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Mardi  
30 mai 2023

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 30 May 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 30 mai 2023

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LESS RED TAPE, STRONGER ECONOMY  
ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À RÉDUIRE  
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES  
POUR UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 29, 2023, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to enact two Acts, amend various Acts and revoke various regulations / Projet de loi 91, Loi visant à édicter deux lois, à modifier diverses lois et à abroger divers règlements.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's an honour for me to rise today as the MPP for London North Centre and add the voices of the great people of my riding.

When we take a look at Bill 91, which we have up here for third reading, we see a number of different changes that this government is making. But what is concerning is that this government, in its ideological war against red tape, has done a lot of tinkering around the edges without addressing the actual needs of Ontarians right now. In fact, in many cases, they are ignoring as well as creating their own red tape—or blue tape, as it were.

This omnibus bill opens up so many laws across Ontario, and it does next to nothing to address the challenges that we face in terms of housing. It does nothing to stop the sprawl that we see, the carving up and the auctioning off of the greenbelt that this government is so fond of doing. We see the people are still going to continue to struggle with the ever-increasing cost of living. We see that people who are on social assistance are deliberately being relegated to below-poverty living standards and assistance levels. And we see that there is very little in terms of the investments that this government would claim in terms of rural communities for broadband infrastructure.

The schedules that I'm going to focus the majority of my comments on today will be schedules 7, 14, 29, 30 and 33.

First things first, I did want to briefly mention schedule 3, the Building Broadband Faster Act, which will permit

the Minister of Infrastructure to make regulations governing the application. I want to also point out that the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario in 2021-22 pointed out the vast amounts of money that this government chose not to invest in rural communities in terms of broadband infrastructure.

We know that Internet service is vital. It's vital to education. It's vital to our growing economy. It's vital to the agriculture community. It is vital across the board. Internet service is almost like oxygen these days. When you're being deprived of it, it is something that we rely upon in so many ways.

In Q1, the FAO pointed out that there was the \$92 million below spending. In Q2, there was \$110 million below spending. In Q3, there was a \$207-million decrease in broadband infrastructure spending. And in Q4, there was a \$197-million decrease in expenditures on broadband. It's very concerning that this government says one thing and clearly is doing another one when it comes to supporting our rural communities.

Now in terms of schedule 7, schedule 7 will open up the Condominium Act and it does make some changes that are necessary. It will allow for virtual board meetings and owner meetings. But there are so many things that this government could have done and should have done and quite frankly must do to make sure that people are protected and safe in the biggest expenditure of their lives, which is to purchase a forever home.

I'd like to point to the Auditor General's audit. There were so many concerns that the Auditor General had brought forward and there were amendments in 2015 that have not yet been proclaimed into force. The Auditor General found that so many of the inspections were mostly reactive and that many condo directors on the boards had not completed training. There were condo owners who faced so many difficulties and barriers when it comes to accessing condo corporation information. They're not on a level playing field with condo boards in front of the tribunal. So the Auditor General concluded that the existing model for the condo sector does not provide effective consumer protection and does not address the risks that exist for condo owners and buyers.

Further to that, the CAO was asked questions, and it was also recommended that consumer advocates be present upon CAO board composition, and I think it should be agreed upon across the aisle in this House that the condo authority and tribunal should serve condo owners, not lawyers, not consultants, not managers and not developers. Access to justice is a huge concern for everyone across this province and too often within this

system those with deep pockets access justice much quicker than people who possibly need it the most.

It is also very curious, Speaker, that, through their fees, a condo owner could actually be paying for a lawyer to be speaking against themselves. They're actually paying for representation to take away their interests.

We've made many recommendations as the official opposition. I want to also bring forward the voice of Charlene, a resident in London North Centre. She was a member of her condo board, and they had major renovations in her condo development. The board president fired the person who was doing the construction work, and they fired them unilaterally. The board president did not consult with the board whatsoever, and then that board president hired their own cousin to replace the person who was fired and it ended up in a multi-million-dollar lawsuit, and then the condo owners were slapped with a special assessment. It was \$1,500 a month for six months for all condo residents to pay for that development. It was an unusually high rate that was being charged further for the renovations.

There was a great deal of news coverage. We saw the condo owners see their rates go up 500 times the rate of inflation. Another resident spoke out saying that her monthly condo fees are now \$600—50% more than her monthly mortgage. This was back in 2017, but the issues persist to this day.

As well, the official opposition brought forward legislation to help protect people in condos. It was legislation that would expand the jurisdiction of the Condominium Authority Tribunal so that condo residents have a place to turn for issues like unfair condo fees or negligent building maintenance. That could have been included in Bill 91 if this government really wanted to address issues that face Ontarians instead of simply tinkering around the edges.

**0910**

Now next I'd like to take a look at schedule 29. Within schedule 29—there's so many pieces within this legislation. As I said, it's shocking the government has opened up so much and yet, ironically, done so little. We also see different changes, with schedule 23, to the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act, which many environmental people are enormously concerned about. But we see changes to the Private Career Colleges Act. It's allowing these organizations to change the term "private career college" to "career college." What was unclear during committee hearings was what the process would be for these private, for-profit organizations to notify prospective students that this was indeed the type of institution that they would be spending a great deal of money upon. There was also very little sense of what enforcement would be for those bad actors who might mislead or might misrepresent; that's a great concern. Education is one of the biggest expenditures that young people have to make. It's really shocking.

Through many consultations that I was also able to take part in as a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, we got to travel to many different regions in this province, and I'd like to also add the words from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, who

were incredibly concerned about the level of spending that this government and this province makes on services. Ontario is the richest province in Canada, and yet we spend the least amount on services. In fact, as AMO has pointed out, we spend \$2,000 less per resident than other provinces. That's \$2,000 less—not to be first, but simply to not be last, we'd have to increase expenditures. It's deeply, deeply disturbing.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario also called for dramatic increases in social assistance rates. It's truly disturbing—and I will focus my comments on this in the short while—that this government has placed people below the poverty line. We know that there were drastic cuts to social assistance in the 1990s. I think it was 22.5% during the Harris government. As drastic as those cuts were, people are far worse off now than they were back then because of the cost of living, because of inflation.

We had a Liberal government that did nothing on social assistance rates for 15 years. We saw some election promises in 2018, but, really, people have been left to languish.

Now this government has made changes with a 5% increase, which amounts to \$58 per month. They've indexed it to inflation, but they have indexed people into legislated poverty. It's concerning that they're content with people still being below that poverty line for years to come. It's also concerning that, while this government pats itself on the back for this paltry, meagre 5% increase, when they first assumed power, they slashed a planned 3% increase—which was, again, peanuts—to 1.5%. And now that they are giving 5% a number of years later, suddenly they can throw a party and congratulate themselves. It's deeply concerning.

Now schedule 30, as has been effectively presented by the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, is something that is eminently supportable. It is something that will protect farmers from non-payment, and it is something that the official opposition absolutely supports. In fact, it is so supportable, it is surprising that this change didn't warrant its own legislation. It's kind of a dog's breakfast when you look at all of the different things that have been pushed into this bill—some of which are excellent, but others are just nowhere near enough.

The OFA is very much in support of this change. But what I did want to also point out from my time on the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs was that farmers across this province are also calling for increases to the Risk Management Program. We heard that in so many different locations. They were calling for an increase in the Risk Management Program by \$100 million. This government could have made that change. They could have made that change within this legislation, and yet they chose not to. I'm quite surprised.

As well, I think that the agricultural community in this province is also calling for removal of the cap on the Risk Management Program. That was something that the Liberal government had instituted, and it's something that this government could change. It's something that this government could fix. Yet, unfortunately, they have chosen not to.

As I turn my comments towards section 33, section 33 is a change which will set out requirements. They will relate to the provision of direct funding to and for the benefit of eligible adults with developmental disabilities. As a former educator, the individuals who have developmental disabilities are supported within the education system. They're supported by learning-support teachers, by social workers. Oftentimes, they're supported by educators, educational assistants, and they help them navigate the often labyrinthian paperwork, the applications process when it comes to Passport funding and all of the different things to make sure that students are getting supports.

What is very curious and what has been introduced to this government, time and time again, has been that individuals, once they turn 18, have to reapply for Passport funding. Speaker, that makes no sense. Individuals who are diagnosed with a developmental disability do not age out of that disability. Why is it, then, that we are forcing parents to reapply for something that should simply continue?

The NDP has brought forward legislation to make sure that that is a seamless bridge, to make sure that people are not facing red tape that is government-created. Make no mistake, it is very shocking that that still exists to this day. Everybody knows how flawed that is, and yet there has been no effort to change it.

What we've also heard at the finance committee is the need to double social assistance rates. When people have the funding to be able to afford housing—because housing is health care—when they have the funding to be able to afford healthy food, then they end up being less of a burden on the system. It's a shame to think of people being a burden on the system because the system is there to catch people. It's there to make sure that people are protected and people are safe.

But unfortunately, the way in which the government has ignored its responsibilities for many, many years when it comes to people on social assistance has meant that people are falling through the cracks. People are falling into homelessness. People are suffering with mental health exceptionalities. People are absolutely not able to rebuild their lives, and that is on this government.

We heard at the finance committee from a number of folks, one of whom I would like to quote today. It was Mr. Redins. He pointed out the arbitrary, insulting and anachronistic red tape surrounding the living arrangements of people who are on the Ontario Disability Support Program. Mr. Redins indicated that people's finances are evaluated based upon their living status and whom they choose to have a relationship with. That is incredibly bizarre.

**0920**

What Mr. Redins pointed out was that if he were to be in a relationship with another individual who had a greater salary, earns more, then his evaluation for the level of support this province will provide will be impacted as a result. What that means to say is that any relationship that someone on the Ontario Disability Support Program finds themselves within, that person is financially responsible

for them and to them. How does that make any sense? The consequence of that is that many people on the Ontario Disability Support Program might choose not to be in relationships. The government, through their red tape, has impacted who these people can love and choose to co-habit with. What kind of province are we living in that that is anywhere near acceptable?

