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Mercredi
7 décembre 2022

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 7 December 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 7 décembre 2022

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER MUNICIPAL
GOVERNANCE ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT À AMÉLIORER
LA GOUVERNANCE MUNICIPALE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 7, 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 Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to continue debate this morning on this bill. Since we were here last evening, perhaps a bit of a recap: Last night, we were talking a lot about some of the changes in the bill with respect to the voting processes in some of our municipal councils with respect to the provincial policy statement. We heard a lot from colleagues opposite that somehow this would be a very undemocratic process, that the process the government was bringing in hadn't been used before, that it would change democracy forever, it would crash the Western hemisphere, it would kill Westminster parliamentary traditions and revert us back to prior to the Magna Carta and the world would fall apart.

Now, of course, we've had other provincial policy statements. As we reminded everybody yesterday, the last time there was a provincial policy statement—and again, what we're doing in this bill is suggesting that, because there is a housing crisis in the province of Ontario, we are coming forward with another piece. We've talked about this—a number of pieces every single year that we've been in government—and here is another piece, and it is accompanied with a provincial policy statement that allows those impacted municipalities to pass items related to the provincial policy statement with a one-third vote.

Again, you will hear that this is the end of democracy. You're going to hear this a lot, colleagues; I guarantee it, because that's all we heard last night.

But there was, of course, another provincial policy statement that was passed in this House, and it was called the Green Energy Act. As we talked about last night, many people remember the Green Energy Act. Many people remember that provincial policy statement.

You will hear how 33% is an undemocratic way when you talk about a provincial policy statement. Now bearing in mind that the municipalities, of course, are creatures of the province and we are all democratically elected with a massive majority—but you're going to hear about that.

The last time there was a provincial policy statement, again, was the Green Energy Act, and we know how destructive and devastating that was, how hard the Minister of Energy has had to work to actually—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm very interested in what the government House leader has to say and invite him to make his remarks through the Chair.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Okay—and how much he had to work, so I congratulate the Minister of Energy on that. But that provincial policy statement, which the NDP approved and voted in favour of, as we talked about last night, actually didn't have 33% approval; it had zero per cent approval, which means that the end of democracy that is included, apparently, in this bill, where we actually restore the authority of municipal councils to have a say in provincial policy statements—they supported a provincial policy statement that had zero council approval.

In fact, there are a number of colleagues around here from southwestern Ontario, and a number of colleagues on that side of the House, whose communities were dead set against having windmills.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Essex county.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Essex county. Their farmers didn't want windmills on their properties. The municipal councils said, "We don't want windmills on our properties." They voted, 100% of them, against having a windmill on their property—100% of those councils. People protested, but the NDP supported a provincial policy statement that was brought in by the Liberals that would remove those municipalities from even having a say in it.

And now they're going to get up in their place, as they did all night last night, and suggest that since we've given back municipalities the authority to comment on provincial policy statements, that it is ending democracy. This is how the NDP look at it, right? So when you restore authority to municipalities, authority that they took away, it's somehow ruining democracy.

We touched on this last night, colleagues, but I think it bears repeating. Their concept of democracy is a bit

skewed, right? As we said last night, they had a leadership race that nobody wanted to be involved in. They had one candidate in a leadership race. It was an acclamation. Of 30 members of the caucus, only eight members supported the one member who is actually running for the leader, so that's a bit awkward.

But then it gets even more awkward because their philosophy on democracy is like the Fidel Castro style. They're still going to have a vote for their leadership. There's one person running, the ballot is going to come out, and there will be one name on the ballot. I wonder who you can vote for on that? It's like a Fidel Castro-style leadership, right? You get one person that you can vote for. It's the strangest thing.

They're going to have a debate. I'm not sure how that debate is going to work. She's going to ask the question and then she's going to debate back and forth, but that's the concept of democracy that the NDP have. It is very skewed.

Let's look at what the bill does. The bill gives back power to municipalities in terms of the provincial policy statement, power that they voted to take away. In fact, their existing kind-of leader brags that he brought in the green energy program with the Liberals. He brags about it all the time. It was his policy.

But then, colleagues, we gave them an opportunity back in 2018, as I said last night, to redress what they had done. We knew that they had taken away municipalities' rights and their powers, and in 2018 we repealed the Green Energy Act in this House. We repealed it because it was a terrible, terrible, terrible piece of job-killing, economy-killing, soul-killing—it hurt people. They couldn't buy homes. It was just a terrible piece of legislation that they supported. It drove out jobs. And you know what? They had the opportunity to vote in favour of repealing that act, restoring democracy to municipalities, and again they voted against giving back municipalities the opportunity to have a say in provincial policy statements. It really is indicative of who the NDP and, really, the Liberals are.

We also touched upon last night about how it was actually only the Liberals and the NDP that have ever attacked farmland in this province, and in this area in particular. I know quite well because my area encompasses the Rouge National Urban Park, and it was the Liberals, supported by the NDP, who kicked off a farmer who had been on that land for 200 years—his family had been on that land for 200 years; class A farmland. They kicked him off to create a park within the Rouge National Urban Park, the Bob Hunter park. It took them 15 years or so to open up that park, but they kicked the farmer off. When we were creating the Rouge National Urban Park, the Liberals, supported by the NDP, refused to hand over the lands to the Rouge National Urban Park because, under our federal government at the time, a Conservative government, we insisted that those lands be preserved for farmers. They wanted to have the land reforested and evict all of those farmers. That's what they fought for. The Greens supported that, the Liberals supported that, the NDP supported that and they fought for that.

0910

The member for Milton will recall those very difficult debates in Ottawa. They were supported here under a minority Liberal-NDP government. They were supported here in helping to try to evict farmers. It was only the Conservative government in Ottawa that stood up to them and said, "No, we will not evict farmers. We will not remove them from their lands. We will not reforest their lands." So, in every instance, it has always been a Conservative government that has stood up for democracy. It's been a Conservative government that has stood up for our farmers. It's a Conservative government that is standing up for people who want to actually have home ownership.

These are a group of people—opposite colleagues will all know this—who will say no to everything. If it means it's advancing people, if it means making people's lives better, they will vote against it. That is why we're going to pass this bill. I'm very excited, and I hope that the colleagues opposite will rethink their position and vote with us.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I always enjoy being in the House and listening to the House leader. He has a wonderful way of seeing things through his lens.

My question is going to be very simple to him this morning. There are 88,000 acres of already available land that has been zoned for development that is available. But my question to him is one that's very simple: Why hasn't this government looked at those lands in order to meet the needs, the 1.5 million homes that are going to be required to be built in order to accommodate those who are looking to come to Ontario? Why hasn't the government even followed the recommendations from their own task force?

Again, the question is very simple. There are 88,000 acres that will meet the needs of all housing development. Why hasn't this government taken that up?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: That's a good question, and I'm sure some of that land will also be needed, but what we have right now is that thousands of acres of land that have actually already been serviced are available to be used for the construction of new homes in the crisis that we are having right now.

So what the member is suggesting is a typical NDP thing, right? Forget the fact that we have land that's already serviced, land that is good to go, land that abuts all of the other services and communities—like in mine; roads, schools, recreational facilities—forget all of that. Let's start all over and maybe in 10, 15, 20 years we can get those lands serviced.

What we're saying is, we have a crisis now. Let's use the land that is already serviced to build those houses that people can have tomorrow and into the future, starting right now.

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

Mr. Mike Harris: I'm glad the member from Algoma-Manitoulin brought this up, because in Waterloo region—

and House leader, please, I'm really looking forward to your comments on this—there is land that is zoned directly adjacent to our landfill site—directly adjacent—and this is land that Waterloo region wants to “bring in” as part of their official plan. Do you know anybody who wants to move out of their parents' basement next to a garbage dump?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Back to the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member for Kitchener–Conestoga really raises a good point because these are the tricks they will use, right? They'll zone lands in areas where they know people aren't going to want to live and say, “Well, we've got these lands available.”

We heard the member for Spadina–Fort York talk about all of the cranes that are open in his—but then in his very same speech criticized the very same buildings that are being constructed in his own community.

So the member is right, and this is why we need to ensure that the lands that are serviced and available for construction are used for the purpose that those services were put in, to build homes, to get people the opportunity to have a home. Look, if you want to rent, that's great, but if you want to have the dream of home ownership, your government should make that dream available to you, and that is exactly what we're doing—and not by a garbage dump.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: My question is with respect to the strong-mayor powers. We often hear the government talk about how Mayor Tory was elected with this large majority, but the fact of the matter was, after his secret meeting with the Premier prior to the municipal election, it wasn't mentioned at any time throughout the municipal election.

Does the government House leader believe that the election might have changed if folks in Toronto had actually known that this secret meeting had taken place and they were planning to give minority rule to Toronto city council?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I don't know what secret meeting—it's like MI5 is meeting, or something like that.

A bit of information for the NDP: The mayor of Toronto is already the most powerful mayor in the province of Ontario. He already has powers that no other mayor has in the province of Ontario, save and except for, perhaps, Ottawa, who has some of the powers but not all of those powers.

The reason why the mayor of Toronto has powers that are in excess of any other is because this House, including the members opposite, voted to give the mayor powers that exceed every other mayor. One of the reasons why is because it is the capital city; it is the economic engine of the province of Ontario; it is the economic engine of Canada.

So when the member asked me, do I think the votes would be different? No, I don't, because I think most people appreciate the fact that Toronto is very, very

important to the economy of the entire country and that it is our job as Ontario parliamentarians to do whatever we can to assist Toronto, the people who live here and the people who want to live here in getting ahead, and that's what we'll continue to do.

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

Hon. David Piccini: I was wondering—I enjoyed the speech from the member. It's always interesting to hear the sort of pretzels the members of the opposition sometimes twist themselves into on issues. On one hand, we want to intensify and the government puts forward a plan that allows communities like mine, that don't live on the subway line but that want to access areas of the greenbelt that are fully serviced by major transportation corridors—so on the one hand, the opposition don't want us to intensify, but in communities like mine, where we're looking at fully serviced areas right on transportation corridors, they don't want that either.

What do the members of the opposition want?

Hon. Paul Calandra: It is a good question because we're building GO train stations and we're expanding GO train service into many new communities, including your community, to Bowmanville and beyond, and they are against building houses there.

We have two new GO train stations in Stouffville, one at what's called Bloomington and one in Gormley. They are in the middle of nowhere right now because all of the land around them was frozen by the greenbelt, the two most underused stations, probably, on the line—huge, massive, beautiful stations.

What does this bill allow us to do? It allows us to intensify around GO train stations in my riding, in your riding. We brought in transit-oriented communities; they voted against that. But you would think that they would appreciate the fact that we are building homes next to transit that we are paying for, that the people—

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the House leader: If this government was so intent on opening up the greenbelt for further development, why didn't you tell Ontarians that you were planning on opening up the greenbelt before the election?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, this is such an odd question because—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Through the Speaker.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Madam Speaker, in 2018, we came to office and we brought in a housing bill. In 2019, we brought in transit-oriented communities; in 2019, another housing bill for communities to grow. In every speech that I have given and that members have given, we've always talked about how we were going to expand transit and transportation, not only along our rail corridors but on our roads, and how we were going to build homes. Every single year we have brought in a housing bill.

You voted against all of those bills, but it should be no secret to the people of the province of Ontario or members

of this Legislature that we had every intention to ensure that we continue to build homes for the people or put in place the policies that will allow people to build homes and to have home ownership in this province.

0920

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

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank my honourable colleague for his passionate speech and all of his work. As everyone would know, obviously I represent the great community of Milton, one of the fastest-growing in the province—lots of young families, lots of young people looking to be able to buy a home and having a hard time.

I'm going to flip the question a little bit and I'm going to ask the member to maybe explain to us what it would mean, hypothetically, if we were to approach the NDP approach: to say no to everything and not introduce any measures; to continue to introduce more and more red tape; to continue to make life unaffordable for Ontarians and especially young people.

I'm a proud father of three young adults, soon to be, who obviously want to get into their own place eventually. That's a dream that every young person has. So I'm wondering if the member can highlight, if we were to approach, hypothetically, the NDP approach, what it would mean for kids like mine and others—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Back to the government House leader for a response.

Hon. Paul Calandra: You know, it's not hypothetical. The minister is too young to remember the Bob Rae government, the one time that they had the opportunity to govern. That dream was a nightmare for the people of the province of Ontario, between 1990 and 1995. As bad as 15 years of them combined was, that five years was catastrophic for the people of the province of Ontario, and if it wasn't for the Mike Harris government between 1995 and 2003 that put Ontario back on the right track to prosperity, this province would have been a mess.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: I'm pleased to stand near the end of the debate. I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from University–Rosedale.

Look, the government House leader can say whatever he wants. This bill is an attack on democracy. Everyone knows it. That's why we had some very impassioned presentations to the committee on very short notice. Very few people came forward to the committee to speak who were actually in favour of this bill. Folks are outraged right across the province and they're outraged on a number of different levels, for the attack on democracy and for the attack on the greenbelt.

