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of Ontario



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Mardi
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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 21 March 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 21 mars 2023

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next we'll have a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LESS RED TAPE, STRONGER
ONTARIO ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À RÉDUIRE
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES
POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 8, 2023, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to enact one Act and amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 46, Loi visant à édicter une loi et à modifier diverses autres lois.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je croirais que je suis encore endormi ce matin parce que c'est à mon tour de parler puis je suis encore assis. Ceci dit, ça me fait plaisir de parler du projet de loi Bill 46.

This province is facing issues at the moment, and this bill does not address any of them. We are not seeing any red tape being eliminated in order to move forward and immediately fix the crisis of workers in health care or multiple issues First Nations communities are facing, such as boil-water advisories, contamination of soil and others.

I'll give you an example. When we talk about First Nations issues, last week I had the opportunity to go to Attawapiskat. In Attawapiskat, there are a lot of issues happening. One of the biggest ones is the ATR expansion, which is the expanded reserve. They have nowhere to grow. In other words, they have nowhere to build houses or bring houses in to be able to accommodate the community. It's pretty sad when they show me around and the chief is bringing me around the community. He says, "Here, Guy, these are facilities for COVID, but we had to put homeless people in these units." We go again, and then he shows me a facility that burned down that was accommodating homelessness, so they had to move people into the youth centre. So they have no more youth centre. They had to accommodate homelessness in their community, because there is no home.

You think we have a crisis up north, or even down south? Well, you know what? I say this often in the House;

je le dis souvent en Chambre : You can multiply it by 10 when you go even on James Bay coast.

Through times, I've had opportunities to visit homes. When you walk in a living room and you've got a stack of mattresses so that they can sleep—sometimes they take turns sleeping—it's pretty sad. Or you see prospector tents behind the house because there's no more room in the house to have that. There are three or four generations living in this dwelling that was built for six. How is that acceptable in Ontario?

It's always so easy to say—c'est tellement facile de dire : « Ah! Ça, c'est le fédéral. » On passe la puck. Ce sont de bons joueurs de hockey, de l'autre bord, en passant, d'excellents joueurs de hockey.

Mais la réalité est que ces communautés-là ont des situations qu'on ne croirait pas. C'est pour ça que j'invite souvent le gouvernement à venir faire un tour et voir la réalité qui existe dans le Nord. Parce que quand tu rentres dans une maison puis qu'il y a ça d'épais de matelas pour être capable d'accueillir le monde pour dormir, c'est inacceptable. Puis on voit, à moins 40 degrés—il ne faut pas oublier que leur hiver est beaucoup plus dur que les vôtres auxquels vous êtes habitués dans le Sud. Et c'est encore pire quand on parle du Grand Nord, où le moins 40 degrés, c'est normal. Ils vivent dans des tentes de prospecteurs—puis c'est comme acceptable? Je ne mentionne pas l'eau potable encore—je vais en parler. Mais ça, c'est des réalités qu'on a.

On parle de « reducing red tape ». Je veux revenir à Attawapiskat, parce que quand j'étais là, la chef me montrait les places où ils sont obligés de faire—elle m'a amené à une place où il y avait deux igloos en plastique. Ils sont isolés, puis c'était une des solutions du gouvernement, d'envoyer des igloos pour être capable d'accueillir du monde. On s'entend qu'un igloo, ce n'est pas gros. Puis c'est en plastique. C'était comme rire des Premières Nations de prendre ça quand on sait qu'il y a des « portables », des maisons préfabriquées qui pourraient—mais ce qui est encore pire, elle a dit, « On ne peut même pas prendre ces maisons préfabriquées parce qu'on n'a pas de place où les mettre. On a besoin de faire une expansion de la communauté. » Elle m'a montré une mappe, puis il y a juste deux manières de le faire : soit on déménage l'aéroport, qui est juste à côté de la communauté, ou on va sur l'autre côté, qui appartient—c'est du territoire qui est avec les ressources naturelles—that the MNR administers, but it's on their traditional territory.

There's a road that goes to the port, yet there's a bump-up because the mine put a bump-up, so now the government is siding on the mine's side and now the community cannot expand in that direction. They're stuck; they're

landlocked. When you think that their traditional territories are huge—they're on their traditional lands and they're landlocked. How does that make sense? It's not the place that needs it. There are two ways they can expand. The only two ways are towards the airport or towards the other way that would make sense.

That road that the bump-up is on—they call it the bump-up, but they put a protest on the road because they're afraid of the First Nations putting blockades. But the First Nations are not against that. They just want to expand and they want to make sure that what's happening on their traditional territories, that they're made aware and transparency, and they want to ensure that they approve everything that happens.

To hold a community hostage, what's happening now, that they can't even expand—think about this: Some of the community members got out of the community. They want to come back. They said, "I'd love to come back and contribute to my community, but there's no home. There is no house to accommodate my family." They're losing one of their—*moi, je dis tout le temps que la plus grande richesse, c'est la jeunesse. Puis ce qu'ils font—ils n'ont pas de place et ils sont obligés de dire : « Bien, écoute, on n'a pas de maisons; on ne peut pas vous accommoder. » Comment est-ce qu'on peut justifier ça?*

Encore, écoute, c'est pour ça que j'en parle. Je suis revenu plus choqué que jamais, puis je me contrôle pour ne pas m'énerver et commencer à dire certaines choses que je ne devrais pas dire, puis que je vais être obligé de retirer mes paroles.

0910

But when you hear that they signed an agreement with the federal and the provincial—Mr. Rickford signed a deal; Marc Miller signed a deal. I'm trying to find the agreement that was signed. It was signed with Attawapiskat. It reads, "Renewed Relationship Commitment: Mino-Wha-Ko-Me-Ti-Win." It was signed by former Chief Ignace Gull, by Honourable Seamus O'Regan, minister of Indigenous affairs, federal, and Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Indigenous Affairs. What it was all about: I'll read the part that says, "In recognition of parties' urgency of water issues in Attawapiskat First Nation, Indigenous Services Canada will take immediate action on replacing the two reverse-osmosis units that provide community drinking water"—still a problem.

Think about this: In Attawapiskat, if you take a shower, they tell you, you can't take one for more than a couple of minutes. Make sure there's a window open. Make sure you leave a door open, because there's too much chemicals in the water and they can't drink it. They say it's potable, but nobody drinks it. They have to go get their water in different places to be bottled water, so they carry a bottle of water. But think about this: If they stay too long in the shower, they get a rash on their skin. That's a reality.

We talk about this over and over and over in the House. My colleague from Kiiwetinoong has got a community with a 28-year boil-water advisory. You talk about urgency. You talk about good removal of red tape. Hello? Government, listen, because that's the reality they live day

to day. For 28 years, a community boil-water advisory in Ontario? We signed deals with the federal—because don't forget Treaty 9. The province signed this, so you can't pass the buck, because you're part of it. Why are we still having this discussion? Why are we still talking about a boil-water advisory? Why are we still talking about communities that are taking showers and getting rashes? Is that acceptable? I don't think so, and I'm convinced you don't think so. But do something about it.

That agreement was signed in 2019, and nothing has changed. We sign deals, agreements, documents with these First Nations, and then we do nothing. Sound familiar? Governments have been doing it to First Nations for 400 years, and we continue doing this. This is colonialism at its best, and we should be ashamed of it. That's good red tape—remove it. Fix it, because you signed the agreements with them. You signed them, but we don't respect it, so our word doesn't mean—and then you wonder why First Nations are putting moratoriums on their traditional territories, because they cannot trust you because of agreements like this.

That's one example. I can talk about Kashechewan, which gets evacuated almost every spring. And yet, when this government got elected, they signed another agreement. They turned a red document into a blue document and signed a thing saying they will move the community from Kashechewan to a higher location. Five years later, the road is not even built. But it's funny, we talk about the Ring of Fire. How fast is that road going to get built? How many millions are invested to build that? But for a community that every year has to be evacuated, de-rooted from their communities, their traditional territories, we turn a blind eye.

En français, je le dis souvent en Chambre : « loin des yeux, loin du coeur ». On ne devrait pas se pêter les bretelles là-dessus. On ne devrait pas être fier de ça. Parce qu'on signe des ententes puis on ne les respecte pas. Après ça on se demande pourquoi les Premières Nations disent qu'elles mettent des moratoires, que c'est fini. J'ai deux communautés, moi—Fort Albany, puis il y a aussi Kashechewan—qui ont mis un moratoire totalement sur leurs territoires ancestraux. Pourquoi? C'est simple. Elles disent qu'elles essaient d'adresser les problèmes. On sait que le projet qui procède, comme celui-là avec le Cercle de feu—on veut en discuter avec le gouvernement, parce qu'on prend des études environnementales trop étroites. On doit prendre ça beaucoup plus élargi. Il ne faut pas oublier que ces communautés-là sont en aval d'où le développement peut se faire.

Water flows north, so everything that could happen, guess what's going to happen? They're going to pay the price. These communities are going to pay the price. That's why they put a moratorium and said, "No. You cannot ignore us." Just because you talk to a few communities doesn't mean you have consent from First Nations. You need to talk to all First Nations. If you think you can ignore them and you're going to get the thing done, man, you've got a surprise coming. You've got a huge surprise coming.

To get back to Attawapiskat, because it's easy to get carried away and talk about these issues—because when you go there and you see the amount of issues they have and yet all we're doing is playing political Ping-Pong, it's shameful. Again, replace the two osmosis units and provide communities with drinking water. Like I said, Attawapiskat is still carrying water. Complete immediate sampling of raw water sources, because what's happening is the lake is dying. They're getting their water from a lake that is dying, so they have to put the chemicals. When the system was built, it was built for the hospital and the nurses; it was not built for the community. What they did, they connected the community to the system. When the river was right passing there, when they could have had a constant flow of fresh water, they didn't do that. The sad part about this—you just say, “It can't be”—the lake is beside the dump. The lake is beside the dump. Guess what happens in the springtime? Last year, the river almost overflowed, and it's overflowed in the past. Guess where the water is going?

You need to go in these communities and see for yourself, because once you come back from these communities, you can't say you didn't know or you can't pretend you didn't know. You won't be able to say “*loin des yeux, loin du coeur*,” because now you will have seen.

To have your water beside a dump—that's what the chief was telling me. She showed me; she drove me there. She said, “Guy, the lake is right across”—there was a piece of bush. You could see where the lake was because you can tell through the trees. She says, “Guy, that's what's happening.” The spring thaw contaminates are going through that water. That's reality. That would be great red tape: to move the source of the water. Fix it. Fix it like this. Because when we want to build a Volkswagen facility, how fast do we fly through the thing? How fast do we get it done? In a week. But for First Nations, where their potable water comes right beside a dump, nothing is being done. A 28-year boil-water advisory in Kiiwetinoong: Shouldn't that be done? Come on. Be realistic and do the right thing here. It's not because you don't know, because we speak enough in the House here. We speak on it constantly.

To get back to Attawapiskat: ATR, the expansion, do you know how long they have been fighting for that? Take a guess. Thirty years, asking to expand their communities to be able to build houses to accommodate their community members. Thirty years, nothing has been done. Oh, we signed agreements; we signed beautiful documents that talk all about this, and yet nothing happens. That's not unique to Attawapiskat, by the way. There are stories throughout First Nations communities on the James Bay coast and up north, the Far North, that we keep bringing here, yet nothing is being done.

0920

Support Attawapiskat to complete existing immediate water treatment plant repair project, 12 hydrants; refurbish the filtration system and provide additional support to the water treatment plant operators. Indigenous Services Canada will work with Attawapiskat to identify and implement other measures to address medium- and long-term

water quality improvements, including work with Attawapiskat First Nation—and Ontario—to complete the addition to reserve. It's not always federal; it's provincial.

We're supposed to work and meet with the community to try to look at expanding the community. For 30 years we have been working on this—30 years. Yet we signed a document in July 2019—they never met once; they met maybe once, and that's it. Meetings are supposed to happen in Attawapiskat; nothing is happening. Nothing is happening because we're not talking about expanding the reserve.

Support a comprehensive community development plan, and plan for a new raw water intake and water treatment plant on the lands that are subject to the addition to reserve. Because if we're going to build that, we need to put the infrastructure together. But yet, nothing has been done. Nothing has been done.

Kash: Like I said, they signed an agreement four years ago to move the community. Of course, it hasn't been built. How long do they think it's going to take to move this community? Because you need to do the sewers, do everything, move the school, move the hospital, move everything—but nothing, nothing. Yet, they did a big thing, remember? I know my colleague was with me when they signed this. You made a great, great thing about this new signing agreement to move Kash.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: We weren't allowed at the event.

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: Yes, they didn't want us to attend, by the way. Plus they didn't want us to attend the meeting when they talked to the community. We had to fight our way to be able to attend the meeting. In fact, the Chief had to make a stand to say, “No, we want our representatives there.” Because your government did not want us there. Why? Are you afraid to be held accountable for what you do? That's our job to make sure you do it. That's our job to make sure that you live up to the commitments that you signed. That's our job to make sure you do.

Thirty years for expansion, five years now for Kash, and nothing as of yet. Yet we continue.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. I think you've used up all your time.

Une voix.

La Présidente suppléante (M^{me} Lucille Collard): C'est ça. Il a perdu la trace du temps. Alors, merci. Nous allons maintenant passer aux questions.

We'll move to the questions for the member.

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank the member opposite for his statement.

This bill is focusing on reducing burdens to improve services and make life easier for people and businesses in this province. We're here to reduce red tape. And this proposal does not change how the crown fulfils its obligations to ensure meaningful consultation with impacted communities. We're streamlining businesses, fostering a strong business climate and modernizing regulations to make it easier. Does the member agree that supporting the unique needs of businesses ensures interactions with the government are efficient and important?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: If the member believes that you should support and live by what you sign—you talk about consultation, yet you don't consult with First Nations. You say you do, but you don't. If you want to talk real red tape, the bill that we're talking about is mostly a bunch of cleanup, or—what's the word I'm looking for in French? C'est plutôt juste du ménage. Il n'y a pas grand-chose qui est très, très extravagant là-dedans, ou qui est très controversé. On n'est pas contre—we're not against businesses. We're not anti-business. What we are against, though, is—what I talked to on this, what's missing in this bill: true red tape reduction when it comes to First Nations and fixing the problems that they have, that they live day to day, that some of these agreements that you signed that we should be respecting.

If you want to talk consultation, go back to what you signed, and consult and fix the problems that they have in their own community, like Kashechewan, like Attawapiskat. Live up to what we signed and agreed to, because these are the documents you signed. You can't blame the other previous government—

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay for his passionate and articulate speech on Bill 46.

Boil-water advisories are a national and provincial disgrace that they continue to this day with very little action. I wanted to share the words of Deshkan Ziibiing, the Chippewas of the Thames First Nations, who have some concerns about some of the potential areas for carbon sequestration. It has been shown by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to be quite close to COTTFN lands. There is no commitment in Bill 46 to require First Nations' consent for carbon capture, utilization and storage, and they ask that there be early and meaningful involvement of impacted First Nations, and, in addition to consultation, the province must seek consent of First Nations before proceeding with CCUS projects.

My question to the member: Do you suspect that the government understands the difference between consultation and consent?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Thank you for the question. Apparently not, because they're not consulting. They consulted with some, I have to admit that. They are consulting with some. But that doesn't stop at the one that wants to listen to you. You need to be addressing the ones that have issues. And you'll need their consent, because, I can tell you, you're going to be hitting a wall soon. With the First Nations that I talk to, I hear a lot of First Nations frustration. This is why we're starting to see more and more First Nations put moratoriums on their traditional territories. A whole bunch of First Nations have done that and sent letters to the government. When I did my presentation, there was other stuff I wanted to talk about, but you get wrapped up in some of the stuff you see that touches you so hard.

But, no, they are not looking for consent. They just want to plow through.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: I was in the media, as I've mentioned in the House many times, prior to getting into politics, and I remember reporting on the number of businesses and the number of jobs that fled Ontario. One of the reasons why so many companies decided to pick up and, usually, head south of the border was the mountain of red tape that they were forced to navigate on a regular basis. When you are dealing with this level of red tape, it often slows down business, it costs companies money and they look to other jurisdictions where it is easier to do business.

One of the things that we're doing with this, clearly, is to encourage companies to identify red tape, to share it with us so that we can, without harming people, without hurting the environment, get rid of needless barriers to business growth.

Do you recognize the burden that this unnecessary red tape has on business, and will you support us moving forward to allow them to grow and to create more high-paying jobs in Ontario?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: We're not against reducing some red tape. There's no doubt about that. I think we've said it many times in this House. And we're not anti-business—of course not. But consultation needs to happen; it doesn't stop at business. You need consent from First Nations. You seem to be doing a lot of consent with businesses, but yet we fail First Nations.

I want to get back to the First Nations, because when you talk about contaminated fuel issues that still happen in Attawapiskat, we fixed part of the problem but some of the problem is still left there. We talked about boil-water advisories—we talked about them when I talked about showers—and I talked about the housing crisis. The list goes on and on. A community that needs to expand the community for 30 years, and yet you're talking that's not part of reducing red tape. It should be part of reducing red tape. That should have been done a long time ago so that they can thrive as a community. Yet we are controlling them. We landlocked them. Sometimes I get comments from chiefs saying, "You know what they're telling us? 'Well, if you support the Ring of Fire, maybe we can do something.'" Is that acceptable for you?

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C'est du chantage. Arrêtons de jouer au chat et à la souris, puis adressons les vraies « issues ».

La Présidente suppléante (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Merci pour la réponse. Next question?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Thank you to the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay for his presentation. I know that the environmental policy change in schedule 5, which will be permitted on crown lands, has not been subject to free, prior and informed consent with First Nations. Let me remind this government: Crown lands are stolen lands.

I know you spoke about the ATR process—addition to reserves—regarding Attawapiskat. They have been at it for 30 years. And I think—I see this mace. It came from

Attawapiskat. There's a diamond in there. They still have a boil-water advisory.

And I think it's important that when we talk about stolen lands, when we talk about crown lands, the province has a responsibility to be able to expand the reserve of Attawapiskat to be able to prosper.

I have a question for the member: Do you believe that this government is red tape to access clean drinking water? Do you believe this government is red tape to the ATR process?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I thank the question from my colleague. I want to thank him also for all the work he does for First Nations, because you are definitely shining a light for First Nations. I know you've taught me a lot and you've informed me a lot, of course.

The consultation and the consent—this government doesn't stop there. It doesn't stop there because their plan is not to stop there. But First Nations have rights. It's way past time. On n'est plus dans le temps, là—we're not in the times that we could just go in there, do what we need, take the resources and leave without consent. That is passé. We're in a time of truth and reconciliation, that we should live up to what truth and reconciliation means. We should live up to what we signed, because we signed documents that we're not respecting. And who pays the price for that? Communities and First Nations.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): That's time for questions. We're going to move to further debate. I recognize the member for Simcoe—Grey.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and so I don't forget later in my comments, I will be sharing my time today with the Solicitor General, MPP Kerzner.

It's a pleasure to rise today to speak about our government's efforts to increase Ontario's competitiveness, strengthen provincial supply chains and create easier access for all Ontarians. Bill 46, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act, if passed, will modernize outdated practices and boost efficiency across various areas of government and multiple sectors of Ontario's economy. I think we can all agree that red tape hinders Ontario's economic competitiveness, productivity, development as well as innovation. Our government has heard from countless businesses, non-profit organizations, individuals and the broader public sector about the frustration, expenses, delays and complications red tape causes in everyday life.

Speaker, we've listened to our residents, and under this government, we are acting. Since 2018, one of our government's top priorities has been to remove unnecessary, redundant and outdated regulations that are holding people and businesses back throughout our province. Through common-sense solutions, saving both time and money, we've passed eight high-impact pieces of red tape reduction legislation since 2018, and nine packages that acted on more than 400 burden-reducing actions, all without compromising health, safety or the environment.

Briefly reviewing that history, in the fall of 2018, our government passed the first Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, which was part of a broader package of

more than 80 actions to cut red tape and modernize regulations to include more supports to various business sectors, including agriculture, trucking, construction, forestry and mining, and that is a theme that has continued into Bill 46.

In July 2020, the Legislature passed the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, which was our government's first step in our plan for growth, renewal and recovery. The act was designed to reduce infrastructure backlogs for businesses and communities and get infrastructure projects built faster.

In November 2020, the Legislature passed the Main Street Recovery Act to support small businesses and modernize rules that would help to innovate, grow and continue to bring life into our communities. We have seen the return of over 300,000 jobs to our province, and we continue to grow those numbers, as we've heard from our Minister of Economic Development, and we will continue to do that through our efforts in Bill 46.

At the end of 2020, the Legislature passed the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act to include multiple changes such as requiring gas and electric utilities to adopt Green Button technology, digitize the way property developers obtain environmental information, cutting red tape for intercommunity bus carriers to improve transportation options in rural and northern Ontario and many other measures. That continued into June 2021, when the Legislature passed the Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act to help businesses and government deliver clear, modern and effective rules that promoted public health, safeguarded the environment and created jobs.

In December 2021, we continued that work, cutting costly red tape and reducing unnecessary burden by passing the Supporting People and Businesses Act, which was followed shortly by the Fewer Fees, Better Services Act, 2022, which was the eighth piece of red tape legislation. Introduced in February 2022, this act contained legislative changes and policy announcements designed to support post-COVID-19 economic recovery for businesses and individuals across the province.

Of course, Speaker, there is still much work to be done and we continue to face big challenges in our province. On top of the day-to-day difficulties individuals and businesses face, supply chain disruptions continue to worsen for two thirds of Ontario's businesses, and one third of those businesses say that labour-related obstacles will limit their growth, like the ongoing labour force shortages.

There is good news on the horizon because we have a plan. We know that there are more things our government can do to cut red tape and support our businesses to develop well-functioning supply chains and solve the challenges like we are seeing today.

After extensive consultation with stakeholders and the hard work of the Minister of Red Tape Reduction, we have before us Bill 46, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act. The purpose of this legislation is to cut more red tape by:

- (1) strengthening Ontario's supply chain;
- (2) supporting farmers and agri-businesses and agri-tourism;

(3) grow our labour force;

(4) make life easier for people and businesses by making it easier to interact with government; and

(5) ensure that Ontario remains competitive in the growing global market.

Speaker, this proposed legislation is about leading Ontario to more economic certainty, confidence and stability to ensure our province continues to be competitive on the world stage.

This government has taken a Team Ontario approach when it comes to legislation like this. We are working across ministries to identify opportunities to cut red tape while prioritizing fundamental protections that Ontarians value most.

There are five guiding principles throughout this piece of legislation. The first is protect public health and safety and the environment. Our government has worked on relaxing regulatory burdens in a smart and responsible way to ensure that health, safety and environmental protections are maintained or enhanced.

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The second principle is prioritizing the important issues. Our government has assessed which regulations cost the most time and money, while looking for innovative ways to ensure rules stay effective and efficient.

Principle three is coordinating rules with the federal government and other jurisdictions where possible so we can target repetitive red tape and position ourselves with other jurisdictions where possible to eliminate steps that cost and create time and money for our businesses and citizens.

The fourth principle is listening to the people and the businesses of Ontario. Our government has committed to hearing from people and businesses on an ongoing basis, and we continue to do so to learn what we can do to remove obstacles standing in their way.

And the final principle is taking a whole-of-government approach. We are working on a coordinated approach across all ministries in government to reduce red tape—a broad, informed perspective that would deliver smarter government for people and higher economic growth to match.

This legislation contains 28 initiatives which cross all ministries, and based on the five principles, we're looking to reduce the red tape across the province to make our businesses more competitive and more aligned with other jurisdictions in Ontario and Canada.

The first impact I'd like to talk about is in the ministry of food and agriculture, and that is the grow strategy, which is our government's comprehensive plan to build consumer confidence and support farmers and Ontario's food supply, which is our number one economic engine in this province. It focuses on three key priorities. The first is to strengthen agri-food supply chain stability by increasing both the consumption and production of food grown and prepared in Ontario by 30%. The second is to increase agri-food technology and adoption by boosting research infrastructure, advancing the uptake of new technologies

and growing the market for Ontario's innovative technologies both domestically and globally, and growing the use of data to support efficiencies in the agri-food sector and value chain. And the third is to attract and grow Ontario's agri-food talent by increasing the province's total agri-food sector employment by 10% by 2032 and increase awareness of modern, high-tech agri-food careers, opportunities for mentorship and hands-on job training, and supporting efforts to increase veterinary capacity in underserved areas across this province.

