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N° 79B

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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 17 May 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 17 mai 2023

*Report continued from volume A.*

1730

BUILDING A STRONG ONTARIO ACT  
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2023  
LOI DE 2023 VISANT À BÂTIR  
UN ONTARIO FORT  
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Continuation of debate on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 85, An Act to implement Budget measures and to amend various statutes / Projet de loi 85, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à modifier diverses lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to talk a little bit about what is not in the budget but that the government knows full well needed to be in the budget. I will start in the north of my riding, in Foleyet.

Foleyet gets its ambulance services from the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board. The budget of every district services board has gone up by zero for years and years past, for the five years that your government has been in power, and there is no money in this budget for the district services boards. Now there's a possibility—and we came really close to losing the ambulance in Foleyet. Foleyet is an hour-and-a-half drive to the closest hospital in Timmins, or an hour and a half to Chapleau. Think about it: You would be an hour and a half's wait from the ambulance in Timmins to come to pick you up in Foleyet to bring you back. Who would put up with something like this? No one. But there's no money in the budget, and the people of Foleyet are worried.

There's a housing crisis in Gogama. The Premier was there. We opened up a gold mine across the street from Gogama. There are tons of jobs. There are tons of people who want to move to Gogama to work in that mine to provide the minerals that are needed, but yet nobody can buy houses. Why? Because most of them are owned by the MNR. There are seven lots that are on paved roads with electricity, sewer, water—everything. They're owned by the MNR. MNR does not have enough staff to put those lots up for sale. They do not have enough resources to be able to put those houses that they own and that have been completely emptied and not used for the last seven years up for sale. Do we see money in this budget so that MNR would have staff to be able to sell those lots to everybody

who wants to come and work in that mine? No, there is no increase to MNR.

They talk about how important the police is. Police is important throughout the province. It's important in Foleyet, but the detachment got closed. It's important in Gogama, but the detachment got closed. It's important in French River, who is fighting to keep the Noëlville OPP detachment open right now—thank you to everybody that has signed the petition that's trying really hard. But we have a minister here and a budget that is not too kind to the police, because they don't have the money to keep their detachment open and they keep closing them one after the other. That's three just in my riding.

Then we have the cleaning up of old mines. We have an old gold mine beside Long Lake that has been identified as the number one priority in all of the mine sites that have to be cleaned because it leaches arsenic into a beautiful lake in the city of Greater Sudbury. And they have done nothing. The research was done in 2007, the plan's been updated, and we've had acting supervisor after acting supervisor—because they're not allowed to hire new staff because this government wants to save money on staff. What does that mean? That means more and more arsenic is leaching into Long Lake. That means more fish are dying, more birds that eat those dead fish are dying—and the entire ecosystem. Yet, where do I see in the budget that we will finally clean up those mines?

You all know that we have close to two million people in Ontario that do not have a family physician, do not have access to primary care. We have underemployed nurse practitioners in northern Ontario. In Capreol, they have put a budget ask together; they have submitted it to the government three times. There's a physician, Dr. McAlister, who died suddenly, leaving 3,000 more patients. Those patients have all put their names on the nurse practitioner-led clinics to become patients because they lost their family physician. They have a nurse who's willing to take those people on, but the nurse practitioner-led clinic is not able to get one penny more out of this government. Why is none of this in the budget?

What is in the budget, though, is Bill 60 to make absolutely sure that the private corporations will be able to access all of the money they want so that they could have private, for-profit delivery of care.

I encourage all of you to read the Parkland Institute report that just came out from Andrew Longhurst, who looked at Bill 30—Bill 30 is basically the equivalent of Bill 60 but in Alberta. Alberta did it five years before us. What did they find when they did an analysis? They have those private surgical suites owned by corporations in Alberta. What did they find? They found that it “increased

public sector staffing shortages and destabilized public hospitals.” They found that there was “unlawful extra billing and two-tier health care.” They found that there was “higher cost of for-profit surgical delivery”—although the for-profit surgical delivery only provides care to the healthy and the wealthy and, yes, they charge more money to the Alberta government to do the exact same thing. They also found there was a conflict of interest in medical decision-making where surgeries were offered and performed—more profitable procedures even if they were not clinically appropriate. They found patient safety and care quality concerns because, like every other for-profit-held delivery, how do they maximize their profit? By making sure they maintain as low a staffing level as possible and fewer highly skilled personnel per patient as possible.

All of this is in a report from Alberta that has done the exact same thing that this government wants to do, and what are the results of that? It cost the taxpayers of Alberta more money. Their wait-lists are the longest of all of the provinces in Canada for most of the procedures, but there are some investors that are making millions of dollars off the backs of sick people. There is one corporation that made \$108 million. That’s a lot of payments for nurses and quality care that is not being delivered, but this is the path this government has chosen.

When we look at the budget and we look at the needs of people on the ground, there is a complete disconnect. Things as simple as bringing 911 to everywhere in Ontario—why is it that as soon as you go out of the city of Greater Sudbury—between Sudbury and Timmins we use Highway 144, you will go through three sets of 1-800 numbers to gain access to ambulance, to police or to fire services. The services are there; 911 is not. Why? Because this government never negotiated any kind of a—

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Contract deal.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Contract deal—thank you—with Bell. Every other province has done it.

So when we look at this budget that is the biggest budget ever brought forward, and then when you look at what it does for people who have a hard time making ends meet, who have a hard time finding a place to live that they can afford, who have a hard time feeding themselves, and we see exponential increases in people at food banks, you say why is there such a disconnect? Why is it that we have a government that does not look at its number one responsibility, and that is to make sure that everyone in Ontario has a chance to thrive, has a chance to achieve their potential, has a chance to contribute to our community—but none of that is in the budget.

If you are well connected to this government, if you are already a wealthy investor, yes, there is lots of opportunity for you to make more money, but if you are a hard-working woman trying to feed her kids, she cannot find a job that will pay the rent and feed her kids. This is not a budget that will go down in history as changing things for the better; it’s a budget that will go down as making things worse.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I’ve heard the member opposite speak a lot about northern infrastructure in the House over

the years, and I know it’s something she’s very passionate about. Within this budget, there’s \$180 billion allocated for roads, bridges, public transit, highways, schools, long-term-care homes—all the types of things that are often quite lacking in the north. I’ve had an opportunity to travel to the north quite extensively, and we know that there are a lot of infrastructure priorities in the north that need to get done.

So I’m just curious to know whether the member supports that part of the bill and if she will be endorsing that \$180 million.

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**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have the great pleasure of driving down to Toronto every Sunday afternoon and driving back up to my riding every Thursday night. I drive up and down Highway 69. Highway 69 has 70 kilometres of two-lane highway—70 kilometres of two-lane highway where there are moose, there are deer, there are tons of big trucks—and I would say at least once a month, that highway is closed because there is a fatal accident. There is no way around. You are stuck there. You don’t know when you’re getting home.