It's interesting to listen—I just brought it up in my question—to the government talk about how there's some kind of a mandate for this and a mandate for that. This is a government that doesn't come out and tell the truth before they go out and campaign, Speaker. With the greenbelt, as a matter of fact, they said the exact opposite of what they ended up doing. The Premier is on film in the 2018

election divvying up the greenbelt to his friends. Then he came out and said, “No, no, I'm not going to touch the greenbelt.” As a matter of fact, I think the leader of the Green Party—I saw some research that he did: 18 times, the Premier and the housing minister, between the two of them, promised they wouldn't touch the greenbelt. Now they're carving it up for their developer friends.

On the issue of strong mayors: Look, again, the mayor of Toronto came out and admitted that he had a meeting—and it was a secret meeting, because no one knew about it—with the Premier of the province. He requested special powers so that he could rule Toronto city council with one third of the vote—the first time in North America, as the civil liberties association at our committee pointed out, that a government is going to do away with majority rule and institute a system of minority rule. That was planned prior to the municipal election, in a meeting that they didn't tell anyone about. As one of the former mayors said, they're closing down the front door to the people of Toronto and they're opening up the back door to lobbyists and friends of the Conservative Party.

Let's be clear: Throughout the election, this was never mentioned by the mayor. So here's a mayor who meets with the Premier, negotiates special powers of minority rule and then goes into a campaign and doesn't mention it at all through the campaign to the people of Toronto. I can see—and I think that most of the people on this side of the House can see—the anger that is starting to bubble up now that people understand what this mayor and this Premier have done.

We had a group of former mayors come out from all different parties: Art Eggleton, David Crombie, Barbara Hall, David Miller, John Sewell, and they wrote a letter letting the Premier know—begging the Premier and saying: “Listen, don't do this. Don't do this to democracy. Don't be the first jurisdiction in North America that institutes minority rule.”

In their letter they said, “This bill would allow you as mayor to pass bylaws with support from just over one third of council members in any matter somehow defined as ‘within a provincial interest.’” And that isn't defined, Speaker. It's not defined at all. It's whatever the Premier says can be in the provincial interest, and then that is pushed through by one third of councillors. Eight councillors and the mayor of Toronto can go forward and pass bylaws, ignoring the other two thirds.

We just had a letter come from councillors in the city of Toronto, from all political stripes, saying, “Listen, we don't want these powers. We don't want the mayor to have these powers.” AMO did a survey—this is just on the veto powers contained in Bill 3—and 75% of mayors across the province and 95% of city councillors say, “No. This is undemocratic.” That's just the veto powers. Now we have minority rule.

These mayors say: “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 supporting the building of healthy and affordable communities. All of this is taking place within a matter of months into a new mandate, without having put these troublesome changes before the voters. This is alarming in the extreme.”

These mayors have written this and said, “If you tell the government you’re not interested in these powers, we will come and we will support you. We will help you.” This isn’t intended to be punitive. They’re shocked. They’re surprised that John Tory would enter into an agreement like this in secret with the Premier of the province of Ontario prior to an election and not mention it at any time during the election campaign—shocking.

It shouldn’t actually be that shocking to us. For me, as the municipal affairs critic and as a former city councillor, this is probably the most shocking legislation. It’s certainly up there with taking charter rights away from workers to collectively bargain a collective agreement, which happened earlier. But I guess it really shouldn’t surprise me because there’s a long history with this government—

Interjection.

Mr. Jeff Burch:—regardless of what the government House leader says—of contempt for democracy.

Shortly after the 2018 election, they tabled Bill 5, which cancelled the regional chair elections and cut the size of Toronto city council. That happened with the municipal election campaign already under way, and when a lower court found Bill 5 to be unconstitutional and they granted a stay, then the government passed Bill 31, which invoked the “notwithstanding” clause to bypass charter rights—not the first time they were going to do that. After an appeal, Bill 5 went ahead; Bill 31 was left to die on the order paper. Then in 2020, this government tabled Bill 218, which was supposed to be a COVID recovery bill, but inside of that, sneakily, had repealed the legislation that allowed municipalities to have ranked ballots.

Back in September, the government, right before the municipal election, when clearly they already knew that they had cooked up this secret deal with the mayor of Toronto for strong-mayor powers—they introduced the veto powers under strong mayors. Then they went and they decided to suspend everyone’s charter rights to collectively bargain, something that is internationally recognized, that workers have the right to collectively bargain, and they used the “notwithstanding” clause for that. We know what happened with that. Then they come forward with strong-mayor legislation that does away, for the first time in North America, with majority rule and institutes a system of minority rule that the civil liberties association and pretty much everyone else in Ontario who cares about democracy is shocked and alarmed with.

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Then, after telling people for years that—I guess it’s been five years now that the Premier has been saying, “I won’t touch the greenbelt; I won’t touch the greenbelt.” He fought an election on the promise he wouldn’t touch the greenbelt. They’re opening up the greenbelt for development, despite the fact that their own Housing Affordability Task Force clearly said that land was not a problem. We have more than enough land. That’s the government’s own experts on the Housing Affordability Task Force, and yet what we see is the opening up of the greenbelt.

We’ve been pointing out every day in the Legislature, Speaker, these shady deals: people buying land in the greenbelt; developers buying land. They’re not buying it to farm on. They know what’s going to happen. They knew it was going to be taken out of the greenbelt. Now they’re making hundreds of millions of dollars. And that land was put into the greenbelt at a certain price. That’s taking money directly from the public and putting it in the pockets of developers who speculated on that land and banked it.

So that long, long history—I’m going to hand things over to my friend from University–Rosedale, but the record of contempt for democracy from this government is absolutely shocking. To hear the government House leader stand up and pretend that they’re somehow making democracy better when they’re destroying democracy in our province on a number of different levels is absolutely appalling. The people of Ontario are not going to stand for it.

These two issues, minority rule and opening up the greenbelt, are going to be the end of this government.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: This bill came at record speed through committee. Record speed—just one day of committee hearings. Just 18 people got to speak. The overwhelming sense we got from committee members, as well as the hundreds of written submissions that came in, was that Bill 39 is a very bad bill. Bill 39 threatens the fundamental tenets of representative democracy, which is that municipalities pass laws using a majority vote. Bill 39 brings in minority rule.

Bill 39 opens up the greenbelt and paves the way for thousands of acres of class 1 farmland to be used for development. It’s important to note that the developers who own the land that is being opened up to development happen to be some of the PC Party’s biggest donors. Collusion or coincidence? It’s the Auditor General’s job and the Integrity Commissioner’s job to find out. Ontarians want to know. A lot of Ontarians have already made up their minds. It looks suspicious.

I want to summarize some of my initial reactions when I heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing speak yesterday. He talks about how we need to change the status quo. The government needs to be reminded that you are the status quo. You’ve been in power for over four years. When we’re talking about the cost of housing, it’s

this government that is now responsible. When we're talking about the rise in evictions, it's this government that's now responsible. When we're talking about the escalating rise in home prices beyond what anyone but upper-middle-class and high-income earners can afford, it's this government that's now responsible. When we're talking about the rising cost of rent and now how you need to earn over \$108,000 a year in Toronto to find a two-bedroom apartment, it's this government that's now responsible for that, too. You're the status quo. The housing affordability crisis? It's on you. The work that you have done to address the housing affordability crisis hasn't helped.

I hear a lot of talk about how the government says that the NDP is opposed to building 1.5 million homes. That is simply not true. We put it in our election platform. We've been very clear about it. We need 1.5 million homes to meet the needs of current Ontarians and future Ontarians, but more importantly, we need to make sure the homes that we are building are for Ontarians to live in, to raise their children in, to have pets, to retire in. That's what these homes need to be for. This government is very interested in building homes without thinking about the size of them or who owns them. What we're seeing in downtown Toronto—and now, all across southern Ontario, actually—is this increase in the number of people who own six homes, eight homes, 100 homes. That's a concern. This government is not addressing that, nor is this government looking seriously at what kind of homes we're building. Are they family-sized homes? No. They're 600-square-foot condos, and they're McMansions. When you go to the Statistics Canada data, that is what Ontario is building right now.

We proposed targets in Bill 23, saying you need to look at what kind of homes you're building and give municipalities these targets. No, you weren't interested in that—no, no, no.

We are “yes” to ending exclusionary zoning. We are “yes” to fast-tracking construction workers. High school students, people coming from elsewhere—we're “yes” to fast-tracking construction workers. We're “yes” to increasing density near transit. We're “yes” to establishing a public builder to ensure we build housing on public land that is affordable for people. We are “yes” to rent control so people can afford their rent each month. We're “yes” to curbing speculation.

When I think about what else the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing said, honestly, I had a lot of questions. He talked a lot about these provincial facilitators that are going to go to Durham, Halton, Peel, Waterloo, York and Niagara to once again meddle with jurisdiction—the upper-tier municipalities, the lower-tier municipalities—and also to bring strong-mayor powers into those regions as well. That's what he indicated. Did he consult with these municipalities and with these mayors? Has he communicated with them about what they want? I doubt it, because when I look at what AMO, which represents 444 municipalities across Ontario, they tell us very clearly—they've done a survey on strong-mayor

powers, and they have found that 77% of mayors and 95% of municipal councillors are opposed to strong-mayor powers. The AMO board is unanimously opposed to Bill 39 and the provisions of minority rule.

Yet the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is talking on and on about how he is—he's not just going to acknowledge that he's doing something which is harming democracy; he's looking at doubling down and bringing it to additional regions. It's very concerning to hear. You didn't talk about that before the June election, did you? It's very concerning to hear.

I wasn't the only one who was concerned. There are many people who spoke in committee. I want to bring up some of the things that they raised.

Victor Doyle has spoken publicly about this. He is the former senior provincial planner who helped design the greenbelt. He's devastated at what this government is doing, and his quote: I feel “deceived as a planner and as a citizen,” given that Premier Ford and the housing minister both previously promised to leave the greenbelt alone. That's the senior provincial planner who helped design the greenbelt.

Then there's the CCLA. They're very concerned about this government's decision to bring in minority rule. They say that no person, no elected representative, no member of a legislative body who supports democracy should support a bill that tries to take apart the democratic fabric of a duly elected representative body. That's from CCLA—my goodness. This is not a radical group, you guys. That's what they're telling you to do, and you're like, “No, full steam ahead. We've got to expand it.” It's very, very concerning.

It's not only CCLA that is opposed. It's former mayors, it's thousands of citizens, it's the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, it's CELA, it's AMO, it's Ecology Ottawa, it's Friends of Kensington Market, it's Friends of the Golden Horseshoe, it's the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, it's the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, it's the Toronto and York Regional Labour Council—thousands of people who have contacted you. They're very concerned about this bill.

0940

I want to bring up what the Ontario Federation of Agriculture said. They note—and many people have noted this to you—that the Housing Affordability Task Force, your own blue-ribbon, hand-picked task force, very developer-heavy, was very clear that you do not need to open up the greenbelt and you do not need to open up new land in order to meet the housing supply crisis. They're very clear. OFA says this in their submission as well. They go into detail about the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act specifically because that's in schedule 2 and that's the largest chunk of the greenbelt land that's being opened up for development. They talk about the quality of the land there. They say, “Land within the DRAP consists mostly of class 1 soils—Ontario's most productive, yet finite, agricultural land.” That's what you're doing. It's very concerning.

I urge you to vote against this bill. I urge you to keep your election promises and keep the greenbelt intact. I

urge you to respect the power you have and keep majority rule and ensure that municipalities have majority rule. I also urge you to take a serious look at how you're looking at addressing the housing affordability crisis. It is not just about increasing the supply that the developers want to build for maximum profit. It's about affordability, and it's about ensuring that the homes we build are for Ontarians to live in. Thank you.

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

Mr. Mike Harris: To the member from University–Rosedale, I'm just curious—you guys like to talk about the term “McMansions.” It's a bit demeaning I think, but fine, if that's the term you want to use. But as someone who has seven people who live in my house, I do need a larger house. I'm just curious to know whether or not you have a threshold for what you consider to be a house that's too big to be built here in the province of Ontario.

Ms. Jessica Bell: That's a very specific question. I'm going to take a broader approach. We had an expert come in who has worked for many years at CMHC, Carolyn Whitzman, and she recommended that the Ontario government take a more holistic approach, where they give municipalities targets and those targets are overall targets. This is how many homes the government needs to build or that we want this municipality to build, and there needs to be some minimum thresholds on how affordable they are based on income and also what kind of square footage we're aiming to build.

Is it government's job to say no, every single house has to be this set size? No, but there is an acknowledgement that this government needs to make—

Interjections.

Ms. Jessica Bell: No, no, no. There's an acknowledgement that this government needs to make that the private housing market is not building exactly the kinds of homes that meet needs. We need to factor in square-footage size, and we also need to have—

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Point of order.

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

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: A developer bought up greenbelt land—listen to this. He borrowed \$100 million at 21% interest, but didn't know the bill was coming forward. Eighteen times the minister and the Premier promised not to touch the greenbelt.

