would someone borrow \$100 million at 21% interest—it's like on a credit card—to buy land that you could literally do nothing on? Do you know why? Because, weeks later, they could. If this land were stocks in a major company, there would be an insider trading investigation going on right now—and that's where this is going to end up.

Even in the city of Ottawa, the urban boundary was expanded against the will of the city. Guess what? Same thing. In that part of the city that was expanded, a developer bought land very close to that decision, as late as fall of this year. Five people in the company—good, solid donations over the last two years. How do these people know? How do they find out?

It took the minister a whole day, when he was asked, "Did anybody in your government tell these folks that you were opening up the greenbelt?"—he eventually said no. He's saying no right now.

Here's the reality: This stinks. It smells to high heaven. And if you're a friend of the government, you get to know first.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I just want to remind the member, even in the late show, we have to be careful not to attribute motive.

The parliamentary assistant to respond: five minutes.

Mr. Kevin Holland: We know that when it comes to housing in Ontario, the status quo is not working. The members opposite have often said so themselves. Ontario is facing an historic housing supply crisis where demand continues to rise far faster than the available supply.

If we continue at the same pace, a generation of young Ontarians will never have the same opportunities for success and stability that their parents had. Generations of young Ontarians will never achieve their dreams of home ownership. Time and time again, we have been clear that this crisis has been decades in the making.

To fix it will require bold and decisive action now, as well as short-term planning and long-term commitment across all levels of government to make change. The only way to drive change is by working with our municipal partners and by working with our private and not-for-profit partners to get shovels in the ground faster, cut through red tape and build up the desperately needed affordable and attainable homes that Ontarians are waiting for.

Speaker, I'm glad the member opposite brought up the issue of promises in his question, because we have made a promise to the people of Ontario. Our government made a promise to address the housing supply crisis by building 1.5 million new homes so that hard-working Ontarians, young families, newcomers, young professionals and seniors looking to downsize can all find a home that meets their needs and budget.

Our government is keeping its promise to consider every possible option to get more homes built faster so that Ontarians can realize their dream of home ownership. That is why we continue to introduce a range of policies that will help get more homes built across Ontario—single-family homes, yes, but also purpose-built rentals, affordable, not-for-profit, apartments, missing middle, laneway suites, and more—because we recognize that Ontarians have different housing needs depending on where they live, and the best way to meet those needs is to support the construction of housing of all types across the province.

The lands we have proposed for removal from the greenbelt were selected based on strict criteria. They are: on the edge of an existing settlement area; on the edge of the greenbelt; will lead to the overall expansion of the greenbelt; have the potential for new housing to be built in the near term; and are either already serviced or will be serviced at the expense of the proponent.

These proposals will lead to the overall expansion of the greenbelt by 2,000 acres and the construction of at least 50,000 new homes. There's no other way to describe this except as a win for Ontarians looking for a home that meets their needs and budget, and for the greenbelt as a whole.

It's a shame, therefore, that the opposition is again opposing a measure intended to help Ontarians find a home. They will acknowledge that Ontarians need homes, sure. But every single time they are asked to vote in favour of a major pro-housing policy, what happens? They vote no. The previous Liberal government had 15 years to act on the housing file, and yet time and time again, they—supported by the NDP—did nothing to address it. Now we see the consequences of that inaction.

We heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing mention in the House yesterday that Ontario has the lowest housing supply per capita out of all our G7 and Canadian peers. Millennials, on average, are spending 20

years just to save up for a down payment on a new house. We owe it to these young Ontarians to act now.

Ontarians were clear, during the June elections, when our government was re-elected with a strong mandate to build 1.5 million houses in the next 10 years. They called for urgent action to address Ontario's housing supply crisis.

Our policies are working. We already saw that last year when Ontario had the highest number of housing starts in over 30 years and the highest number of rental units starts since 1991. But we need to do more—and that's what our government is doing.

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We are committed to making sure Ontario remains the best province to live in by continuing to build on our successes, continuing to get shovels in the ground faster, and continuing to cut through the red tape so we can get more homes built faster.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): There being no further matters to debate, pursuant to standing order 36(c), I will now call orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT À AMÉLIORER LA GOUVERNANCE MUNICIPALE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 6, 2022, on the motion for third 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 Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The parliamentary assistant had the floor. I invite him to continue the debate.

Mr. Kevin Holland: To continue where I left off, on More Homes, More Choice, our first housing supply action plan: That plan included a full spectrum of legislative changes to increase the supply of housing. From ownership housing to rental housing, whether built by private developers or non-profits, our first action plan and its accompanying legislation helped to build more homes and give people more choice. It aimed to keep more housing more affordable and helped taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned dollars. To eliminate any unnecessary steps, any duplication and any barriers, we reviewed every step of the development process, every policy, every regulation, and every applicable piece of legislation. But we knew that addressing the housing crisis needed a long-term commitment and collaboration at all levels of government.

So our government acted again and created the Housing Affordability Task Force. Made up of industry leaders and

experts, the task force recommended additional measures to increase the supply of market housing. It noted that many efforts to cool the housing market provided only temporary relief to homebuyers and that more was needed.

That is why we then convened with our municipal partners at both the Ontario-Municipal Summit and at the Rural Housing Roundtable earlier this year to seek their input into the province's housing supply crisis. We also heard from more than 2,000 people through a public consultation that we held to gather even more input.

We took all the information we gained from our many consultations and created our second housing supply action plan called More Homes for Everyone, which was launched earlier this year. More Homes for Everyone outlined the next steps we're taking to address Ontario's housing crisis, steps such as accelerating approval times and protecting homebuyers from unethical business practices. We also took further steps to make it easier to build transit-oriented communities.

As the Associate Minister of Housing previously stated, we then introduced the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, which came into force on November 23. It gives the mayors of Ottawa and Toronto more tools to deliver on shared provincial-municipal priorities while strengthening their ability to reduce timelines for development, standardize processes, and address local barriers to increasing the housing supply in their communities.

As you know, Speaker, on November 28, we passed the More Homes Built Faster Act. These policies represent our boldest and most ambitious efforts yet to cut through red tape, unnecessary costs and other bottlenecks in the way of the housing supply that Ontario needs. We've taken action to create ways for missing-middle and low-income Ontarians to enter the housing market. Key actions also include:

- freezing and reducing government fees to support the construction of new homes and reduce the cost of housing;
- creating a new attainable housing program to drive the development of housing across all regions of Ontario;
- increasing the non-resident speculation tax rate to deter non-resident investors from speculating on the province's housing market and to help make home ownership more attainable for Ontario residents; and finally,
- protecting new home buyers by increasing consumer protection measures and consulting on ways to help more renters become homeowners.

So you can see, Speaker, how our government is moving quickly to take every step we can to help support the construction of more homes in the province for hard-working Ontarians.

As we heard the Associate Minister of Housing say, we are proposing to build on and further support 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. We began our strong-mayor framework with single-tier municipalities, with Toronto and Ottawa as the first to receive strong-mayor powers. After all, as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has said, over one

third of Ontario's growth in the next decade is expected to happen in these two communities, so we had to take our time to focus on them and get it right.

But we know there are other high-growth municipalities. Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo, York—these six regions each have a population either close to or more than half a million people, and they are expected to grow. By 2051, Halton's population, for example, is expected to reach over 1.1 million. Peel region is expected to grow to almost three million. And over two million people are expected to call York region home. That's why we are now turning our attention to these municipalities, to municipalities that could benefit from these strong-mayor authorities and tools as they look to grow and build more housing. Specifically, we now want to explore how these powers might work in jurisdictions with two-tier systems of government. And as the province considers how best to expand the strong-mayor tools to more of Ontario's rapidly growing municipalities, we want to get it right.

Speaker, we want to hear from the experts. That's why we are bringing in provincially appointed facilitators. These facilitators will assess the two-tier regional governments in the six regions of Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York, and they will be tasked with helping us determine the best mix of roles and responsibilities between the upper- and lower-tier municipalities in these regions, where increased housing supply is desperately needed.

We want to ensure these communities are ready and prepared for the growth that is coming their way, which brings us back to why we are here today, back to our legislation. To get to our next phase of strong-mayor powers, we need to ensure that we have the right people in place for these assessments, the right people to work with the facilitator on those things that need to be dealt with through strong-mayor powers.

That's why 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 for this term of office. These are the three regions out of six where the chair isn't elected by the community. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has said that if the proposal is passed, he intends to appoint the existing regional chairs. Appointments would apply for the current term of council while the regional assessments occur, drawing on their knowledge and experience to work with the provincially appointed facilitators to provide an accurate assessment of how the regions can best work with our government to adapt to the new strong-mayor powers.

I want to emphasize this: We are not—let me repeat, not—making any changes to any elected regional chair. The minister would be able to appoint the regional chairs only in those regions that currently appoint them. We feel very strongly that we need to have consistency and stability in these regions. It is very important to us and to this assessment to have existing chairs and existing regional councils and staff work with the facilitator, so that we can determine the best way forward for two-tier municipalities.

Speaker, I think you can agree that there's no sense in granting strong-mayor powers only to have another level of government stand in the way of getting shovels in the ground faster. These proposals will help the government look at these six regions under the lens of how we can expand strong-mayor powers, and how we can provide the necessary tools to those member municipalities so that we can get shovels in the ground faster and build those 1.5 million homes. At the end of the day, we want a process that works in all six regions, so that strong-mayor powers can be expanded.

We heard from some mayors and regional chairs who are eager to work with us. Patrick Brown, mayor of Brampton, said, "Redundancy is the enemy of productivity. I am glad the provincial government is looking at ways to make municipalities in Peel more efficient by removing duplication. This will help address the challenges of growth and support the construction of the homes Brampton residents so desperately need."

Karen Redman, recently elected as Waterloo's regional chair, said she looks forward to working with our facilitator to help address the housing crisis. In a statement, she said, "I have heard loud and clear from residents about the impact of the housing crisis and share the province's urgency. We continue to take decisive action and work collaboratively to expedite affordable housing and increase housing supply."

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As you can see, Speaker, there is keen interest from some of the municipalities that will be assessed, so that they can get shovels into the ground faster to build the housing needed to support their growing communities.

The Associate Minister of Housing underscored that housing was a big issue across the province in the recent municipal election. As it is for the province, housing supply is a municipal priority. That's because municipalities are on the front lines of the housing crisis, and they see the harmful impacts that a lack of homes has on their communities. And that's why we are here today. We need strong local governments to help us to make the dream of home ownership attainable for Ontarians.

Having previously served as the mayor of Conmee township in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, I know first-hand how important municipalities are to getting homes built.

Ontarians expect their mayors and councils to get behind new housing and work with the province to increase the supply of attainable homes. That is precisely what our latest actions propose to do.

As I said earlier, our government is no stranger to working alongside our municipal partners to address housing supply. Take this past year, for example: To find ways to coordinate our efforts with big-city mayors and regional chairs, we held an Ontario-municipal housing summit in January. We also met earlier this year with municipalities on the other side of the spectrum—those smaller, rural, northern and remote municipalities—at our Rural Housing Roundtable. Understanding the full range of experiences with the housing supply crisis, such as the cost of supplies

and the unique ways Ontario's populations continue to grow and change, helps us to align housing and infrastructure needs.

We've also worked in partnership with municipalities by rolling out funding programs. The Streamline Development Approval Fund, for example, is providing more than \$45 million to help large municipalities streamline, digitize and modernize their approach to applications for residential development. We are also engaging with all municipalities to discuss ways they can unlock housing by keeping the lines of communication open.

We're happy to work with our municipal partners at forums like the Association of Municipalities Ontario conference that was held in August. That's where I was honoured to meet with many municipal leaders from across the province. It is a perfect forum to share new ideas and best practices, as well as to promote discussions around policy recommendations that support increasing our housing supply. I know that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Associate Minister of Housing and I are looking forward to having similar engagement at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference coming up in January.

Speaker, let me say again, drawing on my own experience as a northern MPP and a long-time former mayor, just how important it is for our plan to address housing concerns across the province.

To address the housing crisis, we are taking urgent action, we are taking bold action, and we are taking decisive action. We are working in partnership with some of Ontario's fastest-growing municipalities as the driving force in getting housing projects through to the finish line, because we need our partners at the table so that everyone in Ontario can find the home they need and can afford.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: I listened very intently to the member's speech. He mentioned a couple of times that he was a long-term mayor and on municipal council, and I respect that. I was also a councillor. As mayor, I'm sure that he spent a lot of time trying to get consensus from his council—or at least 50% of his council. I'm wondering if, under the strong-mayors act, if that applied in his municipality, which two thirds of his council he would ignore.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, we had a bill earlier in this Parliament that essentially started the strong-mayor conversation in Ontario, where we extended strong-mayor powers to the cities of Toronto and Ottawa. The Premier has been crystal clear in his intention to extend strong-mayor powers to other municipalities. Bill 39 puts a plan in place to add a tool that—the government members support Mayor Tory. Mayor Tory asked for this tool, and it's reflected in Bill 39. And then the other municipalities that are involved in the six regions—again, we are putting the plan in place to ensure that we have 1.5 million homes built over the next 10 years

The member opposite isn't being transparent in talking about the amount of votes required. These are only for

provincial priorities. It's very narrowly scoped. The average council meeting will look exactly the same today as it does previously.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and through you, I want to thank the members, the ministers, the associate ministers for their statement.

We are in a housing crisis, and bold and definite action must happen. It's a shared responsibility. And I say this as a parent who currently has an adult child living in their basement.

Last week, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing read a letter from two Pickering mayors setting out a requested removal to support Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan. Will the member or the minister or the associate minister please advise why these mayors would have made such a request?

Hon. Steve Clark: Thanks for the question.

You're right; I did paraphrase the letter in the House last week—I tried in committee, but I was shouted down by New Democrats. Former Mayor Ryan of Pickering indicated that the lands were part of the regional and municipal growth plans for settlement area expansion prior to the greenbelt some 20 years ago. The present mayor, His Worship Mayor Kevin Ashe, acknowledged his support and his thanks of the government for the proposed removal of the lands. They're a very important piece for that community. They've been, as former Mayor Ryan acknowledges, talked about as part of the settlement area and expansion area over 20 years ago. It's something that the government took into consideration when we put the piece in this bill that deals with the repeal of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would be curious to find out, what do you say to people who really believe in our democratic system, who really believe that a democracy works when a decision is made by 50% plus one of the people who are the decision-makers? Now you are setting up this system where 30% of the people voting in favour of something would make the decisions for everybody to follow. It feels like we're pushing away democracy in favour of expediency and convenience. That's not how democracy works. What do you say to people who firmly believe that democracy makes decisions at 50% plus one, not 30%?

Hon. Steve Clark: A local council, if Bill 39 passes, in Toronto and Ottawa is going to look like the member talks about. For the majority of items, how she characterizes a vote is exactly what's going to take place. The tool that's being proposed by Mayor Tory that we're supporting only deals with those provincial priorities that are part of the strong-mayor proposal. But for all the other items that aren't scoped as a provincial priority—like getting 1.5 million homes built over the next 10 years—the council meeting is going to look the same. The approval is going to look the same.

New Democrats have not been transparent when they've talked about the measures in Bill 39.

We think that Mayor Tory is a great mayor. He received a strong, city-wide democratic mandate. We believe that we should make sure that he's equipped to get shovels in the ground. That's exactly what this bill, the Better Municipal Governance Act, does for him.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'm taking an opportunity to carefully read Bill 39, as I always do with these bills, and I notice that it says quite specifically, "advance a prescribed provincial priority," and that the head of council may propose the bylaw to council, and that council would consider it and vote on it. These words, "prescribed provincial priority," stand out in the bill, and my impression of that is that this may only be used under very, very, very narrow circumstances—prescribed provincial priority circumstances—and those seem very, very, very rare. So I'm going to ask the minister if he would be kind enough to describe what that means.

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Hon. Michael Parsa: I thank the member from Essex. He does such a great job at reading these bills and makes it so easy and understands the bills so well. So I thank you very much for reading the entire bill and understanding, and allowing the minister and I and the parliamentary assistant to elaborate on just how important the tools that are being provided through this bill are for housing priorities.

It's important, again, to point out that we're in a housing crisis here in the province. We have to look at every opportunity available to us and take advantage of it. The Minister of Municipal Affairs has already said it's because there's a need—we're half a million homes short now; we're going to be a million and a half short in 10 years—and if we don't do something about it, the problem will exacerbate.

I hope that our honourable colleagues across support us going forward and vote in favour of housing.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Good legislation has to stand the test of time. So my question is to the minister—and I've asked this before. It's a bit hypothetical, but I think it needs to be repeated here. If Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tabled legislation tomorrow that said any province or territory could pass a bill in line with his priorities with one third of the members of that government, would you think this would be a prudent way forward, or do you think that would be an overreach?

Hon. Michael Parsa: With the next federal election, if my honourable colleague—he knows I like him very much—would like to get into federal politics and talk about the federal issues, he's more than welcome to.

What we're focused on here is about the people of this province. We made a commitment to the people of this province that we will do everything we can to solve the housing crisis that we're in. It's not us that we should be—every single member of this House heard it. In the last

municipal election, there wasn't a person I talked to who was running for office who didn't say that housing was the number one issue people were talking about. Every single one of us heard it. We know that there's a problem. Now we need to look at solutions, and the solutions are being provided to us. People are telling us we need more homes; we need all types of homes; we need affordable housing, which is why the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has continuously put forward solutions. But it's unfortunate that all along the way, it doesn't matter what we put forward to solve the housing crisis—the opposition continuously votes against it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Unfortunately, we do not have time for further questions. But we do have time for further debate.

Further debate?

MPP Jill Andrew: I'm honoured to stand once again in the House and add some words on Bill 39, the strong-mayor legislation, as we're all referring to it.

I want to start by saying that democracy, I believe, is at the core of how we inspire and motivate folks to get involved in the political system, in the process. Having their voices heard, knowing that their voices can influence and their vote can influence who gets elected, whether it's at a school board trustee level, whether it's the municipal government, provincial, federal—they have a say in what happens in their communities. So when the provincial government creates a piece of legislation that essentially says, "Well, yes, voting is important, but not really, because whoever you vote for may or may not have power at city council to actually raise the issues that you want to see raised to help you have a better life in your community," that's a problem.

When this government created this bill, Bill 39, what they did was, they attacked democracy by creating a minority-rule municipal government, where literally a third of city councillors are the ones who have the floor. They're the ones who have decision-making power. I'd be remiss if I didn't wonder if a quarter of city councillors, in Toronto for instance, are probably the ones who have the closest ear to the mayor, maybe even the ones the mayor endorsed during the municipal election—and certainly the ones who will help prop up the Premier's agenda.

Make no mistake: It's actually really dangerous to create a piece of legislation that essentially makes the city somewhat of a lapdog to the Premier. The fact that the Premier's powers, the Premier's agenda is what stars, writes and directs the show of city council is deeply concerning at a time when people are feeling the most distrust of governments, at a time when folks want strong leadership that they actually feel reflects their needs.

Right now, what many folks in St. Paul's and, I would argue, across the city and certainly the province are arguing for is affordable housing. Many people are demanding affordable housing. Many of us in St. Paul's, 60% of folks in my community, are renters. So the fact that this government slashed rent control back in 2018, not a fun thing—certainly not something that creates affordable housing. The fact that this government has no regard for ending exclusionary zoning creates an environment where people

cannot have affordable housing—because again, that's what Bill 39 is all about, right? That's what this government says—it's about building homes, making sure that everyone has a home. But the word that they never say is "affordable"—and that's what we over here, as members of the official opposition, are consistently demanding on behalf of our constituents.

It's interesting, because I would argue that the government is pretty NIMBY, especially when we've heard of government members turning down social housing projects in their ridings. To me, that's what I think NIMBY means—"not in my backyard." When a Conservative government says no to development in their community that can help those who are underserved, underprivileged—maybe they prefer a golf course instead—that's the classic NIMBY definition or mentality, as far as I know.

But as we often see here in this House, the government doesn't always listen to opposition. So I thought I would start with a letter that city councillors actually wrote to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I'm sure they've all seen it a million times. Maybe they haven't responded to it, but I'll read it to the House.

"Dear Premier Ford and Minister Clark:

"We are writing today to register our concern regarding Bill 39, Better Municipal Governance Act, 2022, before the close of third reading.

"Bill 39 provides the following: 'That 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 and require city council to consider and vote on the proposed bylaw at a meeting. The bylaw is passed if more than one third of the members of city council vote in favour of the bylaw.'

"On July 19, 2022, Toronto city council passed a motion that read as follows: 'City council request the province of Ontario to consult with the city of Toronto on governance prior to granting additional authorities to the city commensurate with strong mayor governance models,' and, that 'city council affirms its position that any changes to Toronto's local elections or its governance structure should be decisions made by Toronto's city council.' The minutes of this meeting are appended to this letter.