I'd like to also speak about the impacts for the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. While continuing to protect human health and our environment, our government is also proposing changes to streamline the gas volatility regulation. If adopted, these amendments would align Ontario's regulations to national standards and reduce unnecessary regulatory and administrative burdens and costs on the petroleum sector.

We are also proposing changes to the Ministry of the Attorney General that would modernize and reduce red tape burdens in the justice sector in three areas. First, we are proposing to amend the Provincial Offences Act to help reduce the backlog at provincial offences courts exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, we're proposing to create more judicial capacity and alleviate backlogs in criminal cases in Ontario by temporarily raising the limit on the number of days that retired judges can work. And third, the proposed amendments will help reduce administrative costs and expedite prospective jurors to participate in the court system through updates to the Juries Act.

Speaker, I am proud to support this bill on behalf of the constituents of Simcoe–Grey. I know that the many measures I've discussed to cut red tape will help to build a stronger, more competitive Ontario, where people and businesses can continue to thrive and prosper now and into the future.

I'll now share my time with the Solicitor General.

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

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I'm delighted to be here and to say why I'm here and why I'm speaking on this: because I believe that when we reduce red tape, our government is fulfilling our mandate to lower costs, to create more jobs and build a stronger Ontario. I'll make the case that when we unleash the enterprise and enable opportunity, we empower Ontario. I'll share some personal experiences and will demonstrate how reducing red tape makes Ontario stronger on all fronts—that we're working for workers; that we're putting people over paperwork; and we're building Ontario. And I'll encourage everyone to support this legislation.

I really want to thank my great colleague and friend from Simcoe–Grey.

It's an honour to speak here to Bill 46, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act, 2022. When we think about red tape, it's personal to all of us. We've all encountered, at one time or another, red tape. As MPPs we have a responsibility to consider how to reduce the unnecessary

burdens on small businesses, workers and members of the public and at the same time continue to strengthen health, safety and environmental standards.

As MPP for York Centre, I often connect, I regularly connect, I weekly connect to small business owners in my riding, including those who are part of our business improvement areas at Wilson Village and Duke Heights. I hear time and time again positive feedback in terms of our government's approach to creating initiatives to reduce red tape and to boost our local economies. They want us to continue to get it done. As we build the future of Ontario, we have to recall the significant strides that our government has made so far, and it's because we believe in our province and in our future. Madame la Présidente, c'est parce que nous croyons en notre province et en notre avenir.

Since coming to office, we've taken over 400 individual actions to reduce red tape, to reduce the total regulatory burden by almost 7%, and our efforts are saving businesses and organizations almost \$600 million a year in compliance costs. There's a lot of stories we can all tell, and we can tell it in a personal capacity. As an entrepreneur and before the June election of 2022, I saw first-hand when I tried to start a business what it was like to encounter red tape, especially six and seven years ago.

I want to talk about and highlight how it's working for workers. This bill proposes changes to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to continue putting workers first. These are changes that, if adopted, would improve the WSIB's operational efficiency and reduce undue administrative burdens to allow the WSIB to focus on its mandate of supporting injured workers and businesses. As we all know, the WSIB is one of the largest insurance organizations in North America. The updates that we are proposing will keep it world-class. One of the proposals I am most proud of is ensuring that injured or ill apprentices receive loss-of-earnings benefits at the same amount journeypersons employed in the same trade would receive. Madam Speaker, this is about fairness. This is about improving health and safety for everyone who is on the job. This is an initiative that I hope all members in the House will support.

Ongoing improvements to WSIB are essential for the well-being of our workers and their families, including first responders. In fact, I recently joined our great Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development to announce that our government is expanding cancer coverage for firefighters. This means that pancreatic and thyroid cancers will be added to the list of presumptive cancers so firefighters and their families can receive the support they deserve from WSIB more quickly and with less red tape.

Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank all our front-line firefighters across Ontario, full-time and part-time, career and volunteer. And to the member sitting right beside me—I toured in her own riding, in Lindsay, and we met Fire Chief Terry Jones. It was an example of how a community comes together under great leadership of people that take their responsibilities seriously. I want to give a shout-out to Chief Terry Jones.

We recognize their courage and we honour their service. That's why this recently announced change applies to all firefighters in Ontario. They're incredible people who keep us safe every day, and we're proud to support our firefighters. Ce sont des gens formidables qui nous protègent au quotidien. Nous sommes fiers de soutenir nos pompiers et tous ceux qui assurent la sécurité de l'Ontario tous les jours. Nous travaillons fort pour soutenir ces héros.

Next, I'd like to highlight some examples of how our government is working for the people of Ontario. I want to thank my great colleague sitting to the right, the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, for your leadership, because we're enhancing service delivery, reducing wait times and, as we say, Minister, putting people over paperwork. We're doing this by streamlining administrative, and I want to thank you for your leadership as it relates to the work that you're doing on the IT systems and creating a single system, the Transfer Payment Ontario system, or TPON for short.

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This change will reduce paperwork and red tape, and improve the digitization of government services. It will allow service providers like municipalities and non-profits to focus on providing valuable public service, rather than being bogged down with paperwork. This is another common-sense solution, and again, I hope the members will support it.

I want to thank our great Minister of Transportation as she works tirelessly to build Ontario and to keep Ontario moving. Continuing to build a modern and robust transportation network is critical to the vitality of communities all across Ontario, and supports our government's historic steps to build new housing. When you have roads, you have places where people can build housing. The Highway Corridor Management System has already significantly reduced the burden on Ontario businesses and individuals by streamlining the permit application, review and approvals process.

In closing, we're focusing on reducing red tape to improve service and make life easier for everyone in Ontario. Everyone in our province deserves the chance to succeed, and reducing red tape helps us unleash Ontario's full potential. Whether it's working for workers, putting people over paperwork or building Ontario, reducing red tape helps make Ontario stronger on all fronts.

On behalf of the people of York Centre, who elected me to serve here as the 1,947th member since Confederation to serve in this Legislature—and I'm grateful every day—I support this bill, and I encourage everyone to do this. Let's remember one thing, why we're here, as I said at the beginning of my remarks: The province is bigger than all of us. It is more important than any of us. Ontario was here before us and will be here long after us.

Madame la Présidente, la province de l'Ontario est plus grande que nous tous. Elle est plus importante que n'importe lequel d'entre nous. L'Ontario était là avant nous et le sera longtemps après nous.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to thank the two members for their presentations, and I'm posing this question to either of them: Can either member tell us how the elimination of the requirement that the WSIB file a strategic plan with its minister actually will make Ontario better? WSIB is not a small business; it's an entity that I think would serve this province well by actually reporting regularly on its strategic plans. It needs to be held accountable. If you don't know what they're planning, you don't know how to hold them accountable. Why do you want to make it less accountable?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. The WSIB has an important role to play in our workplace system. It protects employers and it protects their workers. If the workers are injured, they can get compensation.

The proposed changes that are contained in Bill 46 would exclude WSIB lease transactions from the requirement for the Lieutenant Governor in Council's approval of acquisitions and dispositions of real property, to help streamline that process. It would ensure injured or ill apprentices receive loss-of-earning benefits in the same amount as journeypersons of their trade would receive, as pointed out by my colleague. It would provide flexibility as to when the WSIB board of directors must meet; ensure that requirements for governance documents are consistent with, and not duplicative of, government directives; and, finally, it would ensure the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, does not reference repealed statutes. That would clean it up. It would help with the efficiency and it would remove duplication.

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

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I want to thank the member for Simcoe–Grey and the Solicitor General for their comments during debate this morning. I have a specific question for the member for Simcoe–Grey: Would this bill, if passed, impact Aboriginal treaty rights under section 35 of the charter, and specifically the duty to consult Indigenous communities? And how, if passed, would this bill help Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank my colleague from Durham for his question. Bill 46 does not change or impact how the crown fulfills its obligations to ensure meaningful consultation with potentially-impacted Indigenous communities on transmissions projects, including transmission projects that are currently and proposed to be exempt from DTC requirements.

Certainly, the intent of Bill 46 would be to remove barriers that are faced by Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs in assessing business support programs and procurement opportunities. It would be heard directly from Indigenous businesses and economic advisors that information about these supports and processes is not widely known and difficult to obtain as sources of information are disparate and complex. The intent here is

to streamline the process so that we will work with our Indigenous stakeholders to streamline the consultation process.

In that way, we are working very hard to support all Indigenous stakeholders and businesses to make sure we're competitive across the province.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: A question for my colleague from York Centre who mentioned firefighters and presumptive timelines when he spoke—I don't believe this bill actually addresses that. I do have a firefighter in my riding who has been a firefighter for 23 years, has esophageal cancer and cannot get WSIB because the cut-off is 25 years. Those are the kinds of red tape that we would like to see improved, the things that actually improve the lives of injured workers. Deeming is another thing that this government could improve on. Tinkering around the edges doesn't help people like Captain Craig from Welland, who has been a firefighter for 23 years, has cancer and can't get WSIB because the cut-off is 25 years. Why would we not take the opportunity to fix those kinds of issues?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to thank you for the question. Firefighters are true heroes in Ontario. One of the things I have learned through my travels is the amazing work that they do, but also the volunteer firefighters. What I spoke of in my remarks is taking acknowledgement of the pancreatic cancer as an example of a presumptive illness. We're going to continue to look at that, but you're absolutely correct. The firefighters are amazing heroes in Ontario and we have to treat them with respect. The announcement that the Minister of Labour made with me not that long ago is starting to look at this in a practical way, and it's part of reducing the burdensome red tape.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question: the member for Brantford–Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair.

I really appreciate the conversation today, and I really appreciate the suggestions made by the opposition also in what could be in a red tape bill. I was just wondering if I could ask one of the members who spoke from the government side what it means to be a part of a government that has committed to having two red tape bills come out every year, because change is incremental. If there's one thing I think we can all admit is when a government chooses to do massive changes very quickly, it often leads to unforeseen consequences that can have to be fixed later.

By making small, continuous, ongoing changes to reduce red tape in the province of Ontario in so many different areas, I just have to ask, because I find it very, very gratifying that we just keep making changes—nothing huge, nothing massive, but keep moving the ball forward so that we can continue to follow up and see what's going on. I was just wondering if I could ask the member from Simcoe–Grey what it means to be part of a government that's willing to do that.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to the member opposite—well, member opposite but on the team—for

the question. But we're all Team Ontario, and I think that's the important thing I've been trying to address this morning: The history of what has been passed in this Legislature and initiated by this government since 2018 is eight and now nine pieces of legislation that are all designed to play the short game, to move the ball down the field in an incremental way so that we can continue to monitor the impacts and the effects that our changes are having. And we've seen that.

We've seen our economy come back in terms of jobs and job demand, despite the pandemic. We continue to hear almost weekly from our Minister of Economic Development about the new projects that are coming to Ontario. We have big plans for the Ring of Fire.

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We are working across the province, across the ministries, on a whole-of-government approach to increase the efficiency of our government, to remove barriers for our residents and for our businesses, and to make us competitive as the largest provincial economy in Canada and probably one of the five biggest economies in North America, and we continue to do that.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the member for Simcoe–Grey. As a representative of the city of London, I note that Bill 46 includes provisions to allow the government to move the WSIB headquarters to our city, to London, which is certainly a welcome opportunity. Hopefully we'll see those jobs materialize.

However, I am troubled at the same time by the other provisions in this bill related to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act that removes the requirement for WSIB to table a strategic plan to the minister. Injured worker groups have taken that opportunity to provide input. Why is the government removing that accountability?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to the member opposite for her question. The WSIB, as I indicated previously, is a very important part of our workforce compensation and insurance that benefits both our businesses and our workers. We are working to make sure that we streamline that process and, as you indicated in the first part of your question, we are looking at how we can streamline efficiencies through our leases. Instead of leasing space in downtown Toronto, we're looking to move to a smaller area where we can do it more efficiently and less expensively. That's another aspect of our efficiencies.

We are working hard to make sure that the end workers, the insured, are going to be compensated properly in the event of injury, and we're making sure that we remove any duplication that would get in the way or hinder that process as we work towards making sure that we are focused on making Ontario competitive, protecting our workers and giving apprentices the same amount of coverage as a journeyman would receive.

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

We'll have to move to further debate. The member for Kiiwetinoong.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker. It's always a privilege to be able to stand up and speak on behalf of Kiiwetinoong. This morning, I'm going to speak your language, English. English is my second language. As you know, my language, Anishiniimowin, is not allowed to be spoken in this place. I have to remind you that this place as well—as a First Nations person, as First Peoples of these lands, this system, this building was never built for me. It was never built for First Nations people to be able to speak in this place.

One of the things I want to say about this Bill 46, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act—I want to thank the government for this bill. I want to thank you because—over the last four and a half years, I've been bringing up issues with boil-water advisories. I have one First Nation in Ontario that has 28 years of boil-water advisories, since February 1, 1995, and the government does nothing, just looks away and says, “That's not our responsibility.” They use jurisdictions as an excuse not to do anything. That's what colonizers do.

I want to thank you for this bill, because it's a reminder. It's a reminder that this oppression still exists in this place. It is a reminder that colonialism is alive and well. Thank you for reminding me of that, of how you treat First Nations, the First Peoples of these lands, as if we do not exist, as if we do not matter. Yes, you care about business, but you do not care about the basic human rights of the people in Kiiwetinoong. So I wanted to share that.

I know it is also important to note where these suggestions, these changes come from and who the government actually listens to, but I know one thing: They do not listen to First Nations. They say they do, but not to everyone; just select people. They do listen to select First Nations. It might be two, it might be three, but not everyone. “Divide and conquer” is a colonial approach. Divide and conquer First Nations is from the colonial playbook that has been played for hundreds of years. It continues to happen because we live it on a daily basis.

I'm using that as an example within schedule 5, and it's based on the government seeking feedback from the oil and gas industries. It talks about carbon sequestration changes that are legislated, subject to consultation that ended in January.

I know that within this change, the environmental policy change, which will be permitted on crown lands, has not been subject to free, prior and informed consent with First Nations—zero. To me, “crown lands,” as you call them, are stolen lands. Everyone who's here are settlers. We've been here for thousands of years. We welcomed everyone. We welcomed settlers, and the first thing they did when the settlers arrived is they took our lands. The next thing they did was, they took our children. They took our children to send them to Indian residential schools. We are still trying to locate our children in those former Indian residential school sites even today.

I heard a comment from this morning from the government side when questions were going back and forth. They

called First Nations “stakeholders.” We are not stakeholders. Up where I come from, there were treaties that were signed. We were supposed to share the benefits of that treaty. We are not stakeholders.

There was a lot of discussion too, about the environmental policy changes on crown lands. What is crown land? Crown land in Ontario represents 87% of the province, and this government describes it as opportunities for economic development, tourism and reconciliation.

Crown land also includes surface and subsurface rights to the minerals, energy and water resources that may be leased to private enterprise, a very important source of government income. Indigenous, First Nation, Anishinaabe understanding of crown land is not this.

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What is the balance we need to be able to strike between economic consumption versus economy as people?

In Treaty 9—we’re supposed to share the benefits of those treaties, and we do not. From the numbered treaties 1 to 11, Treaty 9 is the only numbered treaty out of those, 1 to 11, that has Ontario’s signature on it. You are our treaty partners, but you do not treat us as partners; you treat us as stakeholders. We are not stakeholders.

We have to understand, when we talk about Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario—it depends where you live. I live in a different Ontario. I come from a different Ontario, because you will not invest in water sewer systems to get clean drinking water for the residents of Kiiwetinoong. That’s a different Ontario. That’s a different Canada. That’s how colonialism, that’s how oppression, that’s how racism, that’s how discrimination works. And the system right here, where we sit, the 124 of us who sit here—that’s how it treats people, especially First Nations. I have 31 First Nations in my riding, and I have four municipalities. There’s nothing “stronger” about this bill—there’s nothing “stronger Ontario” on these reserves, in this bill. But it removes the free, prior, informed consent of the people.

We were put on reserves. I remember my reserve in Kingfisher Lake. They moved there in 1966. Do you know where everybody lived? It was on the lands. Do you know why they removed us, to move into a reserve? It was to get us off those lands, because we knew, you knew, the settlers knew that they wanted our resources. And you see it happening today.

The changes in the Mining Act, the changes that are happening to remove the red tape—you are the red tape for a better life for First Nations people on-reserve, because you use jurisdiction as—not to do anything. You are the red tape. This government is the red tape to access to clean drinking water.

Just imagine, every day of your life, for 28 years, that you use, you buy—you bathe using bottled water. That’s the reality of the other Ontario, where I come from.

I’m not sure if you’ve ever experienced living—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I do apologize to the member. I need to interrupt you, as we need to move to members’ statements.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

NOWRUZ

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: On behalf of the residents of Barrie–Innisfil, I would like to extend our warmest wishes to everyone celebrating Nowruz. May this new year bring you and your loved ones happiness, health and prosperity.

As we welcome the spring season and the start of the Persian new year, I want to take a moment to remember all those who lost their lives fighting for freedom in Iran. I stand in solidarity with those who continue to fight for basic human rights for all Iranians.

As the Persian community celebrates Nowruz around the world, they continue to remember Mahsa Amini. As life and the new year go on, so does the struggle of the Iranian people to bring freedom and justice to Iran.

I look forward to gathering with the Barrie Persian Association—not only with the Barrie Persian Association, but we also gather at the Bradford West Gwillimbury Public Library this weekend with our Minister of Transportation to celebrate Nowruz and, of course, Persian Heritage Month.

I also want to thank our Associate Minister of Housing, who is one of the first elected Conservative Persian MPPs in this Legislature, and, of course, the member from Carleton, also the first Persian elected member of this Legislature, for everything they stand for to bring freedom to this province.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTIVITIES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Folks around the world are seeing that hate is not only on the rise but getting closer to home. There are hate groups and people who are spreading hate and fear, that are targeting our neighbours and friends in the trans community and the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Just last week, there was an awful demonstration of intolerance and hate that was planned in Oshawa, but thankfully, the church where they were scheduled chose not to host it. Instead, folks from across our community came out in force and allyship with the 2SLGBTQIA+ and trans communities and gathered at Brew Wizards Board Game Cafe for a brilliant and bright evening of love and art and community. We came together to show love and support for our trans family, friends and neighbours. They created a space of love and support and raised donations for PFLAG Durham while giving people a way to stand up against the ugly hate that is crawling across our province.

Last night at the DDSB board meeting, groups who have been attacking the 2SLGBTQIA+ and, in particular, the trans community for months now descended on our Durham community. These hate groups set up their ugly protests but were met with a loud rally of support and love for students and community members, who have the right to live authentically and free from harassment and harm. There was an awesome show of unity, Pride flags, symbols and strength at the board office that sent a clear message

that there is no room for hate and transphobia in our community or anywhere. We are here, and we support each other.

I am proud to stand in solidarity with the trans and the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and with allies and friends who won't back down or go away. Discrimination and hate will not be tolerated in our community.

POLISH DELEGATION

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Later today, I will have the honour of welcoming the Minister of Health of the Republic of Poland to our wonderful city of Mississauga alongside my colleagues the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and his parliamentary assistant the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills. We have the distinct honour of hosting the minister, Dr. Adam Niedzielski, accompanied by Witold Dzielski, Poland's ambassador to Canada, at our state-of-the-art Trillium Health Partners Credit Valley Hospital.

With our government making historic investments into health care infrastructure, operations and human resources, it is important we continue to build our system by working with and sharing best practices with other jurisdictions. We will continue to collaborate and build bilateral relations, with the common goal of enhancing the level of health care received by our constituents.

We are actively doing this, as our government released the Your Health plan last month, which focuses on providing people with a better health care experience by connecting them to more convenient care closer to home while shortening wait times for key services across the province and growing the health care workforce.

As a registered nurse and a proud Polish Canadian, I am very excited to be welcoming Minister Niedzielski to Mississauga, and it brings me great pride to be a part of a government that understands the challenges in our health care system and is taking bold and innovative steps to address them.

1020

NORTHERN BANDS HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker. *Remarks in Anishiniimowin.*

The 35th annual Northern Bands Hockey Tournament was held in Dryden last week, with 47 men's teams participating. The tournament hasn't been played since 2019 due to the pandemic.

During the tournament, I noticed that many teams acknowledged their players who have passed on since the last tournament was held with moments of silence.

The Northern Bands Hockey Tournament is an event that all of us across the north enjoy, and many people look forward to participating in every year. I got to see players. We competed in the tournament years back, which I enjoyed, but I also got to see the new and upcoming players as well.

A big thank you to the coordinators, coaches, managers, players and the fans in the stands who make this tournament happen. Thank you to the town of Dryden for hosting all the visitors. All the teams played well and represented their home First Nations with pride and respect.

At this time, I'd like to say congratulations to the championship teams: C-side champions, Kingfisher Lake Ice Lords; B-side champions, Team Webequie; and finally, the A-side champions, Michikan Lake Mavericks. We'll see you next year.

ST. MARYS CEMENT

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: It gives me great pleasure today to recognize an outstanding company within my riding of Durham. St. Marys Cement has called Bowmanville home for more than 50 years and has been a vital job creator in the province of Ontario for more than 110 years. St. Marys Cement, now part of Votorantim Cimentos, has manufactured cement for more than 110 years in Ontario. Originally located in St. Marys, home to the honourable member for Perth—Wellington, St. Marys Cement is a worldwide provider of cement, concrete and aggregates, and these products are used in a wide range of construction and infrastructure improvement projects.

Most recently, I'm proud to announce that St. Marys implemented its leading-edge alternative low carbon fuel, ALCF, program at the Bowmanville plant, and this eliminates coals from fuels which are non-hazardous and come from industrial and post-consumer sources. Much of this fuel is wood-waste material that has been diverted from landfill.

St. Marys Cement is responsible for over 54,000 direct and indirect jobs across Ontario and generates over \$25 billion in economic activity while supporting small and medium-sized businesses throughout Ontario's supply chain.

Welcome, in particular, today to St. Marys executives, Resha Watkins, David Hanratty and John Fahey.

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Wayne Gates: We have an affordability crisis in Niagara. Seniors and families are struggling. In Fort Erie, there is a 13-year wait-list to get an affordable one-bedroom housing unit if you're a senior—13 years. Seniors are cutting pills in half or skipping a dose. They can't afford their medication and groceries.

I get calls every week from seniors concerned with the cost of home heating. Under this government, Enbridge rates have doubled in the last two years. Grocery prices have skyrocketed. Last year, food prices rose at the fastest pace in 40 years. Loblaws, owned by the Weston family, earned more than \$500 million in fourth-quarter profits. They earned a million dollars a day last year in profit. That's price gouging. One in five children live in poverty in the province of Ontario. Conservatives have done nothing to combat corporate greed.

This crisis is putting enormous pressure on our front-line social services in Niagara. Non-profits in my community have seen drastic increases in the need for housing supports. Demand for food banks has never been higher.

We need investment in affordable housing and public, not-for-profit health care. I proposed solutions to this crisis, but the Conservatives say no. It has become unaffordable to live in Doug Ford's Ontario, but I'll keep fighting for affordable housing to protect our families and our seniors, and fight grocery price gouging by the Weston family.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind the members once again that we refer to other members by their ministerial title or by their riding title, not by their personal name.

STUDENTS

Mr. Billy Pang: I would like to share with members my recent engagement with students from Markham–Unionville. Two weeks ago, I had the pleasure of having Bianca Caracoglia from Markham–Unionville serve as a page. Bianca was selected from among hundreds of applications to serve in the House and learn about our Parliament and legislative process. I would like to extend my gratitude to Bianca, who demonstrated her responsibility, commitment and leadership during her service.

Just last week, I also had a meeting with JC, a grade 7 student in Markham–Unionville who is interested in becoming a page. We talked about the work of a page and how she can prepare herself for the application.

During the March break, I also hosted two tours of our Legislative Building. Over 60 residents in Markham–Unionville visited us. Many of the participants were students who are interested in the work of the Legislature. I was delighted to see students engaging in the tour and asking different questions, from the operation of the Parliament to the architecture of the Legislative Building to how I became an MPP.