We also heard from a huge amount of delegations who talked about the importance of doubling ODSP and OW rates. This government will pat themselves on the back for the paltry 5% increase, and they will talk about the earnings exemption that they have allowed, but that doesn't answer all of the people who are disabled and are unable to work, who are physically unable to work. It is a neoliberal sort of judgment that people are taking advantage of the system, that people just need to pull their socks up and work harder. That is not true for so many people, and it's insulting, it's demeaning, it's degrading and it is dehumanizing.

Today, on ODSP, a single person receives a maximum of \$1,069 a month, and that includes the \$479 shelter allowance and \$672 for basic needs. That's \$14,028 annually, and it's 30% below the poverty line in Toronto alone. Those statistics are from 2022. The 5% increase, \$58.45, a month is still far too low for most people to survive today.

In my area of London, we've seen the vast increases in rent, and it's just shocking to think that those numbers in isolation, when we look at them—\$497 for shelter. Who across this province can find shelter for \$497? I would love to know. I know that in all major cities across this province, that is nowhere near enough. You simply can't even find a bedroom in shared accommodations for that amount.

Now, additionally, there are many things that this government could have done and should have done if they had listened to all the people who presented at finance committee. Nina Deeb also brought some incredibly important, actionable items that this government chose to ignore. She brought forward concerns, because so much of this government legislation would see the transfer of public tax money into private, for-profit hands. That is Bill 23. We see that this government is effectively subsidizing major developers across this province by removing development charges. There's this pretend game that's somehow going to create affordable housing, yet there's no distinct tie or limitation between Bill 23 and the direct creation or provision of affordable housing.

Ms. Deeb also brought forward concerns about the 407. We saw that that privatization of that public resource has resulted in one of the worst fiscal mistakes that a government that prides itself upon fiscal responsibility could ever have made.

Now, that was in the past. More recently throughout the pandemic, this government could have collected \$1 billion from the international conglomerate operators, owners of the 407, yet they chose not to. They forgave \$1 billion, and for what purpose? Who did that benefit? That \$1 billion could have been spent in affordable housing. It could have

been spent in supportive housing. It could have been spent in mental health, in health care, in education—in so many places, but this government chose not to. Instead, they continue with their gravy train to line the pockets of people who don't need more money.

Now, Ms. Deeb also pointed out some of the issues with the non-resident speculation tax. We saw an increase to that to 25%, which is something that is supportable. However, there are exemptions under the NRST which are huge, gaping loopholes that have not been plugged. In fact, if someone were to purchase a development with over six units, they're not subject to the NRST. So if they were buying any apartment building, they will not pay that 25% tax, which is a huge loophole. You could drive a truck through that loophole, and this government has chosen not to do it.

What's also deeply concerning is that, when we consider the provision of rental stock in this province, this government moved backwards when it came to rent control. Their answer to the affordability crisis was to get rid of rent control. They will pat themselves on the back because there were new developments in 2018 and that was because it was a gaping loophole where you allowed people to exploit renters. Buildings first occupied after November 2018 are not subject to rent control, so people who had finished their lease after one year were saddled with enormous, enormous increases in their rental price. They did not know—they were not informed that there had been this change and it has hit so many people incredibly hard, and it will keep hitting them because, as you know, you spend a year in a location, the rental prices go up in the market and they're stuck. They're also concerned about what's going to happen the next year, the year after that and the year after that.

And yet, this government has the opportunity to pass NDP legislation that would re-establish rent control on those buildings, that would create a public rent registry so that landlords—these faceless corporate landlords—aren't exploiting people, but yet this government chooses not to. They choose not to stand up for renters. We see ironically titled legislation, but we don't see the actual protections that people require within this province when it comes to the place that they call home.

Additionally, just overall with finance committee, what is also concerning is that this government, through their own projections, through their own numbers and as reported by the Financial Accountability Officer, will be \$1 billion short in education for 2024-25. They will be \$6 billion short over the next six years. Ontario, despite being the richest province, would have to increase post-secondary expenditures by 43%—and that's not to be first; that's simply to not be last place. That's to be second-last place. This government does not stand up for students and it's deeply, deeply concerning. The funding that Ontario provides to post-secondary education only covers about a third of the operating costs. There's so many things that this government could have done in Bill 91. There's so much red tape that this government has, themselves, created.

For the next while with my comments, I'd like to focus on schedule 14, which does open up the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. What is deeply concerning about this is that this is a change that came about in 1997. Now, when we take a look at different developments in animal agriculture, we have standards. We have ethical concerns that the animal agriculture industry has been very responsive to. It actually has an economic benefit as well.

#### 0930

Now, when it's time for an animal to be slaughtered, to be processed, we have various standards and parameters to ensure that it's done in a humane way. We know that we depend upon animals for food; that is a simple fact. However, the causing of distress, of harm is something that we want to make sure is minimized as much as possible.

I want to think of the work of Temple Grandin, who has been an excellent advocate and academic, who has considered this at great length, whether it comes to the design of stalls for pigs or when it comes to the manner in which animals meet their final end.

What's also an economic benefit to this is that, as it turns out, when an animal is in distress at the time at which their life is taken, it actually has an impact on the quality of the meat. I know that is very surprising, but there are certain hormones that are released and it can actually have an economic impact. So it's in everyone's best interest to make sure that when these animals do meet their end, it's done in a way that is as humane as possible.

What we also see from this government is that they introduced the PAWS Act, the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act. It came into force on January 1, 2020. It requires compliance with standards of care and prohibits causing animals distress, to help ensure animals in the province are protected and treated in a humane manner. Yet, with Bill 91, it seems this government is talking out of one side of its mouth and then talking out of the other.

In 1997, the fish and wildlife act was updated; this was during the Harris government. It was updated to be the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. I did a deep dive looking through hours and hours of debate through Hansard in 1997 just to see what people's concerns were and what their thoughts were. It was truly inspiring to see how many people supported this legislation across the floor. It had unanimous support, Speaker. It was a change and a development that was eminently supportable.

What it did was it then took away the ability to create new dog training and trialling areas and it also created the inability for people to transfer those licences. So there were no new licences created and there was no transfer.

What was really quite interesting is history repeating itself in looking through this legislation because, in the interim period, Minister Snobelen took over that file after having been the education minister. It was said that he was transferred over to that ministry because of the chaos he deliberately engineered within the education system. I think you will remember, Speaker, that he was caught on a hot mike saying that it was his intent to deliberately underfund the education system, thus creating a crisis and



allowing for privatization. That was Bill 160, I believe, at the time.

But here today, we're going to be discussing their bill from 1997, which was Bill 139. It was the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, under the name of Minister Snobelen. At that time as well it had been said that this minister had created a crisis within the education system—he cut and underfunded education, attacked classrooms, removed administrators from the same bargaining unit as educators, setting them up in an adversarial relationship—really creating as much discord as possible. But fortunately, through technology, he was caught with his machinations and this really dubious, deceitful plot, but he then went over to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. But they had already suffered a 40% cut. They had lost, I think, 2,000 ministry workers at that time. Minister Snobelen came in, and already a crisis had been under way.

Now, when it comes to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act that we see being updated within Bill 91, the changes that Minister Snobelen indicated—the minister said, “Meetings were held in the fall of 1996 with more than 20 major client groups. They represented a wide variety of interests, including recreational hunting and fishing, commercial fish and wildlife industries, animal welfare, agriculture, naturalists, zoos, and tourist operators.” So it showed that at that time, this change that removed the ability for new licences for training and trialling of dogs was something that was widely consulted. That's something that doesn't happen now, Speaker. We see so much legislation that is time-allocated and so much legislation that is also pushed through this House at breakneck speed, skipping the committee process entirely because this government is not fond of transparency or accountability.

We also heard from other members from the opposition at that time. I believe it was the MPP for Algoma-Manitowlin who said that this legislation, this change, was about “15 to 20 years in the making, under a Conservative government, then a Liberal government and then an NDP government,” and indicating that they're very happy to see it before them so they can discuss it. Other members said that it brings the Fish and Game Act up to the modern day: “It is renewing an act that protects our wildlife in Ontario and brings it up to the standards and quality that we would consider today.”

So many people spoke to this legislation, Speaker. They spoke about how all three parties accepted it. In fact, I don't think I could find a single dissenting voice who was opposed to this change, to change the fish and wildlife act into the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. So many people were supportive of removing the ability to have these training and trialling areas.

There was also—and this was a government member who pointed to a letter signed by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the Animal Alliance of Canada, the Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters, the World Wildlife Fund and the Bear Alliance. Now, the MPP from Halton North said it was “certainly a diverse group of clientele”—I completely

agree—“all supporting the bill and all asking for its timely passage.”

Speaker, it's surprising to me that, through Bill 91, we see these changes from 1997, which were called modern at the time, going backwards. How is it even possible that this government is contradicting their own government when it comes to animal welfare?

It has been said before that whoever is righteous has regard for the life of a beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel. Various stakeholders have spoken out against these changes. This government was not clear in asking for public input. They certainly have not travelled this bill. I wanted to add the voice of Liz White, who is the director of the Animal Alliance of Canada. Liz states, “Compounds”—which are these large fenced areas where animals are trained to track and attack animals. Liz states, “Compounds are cruel. They confine wild animals, including coyotes, foxes, rabbits and hares, and allow dogs to chase, harass, capture and even tear these animals apart. Depending on the size of the compound, up to 50 dogs can be used to hunt down hares, cottontails and red foxes and 66 dogs to hunt fox and coyotes.”

Liz points out the question: Is this fair sport? Hares and cottontails cannot defend themselves. They do not have that—it's not possible for them. They are subject to what is a cruel and miserable death. Foxes are also smaller than hunting dogs, so they're vulnerable for that reason. And coyotes would be the only animal that is being attacked and tracked in these areas. They might be close to the same size and weight, and they will defend themselves, but they have no chance against a pack of dogs—numbers. How is it fair that these animals, in the name of sport, are being trapped in an area? How is that fair indeed? We heard people speaking at committee about how there could be man-made brush piles or culverts where these animals could hide, but how long are they hiding for, Speaker? These are in fenced areas. They are never going to escape until they are dead, and they're going to meet a really unpleasant, horrible end to their life.