There is no plan in place for the four-laning of Highway 69. How can you tell me that there are billions of dollars to build all kinds of highways down south? Good for them, but we exist in northern Ontario. This is a dangerous highway that has needed to be four-laned for 20 years, but there’s not one penny in the budget for it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Doly Begum:** I want to thank the member from Nickel Belt. I know she’s been a champion for her community of Nickel Belt and for many across the northern Ontario communities. One of the things that she talked about is the fact that there are communities that do not have access to calling 911. You simply cannot dial 911, and it has caused a lot of atrocities, I would say. I can’t even imagine. Are you telling us that there are three different 1-800 numbers that you would have to call, and this is what communities are relying on in just one single highway that you’re driving through? If you would elaborate a little bit more on that.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So everybody knows—you take a four- or five-year-old child, and we teach them, if there’s an emergency, you dial 911. We all know that when there’s an emergency, you dial 911. The police, the firefighters, the paramedics will come and help you. But in Ontario, this only works within the boundaries of a municipality. In southern Ontario, one municipality ends, the other one starts, so 911 is there everywhere. In the north, it’s not the same. The municipality of Greater Sudbury ends and there is no other municipality until Timmins, which is three-and-a-half-hours’ drive later.

We have beautiful parks, we have provincial parks. Come and see Halfway Lake, come and see Killarney. But people come—I don’t wish harm upon anybody, Speaker, but this is the long weekend; I can just about guarantee that somebody will get in trouble. We had a drowning last year. People will dial 911 because they need help and they get, “This number is not in service. Please try your call again.”

This could be fixed by this government. All they have to do is what every other province in Canada has done: make the agreement with Bell so that they extend 911. But this government is not willing to do that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I always feel like I'm listening to an alternate reality version when I hear the member opposite speaking. It sounds to me like the anti-capitalist Toronto coffee shop that I found out today is closing its business because of a lack of capital. So it's a bit confusing.

The member talked about a number of health care things. I know it's an issue that she's the critic for. One of the things she mentioned was no help for primary care. In the budget, we've provided \$60 million over two years to expand existing teams and create up to 18 new primary care teams in communities with the greatest need. The very thing she's talking about, her nurse practitioner-led clinic that she wants to get funded—perhaps they could put that one forward for this funding. This is a great opportunity for her community. Will she support this?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The member is right that there is \$30 million available for interdisciplinary primary care. That includes community health centres, nurse practitioner-led clinics, Aboriginal health access centres, family health teams and the list goes on. The demand is at about 10 to 20 times that amount. They could have easily put that at \$300 million rather than \$30 million, and they would still sell out. By the way, the application is now online, so anybody who wants to apply—the application is online. It goes until June 16, so don't miss the window to apply for those \$30 million.

But I don't give people false hope. There will be way more demand than there is money for it. Just in my riding in northern Ontario, we could use those \$30 million to expand community health centres, nurse practitioner-led clinics, Aboriginal health access centres. But that \$30 million is for the entire province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm glad to be able to ask a question, and I appreciate the depth and breadth of experience and understanding that the member brings when it comes to health care. The number of folks that she has learned from and met with through the years helps to shape the conversations in this space, and I wish that it helped to shape the policies that the government brought forward.

When we're hearing about communities—Minden is fresh in my mind, because we all have full inboxes, but communities like that that are on the verge of losing their emergency rooms—that are worried about access to health care in their communities, that they can't get a hospital, or emergency rooms may be on the chopping block, what would government funding need to look like to reassure communities like Minden and others that health care is going to be there for them and for their children and their families?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** People have to understand that health care takes place between a care provider and somebody in need. There's a relationship between the two. We

can only have good health care when we have health care workers. Right now, the number one reason for the ER closures, for the recruitment, is Bill 124. We had three years of really, really difficult work for everybody who works in health care. The pandemic was hard on each and every one of us, but it was really hard on health care workers. They feel devalued. They feel disrespected by Bill 124, yet the government continues to bring them to court.

What can you do? Save the lawyers money and let the nurses negotiate a fair collective agreement. They have always been reasonable. They've never asked for extravagant increases. Let them bargain. Show them that you care and show them respect.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** My question to the member is—they talk about different issues within the province, but one big issue we see in anyone's riding is the ability to seek employment, and the fact that we are working really hard on the government side to create high-paying jobs in all different sectors, whether it's lifting the caps for more people to go to med school, expanding the scope of practice for our pharmacists or whether it's investing in our manufacturing sector through our manufacturing tax credit. We're trying to create more jobs in this province, to give people more opportunities.

So why do you feel that you need to suppress people's opportunities in this province and not give them more opportunities for meaningful employment?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** We have right now, as we speak, 38,000 job openings in our hospitals only. We have 152 hospitals in Ontario. Go on the website. Count the openings. We have 36,000 openings, right here, right now, in Ontario. Those are jobs that already exist, for which we cannot recruit anyone. Why can we not recruit anyone? The number one reason is Bill 124, that disrespects the health care workers.

Why do you have to keep making the health human resources crisis we have in health care worse? Stop fighting nurses in court.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'm pleased to join the debate today on the budget bill, Bill 85. My comments are going to centre on the impacts of this budget on the region of Durham, and in particular the town of Whitby that I have the privilege of representing and have for the better part of seven and a half years.

This budget, in my view, is generational and provides a foundation for how we're going to support future generations in our province. I want to start with health care to begin. We're expanding capacity in every corner of the province, getting shovels in the ground for over 50 new major hospital redevelopment projects over the next 10 years, which will build 3,000 new hospital beds, including nearly 100 new beds within the Lakeridge Health network, which is situated in Oshawa but has other campuses in Port Perry, Bowmanville and Ajax-Pickering.

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We're investing over \$182 million this year in the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund and Community Infrastructure Renewal Fund to support critical upgrades and repairs at 131 hospitals and 65 community health care facilities across the province.

Just a few weeks ago, the Minister of Health, the Honourable Sylvia Jones, along with other Durham-based government members, met with the Lakeridge Health leadership team to discuss how our government is connecting more Ontarians to the high-quality care they need in their communities that form the region of Durham. This came after an announcement that was made about new medical positions available, in collaboration with Queen's University, that would be sited at Lakeridge Health. Part of that discussion centred on how Lakeridge Health was proposing to deliver primary care and long-term care, but it also transcended into a discussion about the status of the planning grant for Lakeridge Health, and in particular the siting of the new regional hospital in the town of Whitby.

The status of that planning grant is not unlike any other planning grant that would have originated from other sources in the province of Ontario. There were no planning grants in the Ontario budget, including Lakeridge Health—none. Make a distinction between planning grants and capital grants. There were no planning grants. The planning grant from Lakeridge Health, as you know, is with the Ministry of Health civil service to consider, and that is the process that has been well established for a long time—I think back to when I was a civil servant at Queen's Park in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care at that point.