Our children are the future. I am encouraged by the passion and enthusiasm of the children in the community and public affairs, and I am confident in the future of Ontario thanks to them.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mike Schreiner: We are at a climate crossroads. Do we choose the highway to hell or a livable future? Yesterday's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report is so terrifying that, collectively, it seems like we're burying it under all the other challenges we face.

Speaker, I say to my colleagues in this House, to the people of Ontario and people all across the world, everything is literally at stake. The IPCC report is clear: Any new fossil fuel developments are utterly incompatible with the net-zero emissions required for a safe and livable future. We simply can't waste money on things that are going to make the crisis worse: super-sprawl, highways in the greenbelt, ramping up expensive fossil gas plants.

We're in a crisis now, and we need to act now. We must protect the nature and the farmland that protects us and feeds us. We have affordable solutions, such as low-cost renewable energy, building retrofits and heat pumps.

Speaker, in the interest of non-partisanship, I say to everyone in this House that we all face the catastrophic risks. Let's all work together to solve those risks, before it is too late.

MAPLE SYRUP

Ms. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, it's that wonderful, sweet time of year when we begin to harvest the liquid gold provided by Mother Nature and we turn it into our beloved maple syrup. Maple syrup has always been a part of Canada's cultural fabric, and this is especially true in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, where maple syrup season is in full swing.

I recently had the pleasure of joining Robert and Jill Staples and their family on their farm in Cavan for the first tapping of the season. Their syrup and maple tarts were delicious, and it's no wonder, as Staples Maple Syrup has been tapping trees since 1973 and won so many awards. As a matter of fact, they are the four-time world champions at the Royal Winter Fair and currently tap over 3,600 trees. I was happy to see the next generation ready to participate and continue the family tradition.

On April 1, Sunderland, in Brock township, will host their annual maple syrup festival, which offers a weekend of family-friendly events and activities, from a historical bus tour of Harlaine farms and a visit to their sugar shack to a draft horse display and much more.

With Ontario being the third-largest sugar bush in the country, I would like to thank the hard-working men and women, and it's timely today as we welcome the Ontario Federation of Agriculture to Queen's Park. This season, I recommend everyone participate in your communities'—

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

The next member's statement.

1030

NOWRUZ

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, it's Persian Heritage Month in Ontario, and yesterday—Monday, March 20, 2023—was Nowruz, which means “new day.”

Nowruz is based on the Iranian solar Hijri calendar and the spring equinox and is celebrated by millions of people around the world. Nowruz has its origins in the Iranian religion of Zoroastrianism and is rooted in the traditions of the Iranian people. Nowruz has been celebrated by diverse communities for over 3,000 years. Presently, Nowruz is largely a secular holiday celebrated by Iranians around the world, regardless of ethnicity, language or religion, because Nowruz is part of our cultural heritage.

Nowruz is supposed to be a time of joy. Friends and family get together to celebrate the end of winter and the beginning of spring. We eat traditional food, including a

fish and rice dish called “sabzi polo ba mahi.” We give gifts—or “eydis,” as we call them—to children.

Nowruz is supposed to be a time of rebirth, renewal and hope. Unfortunately, this year Nowruz is a bit more solemn and sombre. But Iranians are still celebrating. For 44 years, the terrorist and illegitimate Islamic regime in Iran has held the people of Iran hostage and has tried to erase our culture, heritage and history. And that is exactly why Iranians, even though they have heavy hearts, are celebrating. We're celebrating for Mahsa Amini, for Hadis Najafi, for Kian Piralak, for Mohsen Shekari, for Nika Shakarami, for Majid Reza Rahnavard, for Khodanoor, for our endangered—

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

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. That concludes our members' statements for this morning.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required and, therefore, the afternoon routine on Wednesday, March 22, 2023, shall commence at 1 p.m.

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report entitled Ontario's Labour Market in 2022 from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd like to begin the introduction of visitors with an introduction of this new cohort of our legislative pages. I'll ask our pages to now assemble. They're all working so hard.

From the riding of Milton, Shahd Alshamaly; from the riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, Felicity Banbury; from Ottawa Centre, Ethan Blonski; from Brampton South, Jonas Boyce; from Simcoe–Grey, Morgan Burkitt; from King–Vaughan, Savannah Chu Morrison; from Richmond Hill, Skyler Chui; from Hamilton Centre, Artur Cordovani; from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Ryan de Haan; from Hamilton Mountain, Keya Dudhwala; from Niagara Falls, Claire Fish; from Essex, Cole Foster; from Don Valley West, Paul Hu; from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Helen Elizabeth Keys-Brasier; from Mississauga–Erin Mills, Mikael Mahmood; from Toronto–Danforth, Stefan Parsons; from Ottawa–Vanier, Mia Tocchi; from Oakville, Madison Wong; from Willowdale, Evelyn Yeung; and from Spadina–Fort York, Jing Zomok.

Please join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages.

Applause.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Deepak Anand: My colleagues, I'm sure you feel a lot of energy in the chamber, because we have students from the St. Francis Xavier Secondary School model Parliament. I'd like to welcome Debbie Machado, Denicer Catacutan, Ahmad Elbayoumi, Cristian Casiero, Sonia Vaidya, Jacob Burek, Mark Saad, Anmar Alsibaie, Krishna Dave, Ashrita Samantula, Melissa Bantas, Hasan Obaid, Tiya Alsibaie, Christos Tsiourlis, Zaid Alam, Ishita Rajan, Adrien Ravindran, Lamees Elbayoumi, Evelyn Fonseca, Asher Khan, Andres Vargas-Daza, Lucas Helme, Adam Burek, Daniel Bai, Jessica Hui, Sara Alani, Ryan Bahlawan, Diala Jarcas, Lochan Devanand, Leen Suliman, Siddharth Iyer, Sambhavi Dubey, Aarrushi Nalwa, Gabriel Casiero, Satvik Garimella, Anagha Hamsala, Vyahruthi Danthurthy, Grishma Allam, Aditya Sharma and Liezel Amalaraj. These are the youth who are going to fill this chamber in the future. Welcome to your future home.

Mr. John Vanthof: On behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to welcome the OFA here today on their lobby day. I invite everyone to their reception and especially thank them for bringing young leaders to see how politics works in Ontario.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: It's my pleasure to also introduce this morning the following champions from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture: Peggy Brekveld, president; Tracey Arts, director for Elgin and Oxford; Larry Davis, director for Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk; and last but certainly not least, Haldimand county's rock-star egg farmer and OFA young leader, Charlotte Huitema.

Hon. Kinga Surma: I would like to introduce two very special guests. Aria Bianco is here from my riding. She's an intern in my constituency office, right over there, visiting us today.

And then, of course, my father, Miroslaw Surma, is in the gallery watching us today. I have a wonderful father, and I'm very grateful to have him in my life.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'd like to welcome, from OSSTF/FEESO today, vice-president Martha Hradowy; executive officer Colin Matthew; and GR officer Dan Earle. Thanks so much for joining us today.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to introduce two friends from the riding of King–Vaughan, Fred and Wendy Armstrong—incredible volunteers and leaders. Thank you so much for being with us today.

I also want to recognize, in the gallery today, Canada's first and former ambassador of religious freedoms, Rev. Dr. Andrew Bennett. Thank you for joining us in the people's House.

Mr. Adil Shamji: This morning, I'm very proud to introduce someone from my riding—also my little sister—Faiza Shamji. She's a registered nurse in emergency

medicine. She's a certified poison specialist, which makes her very dangerous to make upset. On this occasion, it is National Poison Prevention Week, so to her and all of the other poison specialists out there keeping us safe, I wish to say thank you.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'm really pleased to be able to welcome a constituent to Queen's Park, Drew Spoelstra, who is the vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. We're really pleased to have you in the House today.

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Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, everyone. I'm thrilled to be able to introduce the amazing members of East York Curling Club: Karen Lee Banka, Brian Beamish, Ursula Beamish-Mader, Jason Chang and wee Kaitlyn—the smallest member here today—Theresa Currie, Joanne Davidson, Mary Furlong, Diane Hooper, Leyla Lavenex, Kathryn Bourne, Ada Shang, Christie Steverson. As curlers say, hurry hard.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I want to introduce some friends in the gallery today: my chief of staff, Heather Potter; my director of policy, Adam Wallace; and my 15 co-workers from team MEDJCT. Welcome, everybody.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I also want to take the opportunity to welcome from Windsor the vice-president of OSSTF, Martha Hradowy, and the entire OSSTF team here today.

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: I want to welcome representatives from OSSTF, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, to Queen's Park today. Specifically, we have vice-president, Martha Hradowy, and executive officer, Colin Matthew. They're here today to ensure that education is a priority in this upcoming budget for the sake of our students and our educators. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to introduce the grandparents of page Elizabeth Keys-Brasier: Anne and Murray Keys.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Good morning, Speaker. I'd like to welcome the remarkable students and the professor who are here from George Brown College. They're here with a committee organizing a community worker program. Welcome to their House. They're from the King Street campus.

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to welcome Larry Davis, representing Brant County Federation of Agriculture, and our town crier. It's good to see you, my friend.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I would like to welcome the amazing representatives from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture: Peggy Brekveld and Bill Groenheide, both living very close to where I am in Thunder Bay—Superior North; Andrea McCoy-Naperstow, who is doing amazing educational work; and Derek Brekveld who is here as a youth representative. Welcome to your House. I'm so glad you're here.

Hon. Neil Lumsden: I'm very proud to introduce some outstanding athletes who represented Canada on the world stage at the IIHF U18 Women's World Hockey Championship.

Mr. Speaker, it's tough to be good, but it's really, really hard to be great, and these young women are great. I'd like to introduce them to you, and as they stand, I'm sure you'll notice how great they are based on the jewellery they are wearing: Caitlin Kraemer, Emmalee Pais, Keira Hurry, Abby Lunney, Piper Grober—well done.

Applause.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to introduce Jennifer Lefevre and her partner, Thomas Bell, and the Vecsei family: Monika, Zsolt and Richard. Thank you for coming today.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Today is Colleges Ontario Queen's Park Day, and we are welcoming our 24 presidents—I'm not going to list them all, but please come to room 228-230 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. tonight to meet with students, faculty and enjoy the culinary innovations.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: I'd like to welcome the mother of page Ryan de Haan, Jordan de Haan who's here watching today, and father, Ben, is at home watching as well.

Hon. Michael D. Ford: It is my pleasure to welcome to the House the leadership team from Surrey Place. Surrey Place helps people of all ages with developmental disabilities live happier and healthy lives. We are proud to support the work they're doing to tackle anti-Black racism in the community. I would like to welcome Joanne, Alicia, Tricia, Esther and Kajany to the House.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I want to take the opportunity to welcome from my riding Peggy Brekveld and Bill Groenheide of the OFA. As well, Bill is the councillor for the township of Gillies, and I am proud to call both of them friends. Welcome.

Hon. Stan Cho: Holly Yoon is a recent graduate from York University and Sheridan College. She started work recently as a graphic designer at a really cool company. She also has a similar family story as mine: a proud second-generation Korean Canadian. Welcome to the Legislature, Holly.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to welcome my friend Carole Breton, secretary general of Saint Paul University of Ottawa. I also would like to welcome Claire Forcier from my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills and congratulate her for receiving the Ordre de la Pléiade award today.

Also, I would like to welcome Father Deacon Andrew Bennett from Cardus and also Father Ammonius Guirguis from the Coptic church of east Toronto. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

Hon. Michael Parsa: Speaker, I'd like to welcome my good friends Salman Sima and Hannah Fudge to Queen's Park. They're here to celebrate Persian Heritage Month as well as Nowruz, the Persian new year. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thanks for the great work you're doing every single day.

Interjections.

Mr. Graham McGregor: One more.

Interjection: Two more.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Two more. The member for Carlton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was waiting for you to recognize the Associate Minister of Housing so that I could then also stand up and recognize my good friend Salman Sima who is here in the Legislature. He has been a huge activist and has spent countless hours supporting the people of Iran, fighting for freedom and democracy. It's an honour to have him in the Legislature. Welcome.

Mr. Aris Babikian: It is my great pleasure to welcome a delegate from the Cardus organization here. Two of them are from my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt: Father Ammonius Guirguis and Father Zareh Zargarian, in addition to Elder Rich Ternieden, Jaspreet Bal and Reverend Andrew Bennett.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our introduction of visitors for this morning. I want to thank all the members for their indulgence. It has been so long since we've been able to welcome our guests to the Legislature, and I think it's great that we can do so again.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Last week, the Integrity Commissioner revealed that his investigation into the removal of lands from the greenbelt had entered a new phase. His office is now "preparing summonses for numerous witnesses to be interviewed." We all remember how the Premier and the former Solicitor General both refused to appear before the Emergencies Act inquiry. They refused a summons to testify.

Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Will he require all government officials, including ministers, to co-operate in full when they are summoned by the Integrity Commissioner?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think the Premier has been very clear on that. He continues to work with the Integrity Commissioner. But let's get really to what the Leader of the Opposition is saying. The NDP, of course, do not want us to continue to build housing for the people of the province of Ontario. Because for the NDP, what they would rather is that the rich are less rich as long as the poor are poorer. That's what the NDP is all about.

Let me tell you what new housing means for the people of Stouffville. For the people of Stouffville, the new housing that the minister introduced means that we are building homes in a community that has the infrastructure to do it, a community that has schools, a community that has churches right by it, a community that has two brand-new GO train stations, a community that has a community centre right next to a downtown core that is desperate for people to fill the jobs in our service industries and right

close to farms that are so desperate for people to work on the land. That's why they bring in temporary foreign workers.

It is a growing community that wants new housing, and a group of people are coming to this country who demand it. We need them, and we will be there for them.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, we're going to keep talking about integrity, because the people of this province deserve a government they can trust and that they can believe in.

Last week, this government appointed a Conservative party donor, Madeleine Bodenstein, to the York Region Police Services Board. This comes a year after the government appointed another Conservative party donor, Mario Cortellucci, to the same board. And not only are they both Conservative party donors, they are also both personal friends of this Premier and even sat at the same table with the Premier at his daughter's wedding reception last year.

1050

These appointments earn \$10,000 a year. So my question is to the Premier: Why is the Premier stacking the York Region Police Services Board with his personal friends and donors?

Hon. Paul Calandra: What we're doing is ensuring that the York Region Police Services Board has qualified people who have made an impact on their community to work with the York Regional Police. Now, we have a growing community and that means that as our community grows, we want to make sure that whether it's the police service board or the other agencies that support the growth that we're seeing in York region, that they have the highest-quality people to do so. The committee can review all appointments.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's really talk about what the issue is for the NDP. The issue for the NDP is that they do not want to see an Ontario economy that is continuing to grow. It drives them crazy that we are seeing jobs come back to the province of Ontario. We've seen what the NDP want. We've seen this show before. They want to kill jobs, they want to kill investments, and they want to overregulate the economy. We saw what happened when they had the opportunity to do so in co-operation with the Liberals. They killed manufacturing; they drove away jobs. What are we doing? We're bringing thousands of jobs and opportunity back to—

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Let me tell you what matters to us over here on this side, Speaker: transparency, integrity, accountability. And that's what matters to the people of this province too. Let me tell you that to earn the trust of the people, a Premier should avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. Yet this Premier keeps appointing his friends and his donors to public boards. His friends and donors seem to have curiously timed information. It even looks like he's giving his friends and his donors special treatment at the expense of everyone else.

Speaker, does anyone on that side of the Legislature care how bad this looks to the average Ontarian?

Hon. Paul Calandra: What the average Ontarian wants is a government that will focus on building an economy, and that is exactly what we're doing. When you look across government as a whole, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, in co-operation with the Minister of Red Tape Reduction, took off over \$7 billion of taxes and regulation that they, along with the Liberals, put on Ontario job creators, driving away thousands of jobs. In fact, together they decided that Ontario needed to move away from manufacturing and focus on the service industry only.

What are we doing for the people of the province of Ontario? We're cutting taxes. We're bringing back a climate where jobs are coming back. There are so many jobs in the province of Ontario, we can't fill them all, so we need people to come and help us build, like countless generations have done before. We're going to make sure they have housing, transit, transportation and the best schools, despite the fact that they voted—

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

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'd like to go back to the Premier. Residents of Alliston in the riding of Simcoe–Grey were shocked to hear that 12 nurses at the Stevenson Memorial Hospital are being laid off at the end of March—12 nurses at a critical regional hospital that serves more than 40,000 Ontarians a year. Now people in Simcoe–Grey are going to have to wait even longer for care.

Speaker, why is this government laying off nurses when hallway health care is at an all-time high under their watch?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm not sure if the member opposite is second-guessing the work of the hospital CEO and the public board at Stevenson Memorial. I can tell you that, as a government, Premier Ford and I have had the opportunity, with the member from Simcoe–Grey's advocacy, to actually visit Stevenson Memorial. Because of that important facility that serves the people of Alliston and the surrounding area in Simcoe–Grey, we've actually announced a redevelopment project for that community hospital.

For the member opposite to suggest that she knows better about what is happening at Stevenson Memorial, more so than the management team, the president and CEO, speaks volumes about what she understands about the public health system.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'll tell you what I do know, Speaker: I know that there's something deeply wrong if a hospital is laying off nurses in the middle of a staffing crisis and an emergency room crisis in this province. I have some

numbers that I'd like to share with the Minister of Health: Average ER wait times for admission right now across this province are 22.9 hours. That's nearly a full day waiting for a bed. Ontarians without a family doctor: 2.2 million. There's 2.2 million without a family doctor. The number of kids on a wait-list for surgery right now: 12,000. But most importantly, Speaker, behind each of those numbers are real people that this government is choosing not to help.

My question, Speaker, is to the Premier: Will you stop getting in the way between Ontarians and the health care that they need?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I have some numbers I would like to share with the member opposite and the people of Ontario. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been able to, as a result of working with partners, not fighting them and second-guessing them—3,500 additional hospital beds in the province of Ontario in less than three years. That is an incredible achievement, and it only happened because we worked with our hospital partners. We do not second-guess the decisions that they make at the local level.

Again, I will say Stevenson Memorial in particular— incredible hospital doing incredible work with incredible staff. Because of that work, we are doing an investment of a redevelopment project—because of the leadership of Premier Ford, because of the leadership from the member from Simcoe–Grey. We will continue to do that regardless of what the NDP want to do.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, if their plan is so good, why are things getting worse in this province? Why are they getting worse five years in? This government is fighting nurses in court to keep their wages down. That's why we can't keep nurses on the job. That's why we can't retain them. I am worried about what I'm seeing, and I think Ontarians across this province are worried.

Their plan to privatize health care is taking Ontario in the wrong direction. It's taking us toward a two-tier system where a select number of people with deep pockets or cozy connections to this government can jump to the front of the line, where even routine surgeries are going to cost the system more in private clinic fees, where people are going to be waiting even longer for care—if they can get it at all. In fact, Speaker, it's already happening.

My question to the Premier again is, when will you reverse course and stop putting private profits ahead of patient care?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, this is precisely the problem with the member opposite and her party that she leads—ideologically opposed to not looking at innovation, not looking at new ideas. Bill 60 actually involves and ensures that we can expand community surgical and diagnostics, of which I might add there are over 800 in the

province today that have been licensed under both NDP and Liberal governments. Take off the blinders and look at the opportunities that we have when we open up and ensure that people have access in their communities faster so that we don't have the backlog, so that we ensure that people who are waiting for surgeries can get it quickly in community. Isn't that at the core of what we all want as politicians?

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Joel Harden: My question is for the Premier. Speaker, it has come to my attention that cancer patients waiting for surgery right now at the Ottawa Hospital are being bumped by clients of the for-profit clinic that's been operating on Saturdays at the Riverside Campus of the Ottawa Hospital. This for-profit clinic has been offering nurses double the wages they earn in our public hospital system, and that has had an impact on our public system's ability to have the staff capacity ready for cancer surgeries for patients in urgent need. This is what I'm being told privately by hospital staff who fear the repercussions for speaking publicly.

Speaker, a very simple question to the Premier: Will they commit today to investigate this matter?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, it is very challenging for me to answer the member opposite's question when he is the same individual who has been organizing and participating in rallies in front of surgical centres in his own community. It is shameful. It is frustrating. It is unbelievable that a member of our Legislature thinks that it is appropriate for him to actually protest in front of where people are getting surgeries that they need in community. I have to question where the member's values are when he thinks that protesting patients who are getting critical surgery in his own community is doing the right thing.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm not going to respond to the disinformation campaign of this government about—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the government side to come to order.

The member will withdraw.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you, Speaker. I'm not going to respond to the smear campaign of this government—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have not heard the member say he withdraws the unparliamentary comment. I ask the member to withdraw his unparliamentary comment.

Mr. Joel Harden: Look, as this government engages in theatrics—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I can't hear the member for Ottawa Centre when there are interjections from this side of the House.

The member will withdraw.

Mr. Joel Harden: Withdraw.

Thank you, Speaker. Look, there is a serious question being posed here, and I would expect a serious answer from the minister opposite. Every day a cancer patient waits for surgery is another day that patient risks losing their life; it's another day that family is put in stress and anxiety because that patient could lose their life. Bill 60, the legislation that this government is putting forward allowing for for-profit, investor-driven clinics in a for-profit system, has led to a secretive clinic in our city that may be putting lives at risk in Ottawa.

It's a very simple question: Will the government investigate these allegations made apparent to me? It's their responsibility. Will you do it?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: If the member opposite would actually look closely at what Bill 60 is going to be able to do: If passed, it will expand those surgical opportunities, ensuring that individuals who are waiting for life-saving surgeries do not have to languish on wait-lists. We have an opportunity here with Bill 60, if passed, that not-for-profit, for-profit community-based hospital partnerships are going to be able to form so that individuals who have been waiting on wait-lists, who are calling every one of our constituency offices saying, "Can I get my surgery faster," now have that opportunity, if and when Bill 60 is passed, because we have a process that will ensure individuals who want to have these surgical and diagnostic surgeries in community will have a pathway and a complete understanding of how they can do that.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. The growing and diverse communities in Mississauga and Etobicoke are counting on our government to build transit, schools, hospitals and roads to support their economic growth and to make their lives easier. The previous Liberal government failed to prioritize projects that would make life better, more productive and more convenient for the communities across our province. That is why our government must show immediate action to make the strategic investments needed in infrastructure in order to rebuild our economy. The people of my riding of Mississauga-Lakeshore and the surrounding communities deserve access to the services they need now.

Can the minister please describe how our government is building key infrastructure projects that will improve the lives of the people of this province of Ontario?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you to the Mississauga member for the question. Our government's plan to build Ontario is one of the most ambitious in the province's history, with planned investments of \$159 billion over 10 years and \$20 billion in 2022-23 alone.

Last week in Mississauga, Infrastructure Ontario and Trillium Health Partners selected their builder to build the

Mississauga hospital, now named the Peter Gilgan hospital. Together, the three parties will work in a co-operative and collaborative manner over the next 12 to 18 months to determine the schedule, design, price and risk. This will be the largest hospital in Canada with the largest emergency room in Ontario, 950 beds and nine new operating rooms to address the growing community.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the minister for her response. It is encouraging that, under the leadership of this Premier and this minister, robust investments in infrastructure continue to be a priority as Ontario's population grows. Under the previous Liberal government, a lack of infrastructure investment meant that hospitals became overcrowded and outdated, schools closed and transit was being built at a snail's pace.

Communities across our province are awaiting completion of projects that will support our government's vision of building a stronger Ontario. Can the minister please explain how our government is putting shovels in the ground to build the projects that are needed most for communities across this province?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Our government is building a stronger Ontario. In our most recent market update, it included 38 large-scale, complex infrastructure projects totalling more than \$35 billion. That's transit, highways, hospitals, long-term care and schools.

In the west end of Toronto and Peel region, our government is investing and expanding the Queensway Health Centre. We're building two new long-term-care homes through our rapid delivery program, which will bring and activate 600 beds. We are investing in the cancer care centre in Brampton, and we're building a brand new hospital in Brampton with 250 patient beds and a 24-hour emergency care centre.

But we're not just investing in growing areas. We are investing in health care facilities right across the province.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. The climate crisis is already driving up the price of food. It's causing power outages and it's forcing people out of their homes. Yesterday, the United Nations panel on climate change pleaded for aggressive climate action from governments around the world to deal with the crisis we're facing.