"Bill 39 is moving quickly through the Ontario Legislature and is expected to pass this week, but Toronto city council has not had an opportunity to debate or consult with residents on this fundamental change in our governance.

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"We are writing to you today because we are concerned that we have not had the chance for input on the governance of our city, or to weigh in on the impacts on the checks and balances of power that would result from the loss of majority rule at Toronto city council.

"We are committed to the relationship with the province of Ontario"—and it goes on etc. etc.

To me, this is a direct appeal by our elected city officials, standing on behalf of their communities, to ask to be consulted. And there's a pattern here, consistently. We're often not consulted, or when we are consulted, when amendments are put forth, they're often denied,

ignored, whatnot. This is having a devastating impact on people's lives, Speaker.

I want to say, in St. Paul's a one-bedroom rent is about \$2,475, something in that ballpark—and that's a month, obviously. The average cost of groceries is roughly 360 bucks a month. The average cost of a phone and Internet, maybe 100 bucks or so, if you're lucky. The average cost of hydro, 50 bucks a month, if you're lucky; Presto card, \$143 a month, if you're lucky; menstrual products, around 70 bucks a year; child care—well, child care is pretty expensive, because as we know, this government's plan for \$10-a-day child care, it's sort of like Waldo. We don't know where it is. All this to say, it's really expensive to be a renter in St. Paul's. Alongside all of this, we have to factor in the cost of food, which has gone up exponentially, certainly a whole lot faster than any salary or any hourly wage of a lower-income worker.

So when this government talks about housing being a priority of Bill 39, even though housing was never mentioned, really, in Bill 39, it makes it clear that this was more so about a power grab, creating an opportunity for the government to again control, quite frankly, our city councillors through the mayor, a mayor who, as my colleague has said, knew about this plan—heck, worked on it with the Premier, approved it, wanted it—but remained quiet during the municipal election and his mayoral race. So there's an obvious question of, why would you remain quiet? If you're proud about this, if you think this is a good thing—this is the same strong mayor who criminalized people who were experiencing homelessness in encampments. We saw them dragged out in many cases, like puppets. It seemed like a militarized space. We were all looking at it, watching CP24 in our offices. This is the same mayor who thought that the response to homelessness was to drag folks out, with no dignity, from encampments. But ironically, the mayor, the province—neither of them was dragging people into affordable homes. Many of them were being dragged into shelters that we know are under-resourced, that are bursting at the seams, where we know sometimes violence against women and other folks happens—and children. I'm sure many of us, in our ridings, have supported or volunteered at Out of the Cold programs. We have several of them in St. Paul's. You hear the stories of folks who have been violated on the streets or in the shelters—and I have to say it includes children.

So when the government puts forth a bill that claims to be about housing but it has no plan for affordable housing—it does not bring back rent control. It does not talk about being harder on speculators so that folks can't buy up all the properties and skyrocket the market value of our properties. It doesn't address this. It leaves me wondering, how could this possibly be about housing? It's clear, over and over again, that this is about power. It's about control. It's about a government who says, at every moment they get, "Ontario elected us with a mandate." Well, 30-something per cent of Ontarians voted—that was an abysmal turnout in the provincial election—and maybe 17% or 18% of them voted for this government. I think maybe one of the reasons why people didn't come out to vote is because they were too exhausted. They were filled with

apathy. They didn't know up from down. They were overworked. They were doing multiple shifts, trying to get by, rubbing pennies together, during a pandemic.

So if we're talking about housing, I want to take a moment to share this letter right here, from a constituent:

"Myself and my spouse are long-time renters in St. Paul's, and we're gravely concerned about our future if the current" PC "government proposal of eradicating Toronto's rental replacement bylaws goes ahead," which as we know, it has. "If this is enacted, it will impact thousands of residents in our riding and throughout the entire city in the very near future.

"Our current landlords have applied to demolish our apartment building and the one adjacent to it in order to build a tower of new rental units. Although we love our apartment and cannot afford to move anywhere else, we and many of the residents of the 20 units in the two buildings took some comfort in the fact that under the current bylaws, we'd be promised the opportunity to live in the new rental tower.

"I am disabled and my spouse is the sole income earner. And we live close to the poverty line, as do so many other residents of the two buildings. These are seniors, very young children, people with various disabilities, students who will lose their homes and be thrown onto the street.

"During these difficult times, our landlords have actually rented units through an agency to provide homes for new Canadians and people at risk of homelessness, and those people will be tossed aside again. Our situation is just a tiny snapshot of the humanitarian crisis that will ensue if and when this city sees the eradication of the municipal rental replacement bylaw."

Affordable housing is nowhere to be found at this time in Ontario, let alone anywhere in Toronto, and we agree that more needs to be constructed as soon as possible. And make no mistake—I'm going to say it on the record, because the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing likes to jump up and say, "Oh, the member from St. Paul's said don't build." I'm not against development. But there's a difference between building sky-high luxury towers that no one, not even an MPP, can afford—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Marit Stiles might be able to on her new salary.

MPP Jill Andrew: Actually, maybe she can't.

The point of the matter is, for you to have to make \$130,000 to even begin to think of getting a home, because this government has changed the definition of "affordability," is absurd.

So I'm happy to have development that is affordable, that is accessible, that's universally designed. I'm even more thrilled for us to do the work that needs to be done to put to use the tens of thousands of empty units that are sitting around Toronto, for instance, for us to think outside the box—granny flats, the missing middle. Let's create that. But what this government is talking about is not affordable housing.

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As Leanne said here, affordable housing is nowhere to be found in Ontario—and as I, she also agreed that construction is necessary but needs to be affordable.

“However, there is already a crisis in rental housing and in homelessness, so throwing good renters and entrenched community members of the working class onto the pavement will only exacerbate an already desperate social and economic situation.

“There are many predator landlords and developers who have already had a huge impact on communities such as ours, who are getting rid of rental housing in order to build massive, expensive condominium towers at the expense of the heritage and culture of old Toronto neighbourhoods, with no regard for the citizens who need to stay in their established areas for work, school, medical access and all the other amenities that make for a good life.

“There will be undoubtedly an even greater mental health crisis in Toronto than already exists, with fewer resources for those of us left homeless or who have been ousted from the communities we’re involved in. To be very blunt, we predict that seniors and disabled people will be left isolated and suicides might increase amongst those who lose their homes due to development without the current Toronto rental replacement bylaws,” which this provincial government slashed.

“This change will mean many more residents will be relying on more government services, services that may not be able to provide what is needed and will come at great cost to the taxpayers of Ontario as the system will be overburdened. Neighbourhoods that are redeveloped and are too expensive for the working class will suffer, as the people who will find employment at local coffee shops, grocery stores, etc., won’t be able to live near workplaces. This will have a great financial impact in local communities as the great citizens who chose to work where they rent affordably will no longer be there to keep businesses afloat.

“The rental replacement bylaw nullification would be short-sighted and self-defeating.” I agree. “If your government,” the PC government, “wants more density, you cannot get rid of the working-class residents who support those other residents who own houses or condos. In St. Paul’s alone, there would be a massive amount of good citizens who work and spend their hard-earned money forced out, as there are so many existing rental buildings currently under threat, including our own heritage apartment building on Vaughan.”

And that is one of several.

Here is Mary, who simply said:

“Hey, Ms. Andrew, I’ll keep it simple. I am shocked—actually surprised that I can still be shocked by this PC government, but I am nonetheless—with their Bill 39. This is a bullet to the heart of our democracy and a slippery slope to something which holds great peril for future bylaws and actions in the city of Toronto and elsewhere.

“While I did not vote for John Tory, I didn’t actually think he was an anti-democrat and would be complicit in such a move. And while I am sure he believes he will be benevolent in his use of his anti-majority powers, that is not what democracy is about and creates a fearful future.”

Here’s the thing: The mayor says he has no intention of changing the way he works and the way he collaborates—if he collaborates—at city council. I would say if that’s the case, then why co-sign, why support, why encourage, why

cheerlead a provincial bill that gives you just that—access to more power; access to overriding decision-making power; access to not having to listen to a city council that, if my memory serves me correctly, is a historically diverse city council. I believe there are five Black new city councillors in Toronto elected and several racialized city councillors who have been elected to represent their communities. If their voices are silenced through Bill 39 and its sister bill, Bill 23, that takes away the voice of the community members they represent, some of whom it may have been their first time voting, some of whom may have been so frustrated over the last three years during this pandemic—even struggling to find vaccines.

What did the Auditor General say about the vaccines? “The lack of a centralized COVID-19 vaccine booking system meant there were about 227,000 no-shows for appointments in 2021 as some Ontarians registered for multiple openings using different booking systems.”

Another one: “The province did not consistently apply its prioritization process when it selected 114 hot spot communities to receive COVID-19 vaccines ahead of lower-risk communities, which resulted in nine high-risk neighbourhoods excluded in favour of eight low-risk ones.” I wonder, if we did the research, if we’d see that many of those ridings that received the luxury treatment of having access first and foremost, even though they were low-risk—I’m sure we might see that some of them, if not many of them or most of them, were government.

There’s also the issue of the greenbelt. I don’t know what the fascination is, or the obsession that the government has, with wanting to pave over the greenbelt, to destroy wetlands. One of the more intriguing excuses I’ve gotten—or rationales, I should say—has been that it’s in order to welcome hundreds of thousands of immigrants to Ontario—about which I’m certainly thrilled. My mother came here as an immigrant. I stand here because of her and her hard work and her labour. But I say this, and I believe I said it last week: I don’t know any immigrants who have asked to live on the greenbelt or who have asked to live on wetlands. What did they say here? They said, “77% of the majority of municipalities the Auditor General surveyed are unable to accurately map urban flood risk areas, in part due to lack of provincial elevation data.” Yet the government doesn’t want to take into consideration conservation authorities and the sound advice that they can offer to protect our environment, to help us address the climate crisis that we’re in. “Green spaces such as wetlands, woodlands and meadows are important for flood reduction, but over the past 20 years, the percentage of urban land area classified as green has declined by 94% in the province’s large and medium urban centres.”

I want to make it clear—and this one blew my mind—even the government’s own housing task force told the government that there was no need to break through to the greenbelt to build homes. It is my understanding that they have enough space within the urban boundaries to build what needed to be built. But yet, here we are. We find ourselves with people still experiencing homelessness, with workers in some cases still having to go to food banks even though they work full-time. It’s winter.

I tell you this: There are going to be kids going to school without their mitts, without a hat, or they'll have holes in it, which, as all of us know, makes it inefficient and ineffective—kind of like this government's legislation. We know that's going to be the case, not because of negligent parenting, but because of simple financial strain.

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This government seems to have this air of, "It's a moment of austerity," but I believe a member said it last week or the week before—it's like paying your mortgage while your kids starve. It doesn't make any sense. They've got the money. This government has billions of dollars that could be used to make the changes that we actually need in order for folks to have affordable housing—and not just affordable housing, but for us to have supportive housing, transitional housing; for us to be able to support folks who are escaping violence, who are escaping intimate partner violence, gender-based violence of all forms. Instead, what we have is a system where, even if you do happen to be that woman—often with child, but not necessarily all the time—who escapes into a transition home, you can only stay there for so long, and without a sufficient amount of transition homes, you end up having to pay market value rent. And if you can't afford it, guess what's going to happen more times than not? You're going to end up going back to that abusive space, whether it's with an intimate partner, whether it's with family. Shelter really is one of our basic fundamental rights; it should be. Housing is a human right; it should be—but with this government, it clearly is not.

I would say to the government that rather than attack the people's democracy, rather than make it so difficult for folks to see themselves represented and to know that their elected officials are showing up for them the way they've elected them to do and that their voices will be heard—rather than doing all of that, just focus on housing. You say you want to focus on housing? Focus on affordable housing.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Supportive housing.

MPP Jill Andrew: Supportive housing, as well. Thank you.

I want to talk a little bit about 1366 Yonge Street, which is a fantastic medical centre. It's a professional building; there is a pharmacist at the bottom—hey, Richard—and it's a place where many of us go to access care. It's located in an area that's surrounded by apartments, by rentals, by condos—and, frankly, a lot of seniors, middle-aged seniors, folks with little ones. It's a vibrant community near Yonge and St. Clair. This is yet another community resource, another safe haven, so to speak, that's being torn down with little consultation, with no promise that there will be a medical centre anywhere in its proximity, in walking distance, for instance. It just seems that we are in a climate where everything that is accessible, that makes it easier for folks to manage their daily lives, is up for grabs. And what's coming in its place? Luxury condos—maybe with a Starbucks underneath, I don't know; maybe some retail underneath. But I can assure you, it's not going to be as resourceful or affordable for the folks who are accessing the Balmoral medical centre right now.

Here is Amber from our riding:

"Hey"—okay, she starts with pleasant words. That's very nice of her. Thank you, Amber—"I do not support the government's housing plan. I know that the government has promised that lost land will be replaced elsewhere, but many of the proposed additions are already protected. Furthermore, even if those lands weren't already protected, the very possibility of taking any land out of the greenbelt will undermine its effectiveness by creating an open season on farmland for land speculators and sprawl developers."

We've already talked this to death—the number of friends and families of this government who seem to know things before everybody else in Ontario does and get in on the deal to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars.

"The government's housing-associated policy changes will create a process for selling off conservation lands without oversight; strip conservation authority powers which protect us from floods; remove protections from woodlands, wetlands and wildlife habitats; cancel municipal green building standards; and do almost nothing to build more affordable homes inside of our cities and towns where they are needed.

"This is a poorly thought-out plan which only benefits the pockets of large corporations and does not solve the issue of housing affordability within the province.

"What is happening right now in Ontario is concerning. The reasoning behind the use of the greenbelt appears to blame immigrants, immigration and Ottawa, as if the provincial government has been forced into a corner. This is inaccurate, as municipalities have proposed alternative areas open for development to prevent greenbelt use."

Again, another person—this person has a lot to say. Where is it here? It looks like I erased her. My apologies, Deb. The point is, Deb is yet another constituent sounding off on how terrible this bill, Bill 39, and its sister, Bill 23, are to our communities—

Interjection.

MPP Jill Andrew: Oh, my goodness, they all are. Bill 3, Bill 23, Bill 39, Bill 124 and Bill 28—all of it just screams against Ontarians and against the most marginalized, the ones who are struggling the hardest. You would think that the government's bills would be geared to support those who are struggling the hardest, not make it even harder for them.

I can't find former mayor John Sewell's letter at this moment, but he too spoke up against this government's power grab.

Folks across the political spectrum have spoken up about this government power grab and their insulting bills—because that's what they are, quite frankly. The government stands up and they profess time and time again, "We want to build housing, we're going to build housing," but then nowhere in the plan does it speak to the need for affordable housing.

I realize that I sort of skipped a beat when I was talking about 1366 Yonge Street.

I see my colleagues turning back—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: No, no. I'm listening.

MPP Jill Andrew: Okay, just making sure.

I've got to go back to 1366 Yonge Street. I'm going back to that place because of a wonderful meeting I had with the Ontario Medical Association where the Ontario doctors recommended three prescription-based solutions to increasing patients' access to care. I'll just focus on one of the problems because it's really directed to 1366 Yonge Street.

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There is a big problem with doctor shortages. One million or more Ontarians don't have a family doctor, and 40% of Ontario doctors say the pandemic has caused them to consider retiring early. I wonder why. I wonder why 40% of Ontario doctors would say the pandemic has caused them to retire early. I don't want to put words in the mouth of OMA, but I suspect Bill 124 might have something to do with it. Emergency room shortages, closures, the lack of the government providing proper PPE at the beginning of this disaster pandemic—I could go on, but I digress—long waits and emergency room closures, and family doctors spending up to six hours a day recording patient information electronically and filling out forms, including government forms, both during and after clinic hours. So family doctors are being inundated with administrative tasks while many folks are sitting at home—I think it was the member from Nickel Belt who said one of these days, I think it was today, actually, in her question about this poor person who is waiting six months for diagnosis of cancer—waiting six months for a diagnosis.

When you don't have family doctors, you can't take care of yourself. You're less likely to seek out help if you're not feeling well. I can assure you that, if it becomes an accessibility issue, if you've got to pay for that TTC ride and you may not have the Presto card and it may be cold outside, your mobility might be an issue—especially if you're anywhere near Yonge and Eglinton and you use a mobility device, I'm sending all the prayers your way, with the state of the area of midtown because of the delays in construction. If this is your case and you are losing your medical centre that's across the street from where you live, that can be an immediate social determinant to your health—the simple fact that you can't get to your health care provider as quickly as you usually would.

So OMA, in response to the doctor shortages, recommends more opportunities for foreign-trained doctors—wow, that sounds really familiar. I think it's the member from Scarborough Southwest who put forth legislation fighting for our foreign-trained international professionals, our doctors and nurses, during the time of a pandemic, when we have a shortage, to be able to come here and get to work as fast as possible knowing that they're fully supported and welcomed in our province. More team-based work—I would think that in a medical professional centre there's a lot of team-based work happening—and more time to see more patients.

Needless to say, I don't think medical centres are the first thing you want to bulldoze over to build luxury condos. But, again, it just seems as though this government and developers are enmeshed—enmeshed in a way

that, frankly, I wish the government was enmeshed with their community.

I refuse to believe that we are the only ones on this side of the House who are hearing these doomsday stories of folks living in rentals without cold water, without hot water, with growing lists of apartment disrepair, without the support to get the repairs they need, while of course rent keeps rising over and over and over.

I also want to say, with regard to the environment and Duffins Rouge agriculture, this bill hurts that too. We have to see our environment as something that we need to protect for the future generations.

When I met with OSSTF District 12 the other day, they were expressing to me the “climate anxiety” that little ones are experiencing. They're experiencing it because they're seeing that the adults they should be able to look up to—the people who decide the laws, create the legislation, hold their lives in the palm of their hands—are abandoning our environment. It's funny; I caught a video from our member from Niagara the other night—because I hadn't seen the clip for myself, to be honest, where the Premier is literally saying, “Oh, I'll never touch the greenbelt.” So it's no wonder the children who are environmentalists in St. Paul's—and I know we have many young environmentalists across Ontario—are getting climate anxiety, because the person who leads the province is—well, I can't say the word “lying”—oh, I guess I just said the word “lying.” My apologies, Speaker. But the person who's supposed to be leading the province—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I do need to ask you to withdraw.

MPP Jill Andrew: Absolutely. I will withdraw.

So the person who is supposed to be telling the truth to our youngest Ontarians isn't. He's saying—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member will need to withdraw again.

MPP Jill Andrew: I withdraw.

I guess I'm trying to figure out how to say—

Interjections.

MPP Jill Andrew: So we have a PC member standing up—a guy—and attacking me and saying that I'm rambling in the House.

Interjections.

MPP Jill Andrew: So, Ontario, that's what we're talking about. On a day and in a month when we are supposed to be highlighting—

Ms. Donna Skelly: Oh, come on.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Order, please.

MPP Jill Andrew: —women's rights, women's safety—

Interjections.

MPP Jill Andrew: Absolutely. I'm in a House being attacked while giving a debate.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to stop the clock, please.

We're just going to remind everybody to be respectful. This is debate. The member has the floor. I can correct if something inappropriate happens. We don't all have to chime in and make it inaudible. Thank you, everyone, for your patience.

Start the clock.

The member for Toronto—St. Paul's to continue.

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you, Speaker, for reminding the House, particularly the government side of the House, that in debate it is necessary for us to respect one another and for us to model the type of behaviour that we teach our kids in kindergarten.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I agree with that. Let's start with you.

Interjections.

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you. I just got a round of applause from the PC government House leader. I appreciate that.

Interjections.

MPP Jill Andrew: A second one.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Sorry.

Stop the clock.

This is not appropriate. You cannot interrupt the member by clapping or by shouting. Please be respectful.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Sorry? I've heard some comments that are inappropriate.

The member for Flamborough—Glanbrook, would you like to withdraw?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): It wasn't her?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Oh. I heard it, but I didn't know where it was coming from.

The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore needs to withdraw.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I apologize if I said something, so I do withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. And then we'll continue in a respectful way. All right? The member for Toronto—St. Paul's to continue.

Start the clock.

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you, Speaker.

Here we have Anna:

"Dear Jill,

"As a citizen, mother and medical doctor, I'm deeply concerned about the impact of this government's housing legislation and what it will have on new communities in Ontario as a whole.

"The location and design of neighbourhoods has an enormous impact on our health and wellness.

"I have outlined the conclusions drawn from Canadian studies on this topic below. Please oppose the government's housing Bill 23. Keep the greenbelt intact. Oppose 39.

"Our well-being is dramatically impacted by our neighbourhood design. Hundreds of Canadian studies, including dozens of Ontario-based publications, demonstrate a strong

link between our health and various subjectivities. Our food, environment, population density and green space features impact our physical and mental health. More than a third of Canadian adults have at least one chronic disease. Community design impacts our risk of injury, high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, anxiety and depression.