My question is to the Niagara Centre MPP: As a former city councillor yourself, do you believe that the loss of development fees will hurt their communities and cause all municipalities in the province of Ontario to raise taxes?

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's a great question and something that municipalities all over Ontario are grappling with. As

a matter of the fact, Markham's mayor and councillors began their new term at council with a special council meeting where they rejected Bill 23 precisely for that reason, and that's in the government House leader's own riding. Taxes are going to have to increase \$600 to \$1,000 per year for the average homeowner. That's what the town of Markham is saying.

I think the government House leader should pay attention to home and talk to his mayor and council about how much their taxes are going to go up because of the irresponsible actions of this government.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to ask the members opposite, because they keep going on and on and on about what we shouldn't be doing, yet I never hear anything but—well, we'll hear a story from some so-called social engineering expert who has all the answers about how we're going to fix our housing problems. But every time this government has tried to do something—and the one thing that all the experts agree on is that we are not building enough homes to satisfy the needs of the current population, including the projected growth.

When are we actually going to hear a plan from the leaderless, or leaderless contest, NDP? When are we going to hear a plan about how we're actually going to meet the goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years?

Mr. Jeff Burch: This is on full display, the typical government attack on the NDP, because they can't actually talk about the issues. They have to insult people, they have to insult the leader, they have to insult our interim leader, they have to insult our new leader because they don't want to talk about the actual issues. If the member bothered to educate himself about the various platforms of the parties in the Legislature—he knows very well that every party had a housing platform and had solutions. They're just not solutions that agree with him and his party.

He can get as mean and nasty as he wants in the Legislature. We'll continue to talk about real issues here on this side of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I caution the member's language.

I recognize the member for Mushkegowuk–Thunder Bay.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Mushkegowuk–James Bay.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): James Bay. Sorry.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Merci, madame la Présidente. And thank you to my colleagues for that presentation. We hear this government say that the NDP is against housing and we don't want housing to be built. We've been very clear: We want 1.5 million houses built. We just don't agree that eroding democracy is the way to go, because we believe democracy is fragile and democracy is important.

Can you explain to the people of Ontario why democracy is so important and why this government is attacking the democracy in this province?

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for that question. In order to achieve the housing needs that we have, we don't need to sacrifice democracy. It's not democracy or housing; it's democracy and housing.

It took thousands of years for citizens to secure democratic rule—

Interjections.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: People fought for it. They advocated for it. They died for it. People went to war for it. We need to protect it and uphold it.

Bill 39 is a direct attack on democracy because it is giving mayors the power to use minority rule, when Ontario has always used majority rule. I think you should repeal this bill.

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I'd like to address this question to the member from Niagara Centre.

Speaker, at the core of this legislation, it is very simple. I've read it over a few times now, and it is very simple. It gives local legislatures elected by Ontarians the extra tools that support efficient local decision-making. That's something I want to reiterate: efficient local decision-making.

It also gives elected officials the tools they need to remove barriers that are stalling development, like housing. I want to reiterate that point: It's stalling development.

My question is: The proposed legislation, if passed, will give local legislatures elected by Ontarians the extra tools they need to get shovels in the ground and help us prepare for Ontario's future growth. Why doesn't the opposition trust Ontarians to—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response?
0950

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member for the question. I guess it's a difference of philosophy between us. I don't think that democracy is a tool to be used or not used. I think that majority rule is the basis of our democracy. As I mentioned earlier, this is the first jurisdiction in North America that's going to institute minority rule, and people are absolutely shocked by it. I think it's something that's going to follow this government around as they continue to attack democracy and violate people's charter rights.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I've been listening to the debate and I hear a lot of the word "power" being thrown around: "People who are elected have power. We're all powerful. We have lots of power." And when I was first elected, someone came to me and said, "You know, Teresa, with great power comes great responsibility."

Can the member speak to who we are responsible for when we have this power?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I think this goes back to our previous discussion about being honest with people and having transparency. The strong-mayor powers were discussed in

secret prior to an election and were not mentioned through the election, so it's clear that folks have forgotten who they work for and who they're responsible to, and that's to the people who elect us. Each and every one of those Toronto city councillors was elected by folks who want them to go and have the same power as every other councillor in an environment that is majority rule, because that's what democracy looks like.

So to the member's question, I think the responsibility is to the people that elected us, not to developers or to other politicians.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: I appreciate all of the statements from the other side—

Interjections.

Ms. Laura Smith: Oh, okay.

No, sorry; I'm not here for debate. My apologies.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): No, no. I recognize the member for Thornhill.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): No, we're going to go back to the member for Thornhill for further debate.

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you. I'm going to just pass my time to the member for Burlington.

Interjection: Share.

Ms. Laura Smith: Share.

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

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I'm honoured to be able to speak on behalf of the Better Municipal Governance Act, 2022. Before getting into the specifics of the bill, it is important to put this bill into context. Ontario has a shortage of over 300,000 workers right now, and that shortage is expected to increase. Without new workers, we will struggle to fix health care and grow the economy for all Ontarians. These 300,000 workers need an affordable place to live, a place to raise their families and become part of their communities. In addition, the federal government's recently enhanced immigration target of half a million new residents per year will put even more pressure on the existing housing market.

Last December, this government created the Housing Affordability Task Force to recommend measures to increase the supply of market housing. One key finding from the task force was that, for many years, the province has not built enough housing to meet the needs of our growing population.

Measures to cool the housing market have provided only temporary relief to homebuyers. The numbers are clear, and the timeline is clear. The only way to get housing costs under control and meet the new demand is to increase the supply of housing to meet the unique needs and budgets of our growing population. We need to build 1.5 million new homes in the next 10 years, and those homes need transit, schools and services nearby. There is no single solution to address a problem this large. We're committed to looking at every impediment and putting practical, timely solutions in place.

In 2019, after consultation with over 2,000 stakeholders, we introduced More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan. This comprehensive plan addressed five key issues:

- speed: of getting construction projects through the approval process;
- costs: of layers of permits, approvals and development charges;
- mix: making it easier to build different types of housing that suit different buyers with different budgets;
- rent: increasing the rental stock;
- innovation: supporting creative designs and using environmentally sustainable building materials.

The action plan paired a housing boost with the necessary infrastructure and transit investment, but it wasn't enough. Housing rental and purchase pricing was getting further out of reach. We went back to our municipal partners at the Ontario-Municipal Summit and the rural housing round table and asked for more input. From those consultations, we developed our second housing supply action plan, titled More Homes for Everyone. The second action plan addressed increasing the supply of rental stock and making better use of our already developed neighbourhoods by allowing more missing-middle homes to be built without local bylaw amendments. It seeks to reduce the burden on homebuyers and renters by exempting those units from development and parkland dedication fees.

We should take a moment to clear up the misconception that was brought to my attention recently. There is a notion going around that development fees don't affect the price of housing because they're paid by the developer and not the buyer. Nothing could be further from the truth. Fees and delays get built into the price of a home, just the same as the price of lumber, concrete and shingles. It all ultimately gets passed to the purchaser and added to the mortgage. Reducing development fees and reducing the time to get projects going makes homes more affordable. And still, it isn't enough.

The Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act gives the mayors of Ottawa and Toronto more tools to deliver on shared provincial-municipal priorities, including increasing the supply of housing. The purpose of the legislation is to give mayors of Ontario's largest two cities the tools needed to streamline process and address local barriers to increase the housing supply.

We've been making the bold decisions to accelerate new housing supply, but still more needs to be done, which brings us to the Better Municipal Governance Act before the House today. To further reduce red tape and accelerate building new homes and supporting infrastructure, this bill will enable democratically elected mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to propose certain bylaw amendments related to provincial priorities. If the proposed bylaws are related to prescribed provincial priorities such as building new homes, the bylaw can be passed with one third of council.

So the question is, why do we need to change the status quo? The answer is, the status quo isn't working. Transformative change isn't easy, but we can't continue to have

decisions on housing requirements of those who need it held captive by those who already have it.

Protectionism has costs. There are hard costs brought on by delays. The Building Industry and Land Development Association estimated that each month of delay can cost between \$2,600 and \$3,300 per unit. Putting that into perspective, a 12-month delay will add an additional \$39,600 to the cost of the unit. That additional cost gets passed on to the ordinary homebuyer. Tacking that onto the mortgage over 25 years adds another \$29,561 in interest at today's mortgage rates. So those first-time homebuyers already struggling to find housing within their means get stuck with a \$69,000 bill because someone insisted on yet another round of consultations. That is \$69,000 that could be put towards furnishings, a child's education or starting a business. Instead, it's lost to the person and to the Ontario economy. This needs to stop. This government is giving the tools to strong mayors to make it stop.

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Strong, efficient decision-making must be balanced with appropriate accountability and oversight. Already, mayors in all municipalities are subject to their local codes of conduct, and persons can make complaints to the local integrity commissioner, who has the power to investigate and report findings to council. In addition, mayors are subject to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, which was recently amended to prevent mayors from using their new powers if they have a financial interest in the matter.

This government is working on creative solutions to meet the housing demands of today and tomorrow. We've introduced measures to make more effective use of existing housing stock, created the opportunity to make better use of environmentally friendly building materials, reduced housing costs by limiting development fees, eliminated red tape at the province level and provided strong-mayor cities with some of the tools they need to further streamline the process of getting housing and related infrastructure projects approved.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Rice bought 700 acres of the greenbelt. He paid \$80 million this September, two months before this bill came to this House. It will be worth millions of dollars more if this bill is passed. It just happens, Madam Speaker, that he is a big donor to the PC Party.

We're losing 319 acres of prime farmland every single day in the province of Ontario. COVID should have taught us that if you can't feed yourself, what are our kids and grandkids going to do?

My question is very clear: Why did the Conservative government never, never consult with AMO on this bill?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I will point out that the person that you mentioned in your question has donated to all political parties.

I'd like to remind the member that the status quo is not working. We are in a housing crisis caused by a severe lack of supply. That is why our government introduced the

Better Municipal Governments Act, which, if passed, takes decisive action to address the housing supply crisis by working together with our municipal partners with the aim and goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result, and yet that's what the members opposite keep wanting us to do. The member for University–Rosedale just said that we should set targets for housing in every area of the city, which we did. When we did this, we said that they should be at every subway stop across the city so we could make better use of our transit and our transit hubs and create sustainable communities, which you would think they'd want. But what did the councillors in the city of Toronto do? They passed a resolution to say, "Yes, we agree to targets at subway stops, just not in my ward."

So what do you think we should do with city councillors who are not even trying to make things work for housing in this city, not even trying to reach targets which they say they agree with? It's nothing short of operating a fiefdom, in my opinion.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you to my colleague. Ontarians were clear, both in provincial elections in June and in municipal elections in October, that housing accessibility was the top issue on the mind of constituents across our province. This government, as well as our municipal partners, was given a strong and clear mandate to increase housing supply and options. That's why the changes we are proposing are taking bold action to empower Ontario's largest and fastest-growing municipalities to get it done and work more efficiently toward these shared goals.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to talk about housing and, as the member has talked about, people getting their children out of basements to find housing.

Teresa and Kevin Rodger want their son to have a home too. Their son is named Patrick. Patrick's mother has ongoing chronic pain that is causing problems for caring for Patrick. As a family, she says, they're aging and it's difficult to find appropriate alternate care. "To be honest," she says, "at times I think about abandoning my family. Taking care of Patrick is exhausting and drains our energy."

By now you know that Patrick is an adult child with development disabilities. Where in this housing discussion is there building for assisted living for families like the Rodgers?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. We know that younger families, newcomers and those all over the province dream of having their own home near where they work and play, a dream that continues to be out of reach for too many as demand outpaces supply.

With the province set to grow by nearly two million people over the next decade, Ontarians are counting more

than ever on all governments at all levels to work together to increase the supply of housing. Once again, that's why our government is taking bold action to address this crisis, and we're working to get 1.5 million homes built in the next 10 years.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I've got a speech here, but I want to start on something that really has been bothering me, quite frankly. It tells you how exciting my life is: The Leafs game was on last night, and I was actually watching this debate. So I want to start by saying—because on that side of the House, they continue to say that we don't agree with building housing. It's absolutely the furthest thing from the truth. I have three daughters and five grandkids. I want my kids to own a home. Two of them do, and I want my grandkids to.

So I agree we've got a crisis in housing, and I agree that we should be building housing. What we don't agree upon—which I think is fair and reasonable and accurate, by the way—is that we know today that there are 880 acres of land that they can develop immediately. I do not agree, and I know my other colleagues here from Niagara—he's from Niagara as well—and right across the province of Ontario don't agree that we should be developing on the greenbelt.

I believe that's fair and reasonable, because if we really care about the kids and the new Canadians coming to this country, we need to make sure that we protect the greenbelt. We need to make sure we protect our air source, our quality of air. We need to protect our food source. I already said it in one of my questions today, although the Conservatives never answered: We're losing 315 acres of prime farmland every single day in the province of Ontario.