**0940**

What is also interesting is that we heard from stakeholders who are only interested in gathering more licences and transferring licences. This government has said, “Well, there's only a 90-day period for people to apply for new licences.” We know that people are chomping at the bit and are ready to apply.

We also heard from someone who operates one of these facilities, and they said they've made an escape pod that is below the surface. When asked about whether this was a safe location for a coyote or a fox who's trying to escape being mauled, it was said that dogs would not follow coyotes into one of these pods because there's an alligator at the other end. Now, what is concerning about that is he said “may not follow them.” It wasn't a solid assurance that this animal was safe in there. I don't know that that would be authentic, to think that one coyote being chased by a large pack of dogs would be safe at all.

What's also surprising is that the dogs who are being trained in these areas also are subject to injury. There are

a number of very grisly pictures that animal advocates have circulated online showing the really horrible situation that hunting dogs also face because they're attacking coyotes who are simply fighting for their life.

There was a rally recently in front of Owen Sound city hall, and members there said it quite well. They said, "You can't justify the cruelty." These are animals that are being held captive. This is not about hunting. This is something quite different. They call what they're doing a sport, but is it a sport to kill something?

At the time of Bill 139, the update of the fish and wildlife act into the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, there were about 50 or 60 training and trialling areas across the province, and now there are about 24 facilities remaining in Ontario.

Camille Labchuk, who is the executive director for Animal Justice, says, "Penned dog hunting is cruel and vicious, which is why no other province allows hunters to chase and kill terrified, caged animals with dogs." It's been called a "blood sport." What is also concerning is the interesting take Camille takes upon this. They say, "Penned hunting is a sport in itself," a lot like "dog fighting; people are not training their dogs, but rather baiting them and watching wild animals get ripped apart." That's horrifying to think, that a government that would pass the PAWS Act would also allow for this sort of thing to happen. It does not make sense.

There are also some developments that would change this. Dogs are necessary within the hunting community. However, they often track by scent, so there are opportunities for these places to not use defenceless cottontails, hares and foxes and not to use coyotes, but simply to have them track a scent trail. There are many opportunities for this, yet this government is moving backwards. For every single person who has an animal, I urge them to think carefully about what this legislation opens up. This is not dog training in terms of people jumping through hoops or going up ladders. No, this is something quite different.

Additionally, I think what is surprising as an overall concern is that this undermines what are principles of fairness. To trap an animal and to call this a sport, to trap an animal and to call this fair chase: That is not what it is at all. That is like putting two people in a boxing ring and tying one person's hand around their back. It is simply not fair. Or keeping someone there to fight a number of fighters—how is this right? This should make everyone concerned across this House. There's a reason the Conservative government, in 1997, passed this legislation. Why on earth are we going backwards?

Some words I wanted to share with this government is that you have an opportunity here when it comes to animal welfare. You've made noises with the PAWS Act that this is something you support and this is something you stand for, and yet we have legislation here which is completely contradictory to that. I urge this government to remove that schedule from this bill, to listen to the people across Ontario.

We had only two people who deputed about this at committee, and it was the Ontario Federation of Anglers

and Hunters and the Ontario Sporting Dog Association. There was no opportunity provided for people who support animal rights to have their voices heard. They have since called out this government. And I'm sure, across the way, all MPPs have received these emails from people who are deeply concerned about animal rights. It is up to us, as individuals, as sentient beings on this planet, to not simply look after ourselves but to think of those who don't have that voice, to raise our voice for those who are vulnerable—no matter where you are in this life with your success, to reach backwards to bring other people forward. Animals do not have that voice, except for us.

We live in a province where animals are treated not as creatures who have feelings, not as creatures who can suffer pain, but as property. Speaker, that is shocking to think that, despite all of our thoughts and our evolution, we still treat animals like property, like they only exist as a thing.

Now, I did want to mention some concerning words that I heard from this government that they were asked about this change in Bill 91. What was surprising to me was that the minister said this is about animals that are bred for this purpose. Let that sink in for a minute. It's completely ignoring the fact that these animals are going to meet a really grisly, awful death in a place which is unfair, but that's okay. The government is saying that's okay because they were created just for that purpose, just to be slaughtered. How does that make any sense? What does that make your heart feel? For anyone who is an animal lover across there, think about that for a moment. Think about any animal that you've ever loved. Can you imagine someone breeding it for the purpose of being mauled in an unfair place?

So just to give the direct quote from the Ontario Sporting Dog Association that stated, "And I can assure you there's not very many dogs going into a 10-inch culvert when there's an alligator at the other end." It doesn't say there are no dogs; it just says there are not very many. What happens if there's 50 of them? What's not very many of 50 when there's one fox or one coyote trying to hide and trying to save its own life? That is deeply, deeply disturbing.

#### 0950

Within this bill, we see that this government has opened up so many laws across Ontario, and yet they've simply tinkered around the edges. They've ignored what is happening across this province. Right now, we have huge issues with our health care system. On the finance committee, we heard about the importance of stopping the costly, wasteful, ideological appeal to the ruling for Bill 124. We've seen this government throwing public money again and again and again, losing court battles. They never get tired of losing in the eyes of the law, yet they're happy to have this party with the public purse, simply just going wild, because that suits their ideology.

What is shocking is we look at the health care system in terms of so many people are unable to get the support that they need because there simply aren't the nurses. Late-career nurses have simply left. They didn't want to be treated—I think the word that was used at committee

was that they felt humiliated by this government. Nurses who are now entering the field are being placed in positions of responsibility that quite frankly they're not ready for. It's because so many late-career nurses have left the field.

We've been calling again and again for a program to recruit, retain and return nurses; to remove the appeal to Bill 124; pay nurses what they're worth and have a robust health care human resources strategy to address this issue. But more broadly, again, this is like Bill 160 and Minister Snobelen all over again. This is a deliberately manufactured, engineered crisis in order to undermine our publicly funded and publicly delivered health care system so that the only alternative that is possible is the for-profit industry. It's history repeating itself all over again.

This government is allowing the creation of these private, for-profit clinics which is going to absolutely be the end of medicare as we know it. This government has an opportunity to listen to people, to listen to the concerns that Ontarians have raised. Yet they bulldoze forward with these ideological plans.

When it comes to different things that this government could fix, we have heard various concerns about Bill 23, about how that's going to rip \$5 billion away from municipalities. It's going to be money that's going to go directly into the pocket of private, for-profit developers, who are not going to create affordable housing.

On this side of the House, the NDP has been and always will be the party of housing. Despite all of its flaws, the Bob Rae government in the 1990s created the biggest amount of social and affordable housing, much of which still exists to this day—thankfully. We saw different ministers in the Liberal government try to change some housing developments. It wasn't always successful, but sometimes it was.

Within Bill 23, it's concerning that there is also an opportunity for these private, for-profit companies to snatch up rental housing and redevelop it into luxury condos, which is not what people in Ontario need. What people in Ontario need is a government that doesn't simply sit back on the sidelines and wait for someone else to do the heavy lifting. We need a government that actually builds that housing themselves, that puts on its big boy pants and actually does the work. It's just unbelievable to think that so much of what this government does is cross their fingers and hope for the best, and tell everyone that this is going to happen—but there's no way that they have made sure it's going to happen through serious and thoughtful legislation.

This government could also make sure that they are standing up for tenants by reinstating rent control, by plugging the hole of vacancy decontrol. Right now in this province, there is an incentive for unethical corporate landlords to kick good people out so they can jack up the rent because the government lets them do that. The last Liberal government got rid of vacancy control and it's an unwritten incentive that landlords will look and they will see, "Oh, I can charge this much? This is how much profit I can get?" So of course they want to make more money because there is no control for those tenants.

Right now on Webster Street—I believe it's 1270 and 1280 Webster Street—there are so many tenants who are now facing a huge concern: Seniors who are hoping to spend the next 10 years, 20 years in the place that they have called home are now concerned about living in their car. They're now concerned about being homeless. They're now concerned that they're going to be living on the street because this landlord is renovicting them—units which don't need to be renovated, but the landlord is claiming that they must do this. This government has their ironically titled pieces of legislation that purport to support tenants, but actually do nothing. There's one that is actually going to increase fines, which are never going to be levied. We know that once a tenant is out of a unit through renoviction, there is a 1% chance that they will get back in.

Landlords will also claim that they're going to be moving a family member into the unit. Now, what tenant has the wherewithal to go and check a family tree? What, do they do a blood test to make sure somebody is indeed related? It's ridiculous. But the avenue that the tenants have is the Landlord and Tenant Board, which we know that this government has not fixed since they formed government in 2018. It has been flawed since then and it has been a miscarriage of justice for tenants, for landlords, for everyone. The Landlord and Tenant Board is a hot mess right now.

As well, this government could truly address the issues that face Ontarians by doubling social assistance rates, by making sure that people are above the poverty line now and for years to come. Index it above the poverty line. Don't pat yourself on the back when only half of the work is done. You've indexed it, so why is it below the poverty line? It makes absolutely no sense.

Return respect to municipalities by stopping what you've done with Bill 23. Make sure that municipalities are made whole. You've stripped \$5 billion from them. You're also allowing incursions into our prime agricultural land. We're losing 319.6 acres per day, last I checked—probably more at this stage—and yet this government is bulldozing forward. Listen to municipalities; listen to their plans for growing inwards and upwards. There are plenty of places to build within this province. You do not need to pave over vital farmland. We heard again and again and again across this province that people are concerned. You cannot recreate farmland. Once it's gone, it is gone forever. So this government needs to have some sober second thought, to sit back and to think.

But I ask you, in terms of dog training and trialling, is it necessary for animals to meet their end in the most grisly way possible? Is that okay with all of the members across? There are opportunities for these dog training and trialling areas to train dogs through scent without sacrificing other animals, without having a grisly, unfair blood sport. This could be changed by this government. But this government, will they listen? I'm not sure.

#### 1000

We see the same patterns, although in different ways, from 1997: the attacks on the education system, the attacks

on people who are on social assistance, the deliberate creation of crises. That's coming through again. It's just happening in a different form.

It's like this government has not changed its playbook whatsoever. They want to cut, undermine and deliberately fracture our social services so that they are on life support. They undermine workers. They undermine the people in caring positions who are doing phenomenal work.