I want to transition to a very important factor that's in the budget. It's on page 88 of the budget. It talks about supporting end-of-life care. I bring that up because it relates to hospice within the region of Durham—not exclusively the town of Whitby or Clarington, but the region of Durham. I'm going to quote, Speaker, if you would allow me please—and it's not a prop; I'm reading right from the budget:

“The government is working to expand palliative care services in local communities and adding 23 new hospice beds to the 500 beds already available across the province. This will provide people comfort and dignity near their communities”—like Whitby, like Clarington, like Port Perry—“and loved ones when they are at the end of their lives.”

Now, when speaking about hospice—and again, I'm speaking about the region of Durham—the hospice in Whitby has already been a recipient of \$1.8 million. I was part of that announcement. Now, it's true that due to COVID there have had to be some adjustments to construction costs, and as a consequence, new drawings have been submitted by the board, Eva Reti and company, to the Ministry of Health for their review, and that process is under way. That's the same for the Clarington site, and again, that's not unusual; that's a well-established process, and that process of the review of those new drawings is under way by civil servants at the Ministry of Health. But

at the same time, myself and another member of the Durham government members made a \$1-million announcement: two new beds for the Port Perry site, 10 beds in the Port Perry site. So supporting end-of-life care is well established by this government—has been, continues to be, will be, without any doubt. And that's due to advocacy on the part of government members long established in the region of Durham.

I want to turn to mental health. In this budget, we're providing an additional \$425 million over three years to connect more people to mental health and addiction services, including a 5% increase in the base funding of community-based mental health and addiction service providers funded by the Ministry of Health. That includes the Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences located in Whitby. One of the aspects that's ongoing with mental health—because the Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences serves not only the region of Durham but other parts of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area—is discussion about the Emergency Psychiatric Assessment Treatment and Healing unit on-site, EmPATH. Just last week, Ministry of Health staff were on-site to discuss this particular unit, and that's a good sign, because that is complementary to the efforts you're well familiar with, Speaker, as a member of the Durham government members, as well as other members who have advocated for this particular unit for a long time because it has really had and will have a significant effect on the well-being within the broader community—not only the region of Durham, but beyond as well.

There has been some discussion in the chamber today about fighting gun- and gang-related crime and building safer communities. That's something we've been doing, as a government, within the region of Durham for a number of years. The budget is investing \$13.4 million in 2023-24 as part of the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy. This additional funding, particularly in the region of Durham, will continue effective gang prevention and intervention strategies that are known to work, and that's supported by the Durham Regional Police Service, its association and its front-line officers—but added to that, recently: \$188,000 to victim services of the region of Durham, and \$199,000 to Luke's Place for the work that they do with the community hub centred in the city of Oshawa. So, taken together, we're funding gun- and gang-related crime, but we're also lifting up communities through this investment going forward.

We're looking after people of all abilities, as well, as we should. Speaker, you recently toured the Abilities Centre. Well, we have good news in this budget for the hard-working staff at the Abilities Centre and the clients they have served for a number of years and continue to serve: \$3.5 million, taken together.

Speaker, I've got about 26 seconds—

**Interjection:** Yes, 20, 19, 18—

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I know, I know. You're watching the clock.

We're going to continue with this approach that is building an Ontario the people of this province can be



proud of, not only today, but in supporting future generations, like my granddaughters, Annette and Sophia.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** That was perfect timing right there.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** It is now time for private members' public business.

1800

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### ADVOCATE FOR OLDER ADULTS ACT, 2023

#### LOI DE 2023 SUR L'INTERVENANT EN FAVEUR DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES

MPP Vaugeois moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 101, An Act to establish the Advocate for Older Adults / Projet de loi 101, Loi créant le poste d'intervenant en faveur des personnes âgées.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Bill 101 proposes to establish an advocate for older adults who is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly and whose primary function would include advocating for the interests of seniors, their family members and friends of seniors who act as caregivers. For the purposes of this bill, "older adults" will refer to both seniors and disabled adult persons.

The advocate for older adults would be required to advise, in an independent manner, ministers, public officials and persons who fund or deliver seniors' and adult disabled persons' services on systemic challenges faced by seniors and disabled adults. The bill would require the advocate to prepare an annual report on the activities of their office. The reports may include recommendations relevant to preventing and mitigating the systemic challenges faced by older adults.

In order to assist the advocate for older adults, the advocate may establish an advisory council to ensure seniors' voices are well represented. The advocate for older adults also has authority to require the provision of information in specified circumstances, but more importantly, provide that no person would face reprisals for having assisted the advocate. I also suggest that the advocate be given the authority to issue fines to those institutions that do not meet legally required standards of care.

The advocate would also have the means to commission reports and the obligation to provide an annual report on the challenges and successes of service provision, accessibility of services, physical accessibility of spaces, the protection of whistle-blowers and so on. The advocate will also be able to provide recommendations to resolve challenges to service provisions and set deadlines for their resolution.

I will outline some of the gaps and systemic challenges that we already know older adults are facing shortly, but first, I want to address questions that might be raised about the need for an independent advocate for older adults. For example, some people might question why someone would not simply turn to the Patient Ombudsman if unhappy with the care received in a hospital, or why one couldn't go to the Ontario Ombudsman when an offence has taken place in an older adult congregate care setting. But, simply stated, the scope of these roles is limited and only takes up individual complaints. These offices cannot address issues that are system-wide, and these are issues that do need to be addressed.

Some might also say, "Well, we have ministerial portfolios for long-term care, seniors, people with disabilities and accessibility. We have a Ministry of Community and Social Services and a Ministry of Housing, so why do we need another position?" But just reading this long list of ministries that have an impact on the lives of seniors, including seniors with a range of disabilities, already answers that question. Many cooks in siloed kitchens cannot prepare a cohesive meal. There is no single body, no single person that has the responsibility or authority to consider the needs of older adults at a system-wide level, and thus, the accountability to seniors themselves is diluted and lacking.

Further, the role of the advocate must be non-partisan. Getting an overview, identifying the gaps in services, the flaws in current systems and perhaps identifying solutions that no one has thought of yet is something that can and should be done by an impartial advocate, independent of partisan politics. Like Auditor General reports, there may be times when reports are critical of government or ministry failings, but whatever bumps and bruises we take along the way, our role as MPPs is to take the best information available and use it to ensure the rights of older adults are protected.

Seniors, or older adults, to use the language requested by advocates, is the fastest-growing demographic in Ontario. This is certainly the case in my own riding of Thunder Bay–Superior North, and there is an array of challenges that are not yet being addressed comprehensively. For example, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act does not mention housing at all. In fact, there's no law in Ontario requiring that any housing be accessible. Even seniors' housing is not required to be accessible. Meanwhile, the Ontario building code only requires that 15% of new apartments be "visitabile"—this is not the same as being accessible enough to live there.