Madam Speaker, I believe you're around the Burlington area, or in that area. You understand how important it is to have a food source, an affordable food source. And what we should have learned during COVID is that if you don't protect the citizens of the province of Ontario and Canada—by the way, 5,000 seniors died of COVID. Some of them died unnecessarily, and they died because we didn't have PPE, because we didn't manufacture PPE in the province of Ontario, which made absolutely no sense, because it was taken out of the country and shipped somewhere else. And then, when we needed it, we weren't manufacturing. So what happened is we decided to build our own PPE, and the problem was that we couldn't do it quick enough. And who suffered, where the military had to be called into our seniors' homes, where seniors died terrible, terrible deaths because we didn't have the PPE?

Why are we destroying our farmland? Why are we developing on the farmland? Why are we developing on the greenbelt if your own task force said that we have enough land to build, that we have enough land to meet what we need in the province of Ontario?

But I want to say, because I listen to these guys all the time—it drives me nuts, by the way. Well, not really, but I do listen to you guys.

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Well, you're never right, but I listen.

But I want to say this clearly, and I think this is important to say, because I listen to that side of the House talk about this all the time. They talk about our skilled trades all the time. But let me tell you: I agree that our skilled trades should be building these homes. And I talked to the trades yesterday, by the way.

They had a luncheon, and I went to talk to them. They don't want to be developing on the greenbelt. They don't want to be ripping up farmland, because they understand how important the greenbelt is to our environment. They understand how important it is to have food, and they understand that they have kids and grandkids and they want to make sure their kids are going to be okay. Because we all—I don't think there's anybody in this House; I don't even think anybody who is sitting in the gallery wouldn't agree that when we leave this earth, we want to make sure that we leave it better than when we got here, that we make sure our kids and our grandkids can have the same quality of life we've had. Because quite frankly, everybody in this room is privileged. Everybody in this room makes—well, not everybody, because I don't know what the Clerks make, but I would say everybody makes above \$116,000. On that side of the House, they probably make a little more.

1010

We need our skilled trades working in the province of Ontario. So I agree our skilled trades should do it, but I also agree that as we build these homes or, quite frankly, if we build other infrastructure—in my area I've been waiting 15 years for a hospital to get built. But I believe local workers should do it. Do you agree with that, Madam Speaker? I don't know if you can answer, but I'm sure you agree that local workers, local companies, local engineers should be doing the work.

IBW: I talked to them yesterday. I talked to LiUNA yesterday. They're all in agreement. So when you stand up here, like you did last night—late at night, by the way—and say, “Well, that side is just the party of no,” it's not accurate. It's wrong. It's misleading. I am not a party of no. I'm saying build the houses. I'm saying use our skilled trades. I'm saying our kids need it. I'm saying our new Canadians need it. What we don't need to do is build on the greenbelt. Ripping up our farmland—what are we doing? Why are we destroying our food source?

Has anybody gone to the grocery store lately? They came out with a poll yesterday—I'm not sure it was a poll, but it said that food prices are going to go up another 5% this year. Does it make sense getting rid of our local food? Why are we not supporting our farmers? It makes no sense.

So when you come here and talk about building houses, I agree 100%. What I don't agree with is tearing up the greenbelt. I think it's fair, and I think it's reasonable. I've already said, Madam Speaker, a developer, Mr. Rice—think about this. Again, I know you can't talk, but I appreciate you looking at me because I'm talking to you

like I'm supposed to be, right, unlike other people who kind of do this all the time.

Mr. Rice bought 700 acres of the greenbelt. He paid \$80 million in September of this year. If this bill gets passed, do you know how much that land is worth? A lot more than \$80 million. He just happened—and it's in the record, so I'm not talking out of school. I believe it's accurate. I don't want to say anything here that isn't accurate, unlike some people in this House do quite regularly, quite frankly. It will be worth millions of dollars more—millions. He was a donor to the PC Party. I asked the question, because I thought it was fair to ask that question, how can you support that? Do you know what happened? Nothing. They never answered; never said a word on it.

I've got two minutes left. I should probably start my speech. But it's frustrating to sit here and listen every day that we don't believe in building homes. We absolutely do. I'm going to start—I've got a couple of minutes left. I'll try and get through some of it.

If Bill 23 was the nail, Bill 39 is the hammer. This legislation tightens the grip that this government has on municipalities and strips communities of local decision-making powers. It's an anti-democratic approach to local government. I'm going to try and talk about two things: first, the construction of this bill and how it affects our municipalities, and second, the effects that this government will have on the province in the name of getting their developers and friends even richer.

I'm going to ask anybody here—and I don't know about the people who are sitting up here, whether you guys are businesses or not, but I'll ask anybody—because they talk about interest rates; you know, we've got interest rates and how hard it's going to be for our kids to buy. We have another developer that borrowed \$100 million to buy greenbelt land and—get this—do you know what it was at? Can anybody answer what the interest rates were? Anybody? Because I'm struggling to pay an interest rate if it's 5%. He borrowed \$100 million at 21%. Who does that if they don't have advanced knowledge of what's going on? I just wanted to get that out, because that's exactly what happened.

Twenty-one per cent—holy God. And we remember—remember, going back in the 1980s? Anybody that old? I'm sure there are a couple on that side that are. Remember when interest rates were 21%? When you had to borrow for your house, it was 21%. How many remember that? And what happened? The government was giving people money to buy their homes—\$5,000, grants and stuff like that—so people can get into, in some cases, a semi or a small house. Remember that? This guy borrowed \$100 million at 21%. But he didn't know anything. He didn't know you were going to develop on the greenbelt. He was just lucky—lucky guy.

Anyway, I've got four seconds left. I appreciate you giving me the time to speak this morning. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

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

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOLIDAY MESSAGES

Mrs. Robin Martin: The evening of December 18 will mark the start of Hanukkah for members of the Jewish community within my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence and across our province. Also known as the Festival of Lights—“chag urim” in Hebrew—this holiday commemorates the rededication of the holy temple. Hanukkah candles are a symbol for the enduring spirit of the Jewish people, standing defiantly against persecution and discrimination, and I am proud that our government continues to stand with them in defence of freedom and against the scourge of anti-Semitism. To those celebrating, let me say: Chag Chanukah sameach.

Later this month, Sunday, December 25, will mark Christmas in the Christian calendar. On this holiday, Christians gather to share meals, exchange gifts and celebrate the birth of Jesus. To those celebrating Christmas, let me wish you a joyous and blessed Christmas season.

Last Saturday, I joined the chair of the Fairbank Village BIA, Enzo Torrone; his organization; and lots of community members, young and old, at the annual festival of lights on Eglinton, which I faithfully attend. I had the pleasure of meeting many neighbours at the events, dancing with them to a great live band and participating in a tree-lighting ceremony.

However you celebrate this holiday season, I extend my best wishes to you, to the constituents of Eglinton–Lawrence, of course, and to all Ontarians for a joyous holiday season and a happy and prosperous new year.

FOOD DRIVES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This festive season, I want to recognize the many London volunteers and donors who are helping bring joy to those who are struggling.

First, a huge thank you to the Hyde Park and District Lions Club and the Hyde Park BIA. This year, the annual Santa Claus parade raised 25% more money than in 2021, and 20% more food—donations that will help stock the Northwest London Resource Centre’s Emergency Food Cupboard. With the rising cost of groceries and rent, more London West families than ever are relying on the food bank, especially those who are single parents, newcomers or those living with disability or unemployment.

Next, many thanks to Wortley Pride for organizing a free Christmas dinner for 100 2SLGBTQ youth, about 75% of whom are homeless. With no family to celebrate Christmas with, the Wortley Pride dinner reminds these youths that they are loved and that their community is there for them.

Finally, a big shout-out to Life*Spin for their annual Christmas sponsorship program, which puts a Christmas dinner on the table and gifts under the tree for children from low-income families. Last weekend, London firefighters, police and paramedics held an open house to help collect toys for the program, which has the highest number

of families and children registered since the program began in 1994.

Christmas is such a difficult time for those struggling with hardship and poverty. These special organizations, volunteers and donors are making the holidays just a little brighter for those in need.

SNOWFLAKE BREAKFAST DÉJEUNER FLOCONS DE NEIGE

M^{me} Lucille Collard: In Ottawa–Vanier, every year, we get together for a landmark event called the Snowflake Breakfast, le Déjeuner Flocons de neige. We raised money for Partage Vanier, a food bank of the Vanier Community Services Centre that provides for those in need—a food bank that has seen the demand for help skyrocket, unfortunately.

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But this year we raised \$53,000. In total, 350 people came out to the Snowflake Breakfast and 515 people received delivered breakfast boxes. Thank you to the Centre Pauline-Charron, Chartwell residences, the Vanier Museopark and the Vanier BIA for their dedication to this important cause in support of Partage Vanier Food Bank, and thank you to our community police officers who were also there to lend a hand.

It was wonderful to take part in this community activity alongside Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, MP Mona Fortier, councillors Rawlson King and Stéphanie Plante, and also former councillor Mathieu Fleury.

I really enjoyed serving coffee with the help of the young volunteers from the Collège catholique Samuel-Genest, and everyone enjoyed a delightful time listening and singing along with the incredible choir of the Centre d’excellence artistique de l’Ontario de l’École secondaire publique De La Salle.

It was for me a great way to get in the holiday spirit and I want to take this opportunity to wish all of you, MPPs and your staff, as well as all the staff here at the Legislative Assembly and the people of Ottawa–Vanier, a perfect and very happy holiday season.

GURU PRAMUKH SWAMI MAHARAJ

Mr. Deepak Anand: December 7 marks the birthday of His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, a spiritual leader and guru of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, a worldwide organization dedicated to promoting harmony.

Born on December 7, 1921, Pramukh Swami Maharaj followed a spiritual path from an early age, seeking purity and possessing a striking humility and selfless desire to help all. Swami Ji lent his ears to millions around the world, shared their sorrows and taught them how to overcome personal battles.

Under his leadership, BAPS has more than 1,100 mandirs, including 150 centres in North America, offering a welcoming and spiritual space for devotees. His belief was that you cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself.

With over 55,000 volunteers globally and here at home, BAPS has engaged in the art of giving, helped over 700,000 individuals from addiction and substance abuse, recycled seven million aluminum cans, planted 10 million trees and provided free medical service to 2.5 million tribal communities. Here in Toronto, it provided 4,400 hours of service, vaccinated over 21,000 people in 24 days during COVID, including many, many residents of Mississauga–Malton.

It is a pleasure to celebrate His Holiness's birthday with his words: "Bija na bhala ma, aapdu bhalu Che."

GERRY SAXTON

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I rise today to commemorate a hero in my community. Gerry Saxton passed away suddenly last week in his 18th year of service with the St. Catharines fire department. Sadly, Gerry succumbed to injuries he received in the line of duty.

Gerry was a husband, a father, a neighbour, a first responder, and he was also my dear friend. As I would tell anyone that asked, Gerry was a true Merrittonian. He must have coached soccer and played street hockey with half the kids in Merritton. He had an incredible work ethic. Everyone that met him instantly loved him.

As much as Gerry was devoted to his community, he loved his family the most. He was a loving husband of 29 years to Lorraine and a proud father of four.

A special thank-you to the St. Catharines fire department and the professional firefighters' association, IAFF Local 485. Thank you to all the firefighters that came from across Ontario to celebrate Gerry's life last week.

I will always remember Gerry as the best part of my community, that person who always encouraged others to do the things that they found difficult. I will miss him, and I know everyone he touched feels the same way.

Thank you, Gerry. You were a phenomenal firefighter. We honour you, and we will forever show our gratitude for our time we spent with you.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Good morning, Speaker. As we approach the end of the year and the holiday season, I wanted to highlight some of the great initiatives that our government has taken since being re-elected with a larger majority back in June.

We passed Bill 7, More Beds, Better Care Act, to protect vulnerable and elderly people in our community. Bill 7 frees up hospital beds so that people waiting for surgeries can get them sooner. It eases pressure on crowded emergency departments by admitting patients sooner.

We passed Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, in order to support new homebuyers, the younger generation and new immigrants to Canada. Bill 23 will lead our province towards our goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years and towards resolving our housing supply crisis.

We passed Bill 26, Strengthens Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act. Bill 26 will protect students and strengthen supports for post-secondary students reporting sexual violence and harassment.

Our government also passed Bill 36, the fall economic statement. Bill 36 will increase ODSP payments by 5%, increase the monthly earnings exemption of ODSP recipients from \$200 to \$1,000, double the guaranteed annual income supplements for low-income seniors and extend relief at the pumps by cutting the gas tax by 5.7 cents a litre.

I want to thank the people of Oakville for re-electing me with an even larger plurality of the vote in 2018. It's the greatest honour of my life, and I want to wish all the people of Oakville, all the members of the assembly and all the legislative staff a very merry Christmas and happy holidays.

EDUCATION FUNDING

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Good morning. Growing concerns from parents are being shared with me about the underfunding of our public schools. Church Street, Nelson Mandela and Lord Dufferin public schools take in students from across the Church Wellesley Village, Bay Cloverhill, Regent Park, Moss Park and other communities in the downtown east of Toronto.