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with some front-line harm reduction workers, and so many of them are afraid of becoming homeless themselves because their job pays so little. They are caring for people who are homeless and they themselves, because of the low rates of pay, because of the lack of pension, are struggling. Their heart may be tied to this profession and they may love this as their life's goal—to really stand up for folks who don't have a voice, to make sure they are doing their very best for those people who are vulnerable—and yet they're concerned that they can't do so because they might be at risk themselves.

To this government, I will leave you with one quote, and I want you to think about all the people who are on social assistance; all of the seniors who are struggling, who are facing homelessness because of unethical landlords. I want you to think of all of the animals who will be affected by this. What I say to you is this: "Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute." It's up to you.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** We're going to move to questions.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I appreciated the speech from the member beside me. I was intrigued by his comments about how terrible it is that we're increasing social assistance rates in the province of Ontario. I was curious if he had advice for the members who were here from his caucus from 2011 to 2014 when the NDP held the balance of power. They could have brought down the Liberal government at any time over that period over this issue.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** You were in opposition for 15 years.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I must have hit a nerve, Madam Speaker.

I was wondering, if raising social assistance rates is so important, why the opposition consistently votes against our government on this. And yet when they had the opportunity to make that a point, they did nothing for three years when they had the balance of power.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Speaker, I don't think it's appropriate for the member for Brantford—Brant to pat themselves on the back for a paltry 5% increase after a 22.5% decrease back in the 1990s.

What is also surprising really is the overt admission by this government they didn't do their job as the official opposition, but they haven't really concerned themselves about social assistance. As soon as they formed government, they cut that paltry 3% into 1.5%, waited a number of years for 5%.

Let's talk about their cuts to minimum wage. They do not care for people who are on the margins, who are being

deliberately marginalized by government decisions. In fact, they are upholding that by keeping people below the poverty line. They are kicking downwards to people who can least afford it. They could stand up for renters, they could stand up for students, they could stand up for seniors, but they choose not to again and again and again. There are so many gaps that this government has left, and it's disappointing. The finances are clear. Poverty has a cost. If they increase social assistance rates—

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Thank you.

We're going to move to the next question, please.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** My question—actually, the thing that most concerns me and the thing that I've been getting a lot of feedback in the community about this bill is the train and trials, the animal hunting, that they're going to be training dogs by putting coyotes and rabbits in penned cages and using these as bait for the dogs to learn how to hunt and kill. It just seems like an incredible act of animal cruelty to pass this legislation.

So to the member opposite, thank you for your remarks this morning. What would you recommend the government do with the train and trials?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member from Spadina—Fort York for his comments. I know that members across, everywhere in this chamber, have heard from concerned constituents who just can't believe that we are going backwards to this grisly sort of practice.

There are a number of different ways to achieve these same ends without subjecting animals or breeding animals to be treated in this manner. They could be pursuing scent trails. There are a number of different folks from the Animal Alliance of Canada who are suggesting that dogs track through scent. They don't need to track an animal. That animal does not need to be ripped apart for them to be trained as a hunting animal. It seems incongruous that these animals are simply being ripped apart for really no purpose.

If hunting is involved, then that person is hunting for a purpose: They're hunting for food. They're hunting for their culture. It makes no sense that we still have these areas where rabbits, foxes and coyotes are simply mauled for the purpose of what one would call sport.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Next question.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I appreciate the response from the member to my earlier question. So we've established that the opposition would do nothing for people on social assistance when they held the balance of power, and yet they vote against increases to social assistance rates when our government passes them. But I know that the member also stated that we should be doubling social assistance rates. The price tag on that is about \$18 billion a year.

And so I'll change the point of my question now. I was wondering who the member would tax—because we know that the opposition never met a taxpayer in the province of Ontario that they wouldn't like to add burden to. I'm wondering where the member would find the \$18 billion a year to fund a doubling of social assistance rates.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member from Brantford—Brant for his question. Here on the side of the official opposition, we see the good sense—the good human sense and the good fiscal sense—of looking after people who have been deliberately pushed to the margins because of Conservative and ideological neglect. This government has the money, but what they would prefer to spend it on is their gravy train of insiders and wealthy donors and appointees.

The FAO has pointed out that this government was sitting on \$20 billion in their contingency fund, a slush fund. They're hiding that so it's not subject to public scrutiny. And for the estimates process, which normally is 15 hours where the official opposition gets to scrutinize all of the government's expenditures, this government gave 20 minutes, because they wanted to hide all of the horrible, nefarious things they're doing with all of the province's money. It's a party with the public purse. They just don't want to know where it's going. That's why it's all pushed aside into the slush fund so they don't let people know, because accountability and transparency are not this Conservative government's values.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Next question.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I got here late for the debate, but I'm going to help my member over there. When your government was in power under Harris, they told people on ODSP to eat tuna and go to the grocery store and buy all those cans that were all destroyed. So I'll just help you out. And on your tax question, why don't corporations pay their fair share in the province of Ontario when they're making record profits during COVID on the backs of people trying to buy groceries? But I do have a question; I'm glad I got here in time to answer your question.

There's been no consultation with government for a long time, and I know that because I sat in committee. I sat in Bill 98. Actually, I sat in one with you, Speaker, when you were in committee.

Bill 23, Bill 60, this bill here—do you know what? No consultation with workers, families, nobody—can I ask you a question? Why do you think the Conservatives are so scared of talking to families, talking to unions, talking to workers in the province of Ontario?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member from Niagara Falls. I don't think this government wants to adequately consult or consider the viewpoints of people who don't agree with them. They have confirmation bias, and that shows up through their willingness to ram through legislation as fast as possible to hide it under the cover of night. We've seen many midnight sittings when this government was first trying to enact the “notwithstanding” clause back in 2018. We see in this province that there are many temporary measures that have outlasted what they're intended to do. We see government members that will go and cut ribbons in front of food banks. Food banks were a temporary measure to address food insecurity, and yet now they're something that so many folks rely upon.

1010

It is deeply concerning that we have this situation in the richest province, in Ontario. It's deeply concerning that

this government will not address the root causes of poverty and make sure that people are above the poverty line.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Next question?

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** In my riding of Barrie—Innisfil, I host many round tables, and one that gets people really excited particularly is the red tape reduction round table. I was able to have Minister Gill come do a round table, and through that process, we get so many ideas. And I get the feedback of constituents saying, “Thank you. Thank you for the \$120 million in savings and the red tape reduction burdens that you have created. Thank you for the \$700 million a year that businesses are now saving because of red tape reduction.”

But I also hear from folks who have family that might live in opposition-held ridings, and they're frustrated that their red tape ideas aren't being heard. So I hear that many people in the opposition haven't had red tape reduction round tables and haven't proposed any red tape ideas. Why?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member from Barrie—Innisfil for her comments. This government has established so much of their own red tape, we may as well call it blue tape at this point. We brought forward so many positive pieces of legislation from the side of the official opposition which this government is just ideologically choosing to ignore. We've talked about continuing the Passport Program past the age of 18, removing that arbitrary red tape; removing the restriction on who someone on ODSP lives with. We've talked about so many different things.

We've also talked about the importance of the government actually building the affordable and supportive housing that is necessary, yet this government would simply be happy to tie this province up in red tape. They have removed the ability for municipalities to levy development charges. They've stripped \$5 billion away from municipalities at a time when everyone needs to create housing, yet they have given that to wealthy developers. That is the biggest definition of red tape—or blue tape—that this government has done.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Thank you very much.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** We don't have time to start a new debate, so we're going to move to members' statements.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### LUPUS AWARENESS DAY

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Two years ago, I introduced a bill to recognize May 10 in each year as Lupus Awareness Day in Ontario, which later came into force. This is our second year observing this important day.

This May 10, I welcomed 21 members of Lupus Ontario to Queen's Park. For over 40 years, this amazing

group has been providing education, awareness, advocacy and research to support those who have lupus to live longer, healthier and better lives. It is exciting to learn that this year, the group launched the Lights for Lupus campaign, where 43 landmarks across Ontario were illuminated in purple on May 10.

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease where the body attacks itself, causing inflammation and pain. It can also damage any organ or tissue. Currently, without a cure, one in every 1,000 Canadians is affected by this disease. Lupus affects more than just the person with the disease; it also impacts their family, friends and work colleagues. By raising awareness of the disease, we also save lives. I would therefore like to commend Lupus Ontario on the important work they are doing in our province, and encourage Ontarians—

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Thank you. Next member statement.

#### BACK DOOR MISSION FOR THE RELIEF OF POVERTY

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** At the Back Door Mission, project Mission United brings health care and service agencies under one roof to help those who are unhoused and struggling. People who come to the mission need very real help and are at different stages of healing or hurting. The work done there is tremendous and compassionate, and it helps people on their journey to get the help they need or to have support that they've never found before.

I invited the minister for mental health and addictions to Oshawa, and I want to thank him for coming. I appreciate immeasurably that he came for hours to tour the mission, meet with and learn from front-line service providers and the medical team there. He saw the hub model in action.

What he didn't see and couldn't have seen is what we don't have. We don't have a system that will help people without financial means get from hurting through recovery to stability; 18 months is the wait-list for a bed for treatment.

The minister for mental health and addictions saw the value in the work done at the acute-care clinic that treats folks on-site so they don't have to go to emergency rooms. But in our province, the ministry for mental health can't pay for the health needs, and the doctors who serve so many homeless people without ID can't be paid salary so they can continue to supply street wound care and addiction support. That doesn't make sense.

We heard from victim services that survivors often have no affordable and supportive living opportunities, because it doesn't exist, and they're forced back into danger. CMHA Durham told us they have housing units available, but don't have the subsidy. So we could have housing for more people in need, but agencies can't afford it.

At Mission United, they have figured out how to work together to best support people living in poverty and on the street. I wish this Premier would acknowledge the crisis we're facing and choose to heal and help our community, so people wouldn't have to live on the streets and in pain.

#### SENIORS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** As everyone knows, June is Seniors Month. It's our annual opportunity to dedicate a month to that group of citizens that has reached a point in life where they can look back with a sense of pride on the many things they have accomplished.