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"We owe it to all Ontarians, as well as our future immigrants coming to Ontario, to invest in urban design. We must avoid the low-density sprawl that is consuming our best farmland and polluting our air and water. We need walkable communities that promote physical and mental health and social engagement."

I think I'll wrap up shortly, and what I will say is: Housing is a human right. Here in this province, we have an opportunity, especially the government, since—they say it every day—they're a majority government, even though 17% or 18% of the province voted for them. They are in government. They have the tools to help people, to create an Ontario where people can feel that they belong, where their pennies go a while, where they can cover their rent, where they can cover their food expenses, their medical expenses, anything they need to cover, without having to feel the squeeze of this government—and make no mistake, it is a significant squeeze that has seniors, families and children literally circling around the food banks in our communities. I cannot stress enough that it's getting cold outside.

This government has to recognize that Bill 39 and its sister, Bill 23, and all of them, frankly, do not address the actual issues that people are facing today—and that is an affordability crisis.

Instead, Bill 39, as the member from Spadina—Fort York has said a million times in this House, is an attack on democracy.

The member from Humber River—Black Creek, the example he gave about the federal government—hey, it doesn't matter who it is. The fact of the matter is, in what world does a third—could a third of this House make all the rules?

Ms. Doly Begum: The opposition.

MPP Jill Andrew: That's it, right? That would be excellent, if the opposition members could.

But the reality is, you need majority rule. That's what keeps people invested—50% plus one. It's what ensures that people feel their voices are being heard, and it also allows for a sense of accountability; we can all take part.

This government, I don't know what they have against city council. I just had a flashback to several years ago when they slashed city council, which further prevented, I would argue, city councillors and provincial elected officials—made it really hard for them to be able to do the work that we have to do in our ridings that are getting, in some cases, bigger. We need our elected officials. We need them to be in our communities. We need them to be able to help our constituents. When you have a bill that strips the power away from the municipal decision-

makers, it is effectively stripping away the voice of community members. That is the honest fact.

Everyone under the sun has said Bill 39 is not necessary to build affordable homes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Apparently, we're not under the sun.

MPP Jill Andrew: That was actually funny. For those who are watching, I'm being heckled by the government. While I talk about the affordability crisis, while I talk about people who have real fears about being kicked out of their homes, while I talk about people who are being hit with above-guideline rent increases that are going through the roof, the government laughs and heckles and makes fun of me. This is not the environment that we want to have in political spaces, because this is not the environment that allows for more women, especially Black and racialized women, to feel safe in a place like this. I would tell the government to check their privilege every now and then.

I would love to see this government put forth solutions that we can actually support; solutions that don't include poison pills, that don't have a "gotcha" in it. When the government puts forth ideas, they need to make space available for community members to consult, to come, to log on, to be present, to have their voices heard, and to not be rushed to do that.

This government has a way of letting you know at the last minute that you've got an opportunity to be heard, to depute—if you're not AMO, that is, or Architectural Conservancy Ontario or various places that should have been listened to with Bill 23 and with Bill 39 and weren't. They have a pattern of giving people no time to be able to organize to share their displeasure with the legislation in this House. I think that is because the government is scared. I think it's because they know very well that their legislation is hurting people. Let that ring through the House. The legislation that this government puts forth is hurting people. We have literally seen this government's legislation strip people of their communities; strip people of their lives; strip people of access to housing, a basic fundamental right; and strip people of clean air and of an environment that they can live in.

We have so many constituents who suffer with medical chemical sensitivities who are challenged because of the solvents used to clean the apartments that they live in, because of the carpet in the home—terrible allergies. I say all of that to just highlight that when this government is talking about housing, they need to recognize all the different types of needs that are out there.

People are losing a sense of community, they're being pushed out, renovicted, demovicted, and nowhere in any of their housing legislation is there a plan to ensure that people can stay in their communities once these towers are erected. What that means is, if you're a little old lady in Raglan or Vaughan or anywhere else across the province, and you've been living in your little apartment for the last 40 or 50 years, and maybe you don't have access to family close by—but you can count on your local grocery store, your local convenience store. You can count on your local pharmacist. You can count on your local library. And all of a sudden, you learn that your building is coming down.

Where are your options? What's your option but sheer terror and fear and a sense of being alone? That's the environment. Those are the material conditions that this government has helped to create since their tenure in government. At some point, it has to stop. At some point it has to stop. I don't know what else to say, Speaker.

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I'm just thinking of how many folks I count on my way home—I go up to Eglinton—who are on the subway, literally sprawled out on the three-seater with 10 bags, a stroller, shoes off or just one shoe, sometimes no shoes. These are folks who are experiencing homelessness—or the number of calls we get a week about folks who are seeing their rent skyrocketing 5% and higher.

Where is the affordable housing that this government claims to be creating? At the very least, the first humane thing you can do is bring back rent control for all buildings—that's one of the least things you can do to help people out.

Don't tell people that you're rewriting the rules so that they can never own a home—because that's what these pieces of legislation do. They make it really hard to own a home; they make it really hard to rent, all while taking away from the little bit of green space that folks so desperately need for their mental health and their well-being, or to walk their dog or to have their kid in a stroller and be able to pass by and see something that isn't a crane in the sky, with another condo going up that they can't afford.

I think that everyone in this House has the capacity to do better.

The government stands up—oftentimes, some of their members who proudly say they come from a family of immigrants will stand and say how hard their family worked and how proud their family is and look at where they are right now. The truth is, that's many of our stories. But I would ask government members to tap into some of the fears and the exhaustion and the uncertainty that many of our immigrant parents had when they came to Ontario. The first and foremost thing they had to secure for us—or for themselves, so that we could all come to be—was a home.

I talk about housing a lot, because I know what it feels like to couch-surf, to live with family, to not really have a key of our own.

In a wealthy province like this, with the provincial government literally sitting on billions of dollars that they could invest into communities, folks should never have to—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We'll move to questions.

Mr. Rob Flack: I took great interest in listening to the honourable member's remarks. I wrote down, early in her dialogue, that she is for development. I'm understanding that she would agree with us that defer-and-delay is no longer an option, that we need action now—that we do, in fact, have a housing crisis in this country and this province. Infill, or gentle densification, just will not get 1.5 million homes built. I think we can all agree with that.

Since infill, or gentle densification, won't get the job done, how are we going to get 1.5 million homes built in

the next 10 years to house the two million people coming to this province?

MPP Jill Andrew: Because I simply adore our member from Scarborough Southwest, I would like to say thank you to her for also reminding me so casually of the 88,000 acres of land that this province has access to build on.

The reality is this: The government can chirp all they want, but all the housing they're talking about building does not equate to affordable housing. We would be having a different conversation if you all were talking about affordable housing. But you're just talking about housing—and highways to houses that no one can afford. So please ask me about affordable housing, and I'll have lots more to say.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you to my colleague for her hour lead on this bill.

The issue of affordable housing is at the forefront. We all want people to have a safe, respectable place to live. The number of people I see on the streets in the city leads me to believe we need to do way better. To build 3,000-square-foot houses with three washrooms and four bedrooms on the greenbelt is not going to help a single homeless person. It's not going to help a single low-income person, either. What we need is affordable housing.

Does the member see in the bill any commitment to affordable housing?

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt for that excellent question.

Simply put, no; Bill 39 is not about housing. It's about attacks on democracy.

What we need, as we've been saying over and over again in this House on this side, is affordable housing, rent control, inclusionary zoning, so we can have communities that are mixed-income. And when developers are building, it would be good for them to remember to throw some benefits and some resources to our communities—maybe a community centre, maybe a centre for seniors, maybe another library. Imagine that. That would be a great thing. Those are the kinds of resources that keep people staying in communities and feeling good about their communities.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We'll go to the next question.

Mr. John Fraser: I would like to thank the member for her always impassioned remarks with regard to affordable housing and people in her community.

We know that this bill and Bill 23 aren't about affordable homes. It isn't about land; it's about who owns the land, very clearly. That's why this government is cracking open the greenbelt.

To the member opposite: What should this government be doing about affordable housing?

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MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you to the independent member for that question.

The government simply has to commit and act and create affordable housing, and look at the housing stock we currently have and see how we can make that better,

how we can reimagine granny flats, laneway houses, the missing middle. These are ways we ensure that folks can stay in our communities and they don't get pushed out—especially when they're seniors and they simply don't have the mobility, in some cases, or the access to family nearby. We saw what happened to many seniors with Bill 7. Community is important; it may not be to this government. But we have to keep seniors as close to their communities and families as possible.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. John Jordan: Both sides of this House have agreed that there is a housing crisis and a need to build all types of housing. That includes affordable housing.

I thank the member opposite for reminding me—the member for Toronto–St. Paul's has stated in this House that more houses are not necessarily the answer. There are about half a million people right now who would disagree with you.

When we're looking at the More Homes Built Faster plan, it contains nearly 50 initiatives—50 initiatives—and Bill 39 is one component of building all types of housing. So I'm interested in why the member wouldn't support building all types of housing and support this bill.

MPP Jill Andrew: The government has taken a clip of me saying what they said I said, and they misconstrue it and twist it and try to use it against me. But I am saying over and over and over that I'm not against development.

What I would say is, it's not about just building housing; it's about building affordable housing. There's a difference. If you're building condos that are starting at \$800,000 for a studio, that's not going to lift women up who are escaping violence, because I assure you, they are not moving from escaping violence to a luxury penthouse.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to congratulate my colleague the member for Toronto–St. Paul's on her one-hour remarks on short notice.

I want to ask a question about claims that the government has repeatedly made that this bill, Bill 39, is necessary to meet the housing targets that are needed for the population increase in the province. I'd like to ask the member if she is aware of any evidence whatsoever to support allowing Toronto and Ottawa to make decisions on the basis of one third of council or allowing the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to hand-pick regional chairs in York and Niagara. Is she aware of any evidence to support that those measures will do anything to increase housing stock?

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you to our wonderful member from London.

No. The reality is, every single expert, multiple former mayors—heck, the mayor of Ottawa, if I'm not mistaken—have said that these strong-mayor powers are not necessary, and that they're surely not necessary to create affordable housing. The strong-mayor legislation is not necessary to create affordable housing; neither is Bill 23. Every single expert, including the government's own

housing task force—that's the really hilarious part, that the government doesn't even take its own advice, just like it didn't take the advice of the science table, just like it didn't take the advice—I could keep going—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We need to move to further debate. I'll recognize—*Interjection.*

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Oh, yes. I apologize. The member for Nickel Belt has a point of order.

M^{me} France Gélinas: A very, very quick point of order: I just wanted to correct my record from November 30, when I said, “the way this government interacts with our First Nations.” I wanted to say, “with First Nations.”

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's a pleasure to be able to speak to Bill 39, the Better Municipal Governance Act, 2022. I come to the debate tonight having served for 13 years as a municipal councillor—six as a local councillor and seven as a Durham regional councillor—because, of course, in the region of Durham we have an upper-tier government. During that period, I was the chair of the planning and development committee at the town of Whitby for 11 years.

What is clear, at least with government members, is that throughout the province we need to significantly increase the speed of building new housing to meet the demand and lower costs for hard-working Ontarians, including my constituents in the great town of Whitby and other parts of the region of Durham. We know that if we reduce delays and get the cost of building homes down, we can lower the price of a home for the average buyer, because delays in building housing drive up 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.

Study after study has found development approvals and appropriate zoning are often delayed or hindered because of opposition from some members of municipal councils; I lived it and I witnessed it regularly. Some projects are abandoned altogether. Even if a project finally gets the go-ahead, the damage has already been done, and it's everyday Ontarians in search of a home who, at the end of the day, are paying the cost.

A study released in September by the Building Industry and Land Development Association reports the costs can increase substantially each month a permit is stuck in the approval process. They found development application timelines in the GTA have gotten 40% longer over the past few years and that each month of delay in a typical high-density project amounts to \$2,600 to \$3,300 in additional construction costs per residential unit.

In fact, the Ontario Association of Architects also looked into the cost of delays, and they concluded that the total lost of site plan review application deadline delays could range between \$300 million and \$900 million every year in Ontario. Just think about that, Speaker, for a moment. This drives up costs for builders, for renters and for homeowners alike.

While our new housing supply action plan addresses many of the barriers that cause housing delays, the changes that we're proposing in this particular legislation take important additional steps.

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I think we all appreciate that 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—like mine in the town of Whitby and the other parts of the region of Durham—and help to drive, in the process, increased housing supply in some of Ontario's biggest and fastest-growing municipalities.

Speaker, the legislation before us this evening is one of the many bold actions our government is taking to address the housing supply crisis; the previous government—our colleagues across the way, the Liberals, propped up by the New Democrats—did absolutely nothing.

I want to take a few minutes to remind some members of this House of previous initiatives we've taken to address the housing supply crisis. It goes back as far as 2019, when our government announced More Homes, More Choice, our first housing supply action plan. That plan included a full spectrum of legislative changes to increase the supply of housing that is attainable 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—and we heard that at the doors, didn't we, during the last provincial election? That plan cut red tape, to make it easier to build the right types of housing in the right places, so we could get much-needed homes built more quickly. From ownership housing to rental housing, whether built by private developers or non-profits, our first action plan and its accompanying legislation helped to give people more choice. It also helped bring down costs from what they would be otherwise, another important point. It aimed to make housing more affordable, and it helped hard-working Ontarians keep more of their hard-earned dollars. We reviewed every step of the development process—every policy, every regulation and every applicable piece of legislation. We did that to eliminate any unnecessary steps, any duplications and any barriers.

But we knew in the process that addressing the housing supply crisis required a long-term strategy, with the leadership of our Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, our Premier and the other members of cabinet. We needed a long-term commitment and collaboration at all levels of government.

With those thoughts in mind, our government again acted. In December, 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. The task force, at the beginning of their report, had this to say: “For many years, the province has not built enough housing to meet the needs of our growing population.” The task force noted

that “many efforts to cool the housing market have provided only temporary relief to homebuyers.” They said, “The long-term trend is clear: house prices are increasing much faster than Ontarians’ incomes.” They stated: “The time for action is now.” And this government is moving now.

That is why at around the same time, we convened with our municipal partners—and we do that fairly frequently—at both the Ontario-Municipal Summit and the Rural Housing Roundtable to seek their input into the issues we need to address and are addressing.

We took all that information, as you would expect us to do, from those consultations and created our second housing supply action plan, called More Homes for Everyone, which was what was launched earlier this year. We wanted to build on the success of More Homes, More Choice. More Homes for Everyone outlined the next steps we’re taking to address Ontario’s housing crisis—steps such as accelerating approval timelines and protecting homebuyers from unethical business practices.

Part of our approach in addressing the housing crisis that we have was to make it easier to build transit-oriented communities. As many members of this House will recall, transit-oriented communities, like the south part of Whitby, are our government’s vision for higher density, mixed-use developments that are next to or within a short walk of transit stations and stops.

Speaker, there has been much discussion and speculation on when or how our government would expand strong-mayor authorities and tools to other municipalities. Toronto and Ottawa will be the first, as we’ve heard in earlier discussion, to receive strong-mayor powers. As they begin to use these new tools, we are already turning our attention to other high-growth municipalities which could also benefit from these powers as they look to grow and build more housing—as an example, the region of Durham, which, over the next three to four years, will have close to a million people.

We began our strong-mayor framework with single-tier municipalities. Specifically, we now want to explore how these powers might work in other jurisdictions with two-tier systems of government.

As the province considers how best to expand the strong-mayor tools to more of Ontario’s rapidly growing municipalities, we want to hear from the experts. I spoke earlier about the level of consultation that we’ve undertaken at all levels and all sectors. Provincially appointed facilitators will assess the two-tier regional governments in my region of Durham, in Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York. With populations of around 500,000 or more—and, of course, the region of Durham will be close to a million people shortly—these six regions represent some of Ontario’s fastest-growing communities where increased housing supply is desperately needed. Within the region of Durham, they have their own affordable housing strategy, and they have already identified much of what is reflected in our legislation. But we want to ensure that these communities are ready and prepared for the growth that is coming their way. This assessment will help us

determine the best mix of roles and responsibilities between the upper-tier and lower-tier municipalities in those regions to allow them to get shovels into the ground faster so that they can build the housing needed to support their growing communities—like Seaton in Pickering, our finance minister’s riding, a very large development.

Speaker, municipalities are on the front lines of the housing crisis. They see the harmful impacts that a lack of homes has on our communities—and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has cited some recent examples, particularly the city of Pickering. That is why we need strong local governments to help us make the dream of home ownership attainable for Ontarians.

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I know first-hand how important municipalities are to getting homes built, having served previously as a regional councillor in the town of Whitby and also on the region of Durham council. I know from that experience and process that the residents living in the region of Durham and other parts of Ontario rightly expect their leaders and members of council to get behind new housing. That’s not an unreasonable expectation, is it?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Nope.

Mr. Lorne Coe: No, it’s not—and to work with the province to increase the supply of obtainable homes. That is precisely what our latest actions propose to do. Nothing more—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I would just like to provide gentle advice to the member to be careful about the noise that you make around the mike when you’re speaking, just for the interpreters.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Okay. Thank you very much.

That is precisely what our latest actions propose to do.

As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing said, if the proposals in this legislation pass, the intent is to reappoint the existing regional chairs, drawing on their knowledge and experience to work with the provincially appointed facilitators to provide an accurate assessment of how the regions can best work—I want to underscore that: best work—with our government to adapt to the new strong-mayor powers. This proposed continuity at the regional level would help determine the best way forward for the current two-tier municipalities.

Of course, this is not the only time that we’ve worked with our municipal partners to help address the housing supply, and I provided some examples earlier in my presentation. I spoke earlier about consultations that we’ve had with municipalities.

In January, we held an Ontario-municipal housing summit, co-hosted by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and our Premier, the Honourable Doug Ford. We wanted to find ways to coordinate our efforts with big-city mayors and regional chairs.

We’ve also rolled out programs such as the Streamline Development Approval Fund. This fund is providing more than \$45 million to help large municipalities streamline, digitize and modernize their approach to applications for residential developments.

Speaker, I think we would all agree that municipalities remain the driving force in getting housing projects through to the finish line. But it's abundantly clear that to address the housing crisis we're taking decisive action that addresses the housing crisis in Ontario's fastest-growing communities so that everyone—southern Ontario, northern Ontario, eastern Ontario, western Ontario—can find the home they need and can afford. That's what our government promised to do, and that's what this proposed legislation does in all its aspects, intent and purpose.

In conclusion, I'm so proud to be able to stand in my place tonight to support this visionary legislation that's going to make such a substantive difference in the lives of hard-working Ontarians.

I urge the members of the opposition to stand in their place and—for once—say yes to this particular legislation. Provide the affordable housing that hard-working Ontarians need today and in the future.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We'll move to questions.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: To the member across: Thank you for your passionate presentation.

I recognize that the bill also contains a schedule that is speaking about what can happen outside of Toronto and Ottawa. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing could appoint by order for the term of office beginning in 2022 and could override a local decision of the regional municipalities of Niagara, Peel and York by hand-picking a regional chair. What would be the benefit of that?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I want to thank the member for her question. I think I touched on this in my presentation.

The expectation is that the regional chairs would be able to address the provincial housing priorities that are laid out in the legislation going forward.

The housing issues across those particular regional municipalities that you cited are underpinned by their own affordable housing strategies that, in many aspects, as I read them, are complementary.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I think the member from Whitby did an admirable job in outlining where the legislative history of these projects had begun back in 2019, and then he brought us up to the present day. That was an impressive outline of the history that these projects had.

The new proposed legislation would build on the changes implemented through the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, and it quickly follows this government's latest supply action bill, Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, introduced in October.

So I'm going to ask the member from Whitby to elaborate on why the government is moving on Ontario's housing supply crisis so quickly and introducing another piece of excellent legislation.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thanks to my colleague for his thoughtful question.

Over the last four years, our government has introduced dozens—dozens—of new policies under our first two housing supply action plans, More Homes, More Choice

in 2019 and More Homes for Everyone in 2022. These have helped, in my estimation—and I think the majority of members in the Legislative Assembly would agree—to increase housing starts in recent years. I've seen the evidence of that in my own riding, particularly in the west part of Whitby, where we have five new developments that have been constructed since 2018. There's a range of affordable housing that has been built.

But we know we absolutely do more to hit our target of 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years. This legislation, combined with the previously introduced pieces of legislation, will do that and address the needs that we heard at the doors during the 2018 election.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I heard the member from Whitby speak about northern housing.

We know that AMO is not supporting this legislation. Why do you think they're not supporting this legislation?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to my colleague for his question.

It's not for me to stand in my place tonight and speculate on why the official opposition would continue to say no to every innovative piece of legislation this government brings forward.