Parents like Ines, Murshida and Shifani are telling me how our schools need more supervisors, education workers, special-needs assistants, guidance counsellors and social workers in schools to provide additional supports for their students.

Speaker, the response to violence in schools is not more police officers. Instead, the Premier should invest in the social determinants of health, which are exactly the same as the social determinants of safety: housing, education, food insecurity, early childhood development.

This government needs to invest in high-quality publicly funded education. This government needs to invest in meeting their own standards by reducing class sizes. This government needs to invest in funding existing schools so that they are well maintained. This government needs to invest in helping students living in poverty and to lifting them out of poverty.

This government needs to do all of that and more, but they need to do this by keeping our children, our teachers and their families safe by investing in education and not in bringing more police officers back to schools.

MESSAGE D'APPRÉCIATION POUR LES BÉNÉVOLES ET LE PERSONNEL

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: Lundi était la journée internationale des bénévoles. Nous avons eu l'opportunité de reconnaître plusieurs bénévoles dans toutes les circonscriptions de la province de l'Ontario lors d'une cérémonie virtuelle la semaine dernière.

C'est grâce à plusieurs de ces bénévoles que nous avons eu la chance de participer à plusieurs activités comme les parades de Noël, les illuminations d'arbres de Noël, les

programmes de distribution d'habits de neige, et la distribution de cadeaux de Noël pour les familles moins favorisées. Donc, j'aimerais dire merci à ces bénévoles pour leur travail incroyable.

Sur une autre note, hier nous avons eu la visite de plusieurs membres des équipes des bureaux de députés de la province. C'était une belle opportunité pour nous et pour eux de se rencontrer entre collègues et de faire connaissance.

Merci à notre premier ministre d'avoir pris le temps de rencontrer ces gens et de les remercier pour leur travail.

À ces personnes qui travaillent à représenter les députés et qui sont à l'avant-plan pour servir les résidents de la province de l'Ontario, j'aimerais les remercier pour le travail formidable qu'ils font, jour après jour.

Je termine en souhaitant un joyeux temps des fêtes à tous les membres de l'équipe, aux employés de l'Assemblée législative, à mes collègues députés, ainsi qu'à tous les résidents de notre belle province de l'Ontario. Joyeuses fêtes.

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HOLIDAY MESSAGES

Mr. Dave Smith: Christmas is the season where we can pause and reflect on all the good from the past year that will provide us with hope for the coming year. As I pause and reflect, I'd like to share some things that I hope will be found in the stockings of some of my friends:

—for J. Murray Jones, the now-retired mayor of my home community and longest-serving warden of Peterborough county, a gift card from the classic car mechanic so Ruby will run smoothly enough this summer that he and Anne can enjoy some long drives throughout God's country;

—for Mayor Carolyn Amyotte, a very simple request, photo radar;

—for Mayor Jim Martin, a very large excavator to dig a big hole, big enough for 128 beds on Smith Drive;

—for Mayor Senis, a round table filled with friends who enjoy the southern part of Lakefield;

—for Mayor Terry Lambshead, a season void of LDD moths so all of us can enjoy hikes throughout some of Ontario's most beautiful foliage;

—for Mayor Heather Watson, the long-awaited high-speed broadband to be completed on time, eliminating the last dial-up in our township;

—for Mayor Leal, 11 paddles to be shared with his council so they can move the canoe smoothly through the Otonabee River, even when they hit the rapids; and finally

—for Chief Keith Knott, a return to good health so that all of Peterborough county can enjoy the wisdom and experience that he has brought to Curve Lake for so long.

From my family to yours, however you celebrate, Merry Christmas.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Natalie Pierre: It's an honour to rise in the House to speak to my motion tabled earlier today that would

require Ontario schools to include mental health literacy in the curriculum as a requirement for graduation.

Since 2019, I've been advocating to have mental health education included in the public school curriculum, working closely alongside Minister Lecce. I'm incredibly grateful for his assistance in making this happen. This is a topic that is close to my heart, and we have an opportunity to do right by our children and future generations.

Mental health issues start early, and young people aged 15 to 24 are more likely to experience mental illness or substance-use disorders than any other age group. COVID-19 has impacted all students, with many facing new vulnerabilities.

The introduction of mandatory mental health education delivered directly and intentionally to Ontario students complements our government's unprecedented investments in student mental health supports. Developing literacy is what schools do best, and mental health literacy can be taught, just like any other subject, including math, English or physical health education.

Mental health education empowers students with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to navigate their mental health before getting to crisis, reducing health care costs and the strain on our health care system and saving lives.

TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would like to inform the House that the following documents have been tabled:

—the 2021-22 annual report of the French Language Services Commissioner, from the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario; and

—a report entitled Operation of the Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993, from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is my distinct pleasure to welcome the former MP for Waterloo, my mentor, Walter McLean, and his son, Ian McLean, who is the president of the chamber of commerce. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Applause.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, get up.

In addition, two wonderful firefighters from Waterloo: Brett Gibson and Adam Overgaard. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: We are joined today by the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. Sitting in the members' gallery, we have president Greg Horton and secretary-treasurer Bob McCutcheon. Mr. Speaker, these are the everyday heroes serving and protecting our families and our communities and our province. On behalf of the government of Ontario, Premier Ford, the Solicitor General and all MPPs—on behalf of Ontario, we say thank you.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Chris Slota from St. Catharines, vice-president of Local 485, and Ryan Madill, St. Catharines president and—may I say—he ran against me in the last provincial election. But we've been good friends since then, right, Ryan?

Also, I've got one more. I've got Leona McAusland from Orillia, and I look forward to meeting with you later on this afternoon. Thank you for coming.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome to the Ontario Legislature the Ottawa Professional Fire Fighters' Association. I look forward to meeting with Doug McLennan, David André and Malcolm Todd later today.

M^{me} France Gélinas: First, I would like to introduce Ema MacAulay, who is the page captain for the day. She comes from the beautiful riding of Sudbury.

Second, I would like to introduce a good friend of ours, Michael Squarzolo, who is the president of Sudbury Professional Fire Fighters Association, as well as Jeff Wicklander, vice-president from Sudbury. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I rise to introduce Craig Thompson, president and executive producer of Ballinran Entertainment, who is here for film day in Ontario, Speaker.

Mr. Ted Hsu: I'd like to welcome Ayrton Potter and the Kingston Professional Firefighters Association to the Ontario Legislature today.

MPP Jill Andrew: I'd like to welcome Cynthia Lynch, managing director of FilmOntario, and Jane Tattersall, senior vice-president of Post Toronto and partner with Formosa Group. I'm going to do my best "Alistair:" Alistair Hepburn, executive director of ACTRA Toronto.

And I'd also like to welcome the Hillcrest Community School choir, who will be performing over the lunch hour, led by their amazing music teacher, Ms. Jamie Roblin, and a special shout-out to Dalia, who is one of the star singers in that choir.

Mr. Brian Riddell: I would like to welcome all Cambridge firefighters here today, who I'll be meeting with at 1 o'clock, and I'd also like to welcome John Holman here today.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I too would like to welcome all the firefighters here at Queen's Park today, with a special shout-out to Colin Hunter and Chris Boehmer from the Guelph Professional Fire Fighters Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to give a very warm welcome to my legislative assistant, Jeremy Istead; his wife, Marian Kelly; and his parents, Diane and Paul Istead. Welcome to the Legislature.

I would also like to welcome the Toronto Professional Firefighters to the House today, and a special shout-out to John Blair, John Maclachlan and James Wenger.

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to welcome, from the Canadian Manufacturing Coalition: Robert Cattle, Ryan Levins, Dave Cherniak and Rahul Duggar. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would like to welcome, from my riding, Pete Dyson, Nathan Langille, Brad Whittle and Cory Devereaux, who are here today on behalf of the Oshawa Professional Firefighters Association Local 465. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'd like to give a warm welcome to Wayne Currie and Kris Matton of the Windsor Professional Firefighters Association today.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like give a warm welcome to Lauren Jervis, the VP external of the Postdoctoral Association of Western University, as well as Craig Thompson, the president and executive producer at Ballinran Entertainment and the founder of the Southwestern Ontario Film Alliance. He's here with FilmOntario. I welcome all members to visit them at 5 p.m. today in the dining room.

I'd also like to welcome the London Professional Fire Fighters Association and thank them for their great work at LIFE*SPIN's Lights and Sirens Toy Drive. I hope that all members can visit them at 5 p.m. in room 230.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): If there are no objections, I'd like to continue with the introduction of guests.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Page Max Weatherhead is a page captain today and his parents, Sharon Navarro and Brian Weatherhead, are in the audience today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Also Mike Tucker, Bob Brandon and John Hanlan from the Whitby Professional Firefighters: Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Jill Andrew: I just wanted to say, to the Toronto Professional Firefighters, thank you very much for your work. You run in when most of us would run out. Thank you for your work.

Mr. Mike Harris: I have a few people to welcome here today. I would like welcome the McLean family, obviously up in the Speaker's gallery.

More importantly, though, my staff are here today from Queen's Park and also from the riding. We have Michael Pew, Kasia Kaminska, Jesse Bowman, Emily Vanderkolff and Scott McNab. Thank you so much for all of that you do.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I too want to welcome Sharon Navarro and Brian Weatherhead, and Hedy Navarro and Roy Navarro, who are the parents—they're not here, but still, they're on the Hansard now—and the grandparents of page captain Max. Where are you, Max? There you are. They're proud parents. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to welcome all of the members of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters representing 32,600 firms and 773,000 employees across Ontario.

I would also like to welcome Paul Auger from the North Bay Professional Firefighters.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I want to welcome John Maclachlan, James Wenger and Tori Goulart, who I'll be meeting this afternoon from the Toronto firefighters' association.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to welcome a couple of people from the Peterborough firefighters' association, Mikaela McGill and Captain Jim Woodley.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Graydon Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for making sure I got my squats in today. I've been up and down quite a bit. You're looking after my personal well-being. I love it.

Just want to say hello and welcome to some of my staff here today: John Mark Da Re, Melissa Candalaria and Nathan Cockram. I'd say welcome to Queen's Park, but you're here every day, so keep doing a great job at Queen's Park.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to welcome, from the Sarnia professional firefighters today, Matt Madere.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'd like to recognize the wonderful regional councillor from St. Catharines, Sal Sorrento. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I'd like to welcome the members of the Thunder Bay firefighters' association to Queen's Park today. I look forward to meeting with you this afternoon, and thank you to all the firefighters for the tremendous work you do in our province.

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to welcome to the House the Ontario Clean Air Alliance.

Also, Ryan Morrison and Steven D'Aloisio from the professional firefighters' association. I'm looking forward to meeting you later this afternoon.

Hon. David Piccini: I too would like to welcome all the firefighters to Queen's Park today, as well as a good friend, Jim Corcoran, who's here from Northumberland-Peterborough South.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I would like to introduce the Barrie firefighters Eric Webster and Joey Baker. Welcome and thank you.

Ms. Jess Dixon: I just want to give a quick shout out to Waterloo firefighter Adam Overgaard for answering my many questions, and Cambridge firefighter John Holman for being one of the two-man team who built my Santa Claus parade float.

Hon. George Pirie: I want to take a moment to welcome Matthieu Quirion from the const office in Timmins, Ontario. Welcome, Matthieu.

Ms. Doly Begum: I am also delighted to welcome the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association here, Local 3888, but more specifically Andrew Curtis and Bill Morris to the House here. I'm sure they're somewhere around in one of the galleries.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I would like to give a warm welcome to one of my amazing volunteers, Adam Rodreigo. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters, and in particular Tori Goulart, as well as vice-president John Maclachlan. I look forward to our discussion this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. That concludes our five minutes of introduction of visitors.

QUESTION PERIOD

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. This government has refused to listen to people on Ontario Works and ODSP who are being legislated into deep poverty. The NDP invited social assistance recipients to a round table to share their experiences with the Premier and the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. We've brought their voices to the House in a report, which was delivered to the minister and to the Deputy Premier this morning.

The stories that people shared are profoundly heart-breaking and enraging. Like Trevor, who only gets to eat one meal a day. Or Declan, who wasn't able to get a haircut before going to his mother's memorial service. Will the Premier listen to Ontarians, double the rates and ensure that everyone in Ontario can live a healthy, dignified life?

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I think it's always important to hear from citizens, Ontarians, about their life experiences, and that's why our government has made a decade's—a historic investment in ODSP. It is historic, the largest increase in decades, and we've indexed that to inflation—never been done before in Ontario's history. We've raised the threshold and created an earnings exemption that we quadrupled from—well, quintupled from \$200 a month to \$1,000 a month.