But let's be clear: The seniors of today aren't just looking back; they're looking forward. Our seniors, particularly those who still enjoy good health, are more active than any of the previous generations. Seniors are not sitting back with their feet up; they're continuously engaging in and around their community, in ways that not only benefit themselves socially, but also provide benefits to their community.

I know when I do voluntary service awards every year, the majority of those receiving those awards are in fact seniors who, after contributing so much through their working lives, continue to be the driving forces in so many of our institutions, organizations and service clubs. I dare say that most of the service clubs that exist in our community could not operate or contribute the way they do without the involvement of our seniors.

I encourage everyone to visit one of the Seniors Active Living Centres in their ridings in the month of June and see what amazing things are taking place there to ensure that our seniors continue to be vital and engaged. In the month of June, as summer approaches, be sure not to just honour our seniors for what they have done for us, but celebrate them and celebrate with them, and be grateful for the gift that they are.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The beautiful community of Gogama in my riding is located across the street from a new gold mine. In 2020, the Premier came to the groundbreaking ceremony. He said, "This gold mine will bring economic prosperity and change lives in Gogama." I agreed, Speaker, but for this to happen, people need a place to live, and businesses a place to set up shop. The good news is that there are plenty of empty lots and empty homes located on paved roads, with streetlights, hydro, telephone, Internet, water and sewage—everything a modern family or business needs. The bad news? None of them are available for sale or rent. Do you know who owns them all, Speaker? The government of Ontario or, as the locals call them, the worst slumlord in this province.

Since 2020, my office has been relentless in trying to motivate this government to put them up for sale, or at least to rent them out. I wrote and delivered letters to the Premier, to the Ministers of Finance, Government and Consumer Services, Infrastructure, and Natural Resources and Forestry. And the answer for the last three years has been crickets.

While over a dozen properties are left to rot in Gogama, they, like many others in our province, are facing a housing crisis. Gogama is missing out on the prosperity the Premier promised. The people of northern Ontario are tired of waiting. This government needs to put these homes and lots up for sale right now.

## WATERDOWN FARMERS' MARKET

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** The return of summer also means the return of farmers' markets right across Ontario. Visiting the market is a tradition that families across the province look forward to each and every year.

In my riding of Flamborough–Glanbrook, the Waterdown Farmers' Market kicked off the season last weekend with an exciting opening day featuring live entertainment and activities for children. The market will run from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday until October 14, with over 20 vendors offering everything from fresh fruit and vegetables to baked goods, meat, wine and fresh-cut flowers. The market is made possible by the dedicated volunteers who help with set-up and teardown every week and ensure the market is accessible to all by helping customers carry heavy purchases to their vehicles. This year will be the market's 10th season since it reopened in its current location at the Waterdown Legion.

## 1020

Farmers' markets are an excellent opportunity for Ontarians to support our local farmers, growers and producers, who work hard every season to put food on our tables. The province's agri-food sector is vital to our food security. It employs thousands of people and contributes billions to the economy. I encourage everyone to visit a farmers' market this summer to support local agriculture and enjoy some fresh and delicious Ontario-grown produce.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Last week, the Ontario Health Coalition organized a referendum on the privatization of our publicly funded, publicly delivered health care. People in my community came out to vote at the Douglas Memorial urgent care in Fort Erie, which the community is fighting to save; at the GNGH in Niagara Falls; and at St. Davids fire hall in Niagara-on-the-Lake to send a clear message to the Premier that the people of Niagara do not want privatized health care.

We have a real crisis in our health care system, from wait times to staffing shortages to emergency room closures. This government could choose to address this crisis, but instead they're choosing to underfund public health care by \$21 billion—that's with a "B"—while they pursue an agenda of privatization.

The Legislature will recess for the summer in less than two weeks. Instead of spending the necessary time to fix these problems, the Premier is choosing to end this session while our health care system falls deeper into crisis. As a province, we can choose to either follow the Premier's plan of unequal care, longer wait times and no transparency, or we can choose to repeal Bill 124, repeal Bill 60, invest in publicly funded and publicly delivered health care, and finally end the disastrous system of private, for-profit care and long-term care in the province of Ontario.

I want to thank the volunteers in Niagara for organizing the vote. The people came out to make their voices heard, and I'm looking forward to learning the results later today.

## DURHAM COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** I rise today to highlight the outstanding work being carried out by the Durham Community Action Group in our community. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government is dedicated to providing support to address the challenges faced by our residents, particularly around the rising cost of living. I'm thrilled to announce that the Durham Community Action Group has a remarkable team, headed by Ms. Gloria Small-Clarke, and has been granted \$95,000 from the Resilient Communities Fund. This grant will be utilized over a period of 24 months to aid in their recovery and to strengthen the community programs being offered.

Their primary focus will be on addressing mental health needs among seniors, especially with Black seniors in Durham. Gloria Small-Clarke and her team and countless other community leaders who selflessly devote themselves to supporting our communities in Durham region deserve our utmost recognition and appreciation. Their commitment to providing vital services and programs is truly commendable.

As the representative of Ajax, I feel an immense sense of pride knowing that organizations like the Durham Community Action Group are working tirelessly to uplift our community. Together, we can build a stronger, more resilient community where no one has to face insecurities or mental health challenges alone.

## AUTISM TREATMENT

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I want you to know, I've had far too many gut-wrenching meetings with parents on the wait-list for the Ontario Autism Program. We know that, under this government's watch, the number of children with autism waiting to receive core services has more than doubled, to over 60,000 children. These numbers have real-world consequences for children and families.

One mother last week sat in my office in tears, worried about losing her home to finance care for her child. She's had to pay out-of-pocket for services, calling every week, trying to figure out where her child is on the wait-list. There's no answer and her daughter is becoming increasingly violent. The situation is so severe that the family finally secured urgent response services funding, but it's a 12-week band-aid and the funding is coming to an end.

I want members to imagine the frustration and fear about what comes next, the unimaginable choice of caring for your child or a roof over your head. Some 60,000 children in this province and their parents are facing similar choices. We can do better. We must do better. These kids cannot wait longer. They need a needs-based program that works for everyone, regardless of age.

## SAM IBRAHIM

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** I'm proud to rise today and celebrate a remarkable entrepreneur and a change-maker in Scarborough: Sam Ibrahim.

Born and raised in Scarborough, Sam's roots trace back to Egypt from where his parents immigrated to Canada in the 1980s. It was in the neighbourhoods of Scarborough that Sam found his inspiration and drive to reach for the stars. At the age of 26, Sam founded the Arrow Group of Companies, which has grown to become one of Canada's largest private corporations. Sam is also the co-founder of Scarborough's very own basketball team, the Scarborough Shooting Stars.

Sam's contributions extend far beyond the basketball court. It is Sam's philanthropic endeavours and his love for Scarborough that truly set him apart. It came as no surprise when Sam announced his plan to invest \$25 million into the heart of Scarborough to build the Sam Ibrahim Centre for Inclusive Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Leadership at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus. This centre will provide promising entrepreneurs with resources and connections to make their ideas a reality.

Today I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Sam Ibrahim for his exceptional leadership, his unwavering dedication and commitment to giving back to Scarborough.

Sam, you are truly an inspiration to the next generation to dream big.

#### NICOLAUS COPERNICUS

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** As we come to the conclusion of Polish Heritage Month, I'd like to acknowledge the 550th anniversary of the birthday of Polish mathematician and astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus—Mikołaj Kopernik.

Often thought of as the father of modern astronomy, Copernicus would forever change our understanding of the cosmos, challenging long-held beliefs and ushering in a new era of scientific thought.

During his time, the prevailing belief was that the Earth was at the centre of the universe, but, through his meticulous observations and bold intellect, he unveiled a revolutionary heliocentric model in 1543 that would send shock waves throughout the scientific world. Supported by astronomical calculations, he proposed that the sun, not the Earth, is at the centre of the solar system and that its planets revolve around it in circular orbits. He inspired future generations of astronomers, scientists and philosophers.

Copernicus is an inspiration to the 600,000 people of Polish heritage here in Ontario, and today we have the honour of having the Canadian Polish Congress, the Polish Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor and Wladyslaw Reymont Foundation here at Queen's Park hosting a reception to commemorate the life and contributions of Nicolaus Copernicus right after question period in room 228.

I want to thank the organizers for commemorating this amazing day and wonderful month, and invite all members and staff to join us as we conclude Polish Heritage Month in Ontario.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** I'd like to welcome to the gallery today former Brantford–Brant and current Oakville fire chief Paul Boissonneault.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to welcome the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs here today and invite everyone to the reception they're having in the dining room tonight.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** I'm sharing this list with my colleague, MPP Bailey there.

First, I want to welcome all our fire chiefs to Queen's Park today, and I want to introduce Brian Arnold, Mark Berney, Paul Boissonneault, Chad Brown, Andrea DeJong and Rob Grimwood. As I said, Mr. Bailey will have the following list. Welcome to Queen's Park, and we're inviting everybody to the dining room at 5:00 to 7:00 for a reception.

1030

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It's my pleasure to welcome the folks from the Canadian Polish Congress and the Canadian Polish Business Association in Windsor. They're here to celebrate Polish Heritage Month and the 550th birthday of Nicolaus Copernicus. I'd like to welcome Jerry Barycki—although Jerry is not here right now; he's actually setting up the display in the reception room, which I hope everyone will come to—Ewa Barycka, Barbara Koczwar, Marianna Gajewska, Victor Wolanski, Rosemary Wolanski, David Makarczyk and Suzie Sawicki.

*Remarks in Polish.*

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I'd like to welcome all the members from Nuclear Free North to Queen's Park today, sitting in various galleries. I'd also like to welcome two of my staff from my constituency office, Katerina Davids and Svend-Emil Poulsen. Thank you for your great work and for joining me at Queen's Park today.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I want to welcome members of my team Lana Barkan and Mandana Hezar. Welcome.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I have a long list of visitors I would like to welcome this morning so please bear with me: from northwestern Ontario, representing We the Nuclear Free North, Charles Faust, Bonnie Satten, Wendy O'Connor, Brennain Lloyd, Neecha Dupuis, Audrey Redman; and from South Bruce-Teeswater, representing Protect Our Waterways—No Nuclear Waste, Anja van der Vlies, Rita Groen, Gerald Groen, Yoka Scott, Michelle Stein, Sharon McDonald, Jim McDonald, Don Wall, Linda Wall and Bill Noll.