From my experience, both as a regional councillor and as a civil servant in many ministries, including municipal affairs and housing, it's clear to me that northern housing has many of the same pressure points and issues that I've seen in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. Summing it up: a lack of affordable housing, of a range of housing for all sectors within northern Ontario. My colleague the esteemed parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the former mayor of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, has demonstrated in his presentation his knowledgeability of those issues and what the needs are of northern Ontario, and he has laid out the solutions well.

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The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Billy Pang: Speaker, one of the most common concerns I hear from my constituents—and I'm sure this is something my colleagues on both sides of the aisle relate to—is that they're worried because Ontarians are being priced out of the housing market. They are worried that they will never attain their dreams of home ownership. Young families are worried that they will be unable to find a dream home to grow in. Hard-working professionals are worried they will be unable to find a home close to their work and loved ones. And new Ontarians are worried they will be unable to find a home to settle down in and lay down roots.

Can the member for Whitby expand on how this proposed legislation will help Ontarians find a home that meets their needs?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I think that's an excellent question from my colleague.

Within my riding and the town of Whitby—I just cited the five new municipalities that have been constructed in

the town of Whitby since 2018. When I knocked at doors—and I do that outside the election period, every other weekend; I did it after the Santa Claus parade this past Saturday—there are young families, there are new Canadians who have chosen Whitby as a place that they want to live, because they want to live their dream of home ownership. Our government is putting in the pieces and the policies and the legislation to effect that, because so often, it's out of reach of so many people in our province of Ontario. We're taking action—not only tonight; we have taken action for several years to address that deficiency, and I'm proud of that.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I always enjoy being in the House when the member from Whitby is speaking. His passion, his fire—he always ends his speech or his questions with a crescendo moment, so I want to give him that opportunity.

I want to go back to the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay. He did ask a good question—and I wanted to give the member the opportunity to ask him. AMO, the Association of Municipalities Ontario—444 municipalities—has said no to this government and particularly this bill. It's not the opposition—although we've been opposing this piece of legislation; these are the 444 municipalities across this province who are saying no. I'm asking the member, why do you think they are saying no?

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's an interesting question. In my experience—

Interjections.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Well, there are a few interesting questions.

The challenge of housing and the affordability of housing and the range of housing—the same challenges exist in northern Ontario, and I say that from my collective experience as a civil servant working with municipal affairs and housing and travelling the province, and I say that as a regional councillor and on standing committees of many sectors supporting municipalities overall. All corners of Ontario, as I stand here this evening, have had similar challenges.

What's really important, though, is that we have put in the legislation, programs and services to provide the level of supports that hard-working families in Ontario, including northern Ontario, require.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We don't have time for another round of questions and answers. We're going to move to further debate.

Mr. Chris Glover: I just want to say in advance, we're debating a bill that destroys local democracy in Ontario, and it's five to nine. I was out working in my community, and I got a call an hour ago saying, "Come back. There's this emergency debate"—because if you're going to destroy democracy, you want to do it under the cover of darkness. That's why the government has called this.

I'll withdraw; that would be imputing motive.

But I'll tell you, when the professor of the dark arts in charge of this province—every debate about democracy,

every debate that overrides our charter rights, every debate that says, "Oh, you know that majority rule that we have in this province, where you elect a bunch of people, and if they don't all agree, they vote and the majority rules? You know that principle of democracy? Well, we're going to toss that away tonight. We don't want to do it in broad daylight, because people will be paying attention. So we're going to do it tonight."

I hear this government constantly boasting about the majority that they won in the last election: 84 out of 124 seats. I've got to say, I think we should congratulate them on just how transparent they were on what their intentions were when they got into power here. Do you remember during the election period—it was only six months ago. I'll ask my colleagues, do you remember, during the campaign, when they said, "We have a problem in long-term care"? The Armed Forces reported that people were dying of thirst during the pandemic. They were dying—just this horrible, horrible treatment. The Armed Forces were called in during the pandemic, and now, no one wants to go to the long-term-care homes. Do you remember during the election, in their campaign platform, they said, "Do you know what you know we're going to do? We're going to introduce legislation to strip seniors of their patients' rights in order to force them into those for-profit long-term-care homes that were exposed by the Armed Forces"? Do my colleagues remember that in their campaign platform?

MPP Jill Andrew: No.

Mr. Chris Glover: No, I don't either; I don't think that was there. But that was one of the first priorities. In fact, that was such a priority for this government that just two months after the election, in August, they called us back in the summer for a special summer session in order to get that legislation through, in order to help those for-profit long-term-care homes. That legislation, if anybody ever reads it, is only three pages. One third of the legislation is under a category called "without consent," and it lists all of the things that the government can do to seniors without their consent. It talks about transferring their patient files to these long-term-care homes. They can do everything but bodily move them into the long-term-care homes.

The other thing that was in their campaign: They said, "That democracy thing—we're having municipal elections." Do you remember how they said during the election campaign, in their platform, "It would be really good if the mayor could veto anything that the city councillors do that interferes with" what they're calling "provincial priorities"? Do you remember that being in their campaign platform?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Promise made, promise kept.

Mr. Chris Glover: Actually, the promise was never made, but it was kept to whoever made the promise—

Hon. Paul Calandra: That's amazing. That got you so many seats.

Mr. Chris Glover: Yes, I know.

And I see how you did it, because you were so transparent with your platform. You said, "Hey, we've got for-profit long-term-care homes that are not full, and we're

going to fill them up by stripping seniors of their patients' rights. We're going to give the mayors veto power." No, they didn't see that, either.

Do you remember, in the campaign platform, where they said, "Those education workers have too many rights. They're protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They have freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association. Those education workers have legal rights. They have the legal right that if they are arrested, then they have to be brought to a lawyer"—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Madam Speaker, a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The government House leader has a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I know the member is supportive of the bill, but I would like him to tell us why he is so supportive of the bill. He seems to be straying away from Bill 39.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. The comment is noted. We'll remind the member: Bill 39.

Mr. Chris Glover: Yes, I respect that, Madam Chair.

They said, "These education workers have too many rights," so they're going to strip away the charter rights of those education workers.

This is all building to Bill 39, which is under debate tonight, which actually strips away majority rule. These are all the different ways that this government is undermining our democratic rights in the province and all the ways that they're undermining our charter rights. This is why we are talking about this.

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The other thing they said about education workers—remember, in the platform, they said they're protected—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Point of order—and again, I will—

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Actually, we're talking about Bill 39, not democracy.

Madam Speaker, hopefully they could get back on track.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you for the point of order. I will make the same comment to the member—to make his remarks regarding the bill, Bill 39, that is being debated tonight.

Mr. Chris Glover: Yes, I will discuss Bill 39, Madam Speaker. I will discuss its attack on democracy, and I will discuss a pattern of attacks on democratic and charter rights by this government. That's the line of argument that I'm making in this House. Because if we look at one bill—well, the context of all the other bills, and see how these other bills have built up to the bill that we've got, then we can understand the actual intention of this government. That's what I'm trying to expose here—what the actual intention is of the government.

I will take it as flattery that the House leader has now raised two points of order to interrupt my speech. I take

that as a compliment, because when he's feeling uncomfortable with what we're talking about in the opposition, he tries to interrupt the speech—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I'm sorry.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Again, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Because I am so comfortable listening to the member opposite, I wonder if we could have unanimous consent to allow his speech to go on five minutes longer because of the two interruptions—so to add five minutes to the clock for the member opposite.

Interjections: I agree.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Spadina—Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: The Ontario Human Rights Code protects people against discrimination. It makes it illegal to discriminate against people based on their gender, race, religion or disability. There are 15 categories in there.

Do you remember, in the election campaign, when the Conservatives said, "You know that Ontario Human Rights Code? We may have to override that"? Do you remember how they said that in the campaign?

MPP Jill Andrew: I don't remember.

Mr. Chris Glover: You don't remember that? Wasn't that one of the promises made? Because that's one of the things they did with Bill 28. They said to the education workers, "We're not only going to strip away your charter rights; we're going to strip away your protections under the Human Rights Code." I was wondering why anybody would do that. I had a conversation with a lawyer, and he said that 70% of the education workers who were impacted by that bill were women and a disproportionate number were people of colour. So what that legislation actually did is, it gave the government the power to discriminate against education workers who were predominantly women and predominantly people of colour. That's what it did. I didn't see that in the election campaign.

I'm having trouble here, because it's such a serious topic, and I'm trying to make a little bit light of it. But, my God, we are debating here because this government wants to end majority-vote rule in our municipalities, in our city councils and in our regional councils. That's what is at stake here.

The other thing they didn't mention in their election campaign: They said—

Interjections.

Mr. Chris Glover: Remember how the Premier said—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Order.

Mr. Chris Glover: Remember how the Premier said, "We're going to pave over the greenbelt"? Remember their election platform that said—Premier Ford got up and said, "We're going to pave over the greenbelt." Do you remember that?

MPP Jill Andrew: I thought he said he wasn't going to.

Mr. Chris Glover: That may be more accurate. It may be that the Premier actually said he wasn't going to touch the greenbelt. He listened to people. He wasn't going to touch the greenbelt.

And yet here we are with a second piece of legislation that's actually going to pave over the greenbelt. Just last week, they passed Bill 23—which paved over 7,400 acres of greenbelt and 15 parcels. There's just a strange coincidence that eight of those parcels were bought after that provincial election. So I think the government may have been transparent with somebody about what their intentions were, but I don't think they were transparent with the people who were actually voting for them.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has been asked by our side, by caucus members here, a number of times, "Did you or anyone in the government tip off these developers that they should buy this land because it's going to be removed from the greenbelt? Did anybody have any of those conversations?" What I heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing say was, "I did not tip them off." But he didn't actually answer the question, because the question was, "Did you or anyone in your government service tip them off?" And when somebody avoids answering the complete question, it's sort of an acknowledgement or an admission that yes, maybe somebody did. Otherwise, those developers made a heck of a good guess. They bought this greenbelt land, some of it for—I'm trying to remember the price. Do you remember the price? I think it was \$25,000 an acre. Some of them bought some of this land for \$25,000 an acre in mid-September. Six weeks later, the government removed the greenbelt protections, and it's suddenly worth 10 times as much. I'm thinking, "Boy, those developers—if there was no tipoff, if they just happened to make a lucky guess and make an investment in that property, they should be buying lottery tickets by the bookletful because they are going to win every time."

When you can make an investment in mid-September on a piece of greenbelt-protected property and six weeks later suddenly the greenbelt protection is removed and that land is suddenly worth 10 times as much—the estimate is that the De Gasperis family will have made, just in their section of the investments, three quarters of a billion dollars on their investment in that land. That's a heck of a good investment. What foresight. What insight.

The other thing this government is doing—and now we're coming to our local democracy. Tonight we have been called in for a special night sitting for Bill 39, which is before us today. For those of you who participated—and on my side of the House—I'm going to make this participatory. Any side, anybody can participate in this. On October 24, we had municipal elections across this province. Raise your hand if you voted in those elections. I see everybody on my side of the house; I don't see anybody on the Conservative side.

Maybe the Conservative side knew that their votes might be overridden, that there was no point in voting,

because they were going to be introducing legislation that says, "Yes, you may have elected 25 city councillors in the city of Toronto, but we're going to change the legislation so that if 17 of those councillors vote against something and eight plus the mayor vote for it, that's going to pass. We are introducing a whole new concept called minority rule."

That's what this government is doing—minority rule. That majority rule that has been the foundational principle of democracy for the last—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Government House leader, come to order.

Mr. Chris Glover:—200-plus years, at least since the American Revolution—that majority-rule principle? This government knows better. They're going to throw that out—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Stop the clock for a second.

I would like to hear the member's debate, and I would like the debate to be respectful. So if you can quiet down on this side, that would be appreciated. Thank you.

The member for Spadina–Fort York has the floor. He can continue.

Start the clock.

Mr. Chris Glover: I love it when the House leader is heckling me because it means I'm getting to him, and I think that's a real accomplishment. I think I deserve a bit of applause for that, because I'm getting to him.

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Niagara region has a regional council. It consists of 31 members: 12 elected mayors and 19 elected representatives. It used to be that all those regional council members would get together and they would elect a chair. But this government is saying, "We know better than the locally elected representatives in Niagara region. We're going to appoint the chair, and that chair is going to be able to govern with only one third of the votes of that regional council." The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is giving himself—or this government is giving him the power to appoint that regional chair. So out of the 31 members, if 10 and the appointed chair vote in favour of something, that will override the votes of the other 21 members, because that's how democracy works in a Conservative Ontario.

It's similar in Peel region—25 members on their regional council, including the mayors of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga. With this government, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is also appointing their chair, and that chair and one third of the regional council members will be able to override the majority vote on that regional council, because, again, that's how democracy is going to work in Peel region in a Conservative Ontario.

And it's the same with York. Because we were called in to this special night sitting—because, when the Conservatives are destroying democracy in this province, they do it under cover of darkness—I hardly had any preparation. Would somebody from my side just look up the

number of regional council members in York region? I didn't have time to look that one up. I just want to know what is one third of York regional council, because I want to know how many votes they're going to have.

Interjection.

Mr. Chris Glover: My colleague is saying it's 24 members—so that would be eight and the appointed chair. In York region, that means, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—if this legislation passes, that regional chair and eight of the 24 elected members on that regional council will be able to override the other 16, because that's how democracy is going to work in the region of York in a Conservative Ontario.

I heard the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill speaking earlier today, and he was saying, “The opposition is trying to stop us from doing good things for this province.”

Well, I would argue that the best thing that ever happened in this province was when we got democratic government in 1848. It was actually the colony before—it was the colony of Upper Canada. When you have responsible government, when you have democratic government, that's the tool that you use to fight for everything else. That's the tool that we used to get our constitutional rights. That's the tool that we used to get all the social supports—the employment insurance, the workers' compensation, the social services, ODSP. All of the different social supports, all of the things that we have—the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code—all of that happened because we got responsible government here in 1848.

I will correct that a little bit, because it was called “responsible government,” but it was actually just a step towards responsible government. It meant that it replaced the government at that time. Before 1848, the King appointed the governor of Ontario, and the governor of Ontario governed, was in charge, had the ultimate say on things. In 1848, white men who owned land could then vote. So it was a transition, the transition to full democracy. In 1917, women got the right to vote. In 1960, the last group that had been disenfranchised were First Nations people, and in 1960, First Nations people got the right to vote. So it was a 150-year, 160-year process to actually get full enfranchisement in the province of Ontario. But it was a major step—that responsible government.

If you look at the process, if you look at the importance of democracy and why it's so important that people have that right to vote, it's because if you're not at the table, you're on the menu.

You look at women's rights and the advances in women's rights since 1917, when women got the right to vote. All of the advances, all of the things that women have been able to achieve is hinged on that right to vote, because before 1917, they were not considered persons under the law.

What this government is doing is actually taking us backwards.

I used to teach a course at York University on the history and economics of Ontario. One of the things that I learned there about this transition to democracy is that when you educate someone, when you give them the right to vote, then you enfranchise them, and then they can start advocating for themselves and for other people in their group. That's how we ended up with a robust democracy.

The Conservatives, in the early 1800s, fought tooth and nail against responsible government. Bishop Strachan was the head—and there's a bust of him, actually, in the hallway out here. He fought tooth and nail against democratic government, and then he also fought tooth and nail against public education. The Conservatives, in 1965, fought tooth and nail against public health care. When you look at all of the things that this government is doing—they're privatizing our health care system, so they're repealing that decision, this public health care system. They're privatizing our education system. And they're taking us right back to the early 1800s, before we had democracy. They're going to have minority rule. It's absolutely shocking that this government would do such a thing, that any government would do such a thing.

There has been no rationale about why one third—and this is one of the questions, when I first saw Bill 39. The fundamental principle—if you look at Webster's dictionary, the definition of “democracy” is that the people rule by majority vote. So if you're going to repeal that, if you're going to say, “We're not going to govern by majority vote,” then why one third—why not a fifth or a sixth or a tenth? I was wondering about that in the context of Toronto. The Premier and Mayor Tory endorsed nine of the elected city councillors in the city of Toronto, which is one third plus one—and then you add the mayor to that, so they've got a little bit of a buffer. So the one-third majority allows the endorsed candidates—the candidates who were endorsed by the Conservative Premier and the Conservative mayor—to govern without having to respect the majority vote of the councillors who were not endorsed by the Premier or the mayor. That's the only rationale I can find for the one-third majority.

I'll just close on this. I challenge the government—you're going to have a chance to ask me some questions. I challenge you to use the word “democracy” in any of your questions—because I know you're going to try to pivot to housing.

In my riding, I've got the fastest-growing housing market in the province. There are 150 developments under way in my riding. There are 252 cranes building housing in the city of Toronto.

We can build housing in a democracy. There's no need to override democracy in order to do that.

In fact, one other stat for you guys: In July, I believe it was, the Toronto city council—the one that you're saying, “Oh, majority rule doesn't build housing”—approved 24,000 units of housing in one month. The member from Ajax was saying that they've got five developments in his riding; in my riding, there are 150. And your government is saying you need to override the democracy in my riding,

in my city? You don't. You can build housing in a democracy.

I'm really hoping the government will withdraw this Bill 39. It's an affront to anybody who cares about—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We're going to move to questions.

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Mr. Trevor Jones: Speaker, at its core, this legislation is very simple. It helps support efficient local decision-making and gives duly elected officials the tools they need to remove barriers stalling development of housing, transit and the infrastructure we all need.

The proposed legislation, if passed, would give democratically elected legislators the tools they need to get shovels in the ground and help all of Ontario with our future growth.

Why doesn't the opposition trust Ontarians' democratically elected local leaders to choose efficient local leaders?

Mr. Chris Glover: I can't believe you can ask that question with a straight face, because we do trust our democratically elected local leaders, and we entrust them to go to city council and to vote and make decisions by majority vote. Your government is saying, "That democratic process doesn't work for us, so we're going to throw that out the window and we're going to have a one-third majority." You're the ones who don't trust the democratically elected leaders we have in the city of Toronto and in Peel, York and Niagara. And I know that you're looking at expanding this to other regions across the province.

For goodness' sake, trust the votes of the people of this province and don't override them with Bill 39.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Again, I'll say it: Legislation has to stand the test of time. I want to ask a question, and this is probably better asked of the government, but I'll ask you. Imagine if, when Kathleen Wynne sat as Premier, she had tabled legislation that did the exact same thing—that said that so long as they supported her prescribed priorities, any mayor could win a vote in Ontario with one third of the vote of the council body. Do you believe that they would actually support that?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Order.

The member for Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: I thank the member from Humber River–Black Creek for the question. It's—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Order.

Mr. Chris Glover: I will just repeat again: I love it when the House leader is getting upset, because it means we're getting under his skin, because we're actually exposing what this government is doing—the egregious assault on our democratic rights.

If Kathleen Wynne, when she was the Premier, had brought in legislation that said, "Oh, you know that majority vote that you have at city council? We're going

to override that," I'm sure the Conservatives would have been against it.

In fact, I would argue that given a free vote in this House, almost nobody would vote to overthrow local democracy with Bill 39. I don't believe any Conservative MPP or backbencher or most of the cabinet ministers—I don't believe any of them were told, "Hey, you're going to run, but one of the things that you're going to have to do is overthrow local democracy and majority votes in our city councils." I believe if they had a free vote, they would not be voting for this.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Kevin Holland: The members opposite have often stood in this House and brought us stories of their own constituents—hard-working Ontarians who have been priced out of the housing market, seniors looking to down-size who have been unable to find a home that meets their needs, young families who have been forced to move due to rising costs of living. I'd like to say they talk about their solutions to the housing crisis, but I can't, because they don't have any.

The opposition talks a good game about Ontario's housing crisis and the need to address it—but when push comes to shove, they always vote no. They voted no to Bill 184, which expanded renter protections and held landlords accountable. They voted no to our supply action plans, which led to historic records in home builds. They voted no to Bill 3, which took decisive steps to remove barriers and prevent delays stalling construction of new homes.

When will the members opposite stop saying no just for the sake of saying no, join our democratically elected government, and stop standing in the way of building more homes to accommodate Ontario's growth?

Mr. Chris Glover: That's the second question the government has asked me. I challenged you to ask a question using the word "democracy," and you've still not done it. You always pivot to housing. You're wrapping yourself in this blanket of housing. Your argument is that you cannot build housing in a democracy.

I am saying, and all of us are saying that you can build housing in a democracy, while respecting democratic rights. You don't have to override those rights to build housing, and the city of Toronto is proving it. Look at the development in the city of Toronto. We have 252 cranes in the air. In the North American crane index, we are number one. The next is Los Angeles with 50; it has a quarter of the cranes in the air. We are building housing in the city of Toronto with a democratic council.

The excuse of housing—this government has always got an excuse. They're saying you need to override democracy in order to build housing; I'm saying you don't. They're saying you needed to override the charter—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I'm sorry; just before we pursue—we need some discipline in here. Is that what a night sitting is supposed to be like? The government House leader, particularly.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I know. You're right, Madam Speaker. It's just that the conversation really just—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): It's not a conversation. We need to respect who has the floor. I would like to see that happening.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Sure.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I appreciated the member from Spadina–Fort York making the link between the different pieces of legislation that this government has brought forward that take away people's rights.