These are all measures that we're taking to help people who can work, but we're also helping people who can't work and we're continuing to use a multi-ministry, cross-government effort: the micro-credential programs, the mental health programs, the child care benefits, the LIFT and CARE tax credits, the minimum wage. These are all things that we have done to improve the lives of citizens across Ontario, particularly those who are vulnerable and dependent on support from government. But we're enabling people, creating meaningful and purposeful employment and filling the jobs that exist today, putting them back into—

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

The supplementary question, the member for Ottawa West-Nepean.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: What is clear, Speaker, is that legislating Ontarians into deep poverty is having profoundly negative effects on their physical health, their mental health and their emotional well-being. Tracey has to live on egg salad sandwiches or spaghetti for weeks on end because that's all she can afford on \$80 a month. Jordan has to skip meals to provide for his daughter and can no longer afford to pay for her swimming lessons.

The minister can throw around the word "historic" all she wants. What's clear are the results. People are suffering. Will the government listen to their voices and double the rates?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Once again, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. You know, if the member opposite won't take my word for the real improvement we are making in people's lives, I would suggest you listen to those who provide services and supports every day: "This is great news for people receiving ODSP as the employment income threshold will have a huge positive impact for them. Thank you to the government of Ontario ... for your ongoing support." That's from Brad Saunders, chief executive officer, Community Living Ontario.

"We are pleased with the announcement. This means more money in the pockets of the people we support, as well as improving their quality of life. We thank the government of Ontario for their continued support." That's Valérie Picher, chair of the board, Community Living Toronto.

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"This announcement is a signal from the government that they are listening. This is a definite step in the right direction. We look forward to continuing our work with the government," says Chris Beesley, CEO of Community Living Ontario.

"A game-changer and change in a very, very significant way," says Mark Wafer, interim CEO of the Abilities Centre.

We're making positive change, Speaker—

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

Final supplementary: the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Participants in the NDP's round table who have disabilities shared that they would love to be working, but they can't because of their disability. Parents who are full-time caregivers for children with disabilities are forced to live on Ontario Works, unable to even buy diapers or other supplies for their children because the rates are so low. This government's policies are forcing people with disabilities to live in deep poverty.

But as Paul, an ODSP recipient, said, "Becoming disabled can happen to anyone. It could happen to you." Why is the government making people with disabilities live in poverty instead of doubling the rates?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Our government is taking the measures necessary after decades of neglect by the previous opposition and the NDP. Speaker, it was the Liberals who had the chance to raise rates. In fact, they waited until they were about to lose an election to even suggest it. The NDP had a chance to make it a priority when they propped up the Liberals for three years, while they chose to sit on the sidelines and didn't make it an issue. And while they talked, it was our government that acted. I just find it incredible, the investments that we're making, that you could have done and you never did. You abandoned it when you could have done it.

We made the investments in social assistance and we're investing again. We're indexing rates to inflation. We've made historic raises. We're calling on the federal government to commit to their promise of a Canada Disability Benefit. We're continuing to make the necessary changes to support people—

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

I remind the members to please make their comments through the Chair.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. The verdict is in on this government's so-called housing plan, and it's damning. Mayors, councils, experts and community groups are all united against this so-called plan.

Bills 23 and 39 are undemocratic. They will financially devastate municipalities. They're harmful to the environment, and they won't build the homes that people need. Will this government finally listen to Ontarians, and repeal Bill 23 and withdraw Bill 39 before it's too late?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: The Leader of the Opposition talked about democracy. Here's a party that has, essentially, an acclamation for their leader. They've got a Castro-esque ballot that's going to be available in March with one name on the ballot—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to caution the member on his language.

Minister, please conclude your answer.

Hon. Steve Clark: Even with that, Speaker—you want to talk about democracy? Only 27% of that caucus, only eight members out of 30, could even do a public declaration in favour of the acclaimed new leader. I'm not going to take any lessons from the 30 New Democrats in this House about democracy.

We're going to continue to stand up for young families. We're going to continue to be there for newcomers to Ontario and we're going to continue to stand up for seniors who want a safe—

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary question: the member for University—Rosedale.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. The government has said it is looking at continuing its assault on democratic norms by bringing strong-mayor powers to more regions, including Halton, Durham, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York. We do not have to sacrifice democratic norms to address our housing crisis.

Instead of doubling down on minority rule, can your government withdraw Bill 39 immediately?

Hon. Steve Clark: New Democrats can't build homes; they're a house divided in the Legislature. I'm not sure what that member and her party have against fantastic regional chairs, like Nando Iannicca in Peel, Wayne Emmerson in York and Jim Bradley in Niagara. I want to work with those three chairs; I want to work with the other three elected chairs when we appoint a facilitator, and when do, as our Premier has said many times, we want to make sure mayors have the tools to get shovels in the ground faster. The extension of strong-mayor powers in Bill 39 does exactly that, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary. The member for Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: The minister and this government can spin it as they like, but the facts remain: Bill 39 undermines democracy, it undermines environmental protection, and it does nothing to provide affordable housing.

It also undermines locally elected councillors. I know there are multiple Scarborough MPPs here whose counterparts, the councillors in those regions were some of the signatories to the letter that was recently sent out to the Premier to reconsider Bill 39. They haven't even gotten a chance to sit down and have a meeting about Bill 39 because this government spent last night ramming it through.

My question is, have the Premier and this Minister of Municipal Affairs listened to some of the Scarborough members on his side, especially the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility? Thank you very much.

Hon. Steve Clark: I can assure the honourable member that, on the government side, the members from Scarborough are standing up for that young family that wants to realize the dream of home ownership. The members from Scarborough are standing up, welcoming new Canadians to come to our province and live in Scarborough, but we have one problem that New Democrats stand in front of every single, solitary time, and that's building more housing of every type, of every shape, of every size and every price range. It's the members from Scarborough who are standing up for the people of Scarborough.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. In Durham, there is a layer of protection around the greenbelt called the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act. This Premier is peeling it back in Bill 39.

The minister's public justification was a letter from the former mayor of Pickering. However, late the other night, Pickering city councillors unanimously decided they don't support the repeal of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has no justification for removing the ag preserve protections from the greenbelt, and now he doesn't have the support of council.

Will the Premier let the member for Pickering-Uxbridge side with his community, abandon his assault on the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve and choose to protect prime farmland in perpetuity as promised?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Well, Speaker, I want to assure members of this House, I want to assure people in Pickering and Uxbridge that you're not going to find a bigger champion to have Ontarians realize home ownership than our Minister of Finance, Peter Bethlenfalvy. He is unwavering in his commitment, as we all are on the government side. We looked Ontarians in the eye during the election and said we were going to put a plan in place to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

We also realized that with the federal government's new immigration targets, we're going to have an extra 500,000 people coming to our country—60% of them are going to come to the GTA. We need to ensure that we've got a plan in place and looking at areas like this one that former Mayor Ryan aptly articulated as a site that's been talked about for over 20 years. The conversation around this property preceded the creation of the greenbelt.

I can tell you something, we're going to continue to put policies in place that get shovels in the ground to build those 1.5 million—

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

And the supplementary, the member for Ottawa West-Nepean.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Back to the Premier: It's not just Pickering city council that voted against Bill 39. Last week, Ottawa's new city council voted unanimously in support of a motion condemning Bill 39 and its attack on democracy. Ottawa residents are furious that this government is trampling on basic democratic principles, imperiling affordable housing, destroying wetlands and costing our city millions of dollars with its Bills 23 and 39.

1100

My question to the Premier: Does the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services stand behind those bills or does she stand with her constituents, the people of Ottawa?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: In response to the municipal comments made about Bill 23, Dr. Rob Gillezeau has also said, "It's disappointing but not surprising to see municipalities come so hard against one of the most effective pieces to lower prices in the new housing legislation."

The members opposite should be very familiar with Dr. Gillezeau. He's an accredited economist, but he also works as a policy adviser to the future leader of the NDP.

TRADE MISSION

Mrs. Nina Tangri: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Last week the minister was in India to engage with business leaders and promote Ontario at the Indo-Canadian Business Chamber's annual convention in New Delhi. This was an opportunity to strengthen relationships with economic partners and continue attracting investments in the manufacturing, technology, and life sciences sector.

We can all agree that our government must continue to ensure Ontario has a strong and competitive tech ecosystem while also ensuring that there are plenty of good jobs for individuals and families across this province. Will the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade please update the House on his trade mission to India?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Since we've been out sharing the message of how Ontario is open for business we've been hearing interesting messages coming back. In a world filled with turmoil, companies see Ontario as a beacon; a

sea of calm; a reliable, trusted partner; and a place they can locate their business.

While in Mumbai, 88 Pictures, an animation and media entertainment company, announced Ontario as the location for their first international expansion. Working with our great partner, Toronto Global, 88 Pictures will hire 150 professionals, starting in the new year. They told us that Ontario has everything they need to succeed. It proves that Ontario is open for business. Please welcome us in joining 88 Pictures to Ontario.

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

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the minister for his response. It is evident that our government attending the Indo-Canadian business convention was timely in advancing Ontario as a competitive place for businesses to invest and grow. In an increasingly globalized world, ensuring good working relationships with the world's strongest economies is more important than ever.

As the minister correctly stated, Ontario must continue to promote itself as a great place to do business. Can the minister elaborate further on the positive outcomes and future opportunities Ontario can expect due to our trade mission in India?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Our mission to India was also an opportunity to personally thank the many companies who located in Ontario because of our previous mission. We met with LTTS, which just opened in in Markham; HCL, which now have 1,500 employees in Mississauga; Tata Consultancy Services, which just announced 5,000 new hires; and Zoho, which just opened in the town of Cornwall.

We met with leading companies like Essar, ITC Infotech, Tata Elxsi and up-and-comers like Pingkaksho and Witzeal Technologies, all leading India companies looking to locate worldwide. They're fully aware that Ontario is the number-two tech cluster in all of North America: 20,000 tech companies, 400,000 employees, 65,000 STEM grads, all part of our world-class ecosystem. That's our competitive edge. That's why companies from around the world continue to locate in Ontario.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. In its response to the government's proposed repeal of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, Parks Canada warns, "There is a probable risk of irreversible harm to wildlife, natural ecosystems and agricultural landscapes within Rouge National Urban Park, thereby reducing the viability and functionality of the park's ecosystems and farmland."

Parks Canada also says the provincial government has failed to meet obligations under its binding agreement with Parks Canada respecting the Rouge National Urban Park. Why is the minister going so far out of his way to violate so many agreements and break so many promises?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Graydon Smith: As everyone in this House knows, and as we've talked about over and over again, it is this government's intention to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

Frankly, the federal government's opinion on this is somewhat misguided. The park is not attached to the Duffins Rouge. We know that protections will be in place as we go forward, as home builders build these homes that we desperately need. The conservation measures will still be in place; the wetland evaluations will still take place.

There's an opportunity to solve the problem here. We're taking that opportunity. We need to take that opportunity. We will take that opportunity.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: My question is to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Speaker, it has been very clear that this government does not prioritize Indigenous rights. The failure to engage in dialogue with the rightsholders about the duty to consult and accommodate makes Bill 23 unlawful at worst and undemocratic at best.

Why doesn't this government just say their housing plan is more important than upholding Indigenous rights? Why don't you just come out and say you do not care about Indigenous rights? Meegwetch.

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

Hon. Greg Rickford: It may surprise the member that I don't see it that way, and neither does our government. We have a pressing and substantial challenge that we're turning into an opportunity, and that is to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

We know that across this province, housing shortages are real. They're real for families living in municipalities, in big cities and in Indigenous communities. That's why we will move ahead with a balanced approach to build 1.5 million homes in 10 years, to work with our Indigenous communities and their leadership to ensure the housing opportunities are there for them as well. That's what we're hearing from them, and that's what we intend to pursue.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

DÉVELOPPEMENT DU NORD DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: My question is for the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development. Under the previous Liberal government, our transportation infrastructure system urgently needed investment. Unfortunately, this neglect profoundly impacted road safety for many in northern and Indigenous communities.

Communities in northern Ontario face unique challenges and need our government's support for safe and reliable roadways. Particularly in the north, winter weather conditions can make driving on roads even more challenging. Speaker, can the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development please inform the House about our government's plan to improve access and safety for people travelling across northern Ontario?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I want to thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for his question and his great advocacy on behalf of his constituents. His interest in this matter is timely. Just because winter is coming doesn't mean that a government shouldn't be well under way in building a robust winter roads program for northern Ontario. This serves 24,000 residents across Ontario's Far North.

My ministry recently announced more than \$6 million for the next fiscal year to continue supporting the construction and operation of a 3,170-kilometre temporary winter road system. These investments link 32 isolated First Nations communities and the town of Moosonee together to the provincial highway network. This improves the health, social and economic prospects and much-needed supplies to serve those communities. It forms the basis for important corridors in the future to serve these communities.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: C'est formidable d'entendre que notre gouvernement est déterminé à soutenir les travailleurs du nord de l'Ontario. Les communautés du Nord sont uniques et diversifiées, pas seulement sur le plan géographique. Les besoins des collectivités nordiques et autochtones en matière de soutien des entreprises, des chaînes d'approvisionnement et de l'infrastructure sont différents.