Thank you so much for coming. Welcome to your House.

**Mr. Todd J. McCarthy:** It's my pleasure to welcome to the House today in the members' gallery Mr. Michael Yermus, a leading Ontario trial lawyer and advocate for our fellow citizens, and his cousin—professional excellence runs in the family—Dr. Ryan Yermus, a dedicated physician specializing in family medicine. Welcome to the House, to these gentlemen.

**Ms. Bhutila Karpoche:** It is my pleasure to welcome my constituents to the House. We have Jill Zelmanovits



and Helen DeBoni, mother and sister of Luke DeBoni, a student of Runnymede Junior and Senior Public School who is a legislative page with us here. Helen is also a former page. Welcome.

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** I'm pleased to welcome to Queen's Park this morning my constituency assistant Tina Gates. I'd also like to welcome constituents Aalanna Ramona Rusnak and her mom Jessica. In 2022, Aalanna was crowned Miss Teenage Ontario Southwest. She went on to become Miss Teenage Canada and will be travelling to Carousel later this year to compete on the world stage. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Continuing with the introduction by my colleague, we have Jeremy Inglis, Mark MacDonald, Jeremy Parkin, Kent Readman, Brent Thomas, Jason Whiteley, Mark Tishman and Karthik Swaminathan, all from the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, and I'm asking you to join them tonight at the reception from 5:00 to 7:00 in the dining room.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I also want to extend a welcome to the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. I look forward to meeting with OAFIC past president Chief Mark MacDonald, Chief Bryce Luker and Chief Ryan Murrell this afternoon.

I also want to welcome to the House from Save the Minden ER, Patrick Porzuczek. I also want to welcome from Minden a number of business owners who have come to make their case: Mathew Renda, Mike McKeon, Dennis Pennie, Mark Dracup, Ian Myers, Richard Cooper and Jane Cooper. Welcome to your House.

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

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** I'd like to say good morning to page Silas Dixon, who is the captain today, and to welcome his family: Joanna Dixon, his mother; father Ross Dixon; his sister Imogen Dixon and grandmother Sylvia Dixon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** I wanted to welcome a great friend of mine and the former MP for Nipissing, Jay Aspin.

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Nancy O'Brien and Stephanie Dobbs, two of the heroes who brought forward sexual harassment issues in the city of Ottawa, as well as Emily McIntosh and Farah Grozelle, from The Women of Ontario Say No, who are advocating for the elimination of sexual abuse and harassment at municipal city councils across the province.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I would like to introduce and welcome to the House Leslie Ferrari, president and board member, Golf Ontario; David Herrera, board member; and we've already introduced Jay Aspin, former Conservative MP for Nipissing–Timiskaming. Welcome to the House.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** I'd like to welcome my good friend John Tomczak, the president of the Canadian Polish Congress; my mentor, Jerry Barycki, the president of the Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor; as well as Wladyslaw Reymont Foundation president, Mr. Kazimierz Chrapka, and the entire Polish delegation. Welcome to your House.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's a pleasure today to welcome friends from Sarnia–Lambton: the mother of our page captain today, Cindy, Stephanie Lobsinger in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask our pages to assemble. It is my pleasure and honour to introduce this group of legislative pages.

From the riding of Markham–Unionville, Christopher Au; from Ajax, Ameer Awan; from Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte, Aananya Bakshi; from the riding of Parkdale–High Park, Luke DeBoni; from the riding of Oakville, Pierre Santiago Diaz; from Don Valley West, Silas Dixon; from London West, Arisa Golder; from Etobicoke Centre, Sara Gomes; from Scarborough North, Dina Hashimi; from Windsor–Tecumseh, Giulia Izgherian; from Ottawa South, Tara Kaushik; from Simcoe–Grey, Solomon Kogan; from the riding of Nipissing, Amara Lesanthan; from Mississauga–Lakeshore, Halle Ma; from Sarnia–Lambton, Cynthia Rayson; from Markham–Thornhill, Evelyn Su; from Davenport, Sally Tabachnick; from Scarborough–Guildwood, Shlokh Uplopwar; from Toronto–St. Paul's, Milan Viswanathan; and from Brampton North, Raisha Zaman.

Welcome, pages.

*Applause.*

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## INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Thank you, Speaker. I am seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 100(a)(iv), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to speak on second reading of private member's Bill 5.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 100(a)(iv), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to speak on second reading of private member's Bill 5. Agreed? Agreed.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Good morning, Speaker. Dozens of business owners from Minden are here at Queen's Park today to continue to push this government to keep their emergency room open. Under this government's leadership it's set to close the day after tomorrow. It's closing at a time when the seasonal population in the area soars with kids' summer camps, cottagers and, of course, tourists. It means thousands of Ontarians will have to travel farther

and farther away just to access emergency services. This creates a domino effect on the ERs in those communities, putting even more strain on an already strained system.

Speaker, will the Premier tell the business owners here today that he will keep their emergency room open?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply for the government, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I can only imagine how challenging this decision was for the Haliburton Highlands Health Services leadership and board. But I want to reassure the people of Minden and that community that I am confident that this decision was not taken lightly.

Having said that, I want to highlight, through my supplementary, the many different programs that are available to community hospitals across Ontario as we work with them as partners to make sure that we have programs and incentives available to many accessing programs, including directing the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and the College of Nurses of Ontario to quickly expedite those internationally educated graduates who want to train and work in the province of Ontario. I will share further examples in my supplementary.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, just to be very clear, the closure of the ER department in Minden is the closure of the hospital there. That's it.

It's about responsibility. This government has been in office for five long years and they continue to skip out on their responsibilities to the people of this province.

Today, the Conservatives are turning their backs on Minden families, on cottagers, on kids in summer camps. They're turning their backs on local business owners, some of whom closed up shop today just to be here. The Conservatives are choosing to help private health care companies, some of which are run by this Conservative Party's donors, instead of local job creators who are here today.

Speaker, will the Premier take some responsibility and start putting the needs of Ontarians ahead of his profiteering insiders?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Again, I will remind you that hospitals are independent corporations governed by their own board of directors who are duly elected from their communities that they serve.

But I want to talk about the programs that are available to the 140 hospitals corps that have been using them. Listen, if Haliburton Highlands decides to look and explore some of these programs, we are obviously going to work with them, as we have with every other hospital.

Last year, through our efforts and the efforts of Ontario Health, we were able to avert nearly 1,500 emergency room shift closures that were prevented because of the work that we have been doing with Ontario Health, with

our health care partners and in the ministry. So when we talk about the 911 models of care, where paramedics can take individuals to facilities other than an emergency department—it could be a long-term-care facility; it could be a palliative care facility—dedicated officers—

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

The final supplementary.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, this is the Minister of Health. The buck stops with her.

Cities like Kingston, Kitchener, Owen Sound, Windsor, Cornwall—it isn't just rural areas that are suffering, either. They're all facing alarming shortages of family physicians. This isn't normal, Speaker, and it shouldn't be normal. Shamefully, this government's misguided actions are only going to make it worse, as doctors leave the public system to work at private for-profit clinics.

Speaker, to the Premier: Will he invest in the public system and get Ontarians the care they deserve instead of selling off their health to the highest bidder?

*Interjections.*

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

The Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Not only will we invest, we are investing, and these programs are available to community hospitals across Ontario: dedicated off-load nursing programs that allow nurses, respiratory technicians and paramedics to be hired so that those paramedics who are bringing individuals into an emergency department can get back out onto the road very quickly. There are many programs like that: the Emergency Department Peer-to-Peer Program, the Emergency Department Locum Program, the extern program. We have these programs available, and many hospitals have taken advantage of them.

The Premier often says that we will have the backs of our stakeholders, of our partners. We are doing that in the Ministry of Health, and we will continue to do that. As I said, if Haliburton Highlands decides or wishes to explore any of these programs, we are happy to be a willing partner, as we have with so many hospitals across Ontario.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** This question is for the Minister of Transportation. Speaker, the minister has been repeatedly warned about problems with the Eglinton Crosstown public-private partnership. She was warned by the Auditor General. She was warned by the experience with the Ottawa LRT. She was warned by transit experts. These warnings go back years. She had a chance to do something about them.

Yesterday, when I asked the minister why she ignored all those warnings, she blamed everybody else. How can the public expect things to get better when the minister refuses to take responsibility for the Eglinton Crosstown P3 fiasco?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** I've made it very clear that our government is focused on making sure that the

Eglinton Crosstown LRT opens, so that it is ready for commuters as soon as possible. But our number one priority is that when it opens, it is safe for commuters and it is safe for transit operators. Mr. Speaker, that is the number one lesson that we learned from the public inquiry into the Ottawa LRT.

I have made my expectations clear to Metrolinx. I expect them to get a credible schedule from CTS as soon as possible. But Mr. Speaker, safety is our number one priority, and we will not waver from that. It is essential that the service is safe for everyone to use. We are focused on getting it done, and we will.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Let me tell you, Speaker, you don't have to go all the way to Paris to find out how public transit is built. Ontario used to build big things. We used to build them well. Canada's first subway, the Yonge line, took just five years to build. The Bloor line took six. You didn't need complicated P3s overseen by self-serving private consultants and private financiers. It was public infrastructure built by the public sector to serve the public good, and the cost per kilometre of subway, adjusted for inflation, was barely one tenth of what it now costs under this government.

Why is the minister still defending these costly and risky private contracts instead of restoring public delivery of transit infrastructure?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Why does the Leader of the Opposition stand in this House as a defender of public transit when our government has put forward five new subway lines and LRT lines since we were elected in 2019, the largest transit expansion anywhere in North America? And when the Leader of the Opposition and her party had the chance to support it, they voted against it.

1050

Mr. Speaker, our plan was endorsed by city council, by York region and by the federal government, who recognizes our plan as so nationally significant that they agreed to fund 40% of the cost of our GTA and Hamilton transit plan.