On the one hand, the services available to provide supports for older people to live at home are few and far between and truly only available at the levels needed to those with the financial resources to pay extra for private services. On the other hand, if older adults no longer want to deal with maintaining a house and want access, not so much to full-time care but to PSW supports as needed, where can they go?

In my region of Thunder Bay–Superior North, the wait-lists for the affordable, municipally owned residences and the wonderful, community-owned Suomi Koti residence,

are five to seven years. There's never any difficulty getting into the for-profit residences, though, but of course those are only accessible to those who can afford them—many of which, by the way, have a habit of taking away the autonomy of residents by deciding for them who they will sit with during meals. This is in direct violation of the Residents' Bill of Rights. But we know all too well that challenging management on how any home is run risks reprisals and shaming, leading those residents to acquiesce to their loss of autonomy, despite paying their entire savings to live in these commercial homes.

It is indeed a question of equity that all people have access to safe, fully accessible, affordable housing, but that is far from the case right now. In fact, older adults, people with disabilities and others with limited means are currently being renocted from their homes with nowhere to go.

This is something that the current government could remedy immediately by reinstating rent control in newer buildings and closing those loopholes that let commercial landlords kick tenants out under the auspices of required renovations, only to turn around and dramatically increase rents. This is certainly something that an advocate for older adults could flag and strongly recommend that the government curtail.

There is also the problem with older condominiums with entryways that are not accessible, but there is currently no funding available for condominium residents to apply as a group for assistance in making an older building fully accessible, thus making it difficult for these particular older adults to continue living in their homes.

We know there is an enormous need for more accountability in long-term-care provision, as well as exercising more punitive measures, like denying renewal of licences, when there have been serious infractions around the quality of care and standards in these facilities. Orchard Villa is an example of a company that should never have had their licence renewed. It is troubling when companies responsible for so many deaths during COVID are having their licences renewed and extended for 30 years, with little oversight. Profit over care is not acceptable.

An independent advocate would offer a non-partisan view of whether or not current vetting and inspection practices are effective. The advocate would serve as a resource for collecting complaints being made, prompting systemic, structural issues to be expediently addressed and invoking serious consequences for those facilities that are non-compliant with acts intent on protecting older adults.

We know that there are continued violations of care standards, with little consequence, leaving individual family members or a staff member to make complaints, and people are fearful of reprisals, and with good reason.

Far too many caregivers are being illegally “trespassed” by managers of congregate living homes—usually because they have raised issues about the care of their loved ones. The current Residents' Bill of Rights, while posted in congregate settings, does not in any way address a problem that is leading to the extreme isolation of people receiving care and causing devastating impacts to their

wellness and quality of life. An advocate could direct police services to provide mandatory training to their members to correctly apply the use of the trespass act.

And did you know that defibrillators are not required to be in long-term-care homes? How many people know this? Family members are encouraged to sign “do not resuscitate” forms because they are told frail family members will not survive the force required to do CPR. Then why not require defibrillators? Here, again, a decision has been made at some level that leaves residents and families with poor choices and very poor outcomes. An advocate could make ministries aware of the absence of defibrillators and advise ministries to make it law to have a working defibrillator in every long-term-care home.

#### 1810

Then there is the epidemic of elder abuse, with reported incidents rising by 250% during the pandemic. Children are removed from situations of abuse and placed in care. This is not always ideal, but it removes children from immediate danger. There is no such recourse for older adults experiencing abuse, and many are forced to suffer in silence in circumstances they cannot escape. An advocate for older adults could look at the work of Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario, for example, to understand the trends unfolding and then look for solutions that could then be recommended to ministries—a whole-of-government approach to address the societal intolerance of vulnerable older persons.

Lack of in-person supports for government services, including tribunals, is also problematic. Everything is online these days, and speaking from personal experience, it is next to impossible to get a human on the phone. At best, you might get an automated chat. So while digital services work for some and are touted as a cost-effective means for delivery of services, they do not work for everyone. Once again, when we apply the accessibility lens and the need for accommodations, how can any ministry recognize the limits of services without an independent assessment like that of the advocate's office of the Legislature, really, to understand how different systems function to include some people but they also function to exclude others?

I am advocating for an advocate for older adults because we need that impartial person; somebody whose responsibility is entirely devoted to gathering information, to hearing the problems and to making those recommendations and making sure that those recommendations are acted upon by the various ministries—things that individual ministries have difficulty actually doing because they cannot see that information in a holistic, systemic manner.

I'm looking forward to listening to people's responses to this debate. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** I'm privileged to rise today on behalf of the people and families of Richmond Hill and Ontario to speak on the proposed bill, Bill 101, introduced by the member opposite. Madam Speaker, this is a government

that supports and believes in the power of our seniors. Our government believes that it is fundamentally important for seniors to have a seat at the cabinet table in Ontario. That's why I'm so happy that Minister Cho is there.

The greatest advocate for seniors in the province of Ontario is the Premier. Thanks to the leadership of this Premier, we have the first-ever ministry dedicated to seniors. This started from scratch with no funding, and now we have programs and services helping seniors all over this province. Project by project, community by community, seniors are getting the support they need.

Madam Speaker, I have heard from seniors in my riding of Richmond Hill and across Ontario. They all say the same thing: We must stop social isolation. Social isolation is public enemy number one. The government understands that. Fighting social isolation is at the forefront of how we can help seniors. I don't see or hear anything in this bill talking about social isolation, which shows that the members opposite do not know how to advocate for seniors in this province.

It is under this government that we have added, grown and strengthened care for seniors. This was to help ensure that the needs of seniors had representation at the highest levels of decision-making in our government. Our government is committed to providing seniors with the services and supports they need to stay healthy, active and socially engaged in our communities. These services and supports have gone a long way.

The Minister for Seniors and Accessibility has travelled throughout the province, seeing first-hand how these programs and services are being used. The joy in the minister's voice when he comes back and shares with the team is magnificent. This is because the minister knows from experience how important it is to have seniors connected to programs, services and activities right in their communities. Madam Speaker, these programs and services are making a huge difference for seniors.

I will say it again: There is no better advocate for seniors in this province than the Premier of Ontario. The Premier and Minister for Seniors and Accessibility are showing leadership every day. Whether it is at the cabinet table, at Queen's Park or in the constituency, they are fighting for seniors.

Madam Speaker, we are supporting seniors all across this province, including over \$2.5 million for funding in services since 2018 for the beautiful riding of Thunder Bay–Superior North. This funding has helped support local communities, townships and the city of Thunder Bay.

To make things clear, the member opposite wants to advocate for seniors but continues to fail to advocate for the seniors of Thunder Bay. Madam Speaker, the member opposite voted against funding for her riding: \$60,000 in inclusive community grants; over \$2 million for seniors active living centres; and over \$190,000 in seniors community grants.