What we have is a government whose plan is a complete failure. It will not do what is needed. It will not meet the United Nations standard. When will the Premier cut emissions by the amount necessary to protect the people of Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. David Piccini: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. This report rightly highlights the need to do more. That's why the Premier is doing just that. Hoesung Lee, the chair of the UN panel, spoke about low-

carbon electrification and investing in those projects. That's why Premier Ford is working with Algoma Steel and Dofasco to electrify the arc furnace. That's supporting jobs, Mr. Speaker, and it's taking two million cars off the road. That's why, in this report, they called for investments in public transit. There is no government in this province's history that has invested more in public transit than Premier Ford and this government.

Speaker, we're going to continue to make the investments we need to provide clean jobs for the next generation. For the immigrant looking to come to this province, we'll have a home for them and a clean job for generations to come.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, the problem that we have is that we need to cut emissions dramatically by 2030 and this government's plan is not on track to do that. If you look at their own numbers, the IESO says that the increased emissions from the gas plants in this province will wipe out the savings from the electrification of steel plants, will wipe out the savings from electrified vehicles until 2030. If you look at this government's plan, it does not actually deliver what we need to have delivered. The transit projects he talks about are, for the most part, going to be completed by 2030.

The cuts have to happen now—now. When will he take the action we need?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, there you saw what the NDP's plan is: Yell till you're red in the face and hope decarbonization happens. Their plan—it's about contrasting plans. Their plan, and they should be clear, is about punishing Ontarians with record-high taxation. What this Premier and this government have shown is when you create a competitive climate, you attract clean investment and you create jobs. Guess what, Speaker? We're generating more revenue as a government as a result. Their plan is about "no" and taxes. We saw it when they objected to trees of no significance on the Ontario Line that will take 28,000 cars off the road every day.

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Speaker, we know they can't see the forest through the trees, but on this side of the House, we're going to continue making investments to support clean jobs, clean growth and a low-carbon future for Ontarians.

NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Ross Romano: My question is for the Associate Minister of Transportation. The success of the agri-food sector across all of northern Ontario depends on solid transportation links. Unfortunately, the previous Liberal government ignored the economic importance of the agricultural sector in the north and failed to invest in northern Ontario's transportation network.

Communities across the north count on transportation systems that make life easier for people and for our businesses. Strong transportation networks are vital for moving goods and to enable economic prosperity and future

sustainability for our northern communities. Speaker, can the associate minister please explain what actions our government is taking to strengthen transportation links for moving goods across our great province?

Hon. Stan Cho: That member works his tail off for the Soo and asks a very important and great question this morning. Thank you for that.

Last week, Speaker, on Wednesday, I announced our government's purchase of four terrific new freight train railcars for the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. Let's break that down: Our government is establishing yet another vital transportation link that will connect local farmers to larger markets by transporting their goods by rail throughout Ontario and beyond.

This strong investment of over \$640,000 bolsters freight train access across the north, which in turn supports economic development opportunities for businesses and communities. Unlike the NDP and the Liberals, our government says yes to building vital transportation, so that goods get to market faster and our economy grows.

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

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you again to the minister for that response. This is encouraging news for farmers and agri-food businesses across northern Ontario.

A strong transportation network also means building and maintaining infrastructure that enables hard-working Ontarians to get across our province by car or transit. That is why it is so vital that our government continues to ensure that investments are being made in northern highways and transit services. I'm very happy and grateful to the Associate Minister and Minister of Transportation for all the support our community of Sault Ste. Marie has received in Connecting Links funding.

Efficient and convenient transportation networks help to drive economic prosperity and improve the overall quality of life for residents in northern communities. Speaker, can the associate minister please explain how our government is building strong transportation networks across the north?

Hon. Stan Cho: The member is right: Infrastructure doesn't build or maintain itself, and after 15 years of Liberal neglect, to be very frank, our system is not where it needs to be. That requires investment today, and that's why our government is getting it done for the transportation needs of the north.

In fact, considering the roads alone, this government has dedicated almost \$624 million across the 2022-23 fiscal year to expand and repair highways and bridges across the entire north. What's more, these vital infrastructure upgrades have been supporting more than 4,000 local jobs, all while connecting the north like never before. And, Speaker, of course, let's not forget about the \$140-million purchase of three beautiful new train sets for the revamped Northlander passenger rail service that will get people moving from north to south and south to north.

The NDP supported the Liberals, and the Liberals literally called the north a "no man's land." We disagree.

We're getting it done for the great people of the north and those who call it home.

SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE EN CONDITIONS HIVERNALES

WINTER HIGHWAY SAFETY

M. Guy Bourgouin: Encore une fois, l'histoire qui se répète : une autre tempête et une autre fermeture de l'autoroute 11 de Matheson à Longlac pour 48 heures. Plusieurs accidents et des lignées de transport à n'en plus finir ont fait en sorte que les gens du Nord étaient en arrêt complet encore une fois.

Notre gouvernement a voté contre mon projet de loi pour mettre la 11 et la 17 en classe 1 comme les autoroutes 400 et QEW, et on a passé une motion qui n'a rien fait pour changer la réalité des gens du Nord. Alors, ma question pour le premier ministre : qu'avez-vous à dire aux gens de la route 11 et 17 qui ne cessent de vivre des accidents et des fermetures de la route 11 et 17 dus à l'entretien des routes ?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je remercie le député du parti de l'opposition pour sa question. Tout d'abord, en ce qui concerne la fermeture de l'autoroute la semaine dernière, c'est le résultat d'un accident. La Police provinciale de l'Ontario est toujours en train de regarder les causes de cet accident, et nous allons bien sûr nous pencher sur les résultats de cette investigation lorsque c'est complet.

Monsieur le Président, je sais que la population du nord de l'Ontario sait que notre gouvernement prend la sécurité des routes du Nord très au sérieux. Sous le leadership du premier ministre Ford, nous avons vu plus d'avancées pour la sécurité routière dans le nord de l'Ontario que jamais dans le passé de la province de l'Ontario. En ce qui concerne la sécurité de la route 11 et la route 17, le membre du parti d'opposition sait très bien que nous sommes en train de doubler la route 17 jusqu'à la frontière du Manitoba, entre le Manitoba et Nipigon. Monsieur le Président—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Merci.

Supplementary question? The member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: In northwestern Ontario, we experienced another dreadful weekend of carnage on our highways. Two houses were taken out by a transport truck in Beardmore. Tragically, another snowplow driver was killed near Ignace. Highway 17 was closed for a second 12-hour period because two transports crashed into each other, scattering debris all over the highway and killing one of the drivers.

Auditor General reports have told us that certain carriers are licensing drivers with next-to-no training. I heard from an OPP officer this weekend who is afraid to go to work because the highways are unsafe.

What is the Premier doing to make sure that all truck drivers are fully trained and experienced in winter driving before they are licensed to do cross-Canada deliveries?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: My heart goes out to the family of the victim this weekend in that terrible crash. I can assure the member opposite, as well as all members of this House, that our government takes truck driver safety and training very seriously. Ontario has the most robust commercial licensing system anywhere in Canada, but that doesn't mean that it's enough. We are continuing to review our commercial licensing process to make sure that we're strengthening regulations, to make sure our truck drivers have the training they need when they get out on the road—for themselves as well as for all drivers on Ontario's roads. Just in January, electronic logging devices became required on Ontario roads and that is something that Ontario was leading the federation in, making sure that Ontario trucks are equipped with electronic logging devices.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're doing more than just working on truck driver training. We're ensuring that our roads themselves are made safer. Our government is piloting for the first time in North America a two-plus-one model, which is an innovative model that's been used in Scandinavia, to make sure that our roads—

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Health. I hope the minister can help me understand something. Why is it that a group of orthopedic surgeons who work at the Ottawa Hospital in my riding had to form a private company in order to rent operating rooms at the hospital they work in, and then hire a private company to get surgical instruments and then hire nurses off-book? All this was just to address the surgical backlog that exists in the hospital they already work in.

Can the minister explain all this jumping through hoops instead of the Ottawa Hospital using the capacity that already exists within it?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Of course, since the pandemic began over two and a half years ago, we've actually had a surgical backlog recovery program of almost a billion dollars. That has been available to organizations such as the Ottawa Hospital and other publicly funded hospitals, and they've been able to utilize it very well. They submit their program on how they can use existing OR capacity with their health human resources. It has, in fact, helped us a great deal. We are—and perhaps I haven't said this enough—actually back at pre-pandemic wait times.

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Now, having said that, some of those wait times are still 12-months-plus—six to 12 months—so we can do better, and we will do better. Because of Bill 60, we have a process that ensures that individuals, organizations, hospital partnerships can be formed and have that surgical recovery—surgical options—available closer in community.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I'm not sure I heard an answer in that, so maybe here's the answer: Yesterday, the Deputy Minister of Health revealed that the \$300 million earmarked for the surgical backlog had not been fully used. Or maybe it's because Ontario has the lowest-paid nurses in all of Canada. Or maybe it's because Bill 124 incentivized nurses and other health care professionals to leave our hospitals and go work for private companies.

Speaker, those operating rooms I spoke about have been dark on weekends for months—actually, probably years. How can that be? With all this government has to say about what they're doing, how can that be? Speaker, in hospitals across the province, there are operating rooms that are dark simply because our hospitals don't have the resources to use them to their full capacity, and the minister knows this.

Speaker, through you, can the minister tell us just how it is that we are not using operating rooms in our hospitals to their full capacity?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The member opposite highlights exactly why we have brought forward Bill 60 and why we are expanding the community surgical and diagnostic piece. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have had a fund available to our publicly funded hospitals of almost \$1 billion. And yes, the member opposite is right: They have not been able to utilize that full \$300 million that was assigned in the last fiscal. But does it not speak to the fact that this is why we need more innovation? This is why we need more opportunities in community to ensure that where there is capacity, where there are wait times that are unacceptable to all of us, we can make sure that we have a process, an oversight piece, that ensures people get access to surgeries faster.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Recently, I had the pleasure of joining the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, along with some fellow MPPs, to tour the Bruce Power nuclear facility. We were able to see first-hand this outstanding operation in action, as hard-working members of Ontario's energy sector operate one of the world's largest nuclear plants.

Speaker, nuclear energy is safe, clean, reliable and affordable. Bruce Power operations support 22,000 direct and indirect jobs annually, and their workers are highly skilled, highly educated and very proud of the work they do. The PA and I were able to see the command centre, and it was a sight like something out of a Star Trek movie.

We were also able to see some women in nuclear, and I know that the PA and the Minister of Women's Economic and Social Opportunity recently held a round table to empower more women to enter this very highly competitive field.

Speaker, can the Minister of Energy please provide further information about the important work being done at Bruce Power and throughout Ontario's nuclear industry as a whole?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener South–Hespeler, the parliamentary assistant.

Ms. Jess Dixon: Thank you to the member for Mississauga Centre for that great question and for coming with me on our trip to Bruce. Your enthusiasm matches mine.

Nuclear power is emission-free, reliable and low-cost. Ontario gets about 60% of its power from nuclear. Half of that 60% comes from Bruce Power. The nuclear industry employs over 76,000 people across Canada, but most of those jobs and people are located right here in Ontario.

Our province is rapidly becoming a world leader in nuclear innovation. We're leading the charge on the development and deployment of new technology like small modular reactors, or SMRs for short. We're building Canada's first grid-scale SMR at Darlington. Up at Bruce, they're setting the gold standard on major component refurbishment to keep the fleet in tip-top shape for years to come. Ontario's economy is certainly growing on nuclear.

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Thank you to the PA for that response. It's great to hear that Ontario's nuclear industry is delivering clean and affordable electricity. As a nurse, I am particularly interested in how materials used for nuclear power production can also be used to treat cancer and sterilize medical equipment. The use of nuclear medical isotopes like cobalt-60, lutetium-177 or yttrium-90 can be used for treatment of cancer as well as equipment sterilization and is a vital resource to our health care system in our province.

While other sterilization methods can take up to seven days before products are available for use, nuclear irradiation can process such materials within one single day. That is why it is critical that Ontario uses our nuclear resources and becomes a leader in exporting medical isotopes around the world.

Can the PA please elaborate on how our government is expanding Ontario's medical isotope production?

Ms. Jess Dixon: Thank you for the follow-up. I'm so appreciative of the unique insight that's brought by the member for Mississauga Centre as a currently practising nurse.

As we saw on our tour, Ontario's medical isotope programs don't just benefit Ontario; they benefit the entire world. The isotope cobalt-60 is used to sterilize almost 40% of the world's single-use medical devices—syringes, instruments, implants, gloves. Where does that cobalt-60 come from? Fully half of the world's supply comes from our own Candu reactors at Bruce and Pickering. It doesn't stop there. Darlington will be the only North American producer of molybdenum-99, an isotope which is used in over 40 million imaging procedures worldwide. Bruce has just begun commercial production of lutetium-177, which is an isotope used successfully to fight neuroendocrine tumours and prostate cancer.

Ontario's nuclear program doesn't just put us on the forefront of clean energy, but is a world leader in life-saving medical isotopes.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

MPP Jill Andrew: This question is to the Premier. Today is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. To eliminate racism means cutting it off at the source through anti-racism education, yet across Ontario, only 49% of public schools have implemented a school-wide anti-racism policy, according to a report by People for Education in my riding of St. Paul's. This is a direct result of Conservative government under-spending on public education—\$844 million and counting, to be exact.

My question to the Premier: Will Thursday's budget include the necessary funds so that 100% of Ontario schools can implement anti-racism policies and practices to end racial discrimination experienced by both students and staff?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: In every single budget we've brought forth before this House, funding has been increased in public education. In fact, this year alone compared to last year, it is up \$683 million, yet the opposition New Democrats and Liberals coalesced, came together to oppose that investment, that increase of support. More staff, 7,000 more education workers: They voted against that. Two hundred more principals: New Democrats voted against that. An additional 800 educators in the classroom adding value, helping kids get back on track on reading and writing and math: They voted against that too.

This government is increasing investment. With respect to anti-racism, we took action to de-stream the entire grade nine curriculum to remove barriers, to create pathways and to give 100% of children their full potential to succeed in this economy.

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

MPP Jill Andrew: When this Conservative government funds education below inflation, it is a cut—a cut.

A recent school year report from the TDSB found that, across the TDSB, 50% of hate incidents were race-related; 61% of these were anti-Black racism. Black students need to feel safe from violence in all aspects of their lives, especially at school. They deserve for school to be a place of joy, building self-esteem and support. The toll racism takes on their academics and well-being is mounting as schools are increasingly underfunded and under-staffed. TDSB is projecting a \$61-million shortfall and a loss of 522 staff positions in the coming school year because of this Conservative government's cuts.

My question to the Premier: Will you prevent this from happening? Will your Thursday budget invest every dollar and cent needed to ensure students and staff have the resources necessary in their school to protect them from anti-Black racism and hate across the board?

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Hon. Stephen Lecce: In TDSB alone, which the member opposite represents, funding is up \$38 million

relative to 2017 with the Liberals in power, yet enrolment is down 16,000 students. Even still, funding is up.

Now with respect to the question on anti-racism, we take that seriously. I find it ironic, though, that when the members opposite could have supported what the research clearly states, that the educator that better reflects the classroom helps improve graduation rates—we abolished O. Reg. 274 because we believe in a meritocracy of hiring: the best educator, not seniority as supported by the opposition, ideologically blind to the research which is clear. Let's put an educator that reflects the classroom. Let's find someone who is highly talented, who is racialized, who reflects the experiences of often-diverse diasporas in this community and in this province. We're going to stand up for those kids and ensure they get a job, they graduate, they own a home and they achieve their potential in this country, Speaker.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Ted Hsu: Mr. Speaker, a deceased man's CPP survivor's pension is taxed at 50% before it can help his disabled widow. Linda McGinness is my constituent, and she needs help. She's on ODSP, but \$400 a month of that is clawed back because of an \$800-a-month CPP survivor's pension provided by her late husband. So she ends up with a monthly income of \$1,400, which is pretty much used up by shelter costs of \$1,000 a month and \$300 a month for utilities in winter. She's been overlooked by this government's stingy approach to ODSP in the face of rising costs of living. Would the government extend the \$1,000 threshold for earned-income clawbacks to CPP survivors' pensions?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I'll speak a bit personally to this. My father died when I was quite young, and my family relied on survivor benefits for a number of years. But you know what helped us out a lot too, Mr. Speaker? When there was a government in place that actually looked after the things that were important to us, when costs went down so that our family could afford to do things that we otherwise couldn't have. We lived through that high-inflation period that was in the 1980s, that high-inflation period of the late 1980s.

So what we're trying to do is build an Ontario that reflects the needs of the people of the province of Ontario. Whether you're young, whether you're old, Ontario should be what it used to be: the place where you can grow and have a family, where you can afford to live, where you have a home for you, where that senior doesn't have to worry about the high cost of hydro—in essence created by the Liberals, by the party that he actually represents, Mr. Speaker.

We have turned the table on all of that. We've increased ODSP rates in the province of Ontario. We've cut taxes

and eliminated them for the lowest-income-earning people in the province of Ontario. We're giving people a hand-up, because that's what Ontario—

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

Mr. Ted Hsu: Mr. Speaker, the government must stop dragging its feet on the mental health and addictions crisis.

Linda McGinness, the same constituent—her shelter situation is enormously impacted by this. She has the burden of living three houses away from Kingston's Integrated Care Hub. That's a consumption treatment centre with health care and social services. It anchors a community of people struggling with addictions. Unfortunately, the neighbourhood is also beset by drug-dealing and petty theft. To change this, municipalities need province-wide, predictable and sustained funding for supportive housing where treatments can be followed. While we wait, Linda McGinness is stuck. She can't afford to move. She can't afford to sell her house at a vastly depressed price. Will the government's budget respond to this crisis and address Linda McGinness's dilemma?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, how does any member of the opposition get up and ask a question like that, when they have voted against every single measure that we have brought forward to make housing more affordable in the province of Ontario? We have sat here for months. While this government has said that we need to bring more housing on-line to make housing more affordable, they have opposed every single measure. Transit-oriented communities: They've opposed it. We reduced taxes; they opposed it. We focused on low-income earners, take them off the tax rolls; they opposed it.

Mr. Speaker, today in this House we have the Minister of Infrastructure's father. Here's a person who came to this country, fled a communist dictatorship, to build a better life for himself and his family. It wasn't easy, but they came here. Do you know why? Because there was hope; there was opportunity. You had an opportunity to grow and prosper. He has the opportunity to sit here and watch his daughter serve in one of the largest governments in North America where we prosper.

So I beg the opposition: Get on board, help us build a bigger, better, stronger Ontario—

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

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. The next question.

SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN

Ms. Donna Skelly: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. All children and youth deserve to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives. However, the reality is that children and youth living with complex health and special needs, along with their families, encounter extraordinary challenges in their daily lives and in accessing the care and the services that they require.

While our government has made significant investments for early intervention and has implemented a range

of programs to support children and youth, more must be done to make it easier for families to navigate the system. Access to health care and social services should be seamless, coordinated and designed to address the individual and unique circumstances of children and their families. Will the minister please describe what action our government is taking to expand access to services for children and youth with complex needs?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thanks to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for the question. She's absolutely right: Investments to support children with special needs are important, and so is the innovation and trying new things that will help create programs for the future and for the need for now. That's why I was happy to launch a new pilot program last week. The Integrated Pathway for Children and Youth with Extensive Needs program will connect children and youth with complex special needs to the care that they need. They and their families will connect to a team of professionals, including physicians, social workers and behavioural consultants who work together to provide a tailored approach, based on the individual needs of the child or youth and their families.

We are investing in creative and innovative solutions that will improve the lives and outcomes of our most vulnerable children and their families.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: Back to the minister: It's important to recognize that our government is finding solutions that are flexible enough to meet the needs of families when it comes to addressing the struggles that they experience every single day. There are many children and youth in Ontario with complex needs, such as developmental, mental health and medical concerns. Their needs, along with the needs of their families, can only be met through an integrated approach.

This program announcement is a step in the right direction, but it is vital that the care and services provided by hospitals and local community agencies ensures that our most vulnerable are not left behind. Speaker, will the minister please explain how the Integrated Pathway for Children and Youth with Extensive Needs supports children in our province?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Services can include adjusting medications, personalized behaviour support plans, mental health assessments and treatment, social work such as counselling for parents and caregivers, and specialized interventions to support children and youth to build skills such as communication and self-regulation.

Starting in April 2023, this program will be offered at McMaster's Children's Hospital in Hamilton, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital in Toronto and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa, and the surrounding regions. This exciting new pilot complements our investments to build service capacity and simplify early intervention through children's treatment centres and Surrey Place.

Together with my colleague the Minister of Health, our government knew that the status quo was not working, and programs like this innovative integrated pathway will help to ensure children with complex special needs get the care that they deserve.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. Premier, last year you promised to crack down on developers who cancel or jack up the price of pre-construction homes. There are five people at Queen's Park today who listened very carefully to that promise. In 2022, Briarwood Development Group told these families they could either take their deposit back or pay up to \$175,000 more for their home than they originally agreed to in the original contract. It's been nearly a year since then, and these families are still waiting for justice. Their homes are not built. The developer has not been fined. Their licence has not been suspended.

Premier, are you going to keep your word and protect homebuyers from bad-actor developers like these?

1140

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To the minister across the floor. Minister?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Under Premier Ford, this government vowed to stop bad developers from trying to make extra money on the backs of hard-working Ontarians, which is why we announced new changes to strengthen the regulatory tools available to address this serious issue. These changes include doubling to the maximum fine for unethical builders who unfairly cancel contracts. Under these new changes, bad developers could now be on the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines for each infraction.

Speaker, we have heard stories, unfortunately, of builders who have cancelled projects or who have ripped off individuals, and that's why Premier Ford has said this is unacceptable. This type of appalling behaviour will not be tolerated by this government.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Minister, if it is not tolerated by this government, then why are these people still waiting for their homes to be built at the price they originally agreed to? These families are proof that this government does not adequately protect homeowners from bad developers who cancel or jack up the price of pre-construction homes.

To the minister: What concrete next steps are you going to take to ensure these homebuyers get the homes they were promised at the price they originally agreed to?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

Speaker, it is this government that is doubling the maximum fine for unethical builders who unfairly cancel contracts. It is this government that is providing money from these penalties straight to the victims for the very first time in the history of this province. It is this government that is putting bad builders who rip off Ontario's

homeowners—they can have their licences permanently suspended. It is this government that is recovering our hopes by doubling the maximum financial penalties for repeat offenders of the New Home Construction Licensing Act.

Speaker, we understand. Hard-working Ontarians can rest assured that this government has their backs. We won't rest until that message is heard loud and clear across the province.

HOUSING

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: My question is for the Associate Minister of Housing. For too many Ontarians it remains a major challenge to find the right home. Recent reports reveal that Mississauga is one of the most expensive cities to live in Canada with the average housing price remaining close to \$1 million. Affordability and the housing shortage are serious concerns for the people in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills, and this is a problem impacting other regions across our province.

Ontarians are counting on our government to support them in achieving their dream of home ownership. We must continue our robust efforts to build more homes faster and tackle the housing crisis. Can the associate minister please explain what our government is doing to create the conditions necessary for building more affordable housing across our province?

Hon. Michael Parsa: I want to thank my honourable colleague from Mississauga—Erin Mills for the question and also for the great work he does on behalf of his constituents every single day.

A few months ago, I toured Z Modular, which is a factory in Kitchener, Ontario, that pre-builds modular housing units right here in our province. They manufacture shipping-container-style boxes which you can customize or stack to build modular homes. You can pick the layout and materials you want included and have it delivered to your property with 90% of the project completed off-site, which results in 50% faster project completion.

Thanks to the member from Hastings—Lennox and Addington, I also had the opportunity to meet with GPS 3D Modular, which uses a green precast concrete modular system to build up to 10 storeys high. These are innovative solutions; these are the ones that are going to help us get out of the supply of the housing—

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you to the associate minister for that response. It is good news that our government is actively engaging with companies that provide innovative solutions to address the housing crisis.

As global inflation continues to impact the cost of living for Ontarians, we are also seeing the rise in rent prices in our province. Housing experts continue to anticipate that the cost of rent could continue to raise in the coming months. For example, in Mississauga it costs over \$2,000 per month to rent a one-bedroom unit.

Our government must take urgent action now to increase the availability of rental units in order for the

hard-working individuals and families in Ontario to have a place to live. Speaker, can the associate minister please explain how our government is increasing the options for affordable rental housing?