The members opposite stand up in this House and claim to be defenders of transit, but when it actually comes to voting in favour of it—whether it's for operational support during the pandemic, which they couldn't bring themselves to support, or if it's new lines that are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. The final supplementary.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** To be clear, Speaker, we will continue to vote against their terrible legislation and their terrible plans because it is bad for Ontario. It is bad for Ontario.

It is ironic that the Liberal obsession with transit privatization has been embraced and, in fact, expanded by the Conservative government. Metrolinx is now overrun with private consultants. They are embedded as vice-presidents. They're managing the Eglinton Crosstown. There are even private consultants managing other private consultants. The problem with outsourcing everything to

private consultants is that, over time, the government loses the ability to do things like build transit. This minister can't even manage her own consultants.

While the minister jets off to Paris, people here in Ontario are stuck waiting for transit that will not arrive. Why hasn't the minister been able to deliver the transit that people need?

*Interjections.*

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

The Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** I cannot believe that the Leader of the Opposition just stood there, with pride, saying that she will vote again and again after transit expansion is presented to this House. Toronto city council endorsed our plan by a vote of 22 to three. They knew that our plan was the right one for the city of Toronto. York regional council voted for our plan overwhelmingly because they knew it was the right one for York region. But the Leader of the Opposition? She knows better. She will make sure that she and her caucus consistently vote against the plans we bring forward.

In terms of progress, we are more than halfway through to tunnelling on the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension and halfway through tunnelling on Scarborough. We've got shovels in the ground on the Ontario Line and we've announced the RFQ for the Yonge North subway extension. Our government, under the leadership of our Premier, has made more progress on transit building and transit expansion in this province than ever before.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Thank you, Speaker. Through you to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: There are thousands of workers, including over 2,000 CUPE members, working for Peel region in jobs like long-term care, public health, public works and paramedics—workers this Premier called heroes during the pandemic. These workers have crucial knowledge of municipal operations and have earned a seat at the table in any discussions guiding a migration of services to constituent municipalities.

Yesterday, we learned that the government is skipping the committee process entirely for Bill 112, so these workers will not have the chance to have their concerns about this bill addressed before it's passed and the government won't get the benefit of their expertise to improve the bill.

Will the minister commit to putting a CUPE worker representative on the transition board, as requested by the Canadian Union of Public Employees? Yes or no?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** It's a very interesting question coming from the member opposite. Again, what we're seeing from the NDP is that they want to contract out their work, of course, to CUPE, and we're not going to do that.

It's interesting, we had the opportunity to debate this bill last night, colleagues. I know that my entire caucus

was here debating that bill, but ironically, as soon as the legislative dining room closed last night, the NDP called it a night, closed the place down, put no more speakers up, fast-tracked it and we're voting on it today. You know why? Because it's the right thing. We're going to start to remove those obstacles that are getting in the way of building homes. And just like the Leader of the Opposition said, they don't want to build; it's no, no, no. Try voting yes, yes, yes and get shovels in the ground for new housing, new transit and transportation—

*Interjections.*

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

Restart the clock. The supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** This project of dissolving a region is a massive undertaking and people have a lot of valid and important questions, and now, without a committee process, the public won't get the chance to have those questions addressed. In particular, Peel regional workers and residents of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon are concerned about jobs and public services.

Now, the minister has promised there will be no service disruptions during the transition, but will the minister commit that there will be no disruption to public services and assure citizens and workers that there will be no privatization or contracting out of public services? Yes or no?

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

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I do want to thank the member opposite for the question.

Look, the region of Peel includes some of the largest and fastest-growing communities in Canada, and they're poised for massive and significant growth over this next decade. In the region of Peel, as a second layer of government, municipalities and everyone that wants to build housing have had to have that red tape, that bureaucracy when it comes to getting housing built. As we know, we desperately need to get a million and a half homes built by 2031, and by the dissolution of the region of Peel, this is one great way for us to be able to do that.

Now if the legislation passes, as you know, we are intending to appoint a transition board for the region of Peel and their advice to the province is going to be on a range of restructuring matters, including service delivery, allocation of assets and liabilities, labour relations, long-term financial sustainability, among many others. I ask all members of this House to vote yes.

## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mr. Will Bouma:** My question is for the Minister of Colleges and Universities. Research at Ontario's post-secondary institutions is critical in strengthening the innovation sector and supporting our economy. However, when it comes to innovation, Ontario lags behind other jurisdictions. Unfortunately, this puts our province at a disadvantage in maintaining a competitive edge. Investments in Ontario's post-secondary institutions are urgently

needed in order to elevate our status as a global leader in research and innovation.

Can the minister please explain how our government is supporting research and innovation so that Ontario can compete and thrive in a global economy?

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Thank you to my colleague for that great question. Yesterday, alongside the Minister of Energy and our PAs, I was pleased to announce our government's critical investment to support the expansion of the McMaster nuclear reactor, the largest research reactor in Canada.

Speaker, through an investment of \$6.8 million, we are helping McMaster University scale up their nuclear reactor's operations to 24 hours a day, five days a week, to increase the quantity and number of isotopes the reactor produces. What does that mean for Ontario? It means more opportunities for expanded research and development in strategic areas like advanced materials, medical isotopes, clean energy and small modular reactors. And it means countless quality jobs that will support the economy in southern Ontario, all while positioning our province as a leader in the global nuclear medicine market and our researchers' reputations across the globe.

Speaker, unlike the Liberals who oversaw the fruits of millions of dollars of taxpayer-funded research sold off to the highest foreign bidder, our government will continue to foster Ontario-based research and development.

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

**Mr. Will Bouma:** It's such excellent news to hear about the expanded research and production capabilities at the McMaster nuclear reactor. I remember, when I had the tour, just the incredible work that they do right there, and it's remarkable and encouraging news that this funding will also lead to an increase in production of medical isotopes that are used to treat cancer.

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, over 230,000 Canadians were diagnosed with cancer just last year. For this reason, it is all the more critical that our government continues to make investments that will support and improve Ontario's health care system. Can the minister please elaborate on how this investment by our government will impact the health and wellness of people across the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Thank you again to the member for that question. This investment into the McMaster nuclear reactor is not only beneficial to the economy and research, but it's also critical to life-saving medical technology by producing medical isotopes, an essential part of modern health care.

**1100**

Canadian clinicians rely on access to nearly two dozen different medical isotopes to treat many different types of medical conditions, including heart disease and cancer. That's why this work will have such a wide-ranging impact. It's hard not to have been touched in some way by these conditions.

The medical benefits we hope to see will be unparalleled. The reactor will increase medical isotope

production by three times what it is now, ensuring that Ontarians will have earlier access to advanced cancer therapies.

More importantly, Speaker, it will save lives, and it will take us one step closer to improving health outcomes of those impacted by a cancer diagnosis. It is the strong research that Ontario's post-secondary institutions are conducting that is helping advance—

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

#### ONTARIO PLACE

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the many Torontonians who walk, run, cycle and enjoy Ontario Place every day were stopped in their tracks. Between West Island and Trillium Park, a fence blocking public access has been erected suddenly and with no notice. This isn't the first time something like this has happened. In February, marina tenants were forced out with no notice.

Speaker, the Conservative government keeps acting like Ontario Place is a done deal, but the redevelopment plans haven't been approved. The government doesn't even have a permit yet.

Why is this Conservative government blocking people's access to the waterfront, a public space?

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

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Mr. Speaker, only the NDP would be offended by a measure that's intended to keep people safe. That fence was installed to protect emergency vehicles. Our government has been very clear that we have awarded a contract for the site servicing work. It is anticipated to start in the next very short while, and so it is our obligation to protect the pedestrians who do go to Ontario Place.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are bringing it back to life. Ontario Place will become a place where it's not just 50 people who enjoy the site, but four million to six million people on an annual basis, 365 days of the year.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Spadina–Fort York: supplementary.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Again to the Premier: This government has closed the West Island of Ontario Place to the public even before a building permit has been issued.

Like everything else about the government's plans to give 650 million taxpayer dollars to a private, for-profit luxury spa that's on public parkland, the timeline of this entire project is suspect. In September 2018, Therme hired Conservative lobbyists. Two months later, the government announced their plan to redevelop Ontario Place. In May 2019, the government requested proposals to redevelop Ontario Place. Simultaneously, they changed regulations to exempt projects like Therme's from an environment assessment.

As the timeline suggests, did Therme have an inside track before the government even considered privatizing Ontario Place?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** What they fail to recognize is that if we don't do the site servicing work and the shoreline enhancements, there won't be an island to enjoy years from now. There are erosion and flooding issues.

But that being said, Mr. Speaker, we have three wonderful tenants that are investing hundreds of millions of dollars to bring the site back to life so that four million to six million people come there to enjoy it with their families. Some 2,500 permanent jobs will be created, and with greater coordination with Exhibition Place and the city of Toronto, this will be a hot spot for people to go.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that the members opposite are literally raising this issue today.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. I'm having difficulty hearing members on both sides of the House who have the floor because of the level of noise on both sides of the House. I will start calling out members by riding name if this continues. Thank you.

Start the clock.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Yesterday, I had a question for Minister Smith; today I have a question for another Minister Smith. Speaker, there's almost as many Smiths as there are Liberals here.

My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. The forest sector is critical to Ontario's economic strength and to the communities it supports throughout the province. This sector alone provides more than 149,000 jobs and helps to generate billions in revenue for our province.

Unfortunately, the previous Liberal government all but ignored the valuable contribution of the forest sector, much to the detriment of rural, remote and northern Ontario communities. That's why our government must act now to create the conditions where forest businesses in the north can operate efficiently and be competitive in the global market.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what actions our government is taking to strengthen the forest sector?

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** Thanks to the member from Peterborough–Kawartha—a.k.a. God's country, a.k.a. "Go Petes"—for the question.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, our government is committed to taking meaningful action to support our commitments to support the forest sector, its workers and the communities that depend on it. No government in the history of this province has done more to attract investment, drive innovation and create good jobs.

It doesn't stop, Mr. Speaker. That's why the Ontario government is creating the new forest biomass program. This program will provide an investment of \$19.6 million in funding to projects that will expand wood harvest from crown forest. Biomass includes mill by-products from manufacturing, bark, shavings, sawdust as well as trees and above-ground tree parts that aren't suited to the production of other forest products.