Year after year, the members opposite vote against additional supports, services and programs for our seniors. Since 2018, the member opposite has voted against annual funding for: the Herb Carroll centre; the North McIntyre

recreation centre; the Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre; the Geraldton site; the Longlac site; the Nakina Sunrise Club; Terrance Bay Superior Seniors Centre; and lastly, the township of Schreiber.

No matter where in Ontario you are, there is no better advocate for seniors than the Premier.

We know that social isolation for our seniors has been a particular problem. This is one of the reasons I was proud to stand with the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility as his parliamentary assistant while our government announced the Seniors Community Grant Program. This multi-million dollar program provides grants to community organizations across our province, with the goal of helping to keep our seniors connected and engaged with our local communities.

When the pandemic struck, thanks to the leadership of the Premier, our government moved quickly to support the seniors active living centres across the province as they moved to offer virtual programming. By helping our SALCs to transition to the Seniors' Centre Without Walls program, we were able to provide additional supports for seniors across the province. We know that mental well-being is directly tied to physical well-being. By helping to keep our seniors connected, including those in Richmond Hill, we can help them remain healthy while they had to self-isolate at home.

Madam Speaker, knowing how important it is to support our local community organizations, I was excited to stand by Minister Cho as he announced further grants to enable other seniors to stay healthy, active and socially connected within their communities. These grants will help increase the number of options available for our seniors to stay connected, often in the language of their choosing. We are part of a government that believes the health and well-being of our seniors is a top priority. Thanks to the leadership of the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, we continue to offer innovative supports to meet their unique needs.

#### 1820

Our seniors are a treasure. The insights and wisdom they offer is incalculable in its value. Our government will continue to support them. And I'm thankful to be able to continue to serve the needs of all of our seniors, including those in my riding of Richmond Hill.

Madam Speaker, every day the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility is advocating for seniors across the province. He is showing extreme leadership, ensuring our seniors are able to stay fit, healthy and socially connected. He advocates every day to help end social isolation for seniors. Social isolation is public enemy number one. That is why, thanks to the leadership of the minister, we have so many programs and services to help seniors stay fit, active, healthy, socially connected in their communities and close to their homes.

Seniors are better protected when they are connected to programs and services. Seniors are better looked after when they have people to turn to and places to go. And when we are being social and together, our seniors have a better quality of life.

Madam Speaker, as a senior myself, I'm happiest when I am around people. People are my energy, and I know they are yours.

That is why our government invests in so many ways that give our seniors a better quality of life—seniors active living centres, seniors fairs, seniors community grants. These are some of the ways that we are investing in our seniors so that they can be together, staying fit, active, healthy and socially connected close to home, to end social isolation. But, sadly, this is not always the case.

That is why our government has invested in the Seniors Safety Line. This is available in over 240 languages, and it helps so many seniors, as you know. The Seniors Safety Line provides callers with counselling, safety, programs and services that support our seniors.

We are also providing the education and the training across Ontario around troubling issues facing our seniors.

We must continue to work together, and we're doing our best. We must continue to fight the good fight for our seniors.

Madam Speaker, that is why, every day, myself and the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility will continue to fight for seniors across the beautiful province of Ontario. We are here, and we have a great seniors program to help our beloved seniors.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I want to congratulate the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North on bringing this private member's bill forward. It is very important. Seniors need all the advocacy that they can get. The more people are on their side, the better things can get done—and quicker.

The number of seniors aged 65 and over is projected to increase significantly, from 2.7 million, or 18.1% of the population, in 2021 to 4.4 million, or 21.8%, by 2046. Rapid growth in the share and number of seniors will continue over the 2021-31 period, as the last cohort of baby boomers turns age 65. So we know that seniors are going to be exponentially populating this province, and we have to make sure that they're looked after—and what better way than having a seniors advocate? The reason a seniors advocate is a really good idea is because it's independent and non-partisan, as has been said.

I actually looked up the definition of "advocate"—we all know what we think it is, but an advocate is a person who publicly supports and recommends a particular cause or policy. That's what an advocate is.

Speaker, people have been calling for seniors' advocates, as seniors' advocates are different types of positions than the minister. In Canada over the last decade, four provinces—British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and until September 2019, Alberta—have established seniors' advocates. These officials are typically appointed by the Lieutenant Governor or a minister, depending on the jurisdiction, and some seniors' advocates are required by law to report to the assembly or the health minister on advocates' mandates once a year. Others don't have mandatory reporting but other requirements and may choose to do it anyway.

Although only a few provinces have seniors' advocates, there have been calls for the implementation of similar offices across the country, including in Saskatchewan and Ontario during 2020.

There are so many reasons why we need a seniors' advocate. I met with CIJA today and they had said that, in Bill 7, the long-term-care bill where people are moving out of hospitals into long-term care, what's been missed by this government is culturally appropriate long-term-care homes. People are being moved all throughout the province no matter where the home is, and there are many beds that are meant for culturally appropriate ethnicities that are being taken by people who don't necessarily need those. Therefore, CIJA was explaining that that is something that wasn't the intent of the government, but you can see that that's a result, that's what happened.

That's what a seniors' advocate could do for this government: It could be the voice of families and residents to show the government. It's an independent officer explaining that it's not a partisan issue but that this is the result of an unintended consequence of Bill 7. I found that very informative. That's why I was so proud today—and my time is running out so quickly—that this private member's bill was being debated today.

The other thing I want to talk about is the trends. What happens with a seniors' advocate, I would hope, is that they're able to stay on top of seniors' issues and follow the trends that are happening with seniors, like Internet scams and phone scams. Those things need to be dealt with. And is the government doing that? We don't know, but an advocate would be hearing from people and they would be able to give policies and look at future issues. Not just what's in front of them, but what the trend is, and developing those policies ahead.

So, Speaker, my time has run out. I wanted to say so much more. But I just want to congratulate the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North for bringing this very important bill today to help seniors.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you very much to the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North, the fantastic MPP Vaugeois. This is a very important bill that will create a new independent officer of the Ontario Legislature, called the advocate for older adults, who will be responsible for safeguarding the interests of seniors, their caregivers and their families. The seniors' advocate will identify the many, many challenges that seniors face and make recommendations to government to ensure their well-being.

As New Democrats, we have stood time and time again in defence of our seniors. We first introduced, in 2016, the Time to Care Act. We reintroduced it at least seven times. This was an act that would legislate four hours of hands-on care in long-term care. This government voted it down many, many times. It was humane care that I think that seniors deserve.

We have the member from Windsor West who introduced the More Than a Visitor Act that enshrined family caregiver rights to make sure that family caregivers were

partners; that they were treated like loved ones, not just visitors.