Hon. Michael Parsa: I want to congratulate the member on his recent appointment as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

While on tour at the Z Modular facility, they explained to me how they not only create detached housing, but they can also scale up projects to create buildings for residential use. They are currently working on projects in Lucan, Ontario; St. Clair College; and Port Elgin. And they're working on affordable housing projects all over the province.

Z Modular and GPS 3D Modular are using modern technology and manufacturing processes similar to what the Ford Motor Company did in the early 1900s to make it more affordable to purchase a vehicle, but now to make it more affordable to buy homes. These are great solutions that will help us alleviate some of our housing crisis issues. I hope the opposition supports us as we go forward, as we try to tackle the housing—

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Chandra Pasma: While our children struggle to catch up, their mental health is in crisis and violence is increasing in our schools, this government is underfunding education by stealth. They've committed \$6 billion less than what we actually need to fund schools and they're not even getting promised funding out the door.

Now the Toronto District School Board will have to cut 522 staff members, while the Ottawa-Carleton school board is looking at cuts of up to \$39 million. Parents, school boards, principals, teachers and education workers are calling for more funding. Will the government listen to them, so that our children get the support they deserve in Thursday's budget?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. I can absolutely confirm that we are going to continue to increase investment in public education in this budget and in every budget, because that's been the track record of our Progressive Conservative Party, with \$650 million more in this school year alone.

With respect to TDSB, as the member opposite cited that question, they are up in funding \$38 million, notwithstanding a significant decline in children in their schools—16,000 kids are not in schools. Now, the members opposite are urging the government to continue a fund they opposed. The irony is not lost on Progressive Conservatives, but yes, we will continue to increase investment, increase resources and staffing to help these kids get back on track.

We also will continue to make the case that children should be in school without disruption right to June, and I hope the members opposite will agree.

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

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to inform the House that we have a former member with us in the House this morning: the member for Barrie in the 40th Parliament, Rod Jackson. Welcome back to Queen's Park. It's great to see you.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Ottawa Centre has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Health concerning delays facing cancer patients at the Ottawa Hospital. This matter will be debated today, following private members' public business.

Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Ottawa South has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Health concerning operating rooms. This matter will be debated today following private members' public business.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member for Scarborough—Agincourt has a point of order.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Earlier today, when I introduced the Cardus delegation, unfortunately I omitted the name of one more person, a religious leader. His name is the Very Reverend Vartan Tashjian. The Cardus delegation will be in room 228 to meet members of the various political parties and representatives to dialogue with them. Thank you very much.

NOWRUZ

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the Associate Minister of Housing has a point of order.

Hon. Michael Parsa: It's just to take this opportunity to wish all those who are celebrating Nowruz a happy new year. This is a very, very difficult time for the members of the Iranian community here and, of course, in Iran, as they continue to fight for freedom and democracy against a brutal regime. I thank all my colleagues, the entire House, here and across from me, for all the love and support that they've shown to members of our community. They truly appreciate it. Thank you, thank you, thank you, everyone.

Applause.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member for Hamilton Mountain has a point of order.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to welcome page Artur Cordovani's family, who are here today. We have Ligia, Daniel and Vicente Cordovani. They're the parents

of our page from Hamilton Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Mississauga—Erin Mills apparently has a point of order.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I just meant to welcome my friend Rabbi Alus, who is joining the Cardus seminar today. I welcome him to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Introduction of visitors? I recognize the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Thank you. I'd like to rise on a point of order.

On March 21, we celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, also known in some circles as Rock Your Socks day. It's a chance to wear outrageous socks, which I am doing, thank you very much.

Really, World Down Syndrome Day is an opportunity to advocate for the rights, inclusion and well-being of people with Down's syndrome around the world.

This year, Down Syndrome International has chosen the theme "With Us Not For Us," a—

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

Introduction of visitors? The Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I rise again this afternoon to introduce some of our college presidents who have joined us here today for colleges day at Queen's Park. I promised I wouldn't list all 24 this morning, but I do have some guests here.

I'm also delighted to welcome Linda Franklin to the House, and it is with mixed emotions that I share that this is Linda's last colleges day. After 16 years of leading Colleges Ontario as the president and CEO, Linda Franklin, who I know many of you know, will be retiring at the end of this month.

Thank you, Linda, for your strong leadership and tireless dedication to the sector and to Ontario's college students the past 16 years. I wish you all the best on your well-deserved retirement.

I'd also like to welcome Claude Brulé from Algonquin College, Shawn Poland from Cambrian, Gervan Fearon from George Brown, Rob Kardas from Lambton, Sean Kennedy from Niagara College, Audrey Penner from Northern College, Ron Common from Sault College, and Mark Kirkpatrick from Loyalist College.

Thank you for being here today—and again, welcome to everyone to join the reception this evening.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Alors, je voudrais simplement souhaiter la bienvenue aux récipiendaires de l'Ordre de la Pléiade que nous avons eu l'occasion de voir un peu plus tôt aujourd'hui. Parmi les six récipiendaires, il y a quand

même deux personnes d'Ottawa que je veux souligner, M. Denis Chartrand et M. Mark Power, qui sont également accompagnés de visiteurs qui sont des amis et des anciens collègues à moi : M^{me} Edith Dumont et Isabelle Girard de l'ACEPO. Merci et bienvenue à Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Merci.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a group of Franco-Ontarians who have been selected by an all-party panel of members to receive l'Ordre de la Pléiade, an internationally recognized medal of l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. These individuals are being recognized for their outstanding contributions to French-speaking communities across the province.

Nous avons aujourd'hui, dans la tribune du Président, un groupe de Franco-Ontariens qui ont été sélectionnés par un comité multipartite de parlementaires pour recevoir l'Ordre de la Pléiade. Ces personnalités sont reconnues pour leurs contributions exceptionnelles envers la Francophonie ontarienne.

The recipients are:

Les lauréats sont les suivants :

—Denis Chartrand;

—Lauraine Côté;

—Claire Forcier;

—Ursule Rondot-Leboeuf, whose daughter Denise is accepting the award on her behalf;

—Donald Lemaire; and

—Mark Power.

Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests to the Legislature and congratulating them for this important achievement. Félicitations.

Introduction of visitors? The member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I'd like to welcome Kathleen Lynch, the president of Confederation College in Thunder Bay, to the House today.

I look forward to meeting with you later this evening.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Introduction of visitors? The member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: I know he's watching today because it is his 55th birthday. I want to wish a happy birthday to my brother Jeff Smith.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT (MICROFIBRE FILTERS FOR WASHING MACHINES), 2023

LOI DE 2023 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT (FILTRES À MICROFIBRES POUR MACHINES À LAVER)

Ms. Bell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 83, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act with respect to microfibre filters for washing

machines / Projet de loi 83, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement en ce qui concerne les filtres à microfibrilles pour machines à laver.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for University—Rosedale care to explain her bill?

Ms. Jessica Bell: In order to protect the water quality of the Great Lakes, this bill amends the Environmental Protection Act to prohibit the sale or offering for sale of washing machines that are not equipped with a specified microfibre filter and to provide for corresponding penalties in case of non-compliance with the requirement.

World Water Day is tomorrow, and it's critical that we do everything we can in the Legislature to protect the water quality of our precious Great Lakes water system.

PETITIONS

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to present this petition on behalf of Lynn Mayhew from families of incarcerated women and girls at the Andrew Mercer Reformatory, on behalf of Tina Hendson.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas current legislation does not provide access to post-adoption birth information ... to next of kin if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased;

"Whereas this barrier to accessing post-adoption birth information separates immediate family members and prohibits the children of deceased adopted people from gaining knowledge of their identity and possible Indigenous heritage;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend access to post-adoption birth information ... to next of kin, and/or extended next of kin, if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased."

I fully support this petition. I'll sign it and give it to page Evelyn to give to the table.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour to present the following petition entitled "Invest in Ontario's Arts and Culture Sector." It reads:

"Whereas the arts and culture sector contributes \$28.7 billion to Ontario's GDP and creates over 300,000 jobs; and

"Whereas the Ontario Arts Council budget has not been increased at Ontario's rate of inflation, exacerbating the income precarity of artists and cultural workers, some of whom are earning less than \$25,000 per year, and still less for those from equity-deserving groups; and

"Whereas the income precarity was worsened during the pandemic through issues of regulatory unfairness in

the arts and culture sector, disproportionately impacting the performing arts and OAC-determined priority groups, including BIPOC, Indigenous, women, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQIA+ artists, and cultural workers;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to maintain the Ontario Arts Council budget of \$65 million in the 2023 provincial budget, adequately invest in the arts and culture sector, including supports for equity-deserving groups, small, medium and grassroots collectives in our communities, and individual artists to ensure their personal and economic survival.”

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

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Mr. Dave Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in the First and Second World Wars, over 7,000 First Nation members, as well as an unknown number of Métis, Inuit and other Indigenous recruits, voluntarily served in the Canadian Armed Forces; and

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“Whereas countless Indigenous peoples bravely and selflessly served Canada at a time of great challenges for Canada; and

“Whereas this spirit of volunteerism and community marked the life of the late Murray Whetung, who volunteered to serve in the Second World War; and

“Whereas many First Nations individuals lost their status after serving in the wars off-reserve for a period of time; and

“Whereas despite this injustice, many continued to recognize the value in continuously giving back to their community; and

“Whereas the values of volunteerism and community are instilled in the army, air, and sea cadets across Ontario; and

“Whereas the Murray Whetung Community Service Award Act establishes an award for the cadets and tells the story of Indigenous veterans’ sacrifice and mistreatment;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the passage of the Murray Whetung Community Service Award Act, 2022.”

I fully endorse this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Ryan.

CHRONIC PAIN TREATMENT

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas one in four Ontarians over the age of 15 suffer from chronic pain, with 73% reporting that pain interferes with their daily lives and more than half reporting issues with depression and suicidal thoughts; and

“Whereas pain is the most common reason to seek health care, with chronic pain making up approximately 16% of emergency room visits and 38% of frequent visits, adding to the already lengthy wait times and delaying treatment; and

“Whereas the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) is proposing to limit the number of nerve block injections a pain sufferer can receive to 16 per year, regardless of the severity of the patient’s condition or the number of injections ... and seemingly without consultation with patients or health care” professionals; “and

“Whereas the most common treatment for pain provided by family doctors in hospitals is opioids, despite the current national crisis leading to an estimated 20 opioid-related deaths in Canada every day during the COVID-19 pandemic;

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

“Prevent OHIP from applying a one-size-fits-all solution to the issue of chronic pain, and allow for consultations with health care workers and pain sufferers to determine the best way to treat chronic pain without resorting to opioids.”

I’m proudly affixing my signature to this and sending this to the table with page Ethan.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Dave Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas our government was elected with a plan to stay open by investing in hospitals, long-term-care homes and home care and Ontario’s health care workforce; and

“Whereas to accomplish this our government is:

“—investing \$40 billion in capital over 10 years for hospitals and other health infrastructure to meet the challenges that may lie ahead;

“—spending \$764 million over two years to provide nurses with up to \$5,000 retention bonuses;

“—investing \$42.5 million over two years, beginning in 2023-24, to support the expansion of 160 undergraduate and 295 postgraduate positions, including at the new medical schools in Brampton and Scarborough;

“—investing an additional \$1 billion in home care over three years;

“—shoring up domestic production of critical supplies and ensuring Ontario is prepared for future emergencies by committing, as of April 2022, more than \$77 million of the Ontario Together Fund to leverage almost \$230 million in investments to support manufacturing of Ontario-made personal protective equipment;

“—investing \$3.5 billion over three years to support the continuation of over 3,000 hospital beds put in place during the pandemic, and \$1.1 billion over three years to support the continuation of hundreds of new adult, pediatric and neonatal critical care beds added during COVID-19;

“—a new refundable Ontario Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit to help seniors aged 70 and older with eligible home

care medical expenses to help people stay in their homes longer; and

“—a province-wide expansion to the community paramedicine program, enabling community paramedics to provide key non-emergent health care services within homes for eligible seniors;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue to make strategic investments in support of A Plan to Stay Open.”

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

CHRONIC PAIN TREATMENT

MPP Lise Vaugeois: This is a petition from the national chronic pain society.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas one in four Ontarians over the age of 15 suffer from chronic pain, with 73% reporting that the pain interferes with their daily lives and more than half reporting issues with depression and suicidal thoughts; and

“Whereas pain is the most common reason to seek health care, with chronic pain making up approximately 16% of emergency room visits and 38% of frequent visits, adding to the already lengthy wait times and delaying treatment; and

“Whereas the Ontario Health Insurance Plan ... is proposing to limit the number of nerve block injections a pain sufferer can receive to 16 per year, regardless of the severity of the patient’s condition or the number of injections needed, and seemingly without any consultations with patients or health care workers; and

“Whereas the most common treatment for pain provided by family doctors and hospitals is opioids, despite the current national crisis leading to an estimated 20 opioid-related deaths in Canada every day during the COVID-19 pandemic;

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

“Prevent OHIP from applying a one-size-fits-all solution to the issue of chronic pain, and allow for consultations with health care workers and pain sufferers to determine the best way to treat chronic pain without resorting to opioids.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Evelyn with my thanks.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Mr. Dave Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas army, sea and air cadets are some of the best of our youth; and

“Whereas the young men and women of Canada’s cadets volunteer and serve their communities with honour and distinction; and

“Whereas their development and service within our community are admirable and should be emulated; and

“Whereas their teamwork, dedication, and discipline are qualities worthy of recognition; and

“Whereas the Murray Whetung Community Service Award Act, if passed, would create an annual award for a nominated cadet from within each local cadet corps or squadron to celebrate their remarkable acts of citizenship;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario vote on and pass the Murray Whetung Community Service Award Act, 2022.”

I endorse this petition, will give it to page Ryan and sign it.

CHRONIC PAIN TREATMENT

Mr. Joel Harden: I have a petition that reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas one in four Ontarians over the age of 15 suffer from chronic pain, with 73% reporting that the pain interferes with their daily lives and more than half reporting issues with depression and suicidal thoughts; and

“Whereas pain is the most common reason to seek health care, with chronic pain making up approximately 16% of emergency room visits and 38% of frequent visits, adding to the already lengthy wait times and delaying treatment; and

“Whereas the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario ... is threatening to impose changes to how nerve block injections are administered which would only apply to pain clinics, while leaving similarly in-hospital procedures unaffected. These changes have been proposed seemingly without any consultations with patients or health care workers; and

“Whereas the most common treatment for pain provided by family doctors and hospitals is opioids, despite the current national crisis leading to an estimated 20 opioid-related deaths in Canada every day during the COVID-19 pandemic;

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

“Prevent OHIP from applying a one-size-fits-all solution to the issue of chronic pain, and allow for consultations with health care workers and pain sufferers to determine the best way to treat chronic pain without resorting to opioids.”

I’m happy to sign this petition, send it with page Jonas to the Clerks’ table.

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HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr. Dave Smith: Error! Bookmark not defined. “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario has one of the most dedicated and highly trained health workforces in the world. Over 60,000

new nurses and 8,000 new doctors have registered to work in Ontario; and

“Whereas hiring more health care professionals is the most effective step to ensure Ontarians are able to see a health care provider where and when you need to; and

“Whereas starting in spring 2023, the government will expand the Learn and Stay grant and applications will open for eligible post-secondary students who enrol in priority programs, such as nursing, to work in underserved communities in the region where they studied after graduation. The program will provide up-front funding for tuition, books and other direct educational costs; and

“Whereas with new as-of-right rules, Ontario will become the first province in Canada to allow health care workers registered in other provinces and territories to immediately start caring for you, without having to first register with one of Ontario’s health regulatory colleges. This change will help health care workers overcome excessive red tape that makes it difficult for them to practise in Ontario;

“Whereas we are investing an additional \$15 million to temporarily cover the costs of examination, application, and registration fees for internationally trained and retired nurses, saving them up to \$1,500 each. This will help up to 5,000 internationally educated nurses and up to 3,000 retired nurses begin working sooner to strengthen our front lines;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue to build on the progress of hiring and recruiting health care workers.”

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

CHRONIC PAIN TREATMENT

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This is a petition from the National Chronic Pain Society. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas one in four Ontarians over the age of 15 suffers from chronic pain, with 73% reporting that the pain interferes with their daily lives and more than half reporting issues with depression and suicidal thoughts; and

“Whereas pain is the most common reason to seek health care, with chronic pain making up approximately 16% of emergency room visits and 38% of frequent visits, adding to the already lengthy wait times and delaying treatment...; and

“Whereas the most common treatment for pain provided by family doctors and hospitals is opioids, despite the current national crisis leading to an estimated 20 opioid-related deaths in Canada every day during the COVID-19 pandemic;

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

“Prevent OHIP from applying a one-size-fits-all solution to the issue of chronic pain, and allow for consultations with health care workers and pain sufferers to determine

the best way to treat chronic pain without resorting to opioids.”

I’ll be signing this petition and giving it to page Madison.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LESS RED TAPE, STRONGER ONTARIO ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À RÉDUIRE LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 21, 2023, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to enact one Act and amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 46, Loi visant à édicter une loi et à modifier diverses autres lois.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: I’m pleased to have the opportunity to speak during this third reading debate on Bill 46, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act. I’ll be sharing my time with the member from Chatham-Kent-Leamington. I want to thank the Minister of Red Tape Reduction and his parliamentary assistant for their dedication on moving this important bill forward.

The Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act is the first red tape reduction bill of this mandate—and the ninth red tape reduction bill since forming government in 2018.

Our government’s focus has been and continues to be building Ontario. Bill 46 will contribute to the goal by strengthening our province’s competitiveness in key areas. It will strengthen our supply chains so that more goods can get to more places. It will support our farmers and agribusinesses by laying out a path to produce and grow more food right here in Ontario. It will help grow Ontario’s labour force and protect our workers, so businesses can find the right people to grow and expand their operations. And it will make governments easier to interact with and work with by simplifying administrative procedures, improving customer service, and reducing compliance costs.

In total, this bill, as well as related policy and regulatory changes, will add up to 28 individual measures to reduce burden and red tape in Ontario. This is important because red tape is a significant barrier to efficiency.

When I was a little girl, I loved to swim, but it didn’t happen naturally. So, after a near-drowning experience when I was maybe three years or four years old—I’m going to get to the point—my family, who were all lifelong swimmers, were determined to make me a better swimmer. I thought about this when I was looking at the act. I was determined to become an efficient swimmer. I want to swim quickly. I wanted to get to where I was going, whether it was in the pool or the lake, quickly and efficiently, without any lag behind me. First, I learned to float, dog-paddle and then, finally, I was a swimmer—

along with water wings. But once I was a skilled swimmer, I realized that water wings aren't the fastest way to get around. They're a barrier to swimming quickly and efficiently. I learned that removing those water wings made a more efficient swimmer of Laura. I listened to my instructors, I gained endurance, and by the time I was 10 years old, I was able to swim across the lake and back with no assistance from anything or anyone. I avoided the weeds in the lake because those things could slow me down or drag me down, which was also dangerous.

Later, in my high school and university years, I worked as a lifeguard. There, my team and I prioritized important issues like younger children in the pool and keeping them safe, which is also relevant in this bill. We opened up early and we stayed open late for the swimmers who needed the extra time. We had a harmonized workspace. We created a better-run pool that the entire community could safely enjoy.

Learning to swim was the one thing that I could do, but learning to swim effectively with more speed and less drag made it possible for me to save lives—and a couple of adults, I should add.

That's what we're doing. We are taking the water wings and getting the weeds of red tape away from us, making it so that Ontarians can get where they need to go faster and with less drag.

When it comes to our work, there are five principles that guide our efforts to reduce tape. The first principle is to protect public health, safety and the environment. We do this by easing regulatory burdens in a smart and careful way that always maintains or enhances important health, safety and environmental protections.

The second principle is to prioritize the important issues. We do this by assessing which regulation costs are the most time-effective—while looking for innovative ways to ensure rules stay effective and efficient.

The third principle is to harmonize rules with other jurisdictions, including the federal government, where we can. This is one of the most efficient ways to reduce compliance costs across the board.

The fourth way is to listen to the people and businesses of Ontario on an ongoing basis, to learn what we can do to remove obstacles in their way—the weeds and the water wings.

Our fifth principle is to take a whole-of-government approach. This is the key to delivering better services to people and businesses, making it easier for them to access the information, programs and services they need to succeed.

To be clear, Speaker, we do not believe that rules and regulations themselves are the issue. But unnecessary, repetitive and outdated regulations are a problem. And it's a problem we're committing to solving.

As someone who previously worked within the judicial system, I can tell you how happy I was to hear that the act also included a number of changes to modernize and reduce administrative burdens in the justice sector.

Firstly, our government is proposing to amend the Provincial Offences Act to help reduce the backlog at

provincial offences courts. Often, I hear from law professionals within my riding who tell me that the backlogs left over from COVID-19 are substantial—and I experienced them myself. Ontario needs to have access to justice within reasonable time frames. The proposed amendments would allow the court clerks, rather than a justice, to reopen certain convictions if satisfied that certain conditions are met, such as having a missed notice or being unable to attend a meeting through no fault of their own. This change would help to address the backlog by using court resources more efficiently and freeing up judicial time for other serious matters.

1530

Secondly, we're proposing to create more judicial capacity and alleviate backlogs in criminal cases at the Ontario Court of Justice by temporarily raising the limit on the number of days that retired judges can work. Creating more "per diem" judiciary capacity enhances the scheduling capacity and efficiency in the courts. This will help resolve the backlog more quickly and ensure faster access to justice for Ontarians.

Lastly, the proposed legislation will also reduce administrative costs and make it easier for prospective jurors to participate in court systems through updates to the Juries Act. If this bill is passed, it would introduce a pilot program that would make jury questionnaires available online and help us assess the impacts and response rates in different communities. Recipients of the online questionnaire would be able to request a paper version if need be, but this proposal would allow us to test the feasibility of moving away from sending hard copies of jury questionnaires through the mail. When I was in the judicial system, we dealt with paper constantly, and I was very relieved to see when our courts were finally moving forward. Getting rid of paper is something that brings us into this century, and it is long overdue within the judicial system, providing potential jurors or Ontarians a modern, convenient, streamlined way of participating in the justice system while reducing administrative burdens and costs.

I would also like to discuss some improvements that we're making to some of the essential but often invisible functions of government.

TPON, also known as Transfer Payment Ontario, is a single-enterprise digital solution for delivering government transfer payment programs. Participants such as municipalities and not-for-profit organizations use TPON for everything from applications to payments and reporting. Our government is bringing the vast majority of all its government programs and related IT systems into this one platform, resulting in more efficient and effective program delivery at a lower cost to the taxpayer. For transfer payment recipients, the system provides a seamless user experience, reducing their administrative burden and freeing up more time to deliver their services and programs to their communities.

Speaker, I'm incredibly proud of the work the government has done so far to reduce regulatory burdens on people and businesses. I'm excited to see the changes proposed by this legislation in action. For businesses,

some items could increase regulatory effectiveness, ease of operation and reduce the cost of doing business. For individuals, some items would reduce the cost of living and streamline interactions with government in Ontario.

All of us benefit when businesses can grow and thrive. A competitive business climate brings economic growth, jobs and new investments. These are investments that will not leave or go south—or even begin in Ontario. We want the businesses to start in Ontario; we want them to remain in Ontario. We don't want them to go south.

Building on the previous red tape reduction bills and packages, the cumulative impact of these measures is expected to help modernize Ontario's regulatory system. Our government needs to remove the red tape, like the weeds or the water wings, to move forward. We need to move forward with supports. The province's economic competitiveness and ability to create and retain high-quality jobs is imperative. We have to make Ontario an attractive investment climate and make things easier. Those combined measures ultimately seek to build a stronger Ontario. People and businesses will thrive now and in the future.

I invite the member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington to speak on the further impacts of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington to continue.

Mr. Trevor Jones: I want to thank the member from Thornhill for sharing her time.

I also want to thank our Minister of Red Tape Reduction for the great work that his ministry has done on this bill to create the conditions for all businesses to thrive in Ontario.

Our government understands that to create the conditions for success, we must reduce the regulatory burdens that all businesses face here in our province.

Speaker, when it comes to reducing red tape, our government has taken 400 individual actions to reduce red tape and reduce our total burden by 6.5%. These efforts are saving businesses and organizations \$576 million a year. This bill, if passed, will continue to build on our government's commitment to ensuring businesses are provided the best environment to grow and meet the demands of a growing population and a growing economy.