Monsieur le Président, le ministre du Développement du Nord et des Affaires autochtones peut-il nous en dire davantage sur ce que fait le gouvernement pour soutenir les communautés du Nord?

L'hon. Greg Rickford: Dans le nord de l'Ontario nous faisons des investissements ciblés pour rendre les communautés francophones plus dynamiques. Grâce à l'entremise de la Société de gestion du Fonds du patrimoine du Nord de l'Ontario, nous avons investi 3,5 millions de dollars dans plus de 10 projets comme, par exemple :

—à Hearst, on a investi non seulement dans les institutions communautaires, mais aussi dans la stratégie touristique francophone;

—à Sudbury, au Collège Boréal, nous avons investi dans une infrastructure essentielle pour le campus principal; et, bien sûr

—à la Rivière des Français, avec leur Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario, pour établir leur Centre de développement jeunesse, économique et communautaire.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Premier. All of Toronto city council opposes the government using Bill 23 to carve up the greenbelt. A majority of council is against Bill 39 imposing minority rule on the people of Toronto, including councillors from Etobicoke. Thousands of Etobicoke residents have signed petitions calling on the government to withdraw both bills.

Premier, have the members of the Etobicoke ridings shared the concerns of their local councillors and constituents, and advocated for them with you?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, the members from Etobicoke support Mayor Tory. They want Mayor Tory, who received a strong city-wide, democratic mandate on October 24, to have the tools to get the job done to be able to make sure that he does his share of the 1.5 million homes we need to build by 2031.

My question back to the New Democratic Party members from the city of Toronto is, why don't you support Mayor Tory? Why are you not supporting measures that Mayor Tory needs to help with our housing supply action plan?

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

Supplementary, the member for Humber River–Black Creek.

Mr. Tom Rakocvic: My question is to the Premier. Bill 23 will have devastating consequences for Brampton, including massive tax hikes, a reduction of parkland, and a lack of affordable housing, to name a few.

It has been reported that “the city anticipates if Bill 23 is approved, based on the loss of revenue from development charges, cash-in-lieu of parkland and additional infrastructure hits, it can expect to lose approximately \$440 million. To make up this lost revenue, without a corresponding increase to provincial grant funding, it would require an 80% increase to the current property tax rate for homeowners.”

Through you, Speaker: Premier, has the President of the Treasury Board told you whether he thinks it's fair that seniors and families in his ridings could face a massive tax hike of up to 80%?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, those numbers don't add up, but you know what does add up? The comments from Dr. Gillezeau, who said, “You're arguing for the exact policy agenda that has prioritized existing homeowners at the expense of young people and newcomers.”

He also argued that the opposition's criticism of Bill 23 is too focused on a populist narrative and forgets about “important implications for housing supply, housing prices and inequality.”

The opposition talks a good game but here's their own NDP policy person, Dr. Gillezeau, arguing against the policy—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Steve Clark: Get your facts straight.

Interjections.

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

Again, I'll remind the members to please make their comments through the Chair.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Brampton North will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It's usually you. Start the clock. The next question.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. On August 31, I asked the minister why the reconstruction of the Argyle Street Bridge in Caledonia was being held up. I appreciated the minister's response, that the reconstruction is a top priority for this government. The minister also spoke about the need for due diligence on a laundry list of tasks that need to be undertaken before reconstruction can begin—tasks I believe had already been completed prior to my question in August.

Speaker, I'm in Caledonia often, but I'm not there every single day, like the people who live there, like the people who own businesses. They tell me there has been no work done on the bridge over the past three months.

The people of Caledonia, the people of Haldimand county, would appreciate an update from this government: What due diligence is still required before shovels are put in the ground?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Stan Cho: I appreciate the question from the member opposite this morning. No government has taken the transportation infrastructure investments more seriously than this government. In fact, we're talking about \$80 billion in improving roads, improving transit for the people of this province, because we realize that after 20 years of neglect from the NDP and Liberals, we're playing catch-up. We have a growing population. In fact, record growth is on the way to this province, 30% growth over the next decade alone. That means that we need to prepare for that future.

There is a process, however, and I am glad to highlight for the member this morning that that process involves important environmental assessment, consultation with Indigenous communities, and in the case of bridges, where necessary, if expropriation is necessary, all of the due diligence that is required for that, as well as consultations with local business and municipalities. It is a process. It is a process that is being followed. But unlike the last government, we're doing it, and we're doing it quickly.

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

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Speaker, I firmly believe all the due diligence that the member opposite speaks about has been done. The only thing that hasn't been done is the reconstruction. I've had reporters ask me, "Why the secrecy in the ministry? Why the stalling?"

The Argyle Street Bridge in Caledonia serves both local and commercial vehicles. The ministry imposed a weight limit on the bridge some time ago, and I believe the ministry is collecting fines on anyone who exceeds that limit. I'd love to know how much money the ministry has raked in.

This century-old bridge collapsed in 1925, and I'm fearful that a bridge deemed to be in state of deterioration in 2001 will be another headline at some time.

Speaker, when I asked my original question in August, the minister pointed the finger at the previous government for not taking action, and we all know what happens when you point the finger. Yet today, we see the member opposite pointing the finger again. This government has had four years to begin reconstruction on this bridge, and all that has happened is a woman has been kicked out of her home on the north side.

Speaker, through you to the minister, what is the date the people of Caledonia can expect the bridge to begin reconstruction?

Hon. Stan Cho: Speaker, a curious tone from the member opposite—and I notice that they're cheered on by the Liberals, who, in fact, were the ones who ignored these types of investments in the first place.

So you want me to point a finger? Well, let me point a finger at 2022-23's number, \$1.7 billion to expand and repair southern Ontario's highways and bridges, which will not only fix the issues that the member is speaking about but create over 11,000 jobs in southern Ontario alone.

Interjections.

Hon. Stan Cho: The reality is after years—decades, in fact—of neglect by the Liberals, who are for some bizarre reason heckling this question this morning, we are taking action and investing in this province, not just for today but for generations to come. We're going to get the job done.

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Rick Byers: In my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and across our province, many Ontarians are looking to join the workforce. However, those with prior involvement in the criminal justice system often face barriers to finding work. As Ontario continues to address our most significant labour shortage in a generation, our government must provide the necessary tools for individuals looking to gain secure employment.

1120

Speaker, can the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development please share with this House what our government is doing to empower individuals, helping them to get a second chance?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to thank the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for that question and for advocating every single day at Queen's Park on behalf of his constituency.

Speaker, our government is helping people realize their dreams and build better lives for themselves and their families. It's easy to pigeonhole people who have criminal records for a single mistake they made when they were much younger. In Canada, four million people have criminal records—10% of the population—and they shouldn't be held back after doing their time, for their entire lives. It's time to break the stigma. Second-chance hiring breaks the cycle of poverty and incarceration. To build a stronger Ontario, we must lift more people up.

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

Mr. Rick Byers: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. I'm glad we're giving people a second chance to build a better life here in Ontario. As we work towards reducing barriers for those seeking to enter and re-enter the workforce, it is crucial to prepare jobseekers with the skills they need to succeed in the workplace.

Speaker, my question is once again to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development: What is our government doing to help train individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to thank the member, again, for this very important question. Speaker, no matter where you come from, what your education level is, or who you know, our government wants to help you get the skills you need to succeed. That's why, in the latest round of our Skills Development Fund, we're prioritizing projects helping those with prior involvement with the criminal justice system. Our fund is helping people of all ages, education levels and backgrounds get the skills they need to be successful in life. If you're able to work, we need you. And if you want to work, we're ready to give you a shot at a better life.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Last week, after the government doubled down claiming that Waterloo region municipalities were sitting on over \$200 million of reserve funds from development charges, in fact it was reported that the legislation, Bill 23, will cost the region \$530 million over 10 years, according to regional staff.

Waterloo Mayor McCabe said the bill's reduction in development charges could leave the city short \$23 million to \$31 million. That's money used to pay for roads, sewers, transit, libraries and other city services, and now the taxpayers will have to foot that bill.

Does the minister know whether the member from Kitchener–Conestoga now regrets his support for Bill 23, now that they know it was based on faulty information and will harm our community's ability to build housing and infrastructure? It's a—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order, order. The House will come to order.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to reply.

Hon. Steve Clark: This is just more mendacious propaganda that the opposition continues to speak about in the House. The—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I thought you said "audacious," but you said "mendacious." You have to withdraw.

Hon. Steve Clark: Withdraw, Speaker.

You know, municipalities already do much of what Bill 23 will legislate. Numerous municipalities have existing DC or property tax incentive programs to encourage infill development or to help contribute to affordable housing.

They include Kitchener, Barrie, Cambridge, Peterborough, Halton Hills, Brampton, Niagara Falls and many, many others. In fact, Toronto has provided \$195 million in DC exemptions between 2018 and 2021 through the Toronto Open Door program, and the other municipality that the member knows is Hamilton, her former leader's community, who has provided \$242 million in DC exemptions between—

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

The supplementary question, the member for Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Hamiltonians are tired of this government not listening to them. Our city council voted to hold the urban boundary, but this government has disregarded and disrespected this. Hamiltonians have been protesting the passage of Bill 23 since the beginning, but the local minister and the local member have chosen not to listen to their communities and voted for it anyway. It is clear Hamiltonians are not happy. They know this move will lead to sprawl, unaffordable housing and car-dependent cities.

Can the minister tell this House if the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the member for Flamborough–Glanbrook have shared with them our city's opposition to Bill 23?

Hon. Steve Clark: I've said many times in the House that when it comes to Hamilton, that council went against their own planning department's projections. They couldn't have it both ways. They can't not want to expand the urban boundary but then also not want to intensify within the urban core. They can't have it both ways.

I didn't have enough time to get this on the record, but again, when it comes to Bill 23, municipalities like the city of Hamilton do exactly what the bill is proposing. Hamilton has provided \$242 million in DC exemptions between 2013 and 2021 for both residential and non-residential development. All Bill 23 does is codify exactly what Hamilton council already does.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: My question is for the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity. The COVID-19 pandemic left many families across Ontario dealing with significant challenges. Sadly, domestic violence incidents increased during this period for many women in our province. In my own community, in 2021, Halton police responded to 3,500 intimate-partner-violence-related calls.

Yesterday, December 6, was the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. On this day, we honour and remember the 14 young women killed and the 13 other individuals injured at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal 33 years ago. It is also a day that we remember countless other women and girls who are victims and survivors of gender-based violence.

Speaker, can the minister provide an update to this House on the government's work to address gender-based violence?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I thank the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and commend her work to recently pass a private member's motion to further the important work to end intimate partner violence by offering continuous education courses to those involved in Family Court systems.

Interjections.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Absolutely. This motion builds on our government's many actions to address gender-based violence. Last year alone, we invested \$11 million in violence-prevention initiatives and nearly \$200 million in the services and wraparound supports for the survivors of violence.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the 707 hub, which hosts Rose of Durham, Catholic Family Services of Durham, Luke's Place and DRIVEN. They are a hub that focuses on addressing post-separation violence, trauma-informed supportive counselling and specialized safety planning, while leveraging its legal expertise in the delivery of legal support, legal aid assistance and court preparation and accompaniment.

When women are supported like they are at the 707 hub, they can break free and end the generational cycle of trauma for themselves and their children.

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

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Thank you to the associate minister for her response. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the front-line professionals who support and comfort survivors of domestic and sexual violence. This is difficult and important work, and, sadly, it is often unrecognized.

I'm encouraged that Ontario endorsed the 10-year National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. This national plan is a solid framework that will ensure reliable and timely access to protect and assist anyone facing gender-based violence.

Speaker, can the minister address how Ontario will implement the national action plan?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Thank you again to the member for Oakville North–Burlington for the question. I am proud that our government endorsed the release of Canada's first National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence this past month. The plan is a historic milestone in fulfilling a long-standing commitment of all levels of government to work together towards an Ontario and Canada free of gender-based violence.

1130

Mr. Speaker, the five pillars of the national action plan are (1) support for victims, survivors and their families; (2) prevention; (3) responsive justice systems; (4) implementing Indigenous-led approaches; and (5) social infrastructure and enabling environment. Ontario led the approach in forwarding the national action plan to the FPT forum of justice ministers, with a written request that they commit to taking further action to improve justice system responses, including by holding perpetrators and offenders accountable.

Safety is a right, not a privilege, and during the negotiations with the federal government, we will work hard to reinforce this as we work towards a fair and equitable approach that will address violence against women across—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The member for Niagara Falls.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. In my riding, the mayor of Fort Erie, Wayne Redekop, said Bill 23 will "significantly benefit developers," with no guarantee it would lead to lower housing prices. The town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has said Bill 23 could lead to the "loss of important cultural heritage resources."

In the riding of Niagara West, the town of Pelham voiced concerns. The town of Lincoln's mayor said, "Amendments to these acts will change how we fund the services and programs our community members expect from us." Speaker, that means the PCs are forcing municipalities to raise taxes. The town of Grimsby outright rejected Bill 23.