And, finally, we had the fantastic MPP Catherine Fife and her bill, *Till Death Do Us Part*. This is a bill that would ensure that couples have the right to live together as they age in long-term care, because, sadly, we know that when spouses are separated in the last years of their lives, they often die of a broken heart, and this is unacceptable. But the government turned all of this down.

We learned some heartbreaking lessons during COVID in long-term care, but we also need to understand what happened in retirement homes. At least 700 people died in retirement homes and at least one staff member.

There are 777 retirement homes in this province, almost all of which are for-profit, and they have a population of about 60,000 residents. And the face of retirement care living is changing. They're often sicker and they're often older. But we need to note that this sector is not regulated by any ministry here. It's regulated by an independent, self-appointed board called the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority. And this self-appointed board has failed time and time again to look after the interests of seniors living in these big homes like Chartwell and Rivera.

**1830**

Many seniors don't know their rights when they are living in these homes, and, in fact, most Ontarians don't understand that they do have certain rights but they're hard to understand. Even on the RHRA website, they say if seniors have concerns, they have a list of about 30 different agencies where seniors have to turn to: Landlord and Tenant Board, the rental housing enforcement unit, the fire marshal, Legal Aid Ontario, Ontario Human Rights Commission. It's a huge, long list, and it's confusing. This is not acceptable. It's no longer acceptable for the government to delegate the responsibility or hide behind a regulator like the RHRA, and it's no longer acceptable for this government to play jurisdictional Ping-Pong between ministries that oversee seniors.

We need an advocate for elders so that we can coordinate the disjointed, confusing, uncoordinated patchwork of services for seniors. So for families who are looking out for older adults right now, this will make sure that you have somewhere to turn when you see problems that need to be addressed. And to seniors who want to live in your home longer and who are concerned with your care in long-term care, this bill will give you an independent voice. Seniors, you deserve to be protected more than anyone in this province. You deserve a voice and you deserve an advocate, so it is my hope that this government will support this important bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I want to thank the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North for bringing this forward. I want to register for the record, Speaker, my disappointment that government members over there who I actually like have said in this place that this member here doesn't care about seniors. Let me tell you about a member of this House that doesn't care about seniors, Speaker. He sits

right up there in the front row. Under this Premier's watch, thousands of seniors died in long-term care—thousands.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Point of order, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Point of order?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Rule 25 states quite specifically that, number one, a member shall not impute a false or unavowed motive to another member, and it also states that a member shall not use abusive language likely to create disorder. In my submission, the member has done both of those things.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Consulting with the table, we do not find support for that.

Continue.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Yes, I don't think you're going to find a lot of support for many things that member over there says, Speaker.

Thousands of people died in long-term care under this Premier's watch. All we need to know about this Premier and accountability is what the good people of Ottawa knew after we went through the convoy experience last February, where this Premier was asked for some accountability and refused to show up and hid behind parliamentary privilege. It's what this government is doing today, if they vote against the seniors' advocate proposed by my friend.

Seniors know very well who stands up for them and who is by their side. This House voted in March 2021 for Voula's Law, a law that said people deserve to see their caregivers. We voted unanimously. But what has this government done to give Voula's Law teeth? Absolutely nothing.

So what did I do when I was playing the role the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North plays right now, when I was seniors and disabilities critic? I got a phone call from Diane Tamblyn in Peterborough, and she said, "Joel, I'm being blocked from going into a home where my father is being abused. I have tried lawyers; I have tried the media; I have tried contacting my Conservative MPP. I am getting nowhere."

I got in the car. I drove down the 401. I went in to that home with the great Maria Sardelis, who is the genius behind Voula's Law that this government voted for, and we went into the family council. And that family's complaints were heard, because that's what the NDP does. We are a party that stands up for people, not the big corporations wreaking havoc, making our elders suffer, paying the staff who care for them peanuts. So do not get up in this place, Conservative members of this House, and tell this member that she is doing anything other than the record of the NDP throughout its history, and that is honouring our seniors who built this country and respecting them. That is what the NDP does.

You want to talk about social isolation? How did it feel to die not of COVID-19 but of dehydration at Orchard Villa? You want to talk about social isolation? What does it mean to be abused by a family member for financial resources, verbally, physically? Some 60,000 incidents in this province last year, according to Elder Abuse Ontario.

Seniors deserve their own advocate. They deserve a special lane of access to immediate justice for any concerns they have. This government has given them none of that. We are proposing they do.

Seniors, if you're watching this debate right now and you're wondering who to vote for in the next election, remember how Conservatives voted when your rights and your dignity were at risk. The New Democratic Party will never forget the country you built for us. We are going to stand by you—as much as they chirp and as much as they posture.

Seniors first.

Thank you, member for Thunder Bay–Superior North. Thank you, Diane Tamblyn. Thank you, Maria Sardelis.

Vote for this. If they don't vote for this, don't vote for them.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** It's an honour to rise today to speak to Bill 101. I want to thank the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North and the member from Kitchener Centre for bringing this bill forward.

Before I talk about the bill, I just want to take a moment because this may be my last opportunity to speak about the member from Kitchener Centre, who will be retiring from the Legislature soon. I want to just say that we may be from different parties, but we've always had a very strong and productive working relationship. The member from Kitchener Centre's voice will be deeply missed here in the Legislature.

I had the honour of co-sponsoring the first bill in Ontario history co-sponsored by all four political parties in this House with the member from Kitchener Centre, as well as the member from Barrie–Innisfil and the former member from Scarborough–Guildwood. My experience of the member from Kitchener Centre was that her goal was to always put her constituents and people first, and it's why we were able to work so collaboratively together.

One of the reasons I wanted to speak to the bill is not only to speak to the need for our elders to have an advocate, but also because the member asked me to. Because we are facing a profound demographic shift in our province and in our country. We are going to have more seniors than we've ever had before in the history of our province. It is going to create massive needs, to address the housing crisis for seniors, the need to be able to downsize. It's going to create massive needs around community design and ensuring our communities are accessible for elders. It's going to create a need for changes to legislation to allow things like co-housing for seniors. It's going to require massive investments in home and community care so seniors can age in place where they want.

And, yes, I want to say to the member from Richmond Hill, loneliness is going to be an issue that we will need to address. As a matter of fact, in the UK they have a ministry of loneliness now because this has become such a crisis for elders. More and more Ontarians are going to require complex care in long-term-care homes that are adequately funded and provide adequate levels of care.

I can tell you from our experience during the pandemic, it is clear that we as a society—and I'm going to try to tone down the partisanship because I think we all bear responsibility for this. We as a society have failed to make the adequate investments in ensuring that our elders are cared for. That must stop and it must end. It's one of the reasons seniors deserve an advocate to advocate for them.

I can't tell you—and I'm sure many members experience this—some of the most heartbreaking conversations I have in my constituency office are with families struggling to figure out how to find care for their mom and dad or their grandparents. They can't find a long-term-care bed because there aren't enough available. They can't find adequate access to home and community care because there aren't enough hours.