In this piece of legislation, we take away the democratic right of municipal governments to make decisions in a way that respects people's vote; that is, majority rule, 50% plus one. The government is changing this to 30%, which makes no sense in a democratic society; this is not how you work—to say, “If it comes from the provincial government as a priority, you only need 30%.” What does the member from Spadina–Fort York think the dangers are to limit it to 30% rather than a democratic 50%-plus-one vote?

Mr. Chris Glover: I'm going to respond really seriously to this, because this is the most dangerous piece of legislation that I've ever heard brought before this House. This is not about housing; this is about overriding the results of the October 24 municipal elections in the city of Toronto and three regions. And it's not just this election that they're overriding; it's the next election and every election. Every municipal election that we vote in, going forward, will not be respected by this government, will not be respected with a majority vote, if we let this legislation pass. Our children and our grandchildren will be voting in municipal elections that are meaningless, because the government is going to appoint the chairs and override the majority vote. It's an incredibly dangerous piece of legislation.

I see the member laughing and smiling. This is your legacy. Are you going to go home to your children tonight and say, “Hey, do you know what I did? I voted to override local democracy in the municipalities?”

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We're going to go to the next question.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: The member opposite talks about democracy, and I know he has a lot of experience from Toronto, but CMHC put out a report not that many months ago basically saying that Toronto chronically underbuilds compared to population growth. So how is that democracy working if you're not building the homes for the very people who elected those people? What is the plan there, then, to get houses built for all those folks in the GTA and ridings like mine to get them into the dream of home ownership?

Mr. Chris Glover: The government of Ontario has Places to Grow, and it's a plan that municipalities have to follow. It sets the benchmark of how many housing units the cities, the different municipalities have to build. The city of Toronto has consistently exceeded the provincial benchmarks under the Places to Grow legislation.

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So the city of Toronto is building houses; this excuse that we're not, in the city of Toronto—just look out the window here, come to my riding, and you will see cranes everywhere. There is lots of housing being built, and it was done and planned under a democratic council.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to go to further debate.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I feel like I'm in Groundhog Day with this bill, over and over again. But here we are. As I said earlier, Bill 39 is a horrendous bill. It will not build housing faster. It will not build more housing. We can do that without Bill 39.

I have a track record of working across party lines, working with everyone. I just want to get good things done for the greater good; I try as best I can. I have a track record of doing that both in office at city hall and prior to and afterwards. I really want to work with this government, and I'm trying to. I want to work with this government to build housing, because we know we're in a housing crisis, but we need to build in the right places.

Are we really looking at provincial lands? I haven't heard anything about examples like the LCBOs. LCBOs are, by and large, one-storey buildings on arterial roads. We all have them in our municipalities. Who wouldn't want to live above an LCBO—right, Minister Clark? Absolutely. Are we talking to churches? Are we talking to other property owners like that? Strip malls, surface parking lots—it's ridiculous to have surface parking lots in a downtown like Toronto. Look at Manhattan. We can put our parking lots underground and build up. We should be building up on top of everything.

So we want to be building in the right places. We want to be building in existing communities, in walking, sustainable neighbourhoods. That's where people want to live. They don't want to live on a wetland. They don't want to live on a flood plain.

We should be building where we have transit corridors, absolutely. We want to be bold as well. We want to be building the right types of housing—not single-family, detached homes on farmland, in the greenbelt. We want quadplexes, duplexes, triplexes. We want co-ops.

What are we doing to address vacant properties and vacant homes? I've used the example—I dare you to come; I'll bring you to my riding to see this beautiful home with four bedrooms. It has been empty for 30 years, while people die on the street from being homeless.

We have to be addressing every single thing if we're serious about the housing crisis, which I believe we all are.

Laneway suites, garden suites, secondary suites—we're talking about that. But why just three units per site? Why not four? Why not be gutsier?

Home-sharing: We have upwards of two million empty bedrooms, supposedly, in Toronto. We have seniors who want to age in place, who are feeling isolated. We have students looking for affordable rentals. Partnering them up—there are all kinds of home-sharing groups that do that. Why aren't we educating people on that and doing an

information campaign on that? Multi-residential towns—the whole gamut for housing.

We can solve the housing crisis together—I truly believe we can—if we listen to each other and work together.

But here's the thing: I'm trying to work with the government, but they're not trying to work with us. In committee, they continually vote down our amendments. I'd like to think I'm fairly polite and cordial and collegial, but that doesn't seem to work. We pushed for extra days for presenters because, really, this is—I get that we want to solve the housing crisis and we want to do it as quickly as possible, but it just seems super rammed-through and without giving everyone their voices. We proposed to do more days of speaking for presenters, and that was ruled out as well. I'm not feeling the love for working together to solve the housing crisis.

Really, the word that comes to mind for this whole bill is “unnecessary.” We won't talk fully about the affront on democracy, because I'm running out of time, but we don't need Bill 39 to get things done at the municipal level, at councils.

I worked with two different mayors for the city of Toronto: Rob Ford—rest in peace—and John Tory. We didn't need Bill 39, and we got things done. We worked across party lines—not always, but by and large we did, and we did good stuff. You can see there are more cranes in downtown Toronto than there are in the four largest cities in North America. So we were building housing, and we didn't need Bill 39.

This will be the first place in North America that has minority rule. Do we want to carry that banner? Do we want to be that place that does that? I don't think so.

What else can we talk about? There are so many things.

Farmland—we've heard time and time again from Peggy at OFA that we are losing 319 acres of farmland a day. Duffins Rouge is the only agricultural preserve in Ontario. Why go there? You heard from the planners—I had the letter out earlier from Paul Bedford, former chief planner for the city of Toronto, a very credible guy, very well-respected globally. We have over 700,000 units in the pipeline alone for Toronto—almost half of what our goal is, 1.5 million—and I say “our goal,” because it is our goal. So we don't need to touch the farmland. Honestly, once it's gone, it's gone. You know that. I could count the times we have spoken—we have all shown a love for farmers in here. Right, left and centre, we appreciate farmers—or so we claim—and yet we don't have a problem with getting rid of class 1 farmland and wreaking havoc on farmers. I think actions speak louder than words on that.

So you have your planners, you have your farmers, and you have AMO—you also have Parks Canada not consulted. How could Parks Canada have been missed?

They also mention, as others do, that Indigenous communities weren't consulted. That's so terrible in 2022. Truth and reconciliation—“nothing about us without it,” and we've just heard that. I don't know how that happened, but there needs to be a big change in that.

So it's unnecessary. You've heard that over and over again. We can achieve the goals; we can build housing together. There's no need to go into farmland. There's no need to have minority rule.

Respect the greenbelt. Respect Ontarians. I think you've all seen—you had the letters and emails—hundreds and hundreds of emails come to your offices, rallies galore, rallies outside your constituency offices. I think it's going to be hard to go around your communities this Christmas and show your faces if this bill passes. I come from a small town. I know what it's like when everybody knows everything. They're right there, and there's no escape. At the grocery store or walking down the street, they're going to have things to say about Bill 39. They're not happy. You've really misread Ontarians on the greenbelt. I'm happy to work with you to pull that back and build housing together in the right places—and the right types of housing. I'm your girl to work with you—just not with Bill 39.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to move to questions and answers for the member for Beaches–East York.

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M^{me} France Gélinas: I was wondering if the member could comment about this idea that the rules will be changed so that, following a provincial government objective and priority, the municipal council will only need a 30% vote in order to move with those provincial government priorities. Does she think that this respects democracy and disrespects municipal councils?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I think we all remember when we were new politicians—whether it was municipal, whether it was here, or both. You were so excited to come and represent your community, and you won your hard-fought elections. Until you actually run a campaign and run in an election, you don't know how gruelling it is—and hopefully rewarding. And then you get there and all of a sudden you find out that your voice is gone? There are about seven new councillors in Toronto, and I can't imagine what they feel, knowing that their voice may not matter on certain votes. I feel that they will have been robbed and also that their constituents, their communities, will have been robbed. So it's wrong. We don't need Bill 39.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Mr. Rob Flack: I appreciate the member opposite's questions and her concerns about a lot of things, the greenbelt included. I would offer one suggestion: that it's about balance.

We talk about infill or gentle densification—I keep asking, but I don't get a response. We can't infill to success. If we're going to accommodate two million people and build 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years, we have to look at alternatives, and we have to do it now. We're behind the eight ball now, so deny-and-delay isn't going to work; action today is going to work. So I would ask the member: We can't do it all by infill, so how and where do we build 1.5 million homes?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: That was a great question. Thank you so much—cordial and collegial. It's the way we roll, right?

I've mentioned several ideas. Building up the avenues: I have Danforth Avenue in my neighbourhood, with a subway line underneath—primarily two storeys. I do have one 12-storey on the Danforth; on Main, I have more, because it's a mobility hub. We can be building up the avenues, we can go gutsier—go four-suites as of right and get more things as of right. Laneway suites, which, as you know, I've mentioned a million times, was my baby, with Deputy Mayor Bailão, is as of right.

Are we looking at vacant properties at all? Are we looking at vacant residential? Are we seriously looking at that? What are we doing about home-sharing, the empty bedrooms?

There are lots of ways to get creative—and we can do it; 700,000 units in the pipeline in Toronto is basically half of what we need. Let's do that in other municipalities.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Mr. Ted Hsu: My question for the member for Beaches–East York is, could she tell us about an example of a time when she worked with somebody maybe a little surprising, somebody we might think she might not get along with, in order to get housing built?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I've actually never been connected to a political party till now. At city hall, there were no connections to anything, and I worked with everyone. I did work with the Premier—all three Fords: Michael Ford, Rob Ford and Premier Ford. We passed—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Excuse me—just a reminder that we can't name the people who are in here.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: My apologies.

We passed the city's first climate adaptation and mitigation strategy together, TransformTO. I was chair of parks and environment, and I worked with everyone. I found out what people's concerns were, what their suggestions were. You listen, as well as, hopefully, persuade, and you can get things done and work together. I'm very proud of that.

There are lots more examples: laneway suites—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. That's all the time that we have.

We're going to move to further debate.

M. Anthony Leardi: C'est un plaisir de commencer la discussion ce soir sur le projet de loi 39. J'ai remarqué que le député de Spadina–Fort York a donné une interprétation de l'histoire du bon gouvernement de l'Ontario.

I noted that the member from Spadina–Fort York gave an interpretation of a history of good government in the province of Ontario. I know as a fact that there is an individual watching this debate tonight who is extremely well versed in Ontario history, and I'm hoping that the member from Spadina–Fort York will have an opportunity to hear what I have as my interpretation of the development of good government in the province of Ontario, because it's a truly fascinating history of the development

of good government. Any proper understanding of it should have a starting point. I imagine you could start it at many starting points and choose whatever starting point you want. I think I am going to start at what I believe is a very logical starting point, which is the year 1763. That starts with the royal proclamation of that year.

What occurred in the year 1763 is that there was a royal proclamation that came from the crown. That royal proclamation set out a form of government for what I will call the conquered territories of Canada. I refer to them as the conquered territories of Canada because, of course, as we all know, there was a massive intercontinental struggle between the English empire and the French empire, and eventually, that massive intercontinental struggle resulted in the British Empire obtaining control of the territorial lands which we now call Canada. And then the crown made a proclamation. It set up a form of government, among other things, and that form of government set out a form of how things were going to run. At that time, there were other British-controlled colonies that were extremely displeased with that form of government. We referred to those colonies as the 13 colonies. The Americans like to call them the original 13 colonies. We'll call them the Americans. They were so mightily displeased at that form of government that they actually proclaimed their independence and started a war of independence against the British crown. That war lasted until it was settled by treaty, and as a result of that treaty, it further carved up the North American continent and among other things—interesting things—resulted in the surrender of Fort Detroit to the newly founded American republic.

As a result of this surrender of Fort Detroit to the newly founded republic of America, the British decided to build a brand new fort across the river from Detroit—that's the Detroit River; that's where I live—and that brand new fort was called Fort Amherstburg, or Fort Amherst, if you will. It was named after the architect of that conquest. The resulting town which developed next to the fort was called Amherstburg. That happens to be my hometown.

Matters were not settled between the American revolutionaries and the British crown, and as a result, there ensued yet another war. We call that the War of 1812. The War of 1812, I guess, from our point of view, resulted in a spectacular victory, because we were successful in maintaining and asserting our independence from the revolutionary Americans.

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During the War of 1812, the governor of Upper Canada took certain measures to protect the people and the property of Upper Canada, and those measures were important for the purpose of prosecuting that war. As time went on—

Mr. Michael Mantha: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Excuse me for interrupting the member. There's a point of order.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Could I ask the member to warp-speed to 2022 so we could just get a little bit more—I really appreciate the journey he's bringing us on, but can

we get to a little bit more of how this government is actually going to develop affordable housing?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. I'm just going to say—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Sorry. Thank you.

Again, I'm going to make the same comment that has been made before: The point of order is valid. We're talking about Bill 39—please bring the subject about the debate that's before the House.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: To specifically talk about the subject which the member from Spadina–Fort York brought up, which was responsible government: After the rebellions of 1837, the governor of this area decided that he would make a switch. Prior to 1848, which the member from Spadina–Fort York referred to at length, because he was talking about responsible government, the members of the executive council—we call those people the cabinet today—were not chosen from the Legislative Assembly. But after 1848, the members of the executive council were chosen from the Legislative Assembly. That was the switch that occurred in 1848—in other words, not described as it was set out by the member from Spadina–Fort York. So the massive difference is that the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Ontario chooses the members of the executive council from the Legislative Assembly. That would be the Ontario cabinet—and I put stress on that, the Ontario cabinet—because that is what constitutes responsible government.

Why is that important for today's discussion? Well, it must be important because—

Mr. Kevin Holland: You brought it up.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: At least I'll say that it was important to the member from Spadina–Fort York, and that's why he brought it up, so that's why I responded.

We have responsible government in the province of Ontario, and that responsible government resides in the Lieutenant Governor in Council—that is, in modern-day language, the cabinet of the province of Ontario, which of course, as we all know, is constituted by members of the Progressive Conservative Party, and that is why we have responsible government.

That's all a fascinating history lesson. I guess I could talk at length about all sorts of things out of history, but I don't ramble; I stick to the topic. I'm going to stick to this topic. The topic, of course, is Bill 39. As a result of that bill, we're trying to address the need for housing in Ontario. That is the purpose of the bill. The goal is more housing; it is to address the supply of housing.

Let's talk about that for a second. I heard an interesting story told by another member of this assembly. He talked about a little bit of his experience of how people seek housing and how it's a goal in people's lives. I've got a story about that too.

When I was young, as a family, the six of us used to pile into our green station wagon. I remember it like it was yesterday. My dad would be in the driver's seat, my mom would sit in the passenger seat; my older brother, Pete,

would sit behind my dad; my older sister, Marta, would sit behind mom; and my sister Carla and I would pile in the back, because it was a station wagon and you could do that in those days. Then we'd drive up the 401—and this was an exciting trip because we were going to see my nonna in Toronto. We were from the little town of Amherstburg, on the second concession of Anderdon township. It was a rural area. We'd pile into that station wagon and start driving up the 401, and it was an adventure because we were going to Nonna's house. We'd pass the airport, and my parents would say, "Look at the planes," and we'd be fascinated by the planes. Then we would turn on to Eglinton Avenue—Eglinton Avenue was referred to by another member earlier this evening—and when I saw the sign that said "Eglinton Avenue," I knew we were really close to Nonna's house. Eventually, we'd get to McRoberts Avenue, which meant we were almost there. McRoberts Avenue had a big hill, and we would go down the hill and it was fascinating to us, because we came from Essex county, which was flat as Saskatchewan. We'd go down that hill, and my mom would get out the comb and comb our hair, and she would do the mom thing. Then we would get to Nonna's house and we would walk in the door, and we were bursting with happiness. My nonna would squeeze my cheeks so hard it would hurt, but it hurt out of love. I loved Nonna's house.

This is the thing I learned many years later: I was visiting Nonna's house, but actually, my brother and my sister, Peter and Marta, were going back, because, when my parents grew up in Toronto, they grew up in the same house—when they got married, they moved into the same house as my grandparents, and they had my brother and sister. They all lived in the same house—three generations living in the same house.

The story that I just told I remembered because of what the government House leader said earlier today. He said how people came to this country and they had a dream of home ownership, and they did what they needed to do to attain that dream. My family had three generations living in the same house because they needed to save money and they were saving money towards that dream of home ownership—and they made it. The first home they bought was in an area called Rexdale. Rexdale, by an amazing coincidence, is presently located, as I understand it, in the riding of Etobicoke North. People would ask me, "What part of Italy are you from?" I would say, "Etobicoke." It was a joke among us that we would say we were from Etobicoke, because so many Italians were there. Isn't it a coincidence that where my parents started out is now the riding represented by the Premier of Ontario? That's where we started, because my parents were given the chance to start out and obtain a chance in life and attain home ownership.

Then they worked harder and saved more money, and worked harder and saved more money. My dad worked at a chrome factory. He was, I would guess, a chromer. Eventually, they saved enough money and they moved out to Anderdon township, a rural, rural area. It's very different from Rexdale; very, very different from Etobicoke

North. This home was on the second concession of Anderdon township, but it was not the home that I grew up in. When they left Toronto—my mom and dad and four kids, myself included—they moved into a home on the second concession of Anderdon Township with my mother's parents and started the process over again. Again, three generations living in the same home—three generations—because they were working towards a goal, and the goal was home ownership. The goal was to have a little piece of the world for themselves, a place where they could raise four kids and have a good life as they interpreted it.

2200

Eventually, on the second concession of Anderdon township some lots came up for sale. My mom and dad bought one of those lots and built a home. But they didn't build the whole thing all in one shot. They built the home, but the basement was unfinished and the driveway was not finished. They didn't have any landscaping. It was a starter home. Over the course of time, they finished the basement, they did the landscaping; we had a driveway. It was a very long driveway. I remember shovelling that driveway. But it didn't pain me to shovel that driveway. It gave me pleasure to shovel that driveway. This was my mom and dad's home, and I was helping to take care of the home. This is the pride of home ownership.

This is the goal of Bill 39. This is the mission of the Progressive Conservative government. This is what we want for every person and every family in Ontario—a little place to call home, not just for a few, but for everyone. That is why we do what we do. That is the goal.

Some people might say, "Well, gosh, it took you a long time to get around to that, member from Essex." But you know what? It took us a long time to get around to where we are. This province wasn't built in a day. It has gone through many permutations. It used to be called Canada West. It used to be called Upper Canada. It used to be called the wilderness. The First Nations people had names of their own. I hope I learn those names; I have a feeling I'm going to learn them. These are good things. Everybody needs a place to call home. And that's the goal of this legislation—to deliver a system of government which attains the goal. That is the point: Deliver a system of government which attains the goal.

Back in 1763, they introduced a system of government that attained the goal; it succeeded.

Back in 1848, they introduced another different system of government. It attained the goal; it succeeded, as the member from Spadina-Fort York said.

The goal is important. Providing people with homes is important. We can perhaps come up with various systems—and indeed there are.

For example, as things stand today, even without the passage of this legislation, the mayor of Toronto does not have exactly the same powers as the mayor of my hometown, Amherstburg. The mayor of Toronto and the mayor of Amherstburg do not have the same powers, even as we speak today, because there are different goals involved.

That's why it is very, very important for us to ask ourselves first, what is the goal? Let's develop a system which attains the goal. Clearly, we don't have enough houses, so we need a system that's going to give us enough houses. Bill 39 in and of itself does not achieve that, but Bill 39 taken together with all of the other programs of this government will achieve that. That is the goal. The goal is home ownership, not just for a few, but for everyone.

Let us all work towards a worthy goal for everyone in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We'll move to questions.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch to the member for the presentation.

I know that in northwestern Ontario, there's a group of First Nations—Crees, Woodland Crees, but also Ojibways. There are 49 First Nations, 49 communities, 49 reserves. I remember when I worked there before I got elected, at that time they needed 4,500 homes. When we started looking at it, I remember it was at a cost of \$1.6 billion, because we're in the north, because we're in the other Ontario. You speak about housing. Will we see that housing on-reserve?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The member from Kiiwetinoong has spoken about housing on reserves, and I note, in particular, that we have a federal government in this country, and it lies within the power and the jurisdiction of that federal government to address these concerns.

The member has referred specifically to something which ought to be addressed, but we're certainly not going to address it by doing nothing. We have to do something. Supplying more homes is something—another something would be addressing his question to the federal government.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Rob Flack: I enjoyed your journey down memory lane to all points in Etobicoke.