It's essential to growing our economy to understand the critical contribution and economic power of our agri-business sector. In Ontario, the agri-food sector contributes \$47 billion to Ontario's GDP, \$19.6 billion in agri-food exports, and 750,000 people work in this industry here in Ontario—that's one in 10 jobs. This sector is continuing to grow. In 2022, total farm cash receipts in Ontario were almost \$21.3 billion. That's 12% higher than the previous year.

Speaker, you cannot grow this economy without growing our agri-food sector. This is why it's so important for our government to continue to reduce regulatory burdens for our farmers, processors and the broader industry to support and secure growth in the agri-food sector for generations to come.

Last fall, our government was proud to introduce the Grow Ontario Strategy right here at our local food terminal in Etobicoke. The Grow Ontario Strategy is our plan to strengthen the entire agri-food sector and ensure an efficient, reliable and responsive food supply. The strategy focuses on three pillars: strengthening the agri-food supply chain; increasing agri-food technology and adoption; and, finally, attracting and retaining the crucial talent across the sector. By focusing on these three pillars, our government is aiming to increase the consumption and production of food grown in Ontario by 30%; increase our food and beverage manufacturing capacity—our GDP—by 10%; and increase agri-food exports by 8% annually. This is a bold vision of pride and trust in the quality and quantity of food grown and processed right here in Ontario—in all of our ridings. It's also our government's response to creating a stable and secure food supply chain for generations to come.

Speaker, our government is well on its way to ensuring we can meet these goals. In the last two months, we've announced over \$2 billion in investments for agriculture and food production.

We just secured \$1.77 billion through the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership, an agreement between the province and our federal government. This agreement will provide programs to support farmers, processors and the entire sector. It will position Ontario as a world leader for environmentally, economically and socially sustainable agriculture.

We've invested \$343 million through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance, an agreement with the University of Guelph and ARIO, the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario, that supports food research and innovation to help generate new knowledge that provides real and practical solutions across the sector.

Our government has secured the right investment by listening to our farmers and our growers, our processors and our industry stakeholders. This bill, if passed, will build upon these successes and create long-term accomplishments for the entire sector.

Through this bill, we're also proposing changes to the feeder cattle loan guarantee program. The province's feeder cattle loan guarantee program supports beef cattle farmers by facilitating access to low-interest loans through their local feeder cattle co-operatives. The proposed changes will permit co-op members to custom-feed one another's cattle, give them more flexibility, and improve the competitiveness and profitability of big and small businesses. This action follows months of discussions with our stakeholders and our partners and program users in the programs themselves. To quote Don Badour, a representative of the Beef Farmers of Ontario, on the benefits of these changes: "It will maximize flexibility for co-op members to make decisions on custom-feeding to help expand their beef operations under the Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program to improve their competitiveness and profitability." These are small farms and big farms alike. This is good news for all of Ontario's beef farmers. It will help secure our entire agri-food industry.

1540

We're also proposing changes to the Animal Health Act. In the event of an animal health emergency, it's critical to have the tools necessary to take immediate action to protect the health and safety of the public and our animals. Through the lessons learned in the past few years alone, these proposed changes will enhance our government's animal disease emergency preparedness. The changes will provide an additional critical tool for our Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to take immediate action through a temporary order to require time-sensitive action to be taken by our farmers, our food processors and other stakeholders in the event of an emerging animal health event. This may include temporarily stopping animal movement and adopting specific biosecurity measures to protect health and safety. This will enhance our level of animal health preparedness and better position us to minimize the potential costs and risks of the impacts of a significant animal health event, and ensure we can take immediate action to do what we can to establish longer-term measures.

Our government listens to and understands our farmers and our food processors, and these proposed changes target burdensome government processes within the agri-food sector and beyond to continue to maintain regulation that keeps Ontarians safe and healthy and our food supply system safe, healthy and reliable.

The future is bright in Ontario for our food processors, our growers, our farmers. The passage of this bill will allow our government to ensure good things continue to grow in Ontario.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: I enjoyed hearing the remarks, particularly from the member from Thornhill. I enjoyed the metaphor—there are lots of swimmers in our family, too, and water wings and weeds and the like.

I wonder, given the discussion the bill is having around red tape, if you could help me understand, from the standpoint of persons with disabilities—I spent four years, in the previous Parliament, working with people with disabilities. I learned that their lives are absolutely encumbered by red tape. I'll give you an example that I'd appreciate a response to. If one is on the Ontario Disability Support Program and enters into a relationship, immediately your income as a disabled person is reduced by virtue of who you fall into a relationship with. That seems to me like inordinate red tape that this bill could address.

I'm wondering if the member from Thornhill has considered this and has any thoughts to share about that.

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you to the member across for his comments.

This bill is all about removing red tape. We're focusing on reducing barriers to improve services. This includes a whole-of-government plan, including the elimination of administrative overlaps.

Just as an example, currently, the WSIB is required to create both a five-year strategic plan and an annual

business plan spanning three years to come. The strategic plan and the business plan duplicate content for governance and oversight. Requiring the WSIB to submit both is burdensome and a matter of red tape—and yes, those are weeds. So removing, in that circumstance, the five-year strategic plan while keeping the business plan will eliminate red tape and ensure that the WSIB focuses less time on paperwork and more time on helping the workers.

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

Mr. Billy Pang: I have a question for the member from Thornhill.

She mentioned the modernization of the Juries Act. The ministry recently identified two issues that have affected the composition of recent jury rules in Ontario.

How are you working to prevent these errors from happening in the future? And is this the right time to implement further changes to the jury system?

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you for the question, to my friend, my colleague.

As mentioned, I did work within the system for several years. We were constantly dealing with paper. Papers get lost; people lose them. Those notices were actually sent out to people, and they would lose them; it would never get back to them. They could get into trouble. Eliminating that paperwork will modernize the court system. We do still have a requirement that—people can still ask for paper.

But actually modernizing the system and the justice system is a long time overdue, absolutely.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: To the member opposite: I'm glad that you raised the topic of WSIB. Workers who experience a permanent disability are turned down routinely by the WSIB for compensation and left to appeal year after year after year to get the meagre benefits that they're actually entitled to. This government also gave employers money back that should have gone to workers, to widows, to people who need that money. It's not normal to give back the insurance premiums when you've already paid them, so I don't understand why that money was given back to employers.

What I'd like to ask is if you will also be removing the red tape and barriers that keep injured workers from accessing the support that they deserve and that is paid for by businesses and workers.

Ms. Laura Smith: Our efforts are saving businesses and other organizations \$576 million each year in compliance costs. When it comes to reducing red tape, our government is getting it done. We've taken 400 individual actions to reduce red tape, to reduce Ontario's total regulatory burden.

Following up on what I was talking about earlier, as we continue to modernize regulation, our government is committed to taking action that reduces that red tape. We're proposing to repeal the five-year strategic plan for WSIB, and we're focusing and proposing that this be done

by providing a five-year strategic—the WSIB, also allowing them to submit a business plan that spans three years or more. This strategic plan, this business plan is not a duplicative—

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

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: My question deals with the proposed legislation that would fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery; specifically, the enterprise Transfer Payment Ontario system, the TPON system. What specific changes are being proposed to that system?

Ms. Laura Smith: Through you, Madam Speaker: It's interesting that he brings that up, and I want to thank the member.

TPON is utilized, I believe, by all of our not-for-profits and we want to keep them whole. The enterprise Transfer Payment Ontario system, TPON, is used for the end-to-end administration of transfer payments, from application to payment to reporting. Continuing to implement TPON will provide ministries with standardized, streamlined processes to manage and administer their transfer payment programs, resulting in more efficient and effective program delivery at a lower cost to the taxpayer. For transfer payment recipients, this system will provide seamless user experiences, reducing their administrative burden and freeing up more time to deliver key services for the people of Ontario. Through this initiative, there is a concerted focus on bringing all government transfer payments and programs and related IT systems onto TPON and driving an enterprise-wide efficiency and process.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Members touched upon the justice system and how we need to modernize it, finding different resources so that they're not disparaging people who are seeking justice.

One of the government's initiatives in this bill—I believe it's schedule 5—is to hire retired judges back into the system. That's a temporary solution.

I'd like to ask the member, what is the long-term plan to actually hire new judges to fill the void for cases that are long pre-dating the pandemic, that need to be dealt with? Can the member speak to if they do have that commitment in place so that new judges are hired—and not just recycling the retired judges?

1550

Ms. Laura Smith: Through you, Madam Speaker: The backlog in the Ontario court system affects all court users, and creating judicial capacity enhances the effectiveness of the courts. I know this. I lived in this. This was my world. To help resolve this backlog more quickly and ensure faster access to justice, this initiative, by allowing retired judges to come back, is a way we can effectively utilize our courts and allow the process of justice to be more efficient. It's just another way of cutting red tape.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I thank the member from Chatham-Kent–Leamington and the member for Thornhill for their comments.

The member from Chatham-Kent–Leamington is also the PA for agriculture, and he has got a great knowledge base. Because the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is actually here today and we have made a lot of great progress with our agriculture communities so they can thrive and survive and expand, I wondered if he could expand a bit more about the benefits in this bill, particularly on what we're doing for the agri-food, agriculture sector.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you, my friend, for that question.

The most exciting thing we're doing while reducing red tape is the launch of the Grow Ontario Strategy. It goes hand in hand. This is one way to modernize a system that we haven't really looked at since back in the 1960s. We're still operating on a premise and operating on assumptions—we're a food-producing nation, but we're actually exporting far more than we consume. To modernize and build up the infrastructure and the research capability, attracting young people to the skilled trades within the agri-food sector is essential.

We can continue to export the trusted brand that's "Grown in Ontario." It's known worldwide as trusted, safe, clean and secure. It secures our food security for generations to come and allows us to grow our GDP, grow our economy, and grow interesting, long-serving jobs in the skilled trades in the agri-food sector.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate? I recognize the member for Toronto Centre.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you, Speaker. It's always good to see you in the chair.

I'm proud to rise on behalf of the people of Toronto Centre to speak to Bill 46. This is an omnibus bill with a series of housekeeping amendments that are largely supportable. There are nine schedules.

When this bill came before the House, using our time in debate—it does make me wonder whether or not we are actually cutting red tape. There seems to be a lot of talk about cutting red tape—but the actual motion of cutting the tape, perhaps not so much.

Because there are nine schedules and we don't have a lot of time to go through all of them, I'm going to try to go through at least the portions I have flagged that I want to raise specific issues with.

I'm going to begin with schedule 2 of the bill. Schedule 2 extends the allowable time of service for retired provincial judges serving on a part-time basis from 50% to 75% of full-time service.

I recently spoke with members of the Federation of Ontario Law Associations regarding Bill 46; specifically, around schedule 2 and allowing retired judges to take more time back onto the bench. I need to be clear that I have a great deal of respect for judges and those who have retired and those who've served us incredibly well in the judicial process. However, I was taken back by the reaction of the members of the federation when they heard about this

specific change. First of all, they were surprised. They had not been consulted about this change, and they want to know who was pushing for it. Many legal workers shared experiences that they had during the pandemic, when judges near retirement struggled with the simple use of technology, such as Zoom, which was underpinning the virtual court system and their court duties. They were apparently not ready for this change, and they were not able to do their work in the most professional and timely manner. Secondly, I heard from people who work in legal clinics, and the discussion came about this in this way: They said that trying to fix this problem in the courts from this particular angle was simply wrong. What they did share with me is that they needed more judges and more court staff to ensure that everyone has a right to a timely and fair trial. That is something that everyone is convinced is needed in order for the backlog to be cleared. I heard this loud and clear, and, frankly, the members did also describe that there was a missed opportunity by the government, by not addressing the issue structurally.

How could we expand the talent pool of our bench by bringing in more lawyers and giving them the experiences that they need to become the talented judges that they will be? This is something that requires a fundamental investment of new money.

I want to quote one lawyer who told me after hearing about this proposal—they wish to remain anonymous:

“I have to express extreme concern about this proposal to, rather than appointing new judges, bring back older judges because I can tell you that it was a disaster in the Milton courthouse. It created a complete disaster for children and families in the hopper for over a year during the pandemic. We had two Family Court judges that one Family Court judge ended up having to go on medical leave and another Family Court judge went on medical leave and then left. And as a result, we had many, many per diem retired judges coming to our court on a daily basis with no knowledge of the files, no continuation of the files, a journey many, many of the court files as long as they could, until we finally got an appointment that took, I think, almost a year to get the new appointment. And many I’m telling you the child protection lawyers, the lawyers representing the families were all very upset because it was obviously no continuity in the court cases. I think that by allowing more judges to come back and sit on a per diem basis is going to make a much bigger mess of the entire system right now, which is already in a big mess because of COVID. So I’d like you to know, I think you need to please investigate this” to ensure that you can hire more judges, that you should appoint more judges. We’re going to need more—instead of producing more per diem judges—and it’s just going to create more havoc.

Again, I want to stress that retired judges can be an extremely powerful tool in helping the court system move faster.

I also want to respect the professional experience of practising lawyers, and when they reacted to this news with disappointment and concern, that gave me absolute reason to pause.

While we’re on the topic of the legal system, I want to talk about schedule 8, which makes amendments to the Provincial Offences Act. Schedule 8 reverses prospective reforms of the early resolution process for provincial offences. The prospective reforms were passed in the 2017 budget bill to further government aims to streamline and modernize the court system by supporting early resolution of cases where appropriate. The Provincial Offences Act will continue to provide for early resolution but will no longer provide for these discussions to happen through email, would no longer permit the prosecutor to withdraw charges without a court appearance, and would require that a defendant appear before a judge in all cases where a plea agreement is reached. This change appears to be a step backwards from the goal of increasing efficiency in our court system. This change would get rid of an amendment that would never be implemented, and I understand that this government has been asked by municipalities to remove it, as this is an amendment which would be exceedingly difficult to implement.

Both schedules 2 and 8 are intended to propose changes to speed up the experiences Ontarians have in their court system, and ultimately the intention is to drive down the backlog, but we’re hearing from practising lawyers that this is not going to be the outcome that you are seeking.

I want to quote Daniel Goldbloom from the Law Society of Ontario, who described Ontario’s case backlog: “If you ever speak to an American about how long it takes to get to trial in Ontario, they’re shocked. They can’t believe that it can take a year and a half for trials in the lower courts, and up to two and a half years in the Superior Court.”

Nicole Myers, an associate professor at Queen’s University who studies our court system, said, “Across Canada, 67% of the people in provincial custody are in pretrial detention, and in Ontario” that number goes up to 77%. “The rate with which we hold people in pretrial has more than doubled in the last 40 years, and the number of actual individual people held in pretrial detention has more than quadrupled in that time....”

“Keeping a person in pretrial removes them from the community and may provide some short-term safety; this protection, however, is temporary. It is undermined by the long-term negative public safety outcomes. We need to be mindful that custody is extraordinarily expensive, but it’s also criminogenic. Even short periods of time in custody make it more—not less—likely that someone is going to commit offences in the future. And there are many reasons for this, some of which include pretrial being overcrowded, harsh, dangerous, and rehabilitative programs being virtually absent. Removing people from the broader community is also incredibly destabilizing, disrupting connections to the community, families, employment and other social supports.”

1600

Speaker, legal experts are telling our government how to speed up the courts. They are trying to make Ontario safer. They’re trying to say the following: Resource the courts, hire the staff, and ensure that the court schedule is

operating efficiently. Use the real estate that you have. Get it going.

We should be embarrassed that Americans cannot believe how slow our system is, when Ontario leads America in most indicators of well-being.

Again, if we really want to cut red tape, we have to help Ontarians navigate the invisible rules and procedures that hold our legal system together by reversing the cuts to legal aid and increasing funding to legal aid.

I want to dig into how inadequate legal aid funding is creating so-called red tape for Ontario.

First, our court system has many precedents and rules that internally operate to ensure that all Ontarians have the right to a fair trial. This puts a significant onus on the courts to determine that people charged with provincial offences are treated equitably and fairly. I need to stress this point: Many court cases are mostly, if not entirely, resolved before going to trial, in pretrial meetings and resolution meetings. Here, legal aid lawyers are the subject matter experts in fighting to ensure that marginalized people's rights are protected and that due process occurs. This takes a massive and hugely expensive burden off our courts. It saves us court time, thereby saving taxpayers money.

Secondly, legal aid funding ensures that people's time in court is well used, as much as possible. When people represent themselves—and this does happen—it is often not only detrimental to the likelihood of the success of their cause, but also the time of everyone in the courtroom.

Third, legal aid clinics help stabilize people's housing and other essential life needs so that they can then stabilize their lives and mitigate the crushing impacts of poverty that so many in our court system face. They often serve a rehabilitative role, connecting people to local health organizations and to local service providers, and helping people access the government benefits to which they are legally entitled.

It is for these reasons that studies in other jurisdictions regularly find that legal aid is at least revenue-neutral, if not a net source of savings, for government spending. But this government has not reversed the cuts to legal aid made in their first year of government, and the legal aid clinics and practising lawyers are all crying for help—not to mention those who are recipients of legal aid.

A member of the Federation of Ontario Law Associations was discussing how to modernize access to justice in Ontario and told me: "We're concerned about the financial cut-offs in terms of whether people are eligible because there's such a gap between the top limit of eligibility for legal aid and people who are unable to afford a lawyer. We have major areas within the province where no one is able to access their legal aid certificate. And that's a huge problem for us within the clinic system. We also in the clinic system have funding issues because of inadequate compensation" for lawyers "we're having a great deal of difficulty maintaining staff. So without continued adequate funding going into that system, we're really undermining the administration of justice—particularly for our most low-income residents."

Another lawyer told me, "One of the things that I'm hearing a lot from my members is that a great deal of the backlog and wasted judicial resources in the system comes from the high turnover rate that we are seeing. It's difficult maintaining staff who have experience and who are more efficient in particular areas. So I encourage you" to take a "look into that. Because I know that it has been impacting my practice and the practice of others that I represent."

Speaker, lawyers from all over Ontario are in agreement: Our legal institutions need to be better resourced, and funding must be in place in this budget coming this Thursday. If we are to retain the good staff, the qualified and experienced staff, in order for us to deliver this service most effectively, then we need to make those investments. Every business will tell you that investment in people is the number one way to get the best outcome—and if you want to call it "return," the very best return.

I now want to discuss schedule 5, which deals with oil and gas resources. This bill does nothing to address the 27,000 oil and gas wells across Ontario, 15,000 of which have been identified as abandoned and almost 4,400 that have been identified as posing an immediate and significant risk to both property and life. The Auditor General talked about this in her very recent report. She said the province failed "to identify and inspect high-risk oil and gas wells, even though improperly maintained or abandoned wells are a safety risk for people." We know this to be true because we had the explosion in Wheatley, Ontario that flattened their downtown core and sent 20 people to the hospital.

I want to read the Auditor General's report into the record on this matter:

"Few oil and gas wells are being inspected annually. The ministry has not assessed the risk of all 27,000 oil and gas wells in the province, and is therefore unable to determine whether it is focusing its proactive inspection efforts on the highest-risk wells. Furthermore, based on our analysis of inspection data in the ministry's database for oil and gas wells, we found that only 19% of oil and gas wells in the province have been inspected since 2005. Of those, 38% of inspections occurred more than a decade ago. The low rate of inspections could lead to a risk of complacency by well operators."

This is red tape cutting? You're putting people's property, their lives, their communities at risk.

"Unreliable information on how many high-risk wells have been plugged. Wells that are poorly maintained and improperly plugged can lead to contaminants getting into the province's groundwater or rising to the land surface around the well. Based on our own analysis, 6% or 1,625 wells are not in use and have not been plugged. A further 30% or 8,011 were plugged prior to 1970 when materials used to plug them included logs, gravel and lead which can lose their integrity over time. As a result ... 36% of wells could pose a danger. Further, we found that three high-risk wells have been leaking since ... 2018, but only one is scheduled to be plugged during 2022-23. We were told that the gas explosion that took place in Wheatley, Ontario in August 2021, was in part due to a well that had been

plugged in the 1960s, where the materials used to plug the well had deteriorated over time.”

Speaker, these incidents can be prevented. Lives can be saved. Property and communities can be protected. That’s not red tape; that’s just providing good government. If we want Ontario to be open for business, we need to think of red tape not just as regulation but all of the avoidable systemic barriers that matter to the lives of Ontarians and people doing business here in this province. This bill is opening the act governing oil and gas to allow carbon sequestration and storage for oil and gas recovery. Right at the time when we collectively need to find ways to keep fossil fuels in the ground, this section of the bill wants to put carbon back into the ground only to squeeze it out for more oil and gas at a later date.

To be clear, it is not offensive that I’m seeing that we can move some carbon into the ground, but I am worried that maintaining our society’s commitment to an industry of the past is not any kind of innovation; it’s certainly not the direction that Ontarians are expecting from this government.

This brings me to schedule 9 of the bill. Schedule 9 tinkers with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, removing the requirement of a strategic plan but still requiring that the board meets four times a year. On one hand, injured worker groups are concerned with the removal of the requirement of WSIB to produce a five-year strategic plan, as they have made submissions about this plan. However, the injured workers additionally point out that none of their plans have been adopted.

One way that this bill could actually cut red tape for WSIB would be by ending the controversial practice of deeming. Jessica Ponting, a legal worker at the Industrial Accident Victims Group of Ontario, has described deeming as an egregious and pernicious tactic used by WSIB. WSIB identify suitable occupations that they think the worker can do, and then they cut off the workers’ benefits as if they were working that job, even though many workers never find a job that they can do.

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Migrant workers said, in an open letter to this government last year, “We believe that the workers’ compensation system is racist and that we are treated very badly. This systemic racism does not treat us like we are human.” The letter says, noting that migrant workers are hit hardest by the province, “Rather than helping us heal, the current system makes it worse for us. We have been denied the right to function as humans in Canada. For those of us who have been repatriated, we are returning to our home countries with injuries and traumas.” That is their souvenir after working and toiling in our factories and our fields in Canada.

If this government really wants to cut red tape surrounding WSIB and Bill 46, this government would have made the acknowledgement that COVID is an airborne disease. This has been said by the World Health Organization and by the Centers for Disease Control. It has been singled out by every order of public health in Canada, but it has not necessarily been said in this House,

and it has not been said by the members of the government side. This matters, because workers who are getting COVID on the job—that is still happening, and sometimes those COVID symptoms are long-lasting. Health Canada estimates that up to 15% of people now have long COVID, and COVID-19 Resources Canada projects that over 858 Ontarians contract COVID every single day in our province. They have life-limiting symptoms that last more than three months—they’re not able to go back to work any single time, but WSIB doesn’t cover them. It’s a safety net, WSIB. Our safety net is supposed to be integrated into our building code. Our health guidance and recommendations are there to avoid the suffering, but instead it reinforces the suffering. It actually condemns the workers to less and not more.

These are the issues that Ontarians are dealing with, and these are the issues that are not necessarily dealt with in Bill 46. So is it a perfect bill? Far from it. Can this government do more? Yes, they can.

At this point in time, Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to rise to speak to the House. It is an absolute honour to deliver these remarks.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): It is now time for questions.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the member opposite for the debate this afternoon. I listened very intently to the member opposite’s speech and appreciated the member sharing remarks about this particular piece of legislation and the work that it does to help reduce red tape here in the province of Ontario.

I know that individuals who live in the member’s riding obviously enjoy food, as most of us do, I think, and we recognize the importance of supporting a strong agricultural sector. I have many, many farmers in my riding. I know the member opposite has many people who like to eat the food produced by the farmers in my riding.

I’m wondering if the member opposite could speak a little bit about the importance of the Grow Ontario Strategy in this legislation and what that will mean for locally grown products, such as those from my riding.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I am also a very big fan of food. My father was a chef garde manger for many years. He toiled away in the finest hotel kitchens in Toronto.

Absolutely, we need more food and more food grown locally, especially as we are seeing more and more climate change. As we know, we are also seeing an erosion and removal of some of the very best farmland in Ontario.

So is there more in this bill that actually does more to protect farmland, to enable those farmers to make sure that they hold onto the very best? It does not. And if you wanted to address that issue, we certainly would welcome it.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you so much to my friend and colleague for her excellent presentation. I really appreciated that she talked about legal aid.