When I talk to them about what they can do, most of the time the answer is, I will help you advocate. But, you know what, that's exactly why we need an independent, non-partisan advocate for seniors that reports directly to this Legislature.

**1840**

I oftentimes meet with families who talk about the mistreatment that their loved ones received, particularly in a long-term-care home. They ask me what they can do about it. I oftentimes say, "You can go to the ombuds-person, and they will likely do a report, but they're not going to advocate for you." That's why we need an advocate for seniors.

I believe, given what our elders have gone through, especially during the pandemic, the least we can do for them is to ensure that we have an independent, non-partisan person in this Legislature who will represent seniors, will advocate for seniors and will work with all members of this Legislature to ensure that our elders get the care and the dignity they deserve.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate? Further debate?

Seeing none, we will go back to the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North. You have two minutes for a rebuttal.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I like active living centres, but it doesn't help people who are isolated because of the illegal use of trespass laws or because they're subject to abuse or because they don't have an affordable place that they can live so they can't afford to get out and go places. There are many other issues that need to be addressed.

I want to thank Laura Mae Lindo, MPP for Kitchener Centre, for originally presenting this bill in the last Parliament. I would like to thank the member from Guelph, the member from Richmond Hill and my colleagues from London–Fanshawe, Ottawa Centre and Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas for speaking to this bill.

I also want to thank the many advocates who have written in support of this bill: Marta Hajek and Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario, CEO Cathy Barrick on behalf of the Alzheimer Society, Care Watch Ontario, Martha Foster on behalf of Retired Teachers of Ontario, Kate Chung of the Accessible Housing Network and the many

people who participated in our town hall on Bill 101 on Monday.

To close, I want to use the words of Marta Hajek of Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario:

“As we emerge from the pandemic, there are opportunities to course-correct our approaches, to look at the knowledge and expertise already out there and draw on those best practices to advance what should be a goal for all of government—restoring respect for older persons and ensuring that their human rights to live free from abuse and their quality of life to age safely be protected. The seniors’ advocate role in Ontario has the potential to be that instrument, to not only get some key critical messages to the forefront of the public’s awareness but be instrumental in addressing issues facing” older adults today.

Thank you for the opportunity to debate this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The time provided for private members’ public business has expired.

MPP Vaugeois has moved second reading of Bill 101, An Act to establish the Advocate for Older Adults. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

Those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### LAND USE PLANNING

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member for Guelph has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer given by the Premier to a question. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

The member from Guelph.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** There is no doubt that in Ontario we are facing a housing affordability crisis. That’s exactly why almost two years ago, I put forward a plan that many housing experts call a master-class plan in delivering the solutions to address the housing affordability crisis. It’s clear from that plan that we put forward, from the government’s own hand-picked Housing Affordability Task Force, from professional planners, that Ontario can address the housing affordability crisis without opening the greenbelt for development. As a matter of fact, already, right now, there is enough land approved for development in the province of Ontario to build two million homes, 500,000 more homes than the goal that we all agree on of 1.5 million homes.

Speaker, I would argue that attacking the greenbelt only distracts from the real solutions that we’re facing.

I want to be clear, after some of the statements the Premier has made over the last week: The greenbelt is not full of fields of weeds. The greenbelt is not a scam; it wasn’t drawn with crayons. As a matter of fact, the greenbelt is 721,000 acres of protected wetlands, grasslands and forest that provide \$3.2 billion of ecosystem services each and every year in this province and store 71 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> each and every year. It’s 750,000 acres of some of the best farmland in all of Canada that is vital to the \$50-billion food and farming sector in this province that employs over 875,000 people. It’s much-needed green space where our families go to enjoy time together and access the mental health and physical well-being that comes from being in nature. It was designed with expert input.

I asked Victor Doyle to come to Queen’s Park earlier today. He was one of the chief architects of the greenbelt. It took a year and a half of consultation with stakeholders, farmers, planners, community leaders, municipal leaders, academic experts, land use planning experts to design the greenbelt in a way to ensure that we protected the most sensitive ecosystems in southern Ontario. And why is that important? Because the greenbelt cleans our air and water. It absorbs the excess rainfall and protects us from flooding. It provides a home for 78 species at risk. It provides jobs and economic opportunity. As a matter of fact, each and every year, \$9.6 billion of direct economic benefits come from the greenbelt.

All of that is at risk because of a scheme to pave over the greenbelt—a land grab that is not needed to address the housing affordability crisis.

As a matter of fact, if you talk to professional planners, they will tell you that there is no reason for even one acre of the greenbelt to be removed from the greenbelt, because we have enough land to build two million homes right now.

That’s why, earlier today, I put forward three bills to protect the greenbelt, saying no more land swaps, no new 400-series highways, and no new pits and quarries, because we absolutely have to protect the farmland that feeds us and contributes \$50 billion to our economy, and the wetlands that clean our drinking water and protect us from flooding.

Speaker, I do agree that we need to build more homes in this province, especially right here in southern Ontario. That’s exactly why I’ve put forward Bill 44 and Bill 45, which remove the red tape and the zoning rules that make it so hard to build homes within existing urban boundaries. Even those simple changes mean that we can build homes people can actually afford in the communities they want to live in, close to where they live, work and play. That is the most fiscally responsible approach to addressing the housing crisis. We know that it costs 2.5 times more to service a home through sprawl than one within existing urban boundaries. We know from a study in Ottawa that it’s \$1,000 extra per year per property taxpayer to service sprawl versus within an existing urban boundary.

So let's take the fiscally responsible approach, the economically responsible approach and the environmentally responsible approach and build homes in our existing communities, not in the greenbelt.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from Whitby and the parliamentary assistant.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** What's clear is that we're in an unprecedented housing supply crisis. And the reason we're here is because of a decade and a half of failure from the past government which failed to get shovels in the ground and build homes. And this problem is not going away. New federal immigration targets aim to bring 500,000 newcomers to Canada each year by 2025. Most of those new Canadians will come to Ontario, and they need homes. Our plan will get 1.5 million homes built over the next 10 years.

**1850**

But let's look at the facts. Since the start of the year, there have been 27,427 housing starts in the province. That's up 16% from last year. Purpose-built rental starts across the province are up 143%—more than double from last year. Housing starts in Toronto are up 178% from last year. Housing starts in Brampton are up 65% from last year. Multi-unit construction in Ontario increased by 7.6% in February—the largest increase in the country. We saw a 25% increase in condo permits, also the largest increase in the country. Speaker, there are more active cranes in the city of Toronto right now than there are in New York, Chicago, LA, Washington, DC, Seattle and San Francisco combined. This is evidence that our plan is working, and it is. But, sadly, the same people across the aisle who have been complaining about our housing supply crisis are now complaining about the solution.