To give you a quick reference, my forefathers came in the early 1800s and cleared 100 acres, which is now the city of Pembroke. Throughout the years, families were raised, homes were built, a business was built, the first dairy in Pembroke was built. But then the city of Pembroke grew, and as it grew, it needed what? Homes. So today, that family farm is now part of and within the limits of Pembroke, Ontario—filled with homes.

I dare say everyone in this House, at some point, lives on land that was farmed or produced food—and it's okay for us. We talk about going up—not everybody wants to live on the 44th floor.

My question to the member is, how do you think we can get 1.5 million homes built in the next 10 years?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I want to thank the experienced member from Elgin-Middlesex-London because he has a great deal of experience in getting things done, and every member of this House should take an opportunity to ask him about that experience.

How do we attain the goal? We attain the goal by implementing the right systems, which the member from

Whitby accurately started by describing—or introduced starting in 2019 and then complemented over time and, finally, and perhaps not finally, complemented and advanced by Bill 39. That's how you do it, and this government has undertaken to do so every year—not to stagnate. We're not going to stagnate. We're going to keep doing this every year. We're going to keep making it possible for people to attain their own home. That's an undertaking we've given, and we're going to deliver on that.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch to the member from Essex. Meegwetch for the history lesson and leading to responsible government.

2210

I know that for thousands of years, we've had nations here; we've had our tribes in these wildernesses that you talk about—you talked about the history on how it became that.

What are your views on Columbus arriving in North America?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I think the member from Kiiwetinoong and I should have a good long discussion, because I think I could learn a lot from the member. And I'm going to learn those things. But the topic of discussion tonight is housing and Bill 39, and I don't think Christopher Columbus would have an opinion on Bill 39 at all.

On the topic of housing and the development of a system to get that in place, this is what we need to do: We need to build the homes. And we need a system that is going to get the homes built.

I can tell you that home builders, people who actually build homes, have been calling me and saying, "This is great legislation. Move it forward. Let's get it done. This government's program is right on the ball. We're going to build homes."

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Hon. Michael Parsa: I want to thank my colleague for the presentation and his passionate speech and certainly his experience and his contributions in the short time that he has been here. I've learned a lot from him as well.

The point he raised is very important. He said the housing crisis isn't going to be solved through one bill and through one initiative. He's 100% right, which is what the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and I have been talking about on a regular basis—that the challenges we're facing now are a result of neglect for many, many years. Would the member agree that, through the measures from the last few years, we've seen the results? We saw the results in 2021, where we had the highest housing starts in over 30 years, the highest rental starts in over 30 years. Does the member agree that all of these measures will contribute to a point where we will one day be able to fix the challenges and get out of the crisis that we're in?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I thank the associate minister for that question. Certainly, the associate minister has been around longer than I have in this governmental world, and

he is intimately acquainted with the legislation that this government has introduced—and it is a good thing that it was introduced, because without this legislation, what would be happening? I'll tell you what would be happening: exactly what the members of the NDP have fought for tooth and nail—nothing. That's what would be happening. No new homes would be getting built.

And if the NDP had been around back in the 1800s, when the member's family from Elgin–Middlesex–London settled in this province, there would be no town of Pembroke, because the NDP would have prevented that from happening too.

That's why this needs to need move forward. Quite simply, people need someplace to live.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch again to the member from Essex.

I know that with the history lesson that was provided to us, when we talk about nations, tribes and—I know he responded that it is a federal responsibility when we talk about on-reserve housing. I think it's important to note that Treaty 9 was signed in 1905, with the adhesion in 1929. From treaties 1 to 11, Treaty 9 is the only numbered treaty that has the province's signature on it, which is Ontario.

I think it's important to note that when we talk about crown land, when we talk about treaty partners—crown lands are stolen lands. We agreed to share the benefits of those lands.

How can you move toward reconciliation when you do not practise free, prior and informed consent with First Nations in Ontario?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The member certainly is asking the most complex questions and the deepest questions. In the 23 seconds that I have to answer, I probably wouldn't be able to answer that and do it justice. But I have a feeling that the member from Kiiwetinoong and I are going to have long discussions in the future and we're going to probably have some very constructive discussions. I look forward to those discussions, because we all have a lot to learn here, and I certainly don't pretend that I don't have anything to learn. I certainly have a lot to learn myself, and I'm happy to learn from the member.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We'll move to further debate.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the people of Toronto Centre to offer my presentation on tonight's debate. I wish I didn't have to speak to Bill 39, because I don't think that it is a good bill. It's not going to create a better society for us. It's certainly not going to be building better cities. It's also not going to be creating any more additional housing, and certainly not affordable housing.

I want to take a moment to just recap the breathtaking timeline and speed at which this government has rushed this bill through to this debate. Now it's 10:15 in the evening, and we're barreling towards the end.

The question that really is before us, in so many ways, is, what's the rush? Bill 39 was tabled on November 16,

and it's now facing passage close to 20 days later. It's a very wide-sweeping bill. It's unprecedented in its nature. It has truncated committee hearings—it has actually been reduced by the number of presentations that were permitted to stand at committee. And the public is actually very confused by the technical nature of the bill, by the way the bill is written. Also, the media has barely had any time to pick it up and really unpack it. I know that, for instance, in Toronto city council—where this bill is going to dramatically reduce the democratic control and vote of city councillors, and by way of that, the democratic access that citizens of Toronto have to their elected officials, to their council—they haven't had time to even debate it.

Speaker, I have a letter here from Toronto city council members, all 15 of them, which is a majority of council—which is not what's before us today, which is allowing minority rule. But 15 city councillors have written to the Premier, as well as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, asking them to reconsider and withdraw Bill 39: “Bill 39 is moving quickly through the Ontario Legislature”—it's expected to pass any hour now—“but Toronto city council has not had an opportunity to debate or consult with residents on this fundamental change in our governance.” They're writing to us, to this House, by way of the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to make sure that we don't do that; that we actually solicit their input and make sure they have an opportunity to weigh in on the impacts of this bill, about the checks and balances that they haven't had a chance to speak about. They also know that this will result in a loss of majority rule on council, and everyone is very, very concerned. They cite that in the City of Toronto Act, 2006, which was brought home by Mayor Miller at that time, the relationship with the province that the city of Toronto should have is “one that is based on ‘mutual respect, consultation, and co-operation.’” Bill 39 runs contrary to the spirit of the City of Toronto Act that was signed between the Premier of the day and the mayor of the day: “City council should be governed by majority rule, and any changes to Toronto's governance should be decisions made by city council and local residents.” And it's signed by probably the most diverse group of city councillors that we've ever seen in the history of the city of Toronto.

Speaker, there is a problem with how the government is governing. They're giving powers to mayors who seem to be onside or in their pocket.

The question I would like to ask is, would this government be in such a rush to give these same extraordinary, steroid-injected mayoral powers if the mayor of Toronto was someone other than Mayor Tory? Would they be so keen to give these powers to Gil Penalosa, who is a noted urbanist and one of the leading global international speakers on urban issues? Would they be so keen to have given these powers to Jennifer Keesmaat, the former chief planner of the city of Toronto, a very progressive, forward-thinking woman? Would they have given these powers to Olivia Chow, who ran for mayor, a noted progressive New Democrat and a former MP? I heard the member across

the way say no. So it's selective—who they want to give these powers to.

2220

Because you have the power to pass this bill—you actually have the power to dissolve the city of Toronto and all municipalities, should you choose. That doesn't mean you should do it. And here you are picking at it.

The question is, would you offer the same extraordinary powers and overrule council if it was David Miller as mayor or Jack Layton, who ran for mayor, or Andrea Horwath, who ran for mayor and won in Hamilton? Would you give them the same extraordinary powers?

Five former mayors of the city of Toronto wrote a letter to Mayor Tory. I just want to read this into the record:

“Dear John: Recently, you declared your support for the Ontario government's Bill 39—indeed, acknowledging your participation in its evolution.

“This bill would allow you as mayor to pass bylaws with support from just over one-third of council members in any matters somehow defined as ‘within a provincial interest.’

“We are appalled at this attack on one of the essential tenets of our local democracy and a fundamental democratic mechanism: majority rule.

“We are fearful of the real substantive risks this change would pose for our city. The principle of majority rule has always been and must continue to be how council conducts the public's business.

“We are now in a time when our provincial government is revealing its real agenda for our future. It is a disturbing future. It includes the unwinding of our greenbelt and the hollowing out of the mandate of conservation authorities that were created to protect us from environmental disaster.

“The province is also taking steps toward the intentional reduction of farmland in favour of more urban sprawl and the stripping away of rules and regulations...”

There is just so much that is not right about Bill 39.

The mayors conclude: “With the integrity and well-being of Ontario and its residents on the line, people, communities and civic institutions are organizing for an historic struggle across the province.”

“In that spirit” they are asking the mayor of Toronto to join city council to reject Bill 39.

It's undersigned by former mayors of Toronto Art Eggleton, David Crombie, Barbara Hall, David Miller and John Sewell—of every possible political stripe that's ever sat at the head of council, the different worships all rejecting Bill 39.

There is a statement that came out from the OFL, the Ontario Federation of Labour: “Bill 39, the so-called Better Municipal Governance Act ... attacks the most basic democratic principle—majority rule. If passed, the bill will enable the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa”—potentially more—“to adopt or amend bylaws with the support of only a third of ... council.”

Only on October 24 did Ontarians go to vote to choose their new city councillors and to choose their new mayors. “Now” the Premier “is blatantly undermining those democratic choices. By giving unprecedented power to mayors,

this bill erodes city councillors' ability to represent the constituents who elected them. Equally as concerning as this power grab by" the Premier, facilitated by Mayor Tory requesting "the change in the first place."

It should be rejected. We cannot let Ontarians' democratic rights be undermined. The defeat of Bill 28 was just days ago—as embarrassing as it was, it was there. It's "an example of what happens when a government goes too far"—far too far. "It's a lesson" the Premier "would be wise to heed. Ontario's labour movement takes democratic rights just as seriously as labour rights," and a clear majority of Ontarians will follow suit.

The OFL also urges this government to withdraw Bill 39 and to immediately cease any further attacks on our basic rights and freedoms.

Clearly, there are not a lot of supporters for Bill 39.

I oftentimes have learned that in government you kind of want to do what's popular. You like to go back to your community, where you're applauded and welcomed back to your community. You certainly don't want to go to your community and face your constituency office and hear from your constituency staff that there are hundreds of people protesting outside your offices; that you have neighbours who are looking at you with side glances at restaurants and at the market fair, because they know what you're doing in this House could happen to them over there.

Ontarians really have a sense of justice. Ontarians are fair-minded people. Ontarians are good people. Ontarians also, if they grew up in this province, would have taken a grade 10 civics class, as I did.

What did I learn in my grade 10 civics class? I learned about citizenship. I learned about the different types of government that exist. It was a compulsory class. It was a class that was—it was a course, I should say; it wasn't a class. The course was designed and curated to ensure that young thinkers in this province would grow up to be responsible adults; law-abiding, active citizens, informed.

I remember sitting in this class. I don't remember all the details, but I do remember this: I remember a teacher who was really energized about molding the young minds that were there. I couldn't help but be just as curious as he was and just as enthusiastic. As he set up mock debates for us to participate in, as he taught us about government functions—how to build a budget; how to engage your citizens—he taught us about the historical roots of the rights and freedoms that we now currently enjoy in this country, in this province and, dare I say, in the city of Toronto, for now. He taught us about skills that we needed to have that were going to be transferable in life later on. They were amazing. He taught us the value of communication, and how to be very clear, concise, open and transparent about what you want to say, and to make sure that when you say it, the intention is behind it.

I was taught about collaboration, about critical thinking, about problem-solving, all in my grade 10 civics class. These are all skills that are now quite attributable to what I do today, and I'm so proud about the public education I

received and the textbooks that I read at that time—textbooks explaining to me about the different types of government. What does the federal government do? How is it composed? What do provincial governments do? How are they composed? What are municipal governments all about, and how are they composed? How do they build law? How do they pass legislation?

Interestingly enough, all those textbooks are going to have to be rewritten, because there are going to be some fundamental shifts that have to be taken out. Pages are going to have to be taken out of these textbooks, right across Ontario, right across Canada, probably around North America. The history that this government is about to make and impose on all of us is going to change the course of Canadian history, Canadian civics, Canadian citizenship forever. That's the legacy of this government. That's the legacy of this Premier. That's the legacy of this minister. Your name will be associated with the erosion of responsible government. Your name is going to be associated with minority rule. They're going to rewrite the textbooks for you, for all the wrong reasons.

2230

In this class, I learned about the ways we can analyse issues. In this class, we talked about the events of the day, about how they were so important to informing our minds as citizens of the future who were going to be active voters. I can tell you that it was just really exciting for me, as someone who came from a place that didn't have democracy in the way we have it here. My parents were never encouraged to vote, where they came from. They were encouraged not to inform themselves about the current issues of the day. They were encouraged not to speak up against their government, because you could be harmed, or somehow you'd disappear—and that has gotten significantly worse, the place where I came from.

So I really love Canada because it has given me and my family every possible opportunity to be full, active citizens, which I would never have had if I'd stayed in my native Hong Kong. To this day, things are getting worse and not better.

So, never would I have ever imagined that now, living in Canada, I'm faced with what is the beginning of a very dangerous decline. The quality of our democracy is purely, purely in front of us and exposed and vulnerable.

The government has the opportunity to improve things, to engage its citizens, to ensure that you can build trust in the institutions and the democratic houses that inform and build the laws that create the system that we all rely on and make things better. Instead, the government is choosing—choosing—to make things worse.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has also pointed out in this legislation that there is going to be the opportunity to override the local decisions of the three regional municipalities of Niagara, Peel and York by hand-picking a regional chair. There are no qualifications listed here. It doesn't say anything about what the criteria are. It doesn't even explain why you would want to hand-pick these regional chairs—so another level of erosion of democracy.

The difficulty of much of this, and there's much in here that's so difficult to accept—but the rationale the government stands behind is housing, housing, housing, that 1.5 million homes have got to be built in the next 10 years. And yet what we know is that although there's a path—a warpath almost—to deregulate as much as possible and to cut taxes as much as possible, we haven't seen the fruits of all that controversial labour because there's nothing in the bill that actually speaks to housing; there's nothing in the bill that actually prescribes where, when, why or how. There's nothing in Bill 39 that talks about government investment in housing. In their own fall economic statement—their housing bills haven't even built enough homes.

I know that my colleague and friend from Spadina–Fort York cited the number of cranes in his community and how Toronto city council has more than exceeded the expectations and the objectives of the greenbelt. That didn't happen because of this House. That happened because of a locally elected democratic council, working with our professional planning staff, getting to an outcomes.

Despite the wave of deregulation this government is bringing on like a tsunami, including plans to open up more farmland and the greenbelt for development, the government has also seen significantly reduced production projections for housing starts.

Why does the government believe that home builders will actually build more houses when they haven't already? It's actually going in the opposite direction.

So the folks here may have skipped their grade 10 civics class, and perhaps they don't really truly care about the fundamental rules of democracy, especially the principle of majority rule. But governments throughout history will be judged. In this case, I think it's a safe bet to say that this government will be judged very harshly in the history books.

I would be very interested in knowing what that grade 10 civics class would be revised to reflect and how the teachers of those classrooms—what would they say when they get to the chapter about Bill 39, and how would they explain it to the students in this classroom, on how that would happen? I think we would all like to know.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to move to questions.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: The member from Toronto Centre talked about various things and also talked about civics class and legacy.

Madam Speaker, in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park, the students in civics class will learn the legacy of this government. After 30 years of inaction, our government is building subways across the GTA. That's the legacy they're going to learn about in civics class. The next thing they're going to learn is: After 1848, we are the first government to build a medical school in Toronto, in Scarborough–Rouge Park. That's the legacy they're going to learn in their civics class.

This June, people of Ontario gave us a crystal-clear mandate to get shovels in the ground.

We are in a housing crisis because of the inaction from Liberals, supported by the NDP. Why is the member opposite opposed to getting things done?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: The Premier's own Housing Affordability Task Force noted that the supply of land was not the issue; that you already have 88,000 available acres that can be built on within urban boundaries. It's curious why this government is not answering that question, which is, why not build housing on the land that's available?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank the member from Toronto Centre for her comments tonight.

You mentioned that your family had come from a country which didn't have democracy. I've lived in two countries where the democratic rights of the people were quickly eroded. I've seen those countries dissolve into war, into battles, and I've seen the economies of those countries devolve as well, because democracy is the foundation of a strong economy.

You're saying that this bill is so historical because they're going to have to rewrite the civics textbooks to talk about minority rule in this province.

Why do you think this government—it's not housing. What do you think the government's real agenda is here? Why are they eroding the democratic rights of the people of this province?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you to the member for the question. It is very difficult to answer, because I couldn't possibly put myself in the minds or the heart of this government, to be quite honest. But if I were to take a guess, given the past historical bills that have come before us, it's a path to the centralization of power. It makes it easier to privatize. It makes it easier to deregulate. It makes it easier to control municipalities right here from Queen's Park. The Premier becomes a trustee of—those municipalities are trusteeships of the Premier.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Billy Pang: When I read Bill 39, I thought of a police officer carrying equipment on the street. How heavy is the equipment? Thirty pounds. Are they going to use it every day? They carry them every day, but they are not going to use them every day. Most officers never shoot in their whole lives, but they still need that tool for them to carry out their duty.

2240

For too long, the previous government failed to have any plans for the growth of housing. This is why demand has fast outgrown our available housing supply and Ontario is now facing a critical shortage of housing.

Through this legislation, our government plans to empower our municipal partners and give them the tools they need to grow and plan for future growth. This is a tool; they may use it or they may choose not to use it.

Would the member opposite not agree that we need to give municipal partners the tools—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We're going to ask the member to answer the question. The member for Toronto Centre.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: To the member across, the tools that cities need to build housing are actually government partnerships and investments.

Mayor Tory himself will be the first to say that if this government stood up and said you will fund the 18,000 units of supportive housing he'll need, he'll be at the table. Mayor Tory will be the first one to attend an emergency round table on housing and the housing crisis. I am very confident that the mayor would also expect the government to participate in the funding and the construction as well as the supportive housing now, which is a \$7.1 billion ask that went before this House that has never been answered.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member from Toronto Centre for a very passionate and factual presentation.

I'm struck by how Bill 39 and how this attack on local democracy—the impact it will have on future generations of voters.

How do you feel our young people, how do you feel people in your community and across Ontario—how is this bill going to impact their desire, their motivation, their commitment to voting? Frankly, is it that the government doesn't want people to vote? What do you think the motivation is behind a bill like this that attacks local democracy?

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

I would imagine that we all want a Canada that has active citizens who will come out and be a part of society.

One thing that was great about my civics class: It didn't just teach me about local government; it actually got me ready for life—what should I be doing to contribute to my community? If you are putting in legislation that actually does the opposite of that, you don't want citizen participation. That's why you cut debate, that's why you rush committee hearings, that's why you put limitations on presentations from public members, subject-matter experts and stakeholders—because you're clearly not interested in what they have to say. You want to do what you want to do. And since those mandate letters are still somehow a mystery in a cloud somewhere, where we have to go to the Supreme Court to get those answers, we really don't know what's in the heart of this government. But, bit by bit, legislation by legislation, we're seeing the truth, and strengthening our democracy is not your objective.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: One of the pleasant things about being part of this assembly is hearing about the backgrounds of people and how they got to where they are. We've heard a lot of stories from members of this assembly of how their families started out and gradually, over the course of time, acquired the ability to buy their own

home—in particular, immigrant families who started and worked hard and saved and were eventually, through hard work and their own saving, able to afford their own home.

Would the member agree that it's getting harder and harder and harder for immigrant families and indeed all families to realize the dream of home ownership?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you very much to our member across for the question.

I would agree that life in general is getting harder in Ontario. The food banks are getting long lineups. The wait list for housing is 180,000 deep in the city of Toronto for supportive housing. We are seeing long lineups, with landlords trying to evict their tenants through demolition or some other type of controls. Life is getting harder under this government and not easier. I think there's an opportunity for us to work together to resolve some of those difficulties.

Suppression of wages and low wages are not going to uplift the people of Ontario. And having people move towards medically assisted dying by not doubling ODSP is not giving people hope.

If there's anything we can do overnight—one thing we can do is actually give people hope and then build from there. But that's not what's happening today.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We don't have time for another question.

We're going to move to further debate.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise to speak to Bill 39, the strong mayors on steroids act; or maybe better known as the overturning centuries of democratic practices act; or better known as betraying the public trust by allowing speculators to make billions paving over prime greenbelt farmland act.

Speaker, it's obvious to almost everybody in this province that it's dangerous to bring in minority rule and undermine centuries of democratic practices, except for the members opposite. I want to make it very clear: The government members may have given up on democracy's ability to deliver for families, but I haven't given up on democracy. That's why I will not be voting for Bill 39.