I think we should all agree in this House that finances shouldn’t be a barrier to justice, but of course there were

cuts to legal aid that happened—by this government, in their last session of Parliament.

Can you tell us why it's really important that access to legal aid is something that this government should be striving for and reversing these cuts should be a priority?

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

In my conversations, especially acting as the official opposition critic for the Ministry of the Attorney General, I've now had a chance to meet with an extraordinary number of legal professionals. Without exception, I would say—and they don't agree on everything, but without exception, they all identify one of the systemic problems that now exists in Ontario is the defunding of legal aid. They're losing qualified lawyers who want to stay in practice. Their clients who can't get access to lawyers are suffering. The lawyers they have hired are now leaving the profession. And now we have a corporate sector that's saying that they also don't agree with the defunding of legal aid. All of this means that the government has a chance to take action on Thursday, when they drop the provincial budget, to put the money back in and to index it to the rate of inflation. I would describe it as a crisis, as it has been described to me.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: I appreciate the member's statement and her providing the information about her experiences, but as a part of our commitment to break down the long-standing barriers in justice specifically—and as we were talking earlier, the system previously was literally paper-based. It was not up to date. It was not in a place where it was going to be moving efficiently for very much longer.

Our government is moving more services online by investing in technology and improving processes to deliver a better experience for prospective jurors. Not only will this reduce administrative costs, but it will make it easier for jurors to participate in the court system no matter where they live.

Will the member opposite agree that moving from the paper format to a digital-first experience would benefit the judicial system?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you very much to my friend from across. This is where we will have absolute agreement. We are moving to a less paper-reliant society in all aspects of life, and certainly when it comes to the legal and court system, we certainly see more than enough paper; I think we can agree on that.

I think that the challenge here is that the government is placing the moving to a digital administration of justice as the silver lining or the quick silver bullet on fixing and modernizing the program, and that is simply only one prong. There are many other ways to do that, including the efficient administration of court time, courtroom usage, hiring new judges, and staffing up the court system properly. All of those things in conjunction with modernization, plus an efficient working between policing as well as the court system as well as the ministry—that's what you need, and that's not happening right now.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: As the bill has a few schedules, I want to focus on schedule 3, which is the Juries Act that has just been brought up—how easy it's going to be for people to participate in the justice system as a juror. I know that there are barriers to being a juror, one of them being financial, and perhaps other areas that stop people or prevent people from being jurors.

Can you speak to the fairness about access to justice? Being a juror—if you have to compromise your salary during the day, how is that going to help the juror system be involved?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: That was an excellent question from the member, and I think that she has hit the nail on the head. There isn't anyone who receives a piece of mail which says, "You've been selected for jury duty," and thinks this is actually a great thing. They actually lament when they see that jury duty notification, largely because they are not being compensated for their time away from work, they're not being compensated for time away from family, they're not being compensated for child care and any other expenses that they would have to incur in order for them to perform this valuable public service—not to mention the fact that we have a number of trial lawyers who specifically said that jury trials are now more expensive and more timely, and some of them can be done away with, especially on matters that are less of a broad public nature of interest.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question: the member for Brantford—Brant.

1620

Mr. Will Bouma: I apologize, Speaker. I thought the Minister of Economic Development wanted to ask a question there, but he was just getting up.

It's been very interesting listening to debate on this bill today, and I have to say, I very much appreciate that our government continues to put forward legislation for red tape, I think twice a year—perhaps the parliamentary assistant could correct me if I'm wrong on that.

But what I'm hearing from the opposition benches is that we're not going far enough; we should be doing more, which we are. We keep doing that.

So my question to the member is, since I haven't heard anything terribly negative other than they wish there was more in it, will they be supporting the legislation?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I think one of my second sentences in my remarks was that the bill is largely supportable.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to thank my colleague for her very in-depth debate today which covered a lot of bases. I particularly would like to touch on the WSIB portion. I hear from injured workers in my riding on a regular basis and the struggles they're facing. Possibly this government thinks that they're red tape also because the funding to injured workers is being cut, and they're

constantly trying to figure out if they're going to have a budget to be able to pay the rent in the upcoming months.

Has the member heard this from her constituents and her injured workers' groups here in the Toronto area as I have in the Hamilton area?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you to the member from Hamilton Mountain for that question. Yes, I have absolutely heard very similar comments and concerns from my constituents. As well, different stakeholder groups have all said that because the WSIB is in such a dire state of administrative quagmire, they're stuck. They put in their application and they can't get processed. They can't work because they've been injured and somehow they have to continue to work and prove that they've been injured, and there are so many barriers for them to just get on with their lives.

Absolutely, they're the ones I'm most concerned about. They're the ones I'm specifically speaking about, that there's an opportunity right now to address this piece of legislation to cut through the red tape, but that's not happening, especially for those who are injured and who are the applicants.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. That is the time for questions and answers. We're going to move to further debate.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House. Today, I'm speaking to third reading of Bill 46, and I'm going to focus my concerns on schedule 5 of the bill, which amends the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act, removing a clause that prohibits carbon capture in Ontario while simultaneously lifting the prohibition on enhanced oil recovery.

Speaker, I'm deeply concerned about this particular provision of the bill because of the risk it presents to the people of Ontario. The government's own discussion paper discussed this risk, which is why I was surprised to see it in this bill. I want to quote from the government's own paper: "Careful site selection and extensive study would be required to ensure that the carbon dioxide could be stored safely." The paper goes on to say, "As the ministry accommodates new activities and technology, stronger, more proactive oversight would be needed to prevent impacts to people and the environment and ensure that project proponents that are undertaking any activity under the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act are doing so safely and responsibly."

Speaker, there's been no indication since the Auditor General's report came out at the end of last year raising serious concerns about the end of oil and gas wells in Ontario that the government has mitigated this risk. It isn't indicated in the bill. It hasn't been indicated in any announcements. So why would the government be moving forward with this, calling literally protections—if you talk to the folks in Wheatley, like, serious protections—calling it red tape reduction?

Furthermore, Speaker, anyone who read yesterday's IPCC report on the climate crisis knows that we are facing a serious choice. As the UN said, we are going to go down the highway to climate hell or we're going to build a

livable future, and if we're going to build a livable future—I want to say exactly what they said: Any new fossil fuel developments are utterly incompatible with the net-zero emissions required for a safe and livable future.

Enhanced oil recovery will lead to more climate pollution, which is completely incompatible with what has been widely circulated by not only the IPCC, but the International Energy Agency and so many others. We cannot increase fossil fuel extraction, even through enhanced oil recovery, and have any hope of meeting our climate obligations, so I would suggest the government is wrong with the schedule in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Questions for the member for Guelph?

Mr. Joel Harden: It's always nice to hear my friend from Guelph hold court, particularly on matters of sustainability and the climate crisis. I'm not sure about you, but I always like to try to find a positive way of helping governments imagine themselves as actors in this moment, because sometimes people can get overwhelmed at the thought of what we do, given what we read yesterday in the IPCC report.

So I'd like the member, if it's okay, to reflect on what I think is a major part of Ontario's solution to the climate crisis, and that is renewing our energy relationship with the province of Quebec. Quebec stands to give us an incredible gift of hydroelectricity, but meanwhile, as I understand what the government's plan is, we are doubling—tripling—down on gas-fired electrical plants. I'm wondering if the member, because you're a subject-matter expert, could contribute to this debate we're trying to have from Ottawa and inspire our friends to embrace that relationship with Quebec and bring over more of that clean power to power the next economy that we need.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the member asking this question. We have a huge opportunity in Ontario, a huge opportunity to build and strengthen our relationship with Quebec, to bring in low-cost water power, while at the same time we have a huge opportunity in Ontario to expand low-cost renewable electricity generation.

By the way, solar power now is the cheapest source of electricity in the world. That's what all the international agencies say. That's why most of the global investment now is going into solar—a little less so for wind, but also into wind and into water power, because those are the low-cost sources of generation.

And so yes, 10 years ago—

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I heard members heckling over there—maybe the previous Liberal government overpaid for solar power, but today it's the cheapest source of power. So I would ask: Why don't we buy low-cost sources of power—wind, solar and water power?

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: I wasn't heckling, what I said about wind turbines; I was telling the truth.

But anyway, besides that point: The CCS carbon sequestration issue is a big issue in my riding and a lot of

ridings in Ontario, because industry, to keep expanding here in Ontario, needs carbon sequestration. All I hear about is “CO₂, CO₂.” Well, if you’re going to have energy in this country and industry, you’re going to have to sequester that carbon.

I’ve fought hard, I don’t mind saying, to get that clause out of there, because that’s what the industry in my riding wants, and there are all kinds of examples—I think they’re in Alberta—where they say they’re going to take four million tonnes of carbon and sequester it. Would the member support that or similar in Ontario?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Well, I appreciate my friend on the other side’s question, and sorry, I didn’t mean to accuse you of heckling. I thought you were giving me a rough time on solar power, so I was going to be ready to come back on that.

I appreciate the question, and I appreciate the member’s advocacy for industry in the member’s riding—I really do. But I also think we need to have an honest conversation in Ontario. The International Energy Agency, which historically has been pro-fossil-fuel and is incredibly conservative, has said that if we have any hope of a livable future, meeting our climate obligations, we can have no more new fossil fuel infrastructure developed.

And so when we’re talking about carbon capture and storage, we will have to capture and store CO₂, but if we are doing that to replace the expansion of fossil fuel use, then it’s not going to serve the function that we need it to serve. We need to both dramatically reduce carbon pollution that we’re emitting right now, and we need to take CO₂ out of the atmosphere at the same time. It can’t be one or the other. Far too often, one is being used to replace the other, and that is not sustainable.

1630

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We don’t have time for another round of question and answer, so we’re going to move to further debate.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: It is a pleasure once again to rise in this House, this time to join the debate on third reading with respect to Bill 46, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act.

Speaker, this bill confirms our government’s commitment, made to all Ontarians, to improve Ontario’s competitiveness in several key areas by reducing burdens for people and for businesses in the province of Ontario. This legislation, if passed, would be our government’s ninth red tape reduction bill since forming government in 2018. If passed, this legislation will include 28 new measures to increase Ontario’s competitiveness, grow our labour force so that businesses can hire homegrown Ontario talent, support our supply chains for increased manufacturing, and make government easier to access and to interact with. This is the kind of environment that government, and in particular our Ontario government, is creating so that we build prosperity, we build the province, we create jobs and we in turn create the kind of prosperity that helps fund public sector services like health care, education and social services. That is the plan of this Progressive Conservative Ontario government.

We have already seen the positive results in Ontario’s productivity with eight red tape reduction bills that we introduced and passed. We have taken 400 individual actions to reduce red tape and cut regulatory burden, and our efforts are saving businesses and other organizations \$576 million each year in compliance costs. This makes it easier for municipalities, not-for-profit organizations, businesses and stakeholders to interact and work with government. By simplifying administrative procedures across all ministries and government departments, we are reducing compliance costs and improving customer service. Successive measures like lowering payroll and electricity costs, reducing WSIB premiums and accelerating capital cost allowance writeoffs are making Ontario a more competitive jurisdiction to do business in, and we’re getting attention across the country, across the continent and indeed across the world for that. When it comes to reducing red tape, our government is getting it done, and it’s never been more important for us to continue this important work.

As a former small business owner myself, Speaker, I understand first-hand how frustrating, expensive and complicated it can be when dealing with government and red tape that disrupts business life and gets in the way of growth and job creation. Therefore, these significant barriers to our productivity have to be dealt with and dealt with decisively.

To increase Ontario’s economic competitiveness, we must ensure that we do not discourage trade with other jurisdictions or hinder investment and innovation with global partners, because that would cost Ontario jobs. We are a government that is creating jobs or creating the environment for more jobs.

Now, I’ve heard the complaints about dealing with government in the past: delays, red tape, regulation. I have heard it time and again from individuals, families and small businesses in particular. I’ve heard it in my riding of Durham since I’ve been elected and even before I was elected. And while we are proud of the progress our government has made thus far, there is more work to be done.

Bill 46, the latest of our measures to fight red tape and unnecessary regulation, if passed, will help build a stronger Ontario where people and businesses can continue to thrive and where we will build upon our government’s previous work to save Ontario’s people and its businesses time and money. This will lead to Ontario becoming a stronger economic jurisdiction with confidence and stability and a hopeful future, and as I said, an ability to fund core public services that individuals and families throughout the province rely upon.

Speaker, as the minister responsible for red tape reduction keenly mentioned in this House last week, this legislation contains five guiding principles. These principles are crucial to the effort to reduce red tape.

The first principle is to protect Ontario’s public health, safety and the environment. We will accomplish this by easing regulatory burdens in a smart and strategic way, eliminating duplication, enhancing efficiency, all the

while maintaining or even enhancing important health, safety and environmental protections.

The second principle is to identify and prioritize the important issues which are causing the regulatory burdens and barriers to grow. We do this by assessing which regulations cost the most time and money, while working with municipalities, stakeholders and subject matter experts to look for innovative ways to ensure these rules stay effective and efficient.

The third principle is then to synchronize rules with other jurisdictions, including municipalities and the federal government, because we all serve one citizenry. By synchronizing rules with the other levels of government and other jurisdictions, this brings consistency, streamlines efficiency, and eliminates confusion for both individuals and businesses. This is one of the most efficient ways to reduce compliance costs across the board.

The fourth principle that drives this process is that we will continue to listen to the people and to the businesses of Ontario on an ongoing basis to learn what we can do to remove future obstacles as plans evolve.

And the fifth and final principle is to take a whole-of-government approach in addressing the overall barriers to growth. This holistic approach allows us to deliver better services to people and businesses, making it easier for them to access the information, programs and services they need to succeed.

To be clear, we do not believe that rules and regulations themselves are the issue, but the unnecessary, duplicative and outdated regulations are a problem, and it's a problem we're committed to solving by taking swift and decisive action, by introducing this legislation as part of a series.

This is a critical time for Ontario's businesses. Even as the global pandemic has started to wind down, two thirds of our businesses across various sectors reported last year that their supply challenges have worsened as opposed to have improved.

Make no mistake about it, Speaker: Ontario's businesses continue to face big challenges. That's why we have brought forward this important legislation. And all Ontarians can be assured that this government will continue to show strong leadership on every front, including reducing red tape and unnecessary duplicative regulations. This is the environment we speak of when we speak of creating thousands of new jobs.

And speaking of jobs, I'd like to discuss how the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act proposes to cut red tape and support the competitiveness of Ontario's energy sector. If passed, the proposed legislation in regard to this sector will make it easier to build electricity transmission lines by exempting customer-funded projects from the Ontario Energy Board's leave-to-construct process. Proponents of these projects will continue to have the right to apply to the Ontario Energy Board to cross a highway, railway or utility line in circumstances where an agreement cannot be obtained.

Our government is also proposing changes that would simplify the gasoline volatility regulation, aligning Ontario's regulations to national standards.

Speaker, I also want to touch on several modernization measures for the agriculture and food industries. These are a central part of this proposed legislation.

1640

Through the proposed legislation, our government is proposing to amend the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act and the Innkeepers Act. This would give beef farmers more flexibility and improve the competitiveness and the profitability of their businesses, helping to ensure a stronger and more resilient food supply for the people of Ontario.

The legislative amendments in this bill are in addition to announcements we have made to the larger red tape reduction package. Also included are policy changes and consultations in the agri-food sector to support research that better promotes innovation and enables farmers to implement new technologies and techniques that will increase the competitiveness and the sustainability of the agri-food sector.

Additionally, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act proposes to amend the Animal Health Act to provide authority for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to take temporary action to protect the health and the well-being of the public and animals when faced with a potential animal health crisis such as animal disease outbreaks. These measures aim to enhance animal disease emergency preparedness. They help mitigate risks to animal health and human health and, as well, they propose to boost the competitiveness of Ontario's livestock and poultry sector.

As a result, these proposed amendments will help to ensure Ontarians continually have a reliable, safe and stable food supply. That is the promise we have made to Ontarians to provide healthy, homegrown food, and the promise we have made to Ontario farmers and the agriculture sector to provide the means for the sector to thrive and succeed. It goes without saying, Speaker, farmers feed cities.

Our red tape reduction package also includes the OMAFRA grow strategy, which is the province's comprehensive plan to build consumer confidence and support farmers in Ontario's food supply. The plan focuses on three key priorities.

The first of these three priorities is to strengthen agri-food supply chain stability by increasing both the consumption and the production of food grown and prepared in Ontario by 30%, also increasing Ontario's food and beverage manufacturing gross domestic product by 10% and boosting Ontario's agri-food exports 8% annually by 2032.

The second key priority is to increase agri-food technology and boost research infrastructure, advance the uptake of new technologies, grow the market for Ontario's innovative technologies both domestically and globally and grow the use of data to ensure and support efficiencies in the agri-food sector and value chain. This includes beginning consultations on modernizing agricultural research that is specific to the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario, and the legislation associated, to fuel

innovation and support efforts to provide modern, relevant research information both to farmers and agri-food businesses.

The third priority in relation to growing Ontario's agri-food industry is to attract new talent by increasing the province's total agri-food sector employment by 10% over the next decade. Also, we propose to increase awareness of modern high-tech agri-food careers, opportunities for mentorship and hands-on job training, supporting efforts to increase veterinary capacity in the underserved areas of the province. As a first step, the province has launched public consultations to explore opportunities to modernize the Veterinarians Act as part of the plan to increase access to veterinary care in Ontario. These are important measures to support our agricultural sector and to build a stronger Ontario.

Speaker, the proposed Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act also includes several changes to modernize and reduce administrative burdens in the justice sector. These proposed changes will help improve customer service and make it easier for Ontarians to interact with our justice system.

Having been a practising trial lawyer for over 30 years before being elected, Speaker, I can tell you, from personal and professional experience, that these reforms that are proposed in the bill are long overdue in Ontario's justice system. I have in my past life written several articles and op-eds about trial delays and case backlogs, as well as testifying before a House of Commons committee as a subject matter expert on how to alleviate current backlogs in both the criminal court and the Provincial Offences Court.

Our government is proposing to amend the Provincial Offences Act to make life easier for Ontarians by helping to reduce the backlog at provincial offences courts. The proposed amendments will allow court clerks to reopen certain proceedings if such a clerk believes that the defendant missed a notice or was unable to attend a meeting or hearing through no fault of that person.

We're also proposing to create more judicial capacity and alleviate backlogs in criminal cases at the Ontario Court of Justice by temporarily raising the limit on the number of days that retired judges can work. Those retired judges bring talent, experience and dedication and will help alleviate backlogs.

Lastly, the proposed legislation will reduce administrative costs and make it easier for prospective jurors to participate in the court system through updates to the Juries Act. The bill, if passed, would also introduce the pilot project that makes a jury questionnaire available online by default. This proposal will also allow us to test the feasibility of moving away from sending hard copies of jury questionnaires through the mail. This will provide Ontarians with a modern, convenient, streamlined way to participate in the justice system, while reducing costs and administrative burdens.

What we are doing with these proposals is driving efficiencies, reducing costs and, really, making it more possible for jurors to have a better experience while

serving as jurors. This is consistent with both the charter right to trial by jury in criminal matters in the Superior Court of Justice and the important substantive right to trial by jury in civil matters under the Courts of Justice Act. This is about enhancing the experience, making it easier for jurors to participate as jurors, and that is consistent with making sure the justice system is about serving the people, working in partnership with those who serve on juries with our hard-working judges.

I heard the member from Toronto Centre suggest that she's convinced that somehow we should reduce jury trials if there's some inefficiency or red tape associated with that. In my experience, Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Juries, when they deliberate together, often deliver speedier justice because they can deliver their verdicts in hours after the hearing of evidence or, at most, in a few days, whereas reserve decisions in judge-alone cases can take up to six months or longer to reach the litigants.

Piloting this project then, Speaker, will help the government assess the impact on response rates in different communities. In all cases, the right to receive a paper questionnaire will be maintained.

Through the 13 legislative initiatives in the bill that stretch across government, we are creating the conditions that let businesses thrive and people prosper and, as a result, if passed, the proposed legislation would benefit all of Ontario's people and businesses.

As my colleague the minister for red tape stated in the House last week, our government continues to work with and listen to people, businesses and experts in the field who have been instrumental in recommending great ideas to reduce red tape in Ontario. We continue to encourage people and businesses to submit their suggestions to move forward further on this important measure.

I urge the opposition to recognize these important measures, and I'm hearing that they are convinced to do so. I urge them to stand with us to help reduce red tape, reduce regulatory burden and reduce duplication and unleash the full potential of Ontario. That is the right thing for the province. That is the way to grow and build the province, create jobs and prosperity and fund our essential, core public services. So if I heard right and the opposition is ready to support the bill, I congratulate them on changing their tune and not just being the party of no. Thank you, Speaker.

1650

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you to the member of the government opposite for his presentation. He and I both serve on public accounts, and a lot of what we see here, the changes that come in these what we might call house-keeping bills or regulations and other things that are seeking to improve government, come out of public accounts. They come from suggestions made by the Auditor General of the times.

I wanted you to tell us how important public accounts is as a committee and why it's important to listen to what

the Auditor General has to say and to bring those changes here to the floor of government as quickly as possible.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I thank the member opposite for the question. Yes, I'm honoured to serve on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts with the member opposite. That is a very special committee because as a member of the opposition, he is the Chair. That is the tradition. That's right out of the standing orders.

Some of the measures we've adopted in addition to a member of His Majesty's loyal opposition being the Chair include the fact that all members sit amongst each other rather than opposite each other, as would normally be the case in any assembly or House. We routinely, both because the act provides for it and as a matter of practice, invite the Auditor General to the committee to comment on reports that the Auditor General has authored. This is a very important and valuable aspect of the work that the committee does, hearing from the Auditor General, and we will continue to call upon her to do so.

But also, in addition to the Auditor General, many witnesses come before the committee, including deputy ministers from various departments. This is essential to the work that we do—

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

For the next question, I recognize the member for Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I want to thank my colleague from the Durham riding for an excellent presentation. Speaker, one of the areas that he spoke about was the Grow Ontario Strategy, and I'm not surprised by that, because in the region of Durham, as the member from Durham knows, we have an economic recovery plan. A feature of that economic recovery plan is our agri-food agriculture sector. So through you, Speaker, I'd like the member from Durham to provide more detail about how he thinks the Grow Ontario Strategy will benefit the growing agri-food agriculture sector within the region of Durham.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I thank the member for Whitby for the question. Durham region—and as part of Durham region, Durham riding—is blessed to have so many farming communities. It's a particular honour to represent such a diverse riding in that way, because we have the Darlington nuclear facility and we have many suburban areas and neighbourhoods in my riding, but we have many farms.

Our plan is to work with the agri-food sector to determine current and future research needs that promote innovation and enable farmers to be on the cutting edge of best production practices, implementing new technologies and techniques that will increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the agri-food sector. Ontario is taking action, or is proposing to take action, by this bill to strengthen the agricultural sector, proposing to modernize the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario Act, 1990.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: There's really no greater example of burdensome red tape than the over 800 regulations

associated with the ODSF Act. Can you imagine becoming disabled, with no income, and then having to navigate 800-plus regulations? These are not only barriers to growth; they are barriers to survival. Will the government be reducing the heavy burden of regulatory overreach attached to social assistance programs?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you to the member opposite. The member may know that my wife and I happen to be the parents of an adult son with multiple abilities and disabilities. I can say that even before I was elected, on June 2, 2022, for the second term of this government, I noticed a remarkable change in accessing government services for our disabled son. That was something I noticed that began in 2018. So not only have we done it; we're going to continue to do it, because we believe in emphasizing the abilities of our fellow citizens, rather than their disabilities.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank the member for his thoughtful comments.

He discussed removing the need to apply for leave to construct on energy matters, approval for consumer-funded transmission projects and impact transmission system upgrades being planned in the province. My question is, will removing the need to apply for leave-to-construct approval for consumer-funded transmission projects remove or impact existing rights to municipalities or utilities?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: The leave-to-construct changes that are proposed—and I thank the member from Thornhill for the question—will not remove or impact existing rights to municipalities or utility companies. Transmitters looking across infrastructure typically reach agreements with municipalities and utilities that own the infrastructure. So municipalities and utilities will retain the right to decide whether to enter into these agreements.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you for your presentation, to the member across. In a recent conversation I had with the federation of Ontario law societies—there were about 33 different individuals on the call and they were from across Ontario—when I told them about schedule 2 of this particular bill—this is the schedule that brings back retired judges to increase their sitting time from 50% full-time to 75% full-time—their reaction was quite alarmed. I would say that they were overwhelmingly in disagreement with this proposal. They said that they weren't consulted, but they were also noting that the solution the government has brought forward is costly and not efficient at all.