We refuse to accept the status quo when it comes to getting more homes built. We can't keep doing the same things and expect different results. Too much bureaucracy and red tape stops homes from getting built in this province, and I refuse to let NIMBYs and those who would rather say no get in the way of the needs of the hard-working families here in Ontario. Our changes to the greenbelt boundaries will help to build more than 50,000 new homes on privately owned property, right next to existing developments on or near serviceable land.

Let's not forget, Speaker, it was the Liberals who changed the greenbelt boundaries 17 times while they were in government. And their changes were not to help solve an urgent housing supply crisis. Their changes were to build a golf course and big box stores.

Now, Speaker, not only are we making changes to get the homes we desperately need built, but while we do it, we're adding an additional 9,400 acres to the greenbelt—let me repeat that—an additional 9,400 acres to the greenbelt. Speaker, our government ran on a promise to get more homes built, and we're going to get it done.

#### NORTHERN EMERGENCY SERVICES

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from Nickel Belt has given notice of dissatisfaction

with the answer to a question given by the Solicitor General. The member has up to five minutes to debate, and the parliamentary assistant has five minutes to respond.

The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** This weekend is the long weekend. A lot of people will come up north and enjoy the beautiful provincial parks that we have. Whether we talk about Grundy Lake or Halfway Lake or Killarney, I encourage everybody to come and take advantage of the beauty of northern Ontario. But at the same time, I want the government to act. I don't wish harm upon anybody, but pretty much every long weekend, somebody comes to northern Ontario and tragedy strikes. Last year, it was a drowning; sometimes a car accident; sometimes hitting a moose. As I said, I don't wish harm, but accidents do happen.

When they happen, we all know what to do. Whether you're a four-year-old kid or anybody else, what do you do when an accident happens? You dial 911. We all know this. You dial 911, and then either the police or the fire department or the paramedics will come to your rescue. This is how the system works. The system is set up in Ontario with the municipalities, so every municipality has a contract with Bell to make sure that 911 is active, whether on land lines or on cellphones, within their boundaries. In southern Ontario, one municipality's boundary ends and the other one starts, so we have 911 everywhere. But as you start to go up north, those boundaries can be quite far apart.

I can talk about my riding. My riding includes some of the outskirts of the city of Greater Sudbury. In the city of Greater Sudbury, as long as you are within the boundaries, when you dial 911, the fire department, paramedics, police are there; the minute you cross the boundaries, it is no more. The next boundary is Timmins, which is about a three-and-a-half-hour drive north of us—the same thing going south, the same thing going east and west. So there are big stretches of our province where 911 is not available.

The government has done some great work trying to bring the second generation of 911 to Ontario so that all sorts of things that were not available will be available, such as simultaneous dispatch; such as, if you call and you can't speak, they'll be able to trace back your call and see geographically where you are and send help. Second-generation 911 is a beautiful thing, but it still won't help the fact that we have huge areas of northern Ontario where there is no 911.

Don't get me wrong, Speaker; the police, the fire department, the paramedics are there. But you cannot dial 911 if you are in Cartier, which is just north of Sudbury. If you dial 911, you get, "This number is not in service. Please try your call again." So you try again, and you get the exact same thing a second time: "This number is not in service. Please try your call again." Then you dial zero, because you're in need of help, and you say, "Hey, I'm dialling 911, and it doesn't work. We've had a car accident. We've hit a moose," and the operator tells you to dial 911, because even they don't know that we don't have 911 in the north.



To give you an idea, if you're just north of the city of Greater Sudbury, you dial 705-673-1117 if you need an ambulance; you dial 705-673-1542 if you need the fire department. If you go just a little bit north of this, maybe two hours north of Sudbury, then you dial 1-888-310-1122 for police; you dial 1-877-351-2345 for ambulance, and you dial 1-888-571-3473 for fires. If you go a little bit further than this, then the phone numbers become 1-800-247-6603 for Foleyet—I'll spare you the details. Nobody can remember all of that.

We are the only province that does not have a deal with Bell so that 911 is available everywhere. Alberta was the last province to reach a deal so—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you. Response?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt for explaining 911, or lack of 911, in the north. I guess only if you live there and experience it, you can really understand it. I'm used to living in southwestern Ontario and having access to 911 pretty well all the time.

Madam Speaker, public safety is paramount to this government. For most Ontarians, calling 911 is a lifeline that ensures access to first responders in an emergency and keeps our communities safe.

That is exactly why, after years of neglect from the former government, this government and this ministry are taking action, helping cities and towns to modernize their 911 services. The 911 services are locally administered and funded and they are tailored to serve local needs and delivered by the OPP or local municipal services. Even though funding and hiring 911 operators is within the municipal scope of responsibility, we are not going to let jurisdictional challenges stop us from keeping people safe. Our government is making tremendous improvements to 911 services across Ontario.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to stress that our 911 operators are among the most professional and hard-working first responders and they deserve our gratitude for doing a difficult job. As the Solicitor General has already indicated earlier today, Ontario is providing over \$208 million over three years to support the transition to a new emergency

service communications system known as next-generation 911. It's a major leap forward in 911 services. Next-generation 911 will enable the public to send and receive text messages and other data to the 911 call centres across the province.

The government is also engaging with sector partners to explore their options to improve 911 services in their area. We are now finalizing the first round of grant payments to municipalities to support their transition to the next-generation 911. This \$208 million will support the transition of these 911 communications systems through technology and infrastructure updates. It will allow us to address emergency services in those underserved communities in Ontario, such as the member from Nickel Belt explained. We are now assessing individual grant recipients of that \$208 million and their local requirements.

Some police services in Ontario have already begun to bring next-generation 911 to life. For example, I understand that Barrie and the Owen Sound area are both experiencing this as this time.

Madam Speaker, the Next Generation 9-1-1 Program is a testament to the care and consideration of this government and this minister when it comes to the safety of the public in this province.

We can't forget also the 911 call centre operators and the incredible work they do every single day to help keep Ontario safe. We owe these tireless heroes so much.

Ontario also supports the telecommunications sector through program funding for infrastructure to enable access to high-speed Internet service in underserved and unserved areas. Our government continues to explore opportunities, support initiatives that improve cellular services and close those cellular gaps in Ontario.

Next-generation 911 is a game-changer in Ontario, and we are excited by its capabilities.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** There being no further matters to debate, pursuant to standing order 36(c), I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1903.*







**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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

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

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

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

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Temporary Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes par intérim: Mike Civil

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
<b>Barnes, Patrice (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	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
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
<b>Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Collard, Lucille (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	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
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)</b>	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	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
<b>Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)</b>	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	
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	
Jama, Sarah (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)</b>	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
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
<b>Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaled (PC)</b>	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
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	
<b>Skelly, Donna (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associée du Logement
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	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	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Kanata—Carleton	
Vacant	Scarborough—Guildwood	