I also haven't given up on the profitability and viability of farming in this province. This bill will remove 4,700 acres of prime class 1 and 2 farmland from the greenbelt—farmland that was sold at \$4,000 to \$8,000 an acre so it would be profitable to farm in perpetuity. It's now being sold off for development, turning that farmland into billions of dollars for a handful of land speculators.

Speaker, I had two young farmers at Queen's Park today talking about how this creates a speculative bubble in farming. The average age of a farmer in the province of Ontario is 56 years old. One of the reasons young people are struggling to get into farming is the price of land. One of the benefits of having protection on farmland is that it removes it from speculation, and the minute you undermine that, you bring it back into a speculative bubble, having speculators bank that land and making it less viable—less viable for young people to be able to buy land and run a profitable farm in this province.

None of it is needed to actually build housing. The government's own Housing Affordability Task Force said that we do not need to open the greenbelt for development in order to build the homes people need. The government members talk about the dream of home ownership; let's build it on the 88,000 acres of land that are already approved for development. Let's pass my bills, Bill 44 and Bill 45, which follow recommendations from the government's own housing task force to end exclusionary zoning so we can build homes that people can afford, in the communities they want to live in, close to where they work, without paving over the farmland that feeds us.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We have time for questions,

Mr. Rob Flack: I really respect the honourable member's passion about this and understand his concern—again, I want to use the word “balance”—but I would respectfully suggest that farms bought years ago by those people who bought them weren't buying them to farm them. They bought them with the potential that, at some point, they would be developed along transit corridors in municipalities. It's been done forever, Speaker. So they weren't bought for farming purposes.

My question is simple: 1.5 million homes will be built. We'll disagree; I don't think we have the infill potential to get it done. We need more land, we need more ability to get these houses built over the next 10 years. Two million people, 1.5 million more homes: How are we going to get it done? It won't all be infill.

2250

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I respect the member opposite. That land was sold at those prices with the understanding that it would be preserved for farmland forever, and now the public trust is being betrayed. That's the value of public money. The government could have sold that land for much, much higher value, providing a higher rate of return for the public, and it didn't happen.

Speaker, we can build homes on the 88,000 acres of land that are already there, approved for development. So yes, it won't necessarily be all infill, but we can also build homes through infill in communities that people can afford to live in, close to where they work, helping them save money and have an affordable place to call home.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Algoma-Manitoulin for the next question.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the member; I listened intently to his comments. My question to him is, we keep hearing from this government that there are 1.5 million homes that need to be built. My question to the member is going to be one that is very straightforward. We have 88,000 acres of land already zoned for development. Why doesn't this government talk about those 88,000 acres that we have already available, ready to go? Let's build.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I don't know. I honestly don't know why the government isn't talking about the 88,000 acres that's already been approved for development. Now, I know that won't allow a handful of land speculators to turn millions into billions. I know that it won't enable

those folks to make billions of dollars at the public expense, with all of us paying the price for it. But I can tell you that Bill 44, which I have introduced to end exclusionary zoning in this province, according to one study from Toronto Metropolitan University, could lead to 435,000 homes in the city of Mississauga alone. There are solutions to the housing crisis that don't require us to pave over the farmland that feeds us.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): One last question.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: The previous Liberal and NDP governments turned and watched as the cost of housing skyrocketed. Even the industry experts have continued to say that this crisis was decades in the making and this is a time to act. We all know this bill specifically talks about the provincial priority of 1.5 million homes in the next decade. My question to the member from Guelph is, do you think the goal of 1.5 million homes is a worthy goal?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I absolutely believe the goal of 1.5 million homes is a worthy goal. But I think we've made it abundantly clear—not just me, but the government's own housing task force, housing experts, all kinds of people have made it clear: We don't need to open the greenbelt for development in order to build those homes.

I'll agree with the member opposite. I'll agree with you that the housing crisis has been decades in the making. It started really getting bad in the mid-1990s when governments stopped supporting non-profit and co-op housing. It's really gotten worse over the last four years, especially; we know who was in government during that time. And we have a Housing Affordability Task Force that's put forward some recommendations, and I would encourage the members opposite to support my bills, Bill 44 and Bill 45, which deliver solutions we need in this province.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to say a few words on this incredible bill, which is presented by my very good friend and our Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, along with the Associate Minister of Housing—oh, he's right there—as well as the parliamentary assistant, preparing such an amazing bill. For me, this bill is all about the future generation or, as I say, “the immigrant bill,” because we have always talked about in this House in the last few days, weeks—we have all talked about this immigrant dream: the dream of an immigrant coming to this country, to this province, for a better future.

I'm going to come back to the immigrant story, but as we all know, there is a housing crisis in Ontario, and I think we all have that consensus here. We have heard, even from members opposite as well, that we all agree we need to build 1.5 million homes because, as we all know, we are expecting over two million new Canadians, Ontarians, coming into this province. Where will they stay? They all need homes, because that's the dream they bring with them when they come to this wonderful country and province.

Honestly, I think this Premier and the minister and the associate minister and the PA have made this their number-one priority, because they want to make sure that all these individuals who are coming to this province have a place they all can call home—a home where families get together, enjoy, sit at the dinner table. This is what home is all about. So I must say thank you to the ministers and everyone for taking that bold step that is needed in order to get the homes built in our province. Honestly, I always say that they are working extremely hard to make this happen.

I think it all started—my colleague from Essex was talking about this earlier. He was talking about how this plan all started back in 2019, I believe, with the housing supply action plan 1.0. Nothing can be done in one day, Madam Speaker. It takes time, but we have to start from somewhere, and we started with the housing supply action plan 1.0, then later 2.0 was introduced, and then, just this year, we introduced 3.0. These are all plans towards making sure that Ontarians can have a roof over their head, to make sure that they have a place they can call home. As we say, Ontario is expected to grow by more than two million people by 2031, with approximately 1.5 million new homes.

We always talk about why we need homes. Just two weeks ago, I was with some of my friends, and we were having a conversation over a cup of tea. We were talking about homes, and my friends were saying that it is very expensive to afford a home these days. These are all friends who have good jobs, but unfortunately, they have been saving forever but are not able to afford a home. As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing said, I think yesterday or this morning, even the down payment is becoming really challenging. You start saving, but then you realize that, with the passage of every year, that dream of affording a home just gets at a distance further and further.

We were just talking about how it's basic economics 101; it's demand and supply. We need the supply because there is a huge demand. And when we see that with the supply—as we are talking about, 1.5 million homes—eventually, at some point, we will see the prices of homes start to come down, because when there is more supply than the demand, then it actually balances out. That's exactly what we are talking about. As Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, I was honoured to support my colleagues in making sure that we are able to get this bill—hopefully in the next few hours or so—passed.

2300

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and I announced some of the penalties under the Home Construction Regulatory Authority. We heard for so many months and months about how someone would suddenly cancel a project. I met with families who had put down a down payment, only to later find out that the project got cancelled. The minister and I said we need to do something, and Premier Ford was actually very firm about it, that we need to do something in order to make sure we have a supply of these homes. Think about this, Madam

Speaker: Someone puts that money toward their dream home, only later to find out that they can no longer have their dream home because someone cancelled the project, or the project never started.

These are some of the positive changes we are bringing in order to make sure that Ontarians are able to afford a house in this province, Ontarians are able to call this province their home and that my kids can afford to buy a house in this province. As a parent, I would love my kids to stay in this province and not go anywhere else.

Going back to the story that I wanted to share, since a lot of my colleagues were sharing their stories: My grandfather came to this country in the late 1960s. I remember, after landing at the airport, they moved to a three-bedroom apartment, 5 Capri, near Highway 427. They were a family of seven individuals. My grandfather actually stayed in that same apartment until the day he passed away. He saw his children moving out from that apartment into homes because they were able to get that down payment; they were able to get a house. That was my grandfather's dream—as some of my colleagues have said, his Canadian dream—making sure that his children and his grandchildren were successful. He was so happy to see his children able to get a house in this province where they can grow their own families and they can have a backyard where their children can play. That is exactly what we are trying to do here with this bill. I speak with a lot of my constituents who want to afford a house. They have the same dream as any other immigrant who's coming into this country, that dream of owning a home so that they can give the same love to their family and can help their children build memories in those homes.

It is so important for us to understand the rationale behind this bill, the rationale behind building those 1.5 million homes. It's not about 1.5 million homes. It's about helping those 1.5 million families to have that dream of ownership, to build their own memories, because we always talk about how sometimes individuals will go back to see their first home. The excitement of owning that first home is something that—we as a government are trying to make that dream come into reality for these families.

Madam Speaker, I think that as a government we are doing everything possible, and I know we may have differences of opinion. This is what democracy is all about. But I think that, on both sides, we would like to see that we are able to achieve that goal, because we all have constituents who come and they speak to us. They talk to us about the affordability. They want to have those same dreams.

I just want to say thank you to our ministers for making that dream a reality so that our children, our grandchildren, the future generation, can be proud of us as well, too, of what we have done for them to have their own dreams and make this province the best province where they can live, work and play.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to move to questions.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you to the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery. Did I get that right?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Yes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I agree with you that the idea behind democracy is to respect the difference of opinion. Not everybody thinks the best ideas are the same. And the idea behind democracy is that you get to listen to all of the different points of view, see if there's anything that supports one another and then if not everybody agrees in unanimity, you use the 50% plus one in a democracy.

How did your government come to the decision that if it's a provincial priority, only 30% of council members need to vote in order for this to move forward?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt. She brought up a very good point, actually. I think we heard what the people of this province wanted. On June 2, 2022, they sent us with a stronger mandate than before, because when we went to the people of this province, we said that we need to build homes, we need to build highways, we need to build more hospitals, and they understood what we as a government were trying to achieve.

We went with the message for the next generation. Whenever I see our pages or the ushers who are here, they are the future. Whatever we are doing today is for them. We want them to be able to afford to home in this province.

So when we talk about democracy, I think we're talking about that mandate we received from the people of this province in order to get things done in this province.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Rob Flack: I appreciate the minister's solid remarks in support of this bill. We all know that numbers have changed. I don't think any of us expected the influx of people who were coming into this province or country in the last few years. It has accelerated in a big way, and I would maybe argue that 1.5 million is the target. I think the minister might agree that it could maybe be closer to 1.8 million or two million by the time the next few years roll around.

2310

I hear a lot of reasons why we shouldn't. We need a minimum of 1.5 million new homes in the next few years, so I would ask the minister again, specifically, with a multi-complex of homes built, affordable for seniors and single families, how do we get this done and quickly?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you to my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London for his question. It's actually a really good question, because I always say we have to start from somewhere. Either we can just sit and do nothing or go out there and do something and bring that positive change this province is looking for, and that is exactly what we are doing here.

I always talk about the next generation because that's how my grandfather used to talk about his next generation, which was my parents, but then it was all about the next generation. So if we don't do this today, it will be too late. We have to start building these homes so that the next generation has a place they can call home. I think what

both ministers are doing, introducing these bills that we started in 2019, goes to show how, as a government, we are serious in order to get things done.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We'll move to the next question.

Mr. Chris Glover: I really appreciated the comments from the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville. You were talking about your family's immigrant story. My in-laws came from India in 1960, and one of the reasons they moved to Canada is because they wanted to move to a country with a stable, democratic government. You also said in your comments that it's fine to have differences of opinion; that's what democracy is all about and it is fine to have differences of opinion. And then, if you have those differences, you decide by majority vote.

Your government, with this bill, has decided that you're going to ignore the votes of the own people in your riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville: You're going to appoint a regional chair to the regional council in Peel, and that chair is going to be able to govern with one third of the votes. So did your family not come to Canada because of the democratic rights that we have? And why is your government undermining those democratic rights with this bill tonight?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my colleague from Spadina–Fort York. Madam Speaker, that's exactly what I'm saying: We got a strong mandate on June 2. Ontarians went to the polls, and they re-elected us with a stronger mandate because they knew that this is the only government that can actually get things done.

Housing was one of the top priorities of this government. That's the message we took when we went out there and, in return, Ontarians gave us a bigger mandate because they understand we are the ones who will be able to get things done. As I said, Madam Speaker, it all started in 2019 with the introduction of the first housing supply action plan bill—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We'll go to the next question.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's been interesting tonight, listening to the debate—very intense at times but very informative.

My question to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville: I don't think anybody has touched on this. I'd like to know a little bit more about the facilitators that are going to be selected to work with the areas of Peel, York, Durham, Halton, Niagara and Waterloo to best assess their roles and responsibilities. Could you explain why they picked those six areas?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my esteemed colleague from Sarnia for this question. Absolutely. I'm from a region that is actually going through that process as well, too, and we all agreed on having an individual who can then just sit with our municipal colleagues to understand how we can get things done. But we are doing all this to make sure—and this is what the municipalities have been asking. They're saying that they want to build homes, and they want to build homes faster, and as a part of Mississauga and Peel region, we are seeing—I always say

Mississauga and Peel region are a landing zone where we see a lot of immigrants coming.

Even in my own riding, which is very connected to the airport, we all welcome immigrants and we always talk about their dreams. I always talk about it, because I always love to share our stories—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you for the response.

The last question.

MPP Jill Andrew: Bill 39 repeals the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act. This repeal will allow the government to remove the preserve from the greenbelt. I guess what I'm wondering, since we know that this is of major benefit to Silvio De Gasperis, a powerful landowner and PC donor—I'm wondering if the government has discussed with De Gasperis a plan to build affordable housing for all the immigrants that are coming in, because this government is using immigrants as a scapegoat with their Bill 39, which has nothing to do with affordable housing. I'm wondering how immigrants who come here would be able to afford the "luxury housing" that this government is prioritizing.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We have time for a quick response from the minister.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my colleague. Madam Speaker, we are actually growing the greenbelt by almost 2,000 acres while building homes. We always talk about immigrants and everything; I'm a proud grandson of a proud immigrant who came to this country, who fought in World War II so that we can have a better future. So I think, as an immigrant myself, I can relate well—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We're out of time. We're going to move to further debate.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Order. Order, please. I understand it's late. Let's finish the evening in peace, please.

Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Moi, je suis une lève-tôt. Il est rendu 11 heures et quart le soir, donc je ne suis plus sûre que je sois capable de parler l'anglais, ce qui fait que ça va se passer en français parce que—oui, ça risque d'avoir des pépins. On est en train de parler du projet de loi 39, la loi visant à modifier la Loi sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi sur les municipalités, ainsi que la Loi sur la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge.

La loi, vraiment, n'est pas un gros projet de loi, mais elle aura des conséquences massives. On parle de trois annexes. Dans la première annexe, on parle de ce qui va se passer avec la ville de Toronto. La première annexe modifie la loi sur la ville de Toronto pour prévoir que le président du conseil qui est d'avis qu'un règlement municipal pourrait potentiellement faire progresser une priorité provinciale prescrite peut proposer le règlement municipal et exiger que le conseil municipal l'étudie et vote à son sujet au cours d'une réunion. Le règlement municipal est adopté si plus d'un tiers des membres du conseil municipal votent en sa faveur.

Je vais commencer par la première annexe. Donc, ce que le projet de loi est en train de faire, c'est vraiment de dire qu'au conseil municipal : les choses vont changer à chaque fois qu'il y aura un nouveau gouvernement provincial. Si la priorité du gouvernement provincial en place est la privatisation, si la priorité du gouvernement provincial en place est de construire des habitations sur des terres humides, sur des terrains protégés—puis, on va y venir, hein, parce qu'il y a la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge qui va elle aussi être modifiée. Bien, ça, si c'est une priorité du gouvernement provincial, lorsque le gouvernement municipal va en discuter, ils n'auront besoin seulement que d'un tiers des membres du conseil pour que ça passe.

2320

Ce que ça veut dire également, c'est que même si deux tiers des membres du conseil municipal sont contre et votent contre, ça ne dérange pas, en autant qu'un tiers ait voté pour. Je ne peux pas comprendre comment on en est rendu là. On vit dans une démocratie. Ce qui fait que les gens viennent au Canada, que les gens viennent en Ontario, c'est parce qu'on est reconnu de par le monde pour une démocratie stable.

La loi, de prime abord, c'est des choses qui nous tiennent à coeur. C'est des choses qui nous définissent. Mais là, on a un gouvernement qui, sous le voile de vouloir construire 1,5 million d'habitations supplémentaires, donne des pouvoirs qui n'ont rien à faire avec construire des habitations, qui n'ont surtout rien à faire avec construire des habitations à prix abordable, qui nous sert ça dans l'annexe 1 du projet de loi que l'on discute à 11 heures et quart du soir. Je ne sais pas exactement pourquoi on est obligé de discuter de ça à 11 heures et quart du soir. Il me semble qu'à 9 heures du matin serait meilleur, mais en tout cas—ça n'a pas été mon choix. C'est ça.

Je te dirais que l'annexe 1, c'est une atteinte à la démocratie. C'est vraiment une attaque ciblée envers notre démocratie. On sait tous comment la démocratie fonctionne. La démocratie, c'est 50 % plus un. Ce n'est pas 66 % du monde qui votent contre mais parce que tu en as 33 % qui votent pour, ça passe, parce que c'est une priorité du gouvernement provincial. Pensons-y, là : à chaque fois que le gouvernement provincial change—parce qu'on sait tous qu'en 2026, ce n'est pas tous nous autres qui allons être là. Il va y en avoir des nouveaux. Il risque d'avoir un nouveau gouvernement—néo-démocrate, j'espère—en 2026, etc.

Des voix.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Oui, oui.

Ça veut dire que toute la planification que les municipalités vont avoir faite pour s'aligner avec les priorités provinciales va toute être à recommencer.

De bâtir des logements abordables, ce n'est pas quelque chose qui se fait comme ça. C'est quelque chose qui doit être planifié de long terme. C'est quelque chose dans lequel les municipalités investissent beaucoup de temps, d'efforts, d'énergie pour bien faire les choses, pour s'assurer que, là où tu construis des habitations, que tu as des égouts, que tu as de l'eau courante, que tu as de l'électricité, que tu as des routes, que tu as des trottoirs,

que tu as la livraison du courrier, que tu as l'Internet puis peut-être le câble de TV.

Là je vais faire une petite parenthèse pour vous dire que, moi, je suis dans le nord de l'Ontario, et là où je vis, on n'a rien de ça. Je n'ai pas de l'eau courante chez nous; on prend l'eau du lac. Je n'ai pas d'égouts non plus; on a une fosse septique. Je n'ai pas de rue pavée; j'ai de la gravelle. Je n'ai pas de trottoirs; j'ai des fossés. Je n'ai rien de ça, mais je ne changerais pas de place pour vivre—j'adore où je vis. Je suis fière de vivre dans Nickel Belt et d'être là. Mais je vous raconte ça parce que les planifications, tant dans le nord de l'Ontario et tant dans les Premières Nations que dans une ville aussi grande que Toronto ou Ottawa, c'est des choses qui prennent beaucoup de temps. Une planification qui se fait—la responsabilité de tout ça est sur les épaules des conseillers et conseillères municipaux qu'on vient d'élire.

Là, ce qu'on est en train de dire, c'est que ça ne sera plus eux qui vont décider les mandats, les priorités des municipalités et des conseils municipaux. Ça va maintenant être la province qui va dire : « Bien, si vous prenez notre priorité puis que vous l'amenez au conseil municipal, ça ne dérange pas que 66 % des élus »—donc les gens de ces municipalités, les gens de Toronto vont avoir voté pour des représentants, des conseillers et conseillères municipaux, puis 66 % d'eux vont avoir voté contre et le projet va avancer de toute façon parce que c'est une priorité du gouvernement, puis que le gouvernement a décidé que tu as seulement besoin de 33 %, qu'un tiers des gens votent en faveur, pour que ce projet de loi aille de l'avant. Comment est-ce qu'on en est rendu là? Comment est-ce qu'un gouvernement peut justifier, dans une démocratie stable comme le Canada, comme l'Ontario, que quelque chose comme ça est acceptable? Ce n'est pas acceptable, madame la Présidente. Ce ne l'est pas.

La démocratie nous définit, puis c'est 50 % plus un. Ça l'a toujours été, et ça va toujours l'être. Ce qu'on va avoir, là, ça va être comme—je ne sais pas. Pourquoi va-t-on avoir un gouvernement municipal si c'est le gouvernement provincial qui décide? Je ne comprends vraiment, vraiment pas ça. On va être la première province au Canada à avoir fait ça. C'est quelque chose qui n'a jamais été fait dans une autre province. Pourquoi? Parce qu'on n'en a pas besoin. Parce que les conseils municipaux ont été capables de bâtir et de soutenir la construction de suffisamment d'habitations pour répondre à nos besoins.