Why are the Premier and the MPP from Niagara West ignoring the concerns of Niagara regional municipalities' elected officials?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, our proposed legislation has received strong support, and I'm going to give one example on the record for the member. Niagara Regional Chair Jim Bradley said, "I applaud the province for considering all options at their disposal to address this crisis, including exploration of expansion of so-called strong-mayor powers. As regional chair, I look forward to working with the ... provincial facilitators to find ways to better support our growing population while addressing the housing crisis."

Speaker, it's partners like Jim Bradley, who have a long experience in both municipal and provincial politics in Ontario, who will help our government shape our next steps.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question? The member for Niagara Centre.

Mr. Jeff Burch: My question is to the Premier. Markham's mayor and councillors began their new term at council in a special meeting to unanimously reject Bill 23. This is the government House leader's riding. City staff presented a report showing that the changes in Bill 23 could cost the city \$136 million in annual revenue, requiring an increase of 50% to 80% on property taxes to maintain service levels, equalling an estimated \$600 to \$1,000 a year to the average taxpayer.

Speaker, why does the Premier choose to subsidize developer profits by increasing the taxes of the people of Markham?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Niagara West will come to order.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to reply.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, the numbers the member is professing don't add up. While the Association of Municipalities of Ontario estimates that Bill 23 will result in \$5.1 billion in lost revenue over a nine-year span, municipalities earned \$1.02 billion in investment income and interest earnings from reserve-fund surpluses in 2021 alone. That amounted to double the estimated revenue loss.

The members opposite—especially this member, who doesn't support his chair, Jim Bradley, in Niagara—have to make sure that if they're going to talk numbers, they've got to talk numbers that are correct. We're going to move forward and we're going to have some audits to ensure that the numbers that are being bounced around by our municipal partners are verified.

PROVINCIAL PARKS

Mr. Matthew Rae: Ontario's provincial parks attract local, national and international visitors. The natural environment found at each of our parks reflects each region's beauty, uniqueness and diversity. With so much to offer, it's not surprising that Ontario's provincial parks are experiencing growing numbers, and visitors are eager to take advantage of our parks and to spend time with their friends and family—and I know my friends and family enjoy spending time at our provincial parks as well, Speaker. Visitors can spend their day camping, hiking, canoeing or just relaxing in a wide range of activities and programs at over 330 locations across Ontario.

Speaker, can the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks tell us how our government is supporting Ontario's parks system?

Hon. David Piccini: I want to thank the member for Perth-Wellington for that great question. I'm looking forward to joining you in your riding next week.

Speaker, I think everyone here in the chamber can agree: We all love Ontario parks, and we all love getting outdoors. As a lover of nature, I know first-hand the value of having such an extensive park system in the province of Ontario—in fact, a park system we're expanding. I reflect fondly on the recent announcement to add Alfred Bog to this incredible system, preserving over 3,000 acres and protecting peat moss, one of the most important sources to sequester carbon.

Ontario parks attracted over 800,000 visitors last year, and this government is making investments. In fact, since 2018 alone, this government has invested over \$50 million back into Ontario's park system. These are ensuring that Ontarians are having the best possible visitor experience. We're not done there, and I look forward to expanding on the great work in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the minister for his response. It's great to hear that our government recognizes the importance of keeping our parks vibrant and welcoming to visitors.

The Ontario Parks system is the province's largest outdoor recreation provider, offering a wide range of activities and opportunities. When our parks and facilities are well maintained, our guests are better served, making their stay all the more enjoyable.

Speaker, can the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks please elaborate on what specific investments our government has made to update and improve Ontario's provincial parks?

Hon. David Piccini: I again appreciate the question from the member opposite.

You know, Speaker, when I became Minister of the Environment, I reflected that a previous government had no online store. There was no way to generate revenue from those parks visitors that demanded and wanted things like hoodies or the popular crest—and I see the member from Oshawa looking; I know she's a crest lover as well. We wanted those crests, and online, you can now buy them. In fact, what's exciting is that revenue that we now generate online, 100% of it is going right back into provincial parks. The only answer the Liberals had was to tax people.

Speaker, what's exciting in the winter months: Arrowhead skating. I know members really enjoy that. In Sandbanks, we've invested over \$5.6 million in new campgrounds alone, and I know our Minister of Energy is excited with that. We've also upgraded staffing facilities and built new ones so that the great employees can continue doing the great work. We're the number one employee for students in the summer.

So I encourage everyone: Get out to the parks—

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

The next question.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Chris Glover: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: It's a dark day for democracy in Ontario. In less than an hour, the Conservative MPPs are expected to vote on Bill 39 that will end majority-vote democracy in Ontario municipalities. It will override the voices of elected representatives, including mayor Tom Mrakas of Aurora, who has condemned the government's plans to pave over the greenbelt. In York region, the minister will be appointing a regional chair who, with one third of council votes, will be able to override majority votes.

Now, I know the minister has been blaming the Liberals, attacking the NDP or pivoting to housing when asked about democratic questions, but we can build housing while respecting democratic rights.

Will the minister be voting to end majority-vote democracy in York region today?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, that member's speech and speech last night just made me think of something that we're fighting for. There are thousands of workers building these homes: labourers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians—all union workers, good jobs with pensions and benefits. Speaker, the NDP is no friend of the working-

class families who are looking to get their home. That's what we're fighting for. We're fighting for young people. We're fighting for workers. We're working for workers, and we want to make sure that those good jobs with bigger paycheques are part of our housing supply action plan.

1140

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

Mr. Chris Glover: To the minister, I actually paid my way through a lot of my life doing carpentry work, and I can tell you what every carpenter, every construction worker I worked with, wanted above everything else: the democratic rights of Ontarians to be respected.

York regional councillors asked the government not to give a billion-dollar taxpayer gift to developers because it will mean that the taxes will go up in King–Vaughan.

My question is to the Minister of Education. These councillors were elected by the people in York region, but soon their power to represent their constituents will be overridden by Bill 39, which imposes minority rule in York region. Will the Minister of Education be undermining the democratic rights of York region by voting on the undemocratic Bill 39 today?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, another Toronto member speaking against John Tory and the tools that John Tory needs to get shovels in the ground faster. We support Mayor Tory. He's a great mayor, and he wants to do his share to get shovels in the ground faster. That's why we listened to His Worship and put in those measures to add those tools to ensure the strong-mayor powers get those shovels in the ground, make those important investments in our communities.

Again, despite even their own advisers, even their own adviser to their new leader, the NDP continue to block the dream of home ownership. We had young people in the galleries earlier today. Those young people, we're fighting for them. We want to ensure that they have a dream, to ensure that they have a home that meets their needs and their budget. We're fighting for seniors to ensure that they have the opportunity to downsize, and we're fighting for new Canadians, who we welcome to our community. We want to make sure that we have a home that fits them as they come to live in the best place to live, work and raise a family: Ontario.

CRIME PREVENTION PRÉVENTION DU CRIME

Mr. Billy Pang: My question is for the Solicitor General a gas station in Mississauga. At the same time, Hamilton endures its fourth shooting in a week, and the 40th for the entire year.

Increasing violent gun crime is a serious matter that impacts the safety and security of all Ontarians.

Speaker, can the Solicitor General explain what our government, working in partnership with police services across Ontario, is doing to keep us safe from smuggled-gun crime?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to thank my friend from Markham–Unionville for his question. It's an important question.

On Monday of this week, the Toronto Police Service made an exceptional announcement dealing with smuggled guns. Toronto Police Service has seized an unprecedented 62 illegal firearms destined for the hands of criminals. This seizure shocked the most seasoned investigators.

I want to thank everyone from the Toronto organized crime enforcement unit, including superintendent Steve Watts. All but one of the guns that were traced and seized were illegally smuggled from the US. And together with our federal partners, Ontario has invested \$203 million as part of our Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy. Our program is focused on early intervention in at-risk communities.

Monsieur le Président, retirer les armes à feu illégales de nos rues est notre priorité absolue.

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

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you to the Solicitor General for his response. The work carried out each and every day by all members of our province's police services is commendable and appreciated. The magnitude of the number of weapons seized by police officers as part of Project Barbell is both concerning and disturbing.

Toronto police Chief Ramer said it best that, "Gun violence continues to be the most significant public safety concern, as shootings devastate families and erode our sense of security."

During his press conference, police Chief Ramer further stated that the majority of the guns seized as part of this operation originated from the United States, and that additional measures at our borders are required.

Speaker, through you to the Solicitor General: How is our government addressing this issue as we move forward?

L'hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Monsieur le Président, je remercie mon collègue pour cette question excellente.

Je prends mon rôle sérieusement. C'est un honneur d'assurer la sécurité de notre province.

And we've heard the calls from Toronto Police Service about tightening the screenings at our borders to stop the flow of illegal guns coming on to our streets, and we agree with them. I've seen it for myself in Niagara, in Sault Ste. Marie and in Sarnia–Lambton.

We know the only way to tackle gun violence is to crack down on illegal guns that are being smuggled through our borders every day. That's why I raise this issue with Minister Mendicino in every one of our calls, and I will not stop.

Nous travaillons avec tous les organismes d'application de la loi pour assurer la sécurité des Ontariens.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My question is to the Premier. On Friday, massive demonstrations at Western

University will call on the government to stop auctioning off the greenbelt.

My constituent Brendon writes, Bill 23 threatens “raising our taxes, worsening the housing crisis, privately trading our biodiversity and farmland for industry donations and favours.”

Mainstreet Research CEO Quito Maggi said, “There’s a perception that someone is unfairly lining their pockets. The perception is that the Ford government is unfairly giving a benefit to a small sliver of their supporters.”

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I withdraw.

Will the Premier listen and again admit: “I’ve heard it loud and clear, people don’t want me touching the greenbelt”?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: You know what? It’s no surprise that the members opposite don’t support the people who build homes, because they don’t want people to actually own homes, Mr. Speaker. They talk about affordable housing, but they vote against the fact that we brought in a bill that brought the highest affordable housing, rental housing, in the province in over 30 years. They voted against that.

They talk about affordable housing, but they voted against 60,000 seniors having new and upgraded long-term-care beds. Those are—what are those, colleagues? Those are homes for seniors. They voted against it, Mr. Speaker.

So, they talk out of both sides of their mouth—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I’m going to ask you to withdraw.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I withdraw. So, they talk—
Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): No, it’s not allowed. Conclude your answer.

Hon. Paul Calandra: [*Inaudible*] what I said, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for clarifying.

So, listen, Mr. Speaker: It should be no surprise to anybody that the members opposite don’t support people who build homes, don’t support the people who want to buy homes, don’t support the new Canadians who want to live in the province and have the dream of home ownership. This has been the NDP since their inception and why they always form a small sliver in this—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our question period for this morning.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to correct my record. On the debate on Bill 36, I said that 41 construction workers had died in Ontario. In fact, the total of worker deaths and fatalities in Ontario, according to WSIB, is 144. Nine were COVID-19 fatalities, 75 were occupational disease and 60 were traumatic fatalities.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members can correct their record.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Haldimand–Norfolk has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Associate Minister of Transportation concerning the reconstruction of the Argyle Street Bridge in Caledonia. This matter will be debated today, following private members’ public business.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 10, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 51.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1150 to 1155.

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

Ms. Khanjin has moved government notice of motion number 10 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 51, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bresee, Ric	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Byers, Rick	Ke, Vincent	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Calandra, Paul	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, Laura
Dixon, Jess	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Todd
Dowie, Andrew	McGregor, Graham	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Flack, Rob	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ford, Doug	Parsa, Michael	Wai, Daisy
Fullerton, Merrilee	Piccini, David	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pierre, Natalie	Yakubuski, John
Ghamari, Goldie	Pirie, George	
Gill, Parm	Quinn, Nolan	

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Hsu, Ted	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Karpoche, Bhutla	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Collard, Lucille	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugeois, Lise
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 76; the nays are 30.

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

Motion agreed to.

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)

Deferred vote on the motion for 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 Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1159 to 1200.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On December 2, 2022, Mr. Hsu 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.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Hsu, Ted	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Karpoche, Bhutla	Stiles, Marit

Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Collard, Lucille	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugeois, Lise
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bresee, Ric	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Byers, Rick	Ke, Vincent	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Calandra, Paul	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, Laura
Dixon, Jess	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Todd
Dowie, Andrew	McGregor, Graham	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Flack, Rob	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ford, Doug	Parsa, Michael	Wai, Daisy
Fullerton, Merrilee	Piccini, David	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pierre, Natalie	Yakabuski, John
Ghamari, Goldie	Pirie, George	
Gill, Parm	Quinn, Nolan	

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 30; the nays are 76.

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

Second reading negatived.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF APPRECIATION
 EVENT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I recess the House, I want to remind members that this afternoon at 4:30 we're having a staff appreciation event to thank the dedicated, professional and non-partisan staff of the assembly, who work so hard to support the work that we do here and, in turn, support democracy in the province of Ontario. I'd like to invite all of you to come by to thank our staff, if you can.

This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1204 until 1300.

Afternoon meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Wai Lam (William) Wong,

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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	