Would you explain to those who perhaps may be watching why this government believes that it is more cost-efficient to bring back judges who are already receiving a pension and put them back into the system, and whether or not you think that this proposal is sustainable in the long run?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I thank the member for Toronto Centre for the question. I indicated in my remarks, and it bears repeating, that our dedicated judges, who face a mandatory retirement age of 75, have a wealth of experience and knowledge. By redeploying them, even after retirement, and temporarily creating that possibility, we are bringing forth a wealth of talent that will help reduce the backlogs created by the decision of Her Majesty the Queen v. Jordan, decided by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2016, that put the 18-month and 30-month caps on the prosecution of criminal matters before the Ontario Court of Justice and the Superior Court of Justice respectively.

Allowing for retired judges to come back to serve, even temporarily, will help get us through this very difficult time of dealing with these backlogs. We believe that that will have a major impact and is a positive—but temporary—measure.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you to the member from Durham for his great comments. I wondered if he could talk a little bit more about Indigenous consultation that we are engaging in and changing so that that assists our Indigenous partners in removing red tape and accessing more business opportunities, for example, that would benefit everyone. I wonder if the member from Durham, in the short time he has, can expand further.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I appreciate my friend and colleague asking that question, because it was raised in debate earlier today. It bears repeating, in answer to this question, that the proposed changes will not change, will not alter, to any extent whatsoever, how the crown fulfills its obligations to ensure meaningful consultation with potentially impacted Indigenous communities on transmission projects, including the transmission projects that are currently and proposed to be exempt from DTC requirements, and the intent of this initiative is to engage and remove barriers for Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs in accessing business support programs and procurement opportunities. It's good news for Indigenous communities.

1700

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): That's all the time for questions. So we're going to continue with further debate.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm rising this afternoon to speak to Bill 46 which, if I understand it from my friends in government here, is about reducing red tape. In my remarks this afternoon, I want to focus on three schedules of the bill. I want to focus on schedule 5 and schedule 6 to highlight what the bill could do more on taking the climate crisis seriously. The member from Guelph spoke about this earlier this afternoon. I also want to begin by speaking briefly about schedule 9, the changes to the WSIB from an angle you may not expect, Speaker, and I hope you'll give me a little latitude with this.

We had a significant event last week in the province of Ontario. On Thursday last week, the province of Ontario

saw the election of the first Black Somali Canadian disability rights activist to this chamber in this place's history: Sarah Jama. The people of Hamilton Centre elected Sarah Jama to take her seat in this place, and she'll be doing that next week I'm excited to tell members of this House. For those of you who haven't had the chance to meet Sarah, you're in for a real treat, and for those of you who are from the great city of Hamilton, you know about Sarah and you know about the work she's tried to do to help people with disabilities, and beyond that, just to be an incredible community organizer in her own right.

I had occasion to talk to her earlier this afternoon; she came and caucused with us for the first time. I asked Sarah as we were getting ready to move into that caucus meeting, "What are you feeling right now?" She said, "You know, I'm feeling the burden of a responsibility." The burden of a responsibility as someone coming from a physical disability, coming from the legacy city of Hamilton—a significant amount of folks in the city of Hamilton live with physical or mental disabilities or challenges all the time. She told me, "I feel a responsibility to come into this place and not just criticize the government but to bring something positive home to my community and do something with the resources we're given in my community." I thought how fitting to be debating what this government could be doing with this bill to reduce red tape for people with disabilities.

The member for Thunder Bay–Superior North has spoken about it in a number of the question she has posed this afternoon. I think about the penalties assessed to persons with disabilities when they enter into a romantic relationship with someone—even with a modest income, immediate penalties in their income. You and I both know, Speaker, as people who live in Ottawa and work with people with disabilities, that they live in crushing poverty already. People are living in crushing poverty already, and there should be no penalty for falling in love. There should be no penalty for making administrative errors on one's account, for missing a letter.

But right now, I want to impress upon this government that a way you can improve this bill is by dealing with the incredibly suffocating amount of red tape that people with disabilities and their loved ones and their families and their friends, through them, face every single day.

And do you know what is also related to that, Speaker? I want to impress upon the government that working for this government right now are thousands of caseworkers who work with folks on ODSP and OW who would like to see their talents put to better use. In Ottawa, Speaker, it is common for an ODSP caseworker to have a 400-to-1 ratio. You heard that right: 400-to-1. How is one supposed to be an empathetic voice, an enabler of opportunity to someone when you have that kind of caseload? You can't. You do triage. You do communication by email, by text, by happenstance. That is an army of folks, available to this government, that could be sent out into the community to actually help people find opportunities in their lives.

I just want to impress upon the government that if you want to reduce red tape, if that is the intent and purpose of

this bill—I was listening to the member from Durham in his remarks, and I appreciated an opportunity to talk to him off-line; I know he and other members of this government care about people with disabilities—think about the red tape that you could do to reduce the burdens in people’s lives so they can embrace those opportunities the member was talking about.

Second—and this is another diversion, Speaker, so you’re going to have to maybe give me some latitude. Maybe our friends in government won’t call me on a point of order and I can get this out. I think something that’s missing in this bill is help for local and amateur sport. And I had occasion just earlier this afternoon to briefly talk to the minister responsible. As you know, Speaker, I came to this chamber, still kind of surfing and glowing because the Carleton University women’s and men’s basketball teams both won the national championship last weekend. Speaker, I’m not trying to—I know the University of Ottawa is in your riding and it’s a great university with great sports teams, including basketball teams. But as I took in that national championship on YouTube in the basement of our family home with both of our kids that play in the Ottawa system, and both universities draw heavily upon the amateur system, something occurred to me that I think is red-tape-related.

So the women played their national championship against Queen’s University Gaels—fantastic team, had the fewest points allowed this year, 515; great team, tough game—in Sydney, Nova Scotia. It’s a great place—I got family in Nova Scotia—but it’s far-flung.

The men played their game in Halifax in front of 9,000 fans. Quite a disadvantage for our squad, I have to tell you, Speaker, because the STFX X-Men that played the Ravens men’s team this year, who have appeared in 17 consecutive national championships, had 9,000 screaming fans in there, and they played a heck of a game. But what struck me as red tape in that viewing experience as a lifelong basketball fan, as a sports fan and as someone who really believes that sports is an enabler for our youth—and for people of all ages, frankly, but particularly for youth—is that the women were playing hundreds of kilometres away from the men in a tiny stadium at the same time as the men. And I said to myself, “That seems ridiculous.” If we want to travel this national championship around, absolutely—let’s give that economic opportunity to different places. But I want to see an Ontario that platforms women’s sport as much as it does men’s sport. I want to see 9,000 people out to cheer the women on, not just the men.

It’s the case locally in Ottawa, Speaker, where we have a harder time finding volunteer coaches in the women’s basketball programs, more cancelled games. And I want to say to any of the friends opposite, if you go on our website, I wrote an update. My last column was on this historic weekend—the first time in 38 years that one university has captured women’s and men’s national championship. It’s a really incredible achievement to coaches Taffe Charles and Dani Sinclair—an incredible accomplishment. But my daughter remarked to me—we watched the women’s game

in its entirety and then we switched to the men’s, as it just happened to be going into overtime. I said to myself this game, as every game at the university you and I serve, Speaker—we always have both games there so fans can celebrate both teams.

So I want to invite my friend in government who I know takes sport very seriously and that responsibility—let’s pursue that conversation with youth sports and the people who regulate basketball, because I certainly was so proud to be a Carleton University Ravens basketball fan, but there was a little sting in the tail there as I took that in, and I think we can improve that. I think that’s something we can maybe work on together at committee.

Okay, let’s get to the topic of the week as far as I’m concerned, and that is the climate crisis. Schedules 5 and 6 of this bill deal with two different acts, two different statutes, that I think will be really important in the actions this province takes on climate change—not the only statutes, but important. In schedule 5, the government is making the case that carbon sequestration is going to be an important part of our ability to mitigate against climate change, to address climate change. My friend the member from Sarnia talked earlier about how important carbon sequestration is in his community, and I take his point to heart on that. But I just wanted to make sure we read into the record—and I believe the member from Guelph did it earlier, but I want to do it again because some things bear repeating.

The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said yesterday in a press conference to the world: “Our world needs climate action on all fronts—everything, everywhere, all at once.” And there were three particular demands he put forward to the world, because as I am going to talk about in my remarks this afternoon, this is not all doom and gloom. I think too often when we think about how we can change our economy and our society, we get trapped in doom-and-gloom conversations and people tune out. We can’t do that as politicians. We have to make people excited to embrace the challenges and opportunities presented to us by the climate crisis we’re living in.

1710

There were three things Secretary-General António Guterres mentioned we absolutely cannot do. One was we absolutely have to stick, hard and fast, to the goal of ensuring net-zero electricity by 2035; two, we have to stop any expansion of existing oil and gas reserves all over the world; and three, we have to be shifting subsidies from fossil fuels to a just energy transition for folks who work in the fossil fuel industry, something I think is critically important.

I say that, Speaker, because there are people from our families, from our great province here in Ontario—my own family—who have gone out to work in the oil sands in Alberta or on the east coast on oil rigs. They are incredibly skilled people. I often say to myself, as a researcher, what do we do with these skilled trades folks? What is their future, going forward? Because when I look at their own industries, whether it’s the enormous dump

trucks that are driven in the oil sands or whether I look at the servicing of the oil rigs on the east coast, increasingly all those jobs are being automated, like so many other jobs in our world. The fossil fuel industry does not care about those workers. The fossil fuel industry is increasingly finding ways to get rid of those workers. But we urgently need those workers to plug into the green energy transition in our economy. That is essential.

You and I both live in Ottawa, Speaker, and just for the benefit of everybody else here, I'll repeat an example I mentioned in debate with the minister—the minister; maybe one day he'll be a minister—the member for Guelph. I said to him, "Ottawa-Gatineau has a particular contribution we can make to bringing Ontario to that finish line of net-zero electricity by 2035 that Secretary-General Guterres was talking about yesterday, and that is by renewing the energy partnership we currently have with the province of Quebec."

The province of Quebec right now has more power than it knows what to do with. We are—and I think this is a positive element of what the government has been doing recently—encouraging investments in electrical vehicle manufacturing in Ontario. I give the government credit for doing that. But the question is, we can encourage the manufacturing of these products here, but how do we make sure that those products are going to be able to be used here in Ontario?

On this note, I speak from personal experience, because the summer before last, my partner and I, we took the leap; we bought the same vehicle the member from Guelph drives, a Chevy Bolt EUV. It's a great car, but in the winter, you get a range of about 200 kilometres to 250 kilometres on that car. You need to know where all the charging stations are. Forget driving to Toronto; that is a tricky enterprise, potentially, if you need to stop and recharge. I often take the train. But if the members opposite are serious about the electrification of transport in Ontario, which I think is a fantastic goal, we have to build the infrastructure to sustain that.

What hydroelectricity in Quebec represents, as some advocates have said—think of it as a giant battery, a giant battery beside our existing hydroelectricity system, our existing, though not large enough, renewable energy system and the way the grid functions with nuclear power. Thinking about that opportunity with Quebec that costs, depending on whose estimates you believe, five cents to seven cents per kilowatt hour, that is an enormous opportunity for us.

But instead, what I've heard the Minister of Energy—who is someone I've enjoyed debating and talking to over the years. But I've heard him say, recently, "No, Joel, we're going to be moving out of this permanent agreement with Quebec. We are going to be moving into spot markets." That's kind of transactional, in the moment. That's not a commitment. So what does Quebec do? Well, Quebec says, "If Ontario is not serious about taking our power, let's sell it to the United States." In some cases, depending upon the amount they're cranking out, they may be selling that at a loss.

But here we are, their neighbouring province, desperately in need of this power. Depending on whose estimates you believe, we have to have either a 75% increase or double our electrical capacity in Ontario if we want to electrify buses, if we want to encourage more electrical heat pumps in people's homes or if we want to do that in larger buildings—or if we want to have more electric buses running in our streets, as I know the great city of Toronto is doing and Ottawa is trying to embrace, and I'm sure other cities. We need more power for that. So Quebec presents an opportunity for us to explore that relationship further, Speaker, and we're not taking it. We're not taking it.

I want to make sure that members of this House are aware of some of the news from yesterday because, as I said earlier, sometimes when we talk about the climate crisis, it can be doom and gloom. Here's the truth. The truth is, in 2015 the countries of the world met in Paris and made a collective recognition that we have to try to limit the growth of emissions, we have to stop the heating up of the planet, we have to stop it at 2 degrees Celsius. In 2018 they revised that estimate and they said it needs to be 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We were on track at that point to get to 3.5 degrees Celsius of a warmer planet—3.5 by the end of the current century—and we know what that means. In Ottawa, we've seen it: five major massive weather events, two once-in-a-century floods and two massive windstorms. This has been devastating for farmers, devastating for homeowners, devastating for our electrical system. Tens of millions of dollars of damage. So that's where we were on track, but actually, if you look at what the scientists are telling us, given some of the changes countries around the world have committed to, we course-corrected to some extent to 2.5 degrees Celsius warmer, which is still way too hot.

But if you look at what was recently negotiated in the last round of the global Conference of the Parties discussions, we are now back on a track potentially of 1.7 degrees Celsius. So these commitments and the changes some countries are making are making a difference. I want people watching at home to know that that does matter. Writing me and writing any politician in this House, pressing with your employer, pressing with your community organization to embrace the climate crisis: All of that work has led us to something. We're on track. But it's not far enough.

The big step Ontario made was phasing out coal-fired electricity. That was an enormous step we made, and I give the previous government—previous to this government—credit for doing that, having been pushed, of course, by environmental advocates.

But what we cannot do, what we absolutely cannot do, is what my friends in government have currently proposed, which is massively increase the footprint of gas-fired electricity in this province. As the member from Toronto—Danforth said earlier in question period, that will erase all the benefit that this government has attempted to do with major manufacturers, major emitters like Dofasco or Algoma Steel. Any of that work you've done with the EV

industry in attracting that investment is all wiped out if you increase gas-fired electricity by 300% or 400%, depending upon the estimates you believe. Don't just believe the socialist from Ottawa Centre; look at the scientists that are informing the UN report and the IPCC report from yesterday. They—

Interjection.

Mr. Joel Harden: I guess the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing doesn't like that title. I embrace it. I'm happy for it—

Hon. Steve Clark: That's not what I said at all—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Minister, is that a point of order?

Mr. Joel Harden: All right. Glad I gave you a stretch.

The point is this: You can't move this province in the wrong direction. I got persuaded to run for office in 2017. I had people I loved and trust corner me. I had been able to get out of these conversations for much of my life, but in this moment in 2017 they cornered me—students I worked with at Carleton University, people I know in the great city of Ottawa—and they said, “Joel, we need you to run as a candidate because we know we can hold you accountable and we know your number one goal is to make sure we do right by the planet. We know that's your number one goal.”

And it is my number one goal. There is no other reason I go into this place, do the prep work, engage with colleagues opposite, take blows opposite and offer some of my own; there is no other reason I come into this place but for the spiritual experience of knowing that at this moment in time I had a seat in the House that could take action on the climate crisis. There's no other reason.

Interjection.

Mr. Joel Harden: The member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas just said it should be all of our jobs. You're right.

The government is embracing the electrification of transport—great. You're negotiating with industry partners on helping those industry partners be greener—great. But for the love of God, in the question and response we have for 10 minutes, let's talk about not moving our province in a dirtier-energy direction. Let's talk about not moving our province into more congestion, more smog, further sprawl of homes, not giving our agriculture sector the opportunity to take advantage of arable land to grow the amazing food that nourishes and sustains us. Let's not trade that off. Let's embrace Ontario's strength.

1720

This is a province with so much richness and so much wealth and so many opportunities, and it comes from its people and its natural environment. We can be a world leader. We don't have to watch while states in the United States, countries in Europe and Asia—China—leap past us on growing renewable energy in a systemic way; leap past us on expanding public transit in a way that happens quickly and affordably through a public provision system; leap past us on educating and harnessing the talent of young people and giving them not just a seat at the table but grabbing the steering wheel. I can't wait to retire, to be

honest, sometimes. When I get into environmental conversations with young people, they are so much further advanced than I ever was at their age.

So what can we do to move away the red tape from those change-makers and make this bill better?

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like thank my colleague from Ottawa Centre for his presentation. He would have heard me earlier talk about the agriculture sector and agri-business for a couple of reasons. Durham region is not unlike other parts of Ontario. Beef farmers are really an integral part of the agri-food sector.

A couple of stats I want to leave with you, Speaker, before I move to questions: The beef cattle value chain is an estimated \$1.41 billion, supports over 51,000 jobs, and represents \$2.65 billion in gross domestic product.

Can the member from Ottawa Centre agree that ensuring the success of the Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program is critical to supporting the Ontario beef farming sector and, in fact, our economy?

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank the member from Whitby for that question.

Any time you are in Ottawa, I would love to introduce you to our farm-to-table movement. The farmers and our farmers' market, the rural and the urban and the suburban, have a great, strong relationship, and they are critically important.

I would invite the member to consider that it's not necessarily a good move to be moving into arable land, whether it be the greenbelt or whether it be other forms of land that can be used to grow crops, can be used for animal husbandry, can be used to make sure we can nourish and sustain the province that we want going forward. But I take the member's point: These are critical industries.

I would also say—and I keep getting a reminder of this when I go to farmers' market after farmers' market—that the smaller operations are at a distinct disadvantage still and they are supported less in Ontario relative even to Quebec and other provinces in Canada. I think those smaller family operations are giving us a diversity of product for the consumer that deserves the government's further support—something to work in the future.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Tomorrow I'm going to bring a motion to the Legislature that is going to ask this government to eliminate discriminatory practices for people on ODSP according to living conditions, for people who live in room and lodging. This government talks about eliminating red tape, and I think this regulation could actually alleviate some of the red tape concerns under schedules 2 and 3.

Can the member speak to some of the experiences he has heard from people who have reduced ODSP who live in a room-and-board situation—\$867, compared to someone who lives independently, at \$1,228. How could that red tape help alleviate the juries' and the judges' red tape that the government is proposing?

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank the member for the question.

As I think I've said in this place many times before, I really would invite us to not look at ODSP recipients as anything other than our neighbours, who have an enormous amount of talent to share with us.

There is no festival in the city of Ottawa that functions without ODSP recipients. To qualify for ODSP, you have to demonstrate that you can't maintain a connection to full-time employment, but you can volunteer. I think about a fantastic organization like Bluesfest in our city. I invite any member to go with me this summer, if you want to see it for yourself. It gives people on ODSP and OW enormous opportunities to make new friendships, volunteer, be part of something, and that's extremely valuable. But I would like to see an Ontario in which those folks can earn double the ODSP rate they currently have so they wouldn't be showing up to do that voluntary work dishevelled, in obvious poverty, nursing injuries. That's rough, and I know we can do better.

I thank the member for her work in spotlighting the issue, for sure.

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

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I wanted to ask the member—and I appreciate his heartfelt presentation and comments in this debate.

We know that in 2017—and that was for the term of the Liberal government, 2014 to 2018, when the NDP was not supporting the Liberal government—businesses were paying \$33,000 in annual compliance fees, \$4,000 more than any other province, and they faced the largest regulatory burden in Canada. Now we have a government committed to reducing that burden, and we're saving businesses over \$500 million annually.

Despite some of the critiques, will the member and his colleagues support this bill?

Mr. Joel Harden: I think the member knows that question was already answered. What I'm trying to do in debate this afternoon is push the discussion of the bill so it can be made even better.

On the issue of costs for business: My goodness, yes; we—both of us from Ottawa—could introduce you to hundreds of small businesses, through the pandemic and now—whatever moment we're in now; we're still in the pandemic—that have gone through a wrenching, difficult process and need help and support. I think everybody in this place would agree to that.

Reducing WSIB costs for big employers like McDonald's and Loblaws and Home Depot—that was a handout, in many respects, to enormously profitable employers engaging in pandemic profiteering, often at the expense of workers.

So we have to really, when we think of supporting small operations—and the member has run one, so he knows. Let's make sure the support goes there. McDonald's and Loblaws and Home Depot—Galen Weston does not need our help, but main street needs our help, for sure.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I would like to thank the member for Ottawa Centre for his passionate comments.

In your definition of red tape, you also pointed out the barriers that people face on the Ontario Disability Support Program.

During the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs discussion of the progress on the Plan to Build Act, Bill 36, on November 24, I added the words of Lane Sargeant, a constituent of mine. Lane wrote, "Worse yet, ODSP is even a hindrance when it comes to forming relationships. In many instances, disabled people lose benefits if they marry or cohabit, having to wager the value of the roof over their head against the chance at a stable relationship. We have to fill out questionnaires about our love lives to determine if we are worthy of groceries? The state has no business indeed."

The government understands the red tape that has been created through the ODSP program yet chooses not to fix it. Why does the member think that they have chosen not to fix this within Bill 46?

Mr. Joel Harden: I thank the member for the question. I can't answer the question because I don't go to their caucus meetings.

What I can say is this—pro tip: I love this book. It was recommended by a community kitchen provider at home, Karen Secord from the Parkdale Food Centre. If you're listening and you're looking for something to read, pick up the book by Rutger Bregman, *Utopia for Realists*. It is one of the best cases for a universal basic income I have ever read. One of the chapters of that book says, "Give away money to the poor and watch economic growth happen." It's counterintuitive, I know, but here in Ontario—we had Feed Ontario in this building this week. They told us that poverty costs Ontario \$33 billion a year—and if we doubled ODSP and OW, that's about another what, members? About another \$9 billion? Think about less strain on our hospitals and more dignity for people, less police interactions, less people incarcerated with multiple police interactions. We could give people dignity and give people opportunity, but we have to get over that hurdle of thinking that it's coddling folks; it's not. What's expensive for Ontario is poverty.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We have to move to the last question.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for your speech today and for talking about the UN climate report, where they said we need action on climate change—everything, everywhere, all at once.

What I have to say is what we see from this government—everything, everywhere, all at once is building on the greenbelt and building on protected lands, and that's not the direction we should be going.

I was just at an announcement from the federal government, and they're going to study the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve, which is where the government wants to build houses. There are many people there advocating against this, including people from Ontario

Farmland Trust who said we are losing farmland and our watershed that's integrated—it protects farmlands.

Can you talk about how this government is destroying farmland—building in the Holland Marsh with the Bradford Bypass, building near farmland—and not having a plan as to how we're going to protect ourselves from climate impacts and actually feed ourselves?

Mr. Joel Harden: I thank the member for the question.

Let me be just succinct at the end of my time: This is a debate about capitalism. This is a debate about whether or not we tell the very, very powerful folks in our economy that they can't have everything they want. They make powerful cases to this government: "You need to give us access to this land, despite what you said previously about the greenbelt, despite what you said previously about not doing what the Liberals did." They've been convinced that they need to, but this is a moment when the government has to use its influence to say no, because the evidence that I've read suggests we don't need to develop into the greenbelt.

You don't need to do what the Liberal government did once upon a time—what you're poised to do now. You can save that arable land. You can intensify urban neighbourhoods like mine and save Ontario.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I move that the question now be put.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Mr. Coe has moved that the question be now put. I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House. We had over six hours of debate and 16 speakers.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion that the question be now put, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjection: On division.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I declare the motion carried, on division.

We now move to third reading. Mr. Gill has moved third reading of Bill 46, An Act to enact one Act and amend various other Acts.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

Hon. Steve Clark: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The Minister of Municipal Affairs has a point of order.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Do we have unanimous consent to see the clock at 6? Agreed? Agreed.

VISITORS

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the member for Newmarket–Aurora on a point of order.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I would like to introduce six of my constituents who came down from Newmarket–Aurora today to hear second reading of my private member's bill. I would like to welcome Donna Evans, Bob Evans, Carole Mirkopoulos, Lori-Ann Seward, Jean Bouchard, and Daniel Niesing.

Welcome to the chamber.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
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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 (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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 / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	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	
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	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
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	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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	