En passant, ce n'est pas juste à Toronto que le monde vient s'établir. Ce n'est pas juste à Toronto qu'on a besoin de plus de logements. Je peux vous raconter l'histoire de ma fille, qui avait sa première maison—une petite maison assez vieille à Sudbury, sur une voie passante puis tout ça. Elle a décidé de s'acheter une ferme puis de vendre sa maison en ville puisqu'elle déménageait un peu plus en campagne pour s'acheter une ferme. Quand elle a mis sa maison en vente, l'agente d'immeuble lui a dit, quand elle s'est assise avec elle : « Non, non, tu vas demander 100 000 \$ de plus que ça pour ta maison. On va la mettre en vente pour quatre jours, puis samedi prochain, je vais te donner la liste de tous ceux qui ont fait demande pour acheter ta maison. » Et c'est exactement ce qui s'est passé.

Elle a mis sa maison en vente à 100 000 \$ de plus que ce qu'elle avait pensé que sa maison pouvait valoir. La maison a été en vente pendant quatre jours. Le samedi, l'agente d'immeuble est arrivée avec une liste de personnes qui voulaient acheter sa maison, et toutes les offres étaient au-dessus des 100 000 \$ de plus qu'elle avait demandés pour sa maison initialement.

Donc, est-ce qu'il y a de grandes demandes pour des maisons? Oui, absolument, il y en a. Mais est-ce qu'on a besoin—les deux ne sont pas reliés. Oui, on a besoin de plus de logements abordables partout. Le problème de sans-abris, c'est à la grandeur de la province. Il y en a à Sudbury. Il y en a à Sudbury, quand il fait moins 40, qui vont coucher dehors en dessous des ponts dans des boîtes de carton. Il y en a partout. C'est atterrant, dans une province aussi pleine de richesses que l'Ontario, qu'on voie des choses comme ça. Le gouvernement provincial a un rôle à jouer dans tout ça, mais on ne voit rien dans le projet de loi 39 qui nous dit qu'il y aura des investissements pour des coops d'habitation, qu'il y aura des investissements pour le logement à prix abordable, que le gouvernement va s'assurer que partout dans l'Ontario où on a besoin de logements abordables, il y en aura. À Sudbury, et dans une grande partie de Nickel Belt également, ce sont des listes d'attente de 12 ans, de 13 ans, de 16 ans. Tu es sur une liste d'attente pour avoir un logement abordable—bien voyons donc; qu'est-ce que c'est, ça? On a besoin de faire mieux que ça. Dans 16 ans d'ici, tes enfants vont être grands puis n'auront pas besoin de—par le temps qu'on trouve une place avec trois chambres à coucher, tes enfants vont déjà être grands et vont être partis, puis ils n'iront pas à l'Université Laurentienne parce qu'il n'y a pas de programmes en français qui s'offrent là. Ils vont être rendus on ne sait pas où.

2330

Est-ce qu'on a besoin de faire mieux? Oui. Mais pourquoi est-ce qu'on a besoin de changer la définition de « démocratie »? Pourquoi est-ce qu'on a besoin de porter atteinte à la démocratie? Les deux ne sont pas reliés du tout, du tout.

Je peux vous dire que le projet de loi a été décrié par les conseillers municipaux, qui disent que, non, ça n'a pas de bon sens, ça ne peut pas être comme ça. Eux, ils ont été élus. Ils sont là pour représenter une partie des électeurs dans les différentes municipalités. Ils veulent avoir leur mot à dire, puis ils veulent que, si 66 % des élus municipaux disent non à un projet, ce projet-là n'ira pas de l'avant. Mais avec le projet de loi 39, même si 66 %—on va dire 65 %—des élus municipaux disent non, ça va aller de l'avant quand même.

Même s'il était de bonne heure le matin, je ne suis pas capable de comprendre ça, que des gens qui ont été élus, qui ont gagné leur élection, qui sont là pour représenter des résidents et résidentes de l'Ontario, vont se retrouver à voter à 65 % contre certains projets, et que ce projet va aller de l'avant tout simplement parce que c'était un projet qui était une priorité au niveau provincial. Si c'est une priorité au niveau provincial, laissez donc le gouvernement provincial s'en occuper; laissez-le donc le

financer, le superviser, le planifier, puis s'en occuper. Si c'est une priorité provinciale, je suis absolument certaine que les municipalités—si le gouvernement provincial arrive avec, « La planification a été faite, l'argent est là pour vous aider, puis on a les ressources en place pour superviser le projet », probablement les élus municipaux vont être assez contents de voir l'argent qui arrive au côté municipal. Ce que j'essaie de dire, là, c'est qu'il y a d'autres façons d'arriver aux mêmes fins, et ça, sans porter atteinte à notre démocratie.

Bien entendu, quand un projet de loi qui porte atteinte à la démocratie va passer—il y a bien des chances qu'il va passer parce qu'on a un gouvernement conservateur majoritaire. Tu viens, vraiment, de créer un précédent assez dangereux pour la démocratie, parce qu'on dit que oui, il y aura des élections municipales; oui, les gens vont sélectionner qui ils veulent comme conseillers et conseillères municipaux; oui, on aura des conseils municipaux, mais la minute que le gouvernement émet une priorité—ça ne dérange pas que 65 % des conseillers municipaux qui sont là pour représenter leurs électeurs votent contre—ça va aller de l'avant quand même.

Je peux le voir, à un moment donné, en sens inverse. S'il y a un maire qui veut faire avancer un projet, pour des raisons qui ne sont peut-être pas bonnes pour sa communauté, mais bonnes pour lui ou pour elle, il pourrait facilement aller voir le gouvernement provincial, s'ils s'entendent bien et s'adonnent d'être du même parti, et demander que ça devienne une priorité.

Voyons donc, ça n'a pas de bon sens. C'est pour ça qu'on a des élections. C'est pour ça qu'on a une démocratie, pour éviter que des choses comme ça arrivent. Parce que quand les gens se sentent ignorés et qu'il y a une seule personne qui a tout le pouvoir, ça ne prend pas de temps que les gens vont perdre confiance, que les gens vont perdre intérêt. Qu'est-ce que ça donne d'aller voter pour ton conseil municipal si, à la fin de la journée, même si 65 % d'eux autres votent contre le projet, si le gouvernement provincial aime ça puis en fait une priorité, ça va passer quand même?

Il y a un groupe de travail sur les habitations qui a déjà fait des recommandations au gouvernement, qui leur disent qu'il y a 88 000 acres de terrain ici même à Toronto sur lesquels on pourrait bâtir. On pourrait bâtir les 1,5 million d'habitations dont on a besoin dans les 10 prochaines années.

On n'est pas obligé de les faire toutes à Toronto non plus. Le membre de mon équipe, de Kiiwetinoong, nous dit que dans les Premières Nations, ils ont identifié un besoin de 47 000 logements. Il n'y a pas un sou ou une miette d'investissement pour ces 47 000 habitations dont on a besoin dans les Premières Nations.

Même chose dans le nord de l'Ontario : on n'a pas besoin de changer la loi agricole de Duffins-Rouge pour permettre la construction de milliers et de milliers de logements à prix abordable à l'extérieur de Toronto. Tout ça, même chose—puis là, je vois que vais manquer de temps.

L'annexe 2, c'est vraiment la Loi sur la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge qui va être changée pour permettre, vraiment, qu'on puisse bâtir sur des terres

protégées, et des terres protégées qui devaient être des terres agricoles pour nourrir les Ontariens et Ontariennes. Et là, on va permettre le développement là-dessus.

L'annexe 3, ça, c'est pour permettre, encore là, au gouvernement provincial de nommer le président du conseil de la municipalité régionale de Niagara, de la municipalité régionale de Peel et de la municipalité régionale de York pour un mandat débutant cette année. Ça va se faire extrêmement vite. Pourquoi faire que le gouvernement provincial se mêle de ça? Je ne le sais pas, mais je peux vous dire que, autant pour Niagara que pour Peel, pour York, ce ne sont pas de bonnes nouvelles et ce n'est pas bien reçu.

On a trois niveaux de politique : canadienne, provinciale et municipale. Ils ont chacun leur rôle à jouer et doivent être respectés. Et pour montrer du respect, ça doit se faire au travers du respect pour notre démocratie. Ce qu'on a dans le projet de loi 39, c'est une atteinte directe à la démocratie en disant aux gens : « Même si tu as 66 % contre, ton projet va passer. »

La Présidente suppléante (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Merci. C'est le temps des questions pour la députée de Nickel Belt.

M. Anthony Leardi: J'aimerais remercier la députée de Nickel Belt pour son discours. Nous savons que le maire de Toronto a déjà plusieurs pouvoirs que d'autres maires n'ont pas. Ma question, c'est : est-ce que tous les maires de l'Ontario doivent avoir les mêmes pouvoirs?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ce dont on parle ici, c'est vraiment de responsabilité des différents niveaux de gouvernement. Le gouvernement fédéral a son niveau de responsabilité; au gouvernement provincial, on a notre niveau de responsabilité; et les gouvernements municipaux ont leur niveau de responsabilité. Lorsqu'on parle des égouts, lorsqu'on parle des chemins, lorsqu'on parle de l'eau, lorsqu'on parle de la construction de logements, le niveau municipal a un grand rôle à jouer. Lorsqu'on parle des bibliothèques, des parcs, des installations publiques, le gouvernement municipal a un rôle important à jouer. Mais avec le projet de loi 39, si ça devient une priorité du niveau provincial, bien là, même si 65 % des élus municipaux votent contre, ce projet-là va passer.

La Présidente suppléante (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Le député de Mushkegowuk—Baie James.

M. Guy Bourgouin: C'est tout un plaisir d'entendre ma collègue de Nickel Belt parler. On entend le gouvernement dire qu'on est contre le développement des logements. Je pense qu'il n'y a personne, sur ce côté-ci de la Chambre, qui est contre.

Le problème qu'on a, c'est qu'on entend souvent parler des pilules empoisonnées; on entend souvent parler de comment la démocratie est fragile. Puis on voit dans ce projet de loi-là que la pilule empoisonnée, c'est une attaque sur la démocratie; vous l'avez tellement bien dit. Sur l'aspect municipal, tout d'un coup, ça prend un tiers à la place de 50 % plus un.

2340

J'aimerais vous entendre encore sur pourquoi c'est important, la démocratie, et pourquoi la démocratie est tellement fragile. Le gouvernement s'enveloppe à dire

qu'on va bâtir des maisons, puis on sait qu'il y a 88 000 acres disponibles. Leur propre comité le recommande. Ils s'enveloppent à travers ça, mais c'est une attaque directe à la démocratie. J'aimerais vous entendre sur ces points-là.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Le député a raison que la démocratie, c'est quelque chose qui nous définit. C'est quelque chose qui fait que—tant au Canada qu'en Ontario, qu'au niveau municipal—on a une stabilité. Quand on peut offrir une place où il fait bon vivre, c'est à cause, en grande partie, de la démocratie.

Le gouvernement conservateur est en train de changer ça pour dire que si c'est une priorité provinciale, le gouvernement municipal peut faire avancer de nouveaux règlements. Même si 66 % des élus municipaux votent contre, le changement des règlements municipaux peut aller de l'avant avec seulement un tiers des élus.

Ce n'est pas une démocratie. La démocratie, on sait tous ce que c'est : c'est 55 % plus un, pas 33 %.

La Présidente suppléante (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Questions?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: The core of this bill is very simple: It helps to support local decision-makers with the tools that they need to get the shovels in the ground, the tools that they need to remove the barriers that are stalling the development of transit, of housing and all the infrastructure.

My riding is in the city of Toronto. The Toronto mayor got elected with a city-wide mandate, unlike a councillor, who got elected for a particular ward or a particular neighbourhood.

This bill proposes the provincial priority that enables the strong-mayor powers for the specific provincial priority of 1.5 million homes. We know that's a need of this government—to build this many homes in the next decade.

My question to the member from Nickel Belt is, does the member opposite not agree that we need to provide local leaders the tools they need to plan for the growth that they're going to face in the next couple of years?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have no problem saying that the provincial government needs to respect the municipal government. And yes, the municipal government needs tools in order to provide the level of housing, supportive housing—I would call it affordable housing—that they need. But the tools have nothing to do with putting away our democracy and letting municipal leaders—even if 65% of the municipal leaders vote against something, it's going to go through. That's not what democracy is all about—democracy is 50% plus one.

That tool, if you want to call it that, is not something that is needed. It's something that is dangerous—and it's something that has never been done in any of the other provinces and should not be done.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Questions?

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you to our member for that passionate presentation.

I'm wondering about what happens when the provincial government decides to tell city council or the regional

chairs that homelessness is no longer an issue, that we shouldn't be addressing that. I'm wondering what happens when the provincial government decides to attack public health units once again. I'm wondering what happens when the issues that are municipal, that are local, that need to be addressed don't match the PC government's priorities. Where does that leave people in their communities?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would say we have a pretty good idea of where that leads, because this is what we are seeing right now.

We are seeing a government that doesn't put anything forward to help with the homelessness crisis that we are living through in every part of our province.

We have a government right now that is looking at cutting public health. We went through a pandemic, and on January 1, 2020, when the pandemic started, they were cutting the number of public health units from 34 to 10. They were taking \$100 million away from public health.

We have a pretty good idea what it would look like: hospital emergency departments overcrowded, hospitals doing hallway health care, long-term care systems where 5,000 loved ones died. It will be wrong—and it needs to do better.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We have time for another question.

M. Anthony Leardi: J'aimerais remercier de nouveau la députée de Nickel Belt pour son discours. Est-ce que la députée est d'accord, au moins, avec le but de notre projet de loi? Est-ce que la députée est d'accord que nous devons construire 1,5 million d'habitations dans les prochaines 10 années?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Je crois que tout le monde est d'accord avec ça. L'Ontario va continuer d'accueillir beaucoup de nouveaux arrivants ici, et je vous dirais, à la grandeur de l'Ontario, autant dans le—pas un nombre aussi haut dans Nickel Belt qu'à Toronto, mais on en accueille partout.

Que ces gens-là, comme les familles qui grandissent, etc., ont besoin de logements—oui, absolument. Est-ce que le projet de loi 39 n'a rien à faire avec la construction de 1,5 million d'habitations de plus? Absolument rien à faire. Enlever le système démocratique au niveau de nos gouvernements municipaux n'a rien à faire avec la construction de 1,5 million de logements dont on a grandement besoin.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to move to further debate.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to get up and speak. I'm not going to complain, colleagues, that it's too late at night or that I didn't have enough time to read the bill, because, unlike my colleagues on the opposite side of the House, I actually do read the bills when they come in and when they're on the table. On the weekends, I spend some time doing work, like I know many of my colleagues do.

Let's just spend a moment talking about what the theme of the night has been. We heard from a number of

members about the end of democracy. You're hearing it all night—it's the end of democracy.

Interjection: Pandemonium.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Pandemonium. The world is coming to an end; democracy is finished in the province of Ontario because of this bill. What is this? What has the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing brought forward? He has brought forward a provincial policy statement, colleagues. And with that provincial policy statement, it means that a municipality following the provincial policy statement can actually have a vote at 33%, I believe it is. For them, it's the end of democracy.

Colleagues will know, of course, that there have been other instances where we've had provincial policy statements in the province of Ontario. We've had other provincial policy statements. And some of my rural colleagues will know very well what some of these provincial policy statements were. They're all going to hide their heads now, because the last time we had a provincial policy statement, it was something called the Green Energy Act.

Interjections: Oh, oh.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Oh, yes. Oh, oh. Remember the Green Energy Act? The Green Energy Act was a provincial policy statement similar to the provincial policy statement that we're bringing forward here today. Under the Green Energy Act and the provincial policy statement, do you know what municipalities could vote on, what their vote was? It wasn't 50% plus one. What do you think it was, member for Spadina–Fort York? Was it 50% plus one? No, it wasn't. Was it 40%? No. Was it 38%? 35%? 33%? Surely to God it couldn't have been under 20%? But it was; it was 0%. And do you know who supported that? They did, right over there. The NDP supported that policy statement brought in by the Liberals.

The end of democracy, colleagues—pandemonium.

2350

Mr. Chris Glover: There was no 50% vote—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Exactly, there was no 50% vote, because you gave them a 0% vote. You took away the right of municipalities altogether to vote.

I love the member for Spadina–Fort York—because he has caught himself in a dilemma. Earlier tonight, he was gleeful: “Oh, the House leader is so upset. I've got under his skin.” But now, all of a sudden, colleagues, he's caught on the horns of a dilemma. He's in a tough spot now because he's part of a party that actually took away the right of municipalities to vote entirely. He didn't leave them with 33%. He didn't leave them with the magic 50% plus one that they say should accompany a provincial policy statement. He left them with 0%. They put windmills all over the place in communities that didn't want them. People protested. Municipal councils voted against it. He's got the uncomfortable laugh. Do you see that, colleagues? “Oh, I'm in trouble now. Holy mackerel. How am I going to vote on this sucker? I didn't realize that my party”—because it's late at night. They don't do their homework, colleagues.

They're all on the horns of a dilemma now because they all voted in favour of the Green Energy Act. Then,

colleagues, when they had the opportunity to realize, “Maybe we made a mistake then”—maybe the Liberals brought in the Green Energy Act after 9 o'clock at night as well.

We know what happens after 9 o'clock: The NDP get so tired they can't—earlier tonight, they said, “This was a surprise. This was sprung on us.” There's one bill on the order paper at the end of a session. Wow, what a shocking surprise. What could be called on a night sitting that was called 18 days ago, on the last night when everything else had been passed? Shockingly, it was this bill. But I digress.

They had the opportunity in 2018 to say, “The Green Energy Act that we supported in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018—we made a mistake.” They could have said that. Colleagues, you remember this: We brought it back to the House and said, “If you thought you made a mistake”—the Green Energy Act was horrible. We all know how bad it was. It was terrible. It cost people. It cost communities. It cost the hydro sector. It cost homeowners. It cost families. Part of what took away the dream of home ownership was the high cost of energy that they supported. But they didn't take it away.

Now they get up in their place and say, “It's the end of democracy because you've taken the right away from municipalities,” when the actual architects of that are the NDP themselves. Why do I say that? Because it was the current leader of the NDP, the one who refuses to sit in the Leader of the Opposition's chair—he has to sit a couple of rows over—who takes credit for forcing the government to pass the Green Energy Act. He got up in his place and suggested for years that if it wasn't for him, there would be no Green Energy Act. So the NDP are actually the fathers of taking away the rights of municipalities to have a say in things.

Thankfully, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, seizing on what is a historical challenge in housing across the province—partially because we have the policies that we had from the Liberals and the NDP, which made it so difficult for us to build—we've caught up with all of those bills that you've done. That is a lot of great work, so I appreciate that. Part of that is actually restoring democracy in this bill by, for the first time—the first time—giving municipalities a say in a provincial policy statement.

I congratulate the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and I congratulate the associate minister and the parliamentary assistant for restoring democracy to those municipalities that had it ripped away from them by the Green Energy Act of the Leader of the Opposition.

They talk about democracy, colleagues. How can you not talk about democracy when you look at this party across the way? They had a leadership vote—not to stray too much, but I think you'll see how it comes around, Madam Speaker—where nobody wanted to run. The member for Spadina–Fort York was musing last night, but this morning he decided and backed away from it. They had a leadership vote where one person decided to run, so they're going to actually have a vote, colleagues—a vote à la Fidel Castro, right? One person's name is going to be

on the ballot. The worst part is that out of a caucus of, what, 30, only eight people actually support the new leader who's coming in, who will be the only person on the ballot.

Let's quickly talk about the Green Party—because he's here. There's one party—actually there's two. When we were creating the Rouge National Urban Park, the Liberals, NDP and Greens voted to—there are 5,000 acres of class 1 farmland in the Rouge National Urban Park which was taken away from airport use and put back into farming. Do you know what those three wanted to do? They wanted to evict the farmers and plant trees on the class 1 farmland. That's what they wanted to do. In fact, they went a step further. These two—not the Green, because he wasn't here. The NDP and the Liberals went a step further and actually evicted a farmer on the Rouge who was there—his family was there for 200 years. They evicted him to create the Bob Hunter Park. That park took about 11 or 12 years to open up, colleagues. So that is the legacy of these two, three parties—and I say it loosely, “three parties.” That is the legacy of these three parties.

We have brought bills forward to increase housing, to get people back on track; you've heard all of the comments from all of our members. They want to stop it. They want to delay it.

It's late at night; they don't like working so late. They're put out because we made them stay past 6 o'clock. Maybe they didn't order dinner. I don't know what the deal is with them.

Because they are so tired and want to go home, I move the adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The government House leader—

Mr. Chris Glover: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Point of order.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'm not going to get another opportunity to speak. I want to thank the government House leader for focusing on me this evening—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Excuse me. That's not a point of order.

The government House leader has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This is a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2358 to 0028.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Everyone, take your seats.

Mr. Calandra has moved the adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 0; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Oh, then I have to vote? Okay.

I understand there's a tie, and then I'm allowed to vote. I will vote against the motion.

I declare the motion lost.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Now the House stands adjourned until 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 0029.

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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
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre 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	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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	