One of these regions that will benefit in northwest Ontario is the beautiful region of Atikokan. I was pleased to make that announcement—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. And the supplementary question?

**Mr. Dave Smith:** A previous Liberal member actually referred to the north as “no man’s land,” but we know that Ontario’s world-class forest sector plays a key role in our government’s vision to build Ontario, creating good-paying jobs, boosting economic growth and supporting communities across all of our province.

With an abundant supply of forest biomass products in Ontario, that’s why it’s so vital that we support this emerging industry and its innovators. With so many possibilities, it’s essential that our government explore all options to create opportunities to address the untapped economic growth in northern communities.

Speaker, can the minister please expand on how the forest biomass program will drive innovation in the forest industry?

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** With by-products from one industry segment feeding the demand from another, we can build and expand new industries—an industry generating less waste, where no opportunity goes unrealized. This program will support projects to harvest more wood from crown forests, increase forest sector job creation, increase regional economic growth and find new uses for wood in collaboration with business, industry and Indigenous communities. In short, Ontario will be a leader in innovative uses of forest biomass.

Early this summer, the program will be open to applications for businesses, municipalities, Indigenous communities and not-for-profit organizations located in Ontario that have a project to expand the use of forest biomass and enhance the forest biomass supply chain. Speaker, Ontario’s forestry sector is primed for growth, good jobs and innovation. We’re building a forestry sector unlike anything this province has ever seen.

#### STUDENT SAFETY

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Yesterday at the York Catholic District School Board, they voted 6 to 4 to not fly the rainbow flag. This was based on a recommendation that came directly from their committee—the gender, sexuality and Catholic education committee. That committee recommended that they do fly the flag, saying that it would be consistent with the pastoral mission of the Catholic church.

We know that suicide is the leading cause of death for young people, and that number is multiplied many times for the 2SLGBT community. We’ve seen the anti-2SLGBT hate statistics rise in Ontario by 64%, and yet this government remains silent. We need to know: When will the minister say something, make a statement, and what will you intend to do to keep students safe?

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

The Minister of Education.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Mr. Speaker, we have been clear and consistent since this issue first arose. Our message to children in our schools, particularly from LGBTQ+, is that we see them, we value them and we are proud as a government to stand with them, now more than ever.

Mr. Speaker, we have been consistent on this issue, making clear our position that Pride is something that we can rally behind as a Parliament, that every child in a publicly funded school should be supported, should feel affirmed and should feel safe—I do agree. That’s been our position in the province since the issue arose, and we will continue to make that case. Mr. Speaker, we’re going to continue as a government to actively participate in Pride and what it represents: universal love for every child in the province.

1110

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The supplementary? The member for Ottawa West–Nepean.

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** The minister is more than happy to dictate rules and practices to school boards when it involves funding that he’s not providing, like on mental health and reading and math. That’s what Bill 98 is all about. But suddenly, here’s something that the minister could do that would actually protect kids, that doesn’t require any resources, and suddenly he’s powerless to act.

Why doesn’t the minister just simply direct all schools in Ontario to fly the Pride flag?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Mr. Speaker, we’ve been clear and consistent in our expectations and our hope. We believe the Pride flag is something we can rally behind. It represents a welcome inclusive message for every child. We know that those kids face disproportionate impacts and challenges in schools, which is why the government, the Premier and our entire party will continue to be at Pride visibly, actively celebrating with the LGBTQ community. We will continue to stand with those kids. We will continue to encourage school boards to do their part to make sure every child in Ontario feels safe, affirmed and respected.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** Last week, I visited Minden and joined the rally with residents who are fighting to save their ER. Here’s what I heard. People are losing faith in this province’s health care system and they’re worried. They’re scared for their community and angry that they’re being left behind. In less than 48 hours, residents will be at least 20 minutes further from emergency care. Closing an ER is more than just inconvenience; it can be the difference between life and death.

The people of Minden, Haliburton and Kawartha Lakes are about to experience the very real consequences of this government’s Bill 124 and other irresponsible decisions regarding our health care system. My question to the Premier: Minden hospital is publicly funded. Instead of simply letting Haliburton health services take the heat for this decision, will this Conservative government take accountability and admit what Minden and the rest of us know, that the Minden ER is closing under their watch?

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

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Well, again, I will remind the member opposite that while this decision I'm sure was very challenging for Haliburton Highlands' leadership, it was a local decision based on consolidating those two emergency departments to make sure that the services were provided.

And I have to talk about the investments that we are doing in the province of Ontario in health care. From the beginning, we've talked about short-term, long-term, medium-term goals that get us to a place where we have sufficient health human resources. And frankly, Speaker, this is not just a health issue. We have a Minister of Colleges and Universities and we have a Minister of Labour who have worked very, very hard to ensure that we have sufficient capacity within our system, whether it is training young people in our schools with trades, whether it is new residency spots that are available now in the province of Ontario. Frankly, under the Liberal and NDP governments previously, they were cutting residencies—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The supplementary question?

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** The people in Minden—some of whom are here today—Haliburton and Kawartha Lakes are being left behind by their MPP and this government. Did the Minister of Health even ask HHS why they're doing this? There has been no community consultation. They have not talked with doctors nor hospital staff. And the government has offered no justification for putting the people of this large geographical area at risk. The HHS plan for the Haliburton hospital, which will have to serve the 13,000 people who use Minden's ER, is not ready. Doctor and nurse shifts for the busy summer season just a few short weeks away have not been filled. The Minden hospital has their shifts filled all the way to September and did not close once last summer.

Yesterday, in response to a question from my Don Valley East colleague, the Minister of Health offered up Bill 60. My question to the Minister of Health: Why is she not demanding answers from HHS and intervening in their decision to close the Minden ER?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** While the Liberal member opposite will assign blame to the local hospital leadership, we are providing assistance, and we are doing that through expansions of residency fees, which I will again remind—the NDP government and the Liberal government both cut residency positions in the province of Ontario. It is our government that has expanded it—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa South, come to order.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** It is our government that directed the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the College of Nurses of Ontario to quickly expedite, assess and ultimately approve and license internationally educated graduates who want to practise in the province of Ontario—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Bill 60 has an as-of-right—first in Canada—that allows clinicians who have a licence in other Canadian jurisdictions to come immediately to Ontario and practice.

We're doing the work; you're assigning blame.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. I'm not sure if you heard: The member for Brampton North, come to order. The member for Ottawa South, come to order.

Start the clock. The next question.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Brian Riddell:** My question is for the Associate Minister of Housing. Throughout Ontario, individuals and families are encountering challenges relating to housing availability and affordability. Recently, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced additional funding by our government that will help to support community housing providers across the province. This funding has the potential to make meaningful impact by providing much-needed housing for vulnerable individuals and families in my local community of Cambridge and the region of Waterloo.

Can the associate minister please provide further details on how our government is helping to increase the availability of affordable housing options for those most in need?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I do want to thank the great member for asking that very, very important question. Our government recognizes the urgent need for affordable housing right across our province, and that's why last week, together with the federal government, we announced a joint investment of over \$46 million to support the creation of 267 new affordable housing units across Ontario.

Through the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative, funding will be used for new construction, repairs and maintenance to sustain and expand community housing options. For example, Indwell's St. Peter's supportive housing project in Kitchener will receive \$5.5 million to develop 41 affordable and supportive apartments for those on the region's housing wait-list. This investment demonstrates our government's commitment to tackling the housing supply crisis and improving the lives of vulnerable Ontarians.

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

**Mr. Brian Riddell:** Every person in Ontario deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. Our government's continued investments in affordable housing projects truly demonstrate our firm commitment to addressing the housing supply and affordability crisis. This recent announcement is just one example of how our government is developing partnerships and innovative

solutions when it comes to important issues related to housing affordability. However, we know that more action is needed now, and that housing availability and affordability must remain a priority for our government.

Can the associate minister please expand on how this additional funding will help support housing providers in addressing the needs of vulnerable individuals and families?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** Once again, thank you to the great member from Cambridge for the question. As the member notes, increasing our housing supply requires partnerships and innovative solutions. Our government is collaborating closely with the federal government through initiatives like the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative to repair, regenerate and expand community housing so tenants can live in a home that is affordable.

The \$46 million announced can also be used to support community housing providers whose original program arrangements are expiring and help them to become more sustainable. We also consulted with local housing providers and municipalities to understand where support is most urgently needed and strategically targeted groups like those Indwell will serve through tailored support and unit design.

Speaker, I'm confident that these 267 units will make a very big difference for those who need an affordable place to live close to home, because when community thrives, Ontario thrives.

#### ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. The city of Toronto has passed a resolution calling for its growing electricity needs to be met through efficiency and conservation. It has formally rejected the ramping up of gas-fired power in this city. Credible studies show that we can deliver Ontario's energy needs through efficiency and conservation at a much lower price than gas-fired power. That's what Toronto wants.

1120

The minister has the power to reject the proposal to ramp up gas burning at the Portlands Energy Centre which will increase air pollution and accelerate the climate crisis as well as drive up the cost of electricity.

Will the minister protect the public from higher electricity prices, from more air pollution and from the climate crisis by rejecting this gas-fired proposal for ramping up burning in the city?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the parliamentary assistant and member for Kitchener South-Hespeler.

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** Every day in the paper we see more excellent news about the jobs that are coming to Ontario, the manufacturing that is coming to Ontario. This province was a ghost town when it comes to jobs, when it comes to manufacturing, and it's alive again. It's alive largely because of our work on the energy file. We directed the OEB to procure 4,000 megawatts of new generation, including 1,500 megawatts of natural gas.

The member opposite talks about driving up electricity prices for consumers. When asked about phasing out natural gas by 2030, the estimation was it would add approximately \$100 to the average consumer's electricity bill, making cost of living unbearable for Ontarians and also driving business out of this province—and frankly, that is not something that is ever going to be acceptable to this government. We foster jobs; we foster innovation; we foster clean energy.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. Members will please take their seats.

Restart the clock. Supplementary question?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, again to the Minister of Energy: This is a really simple question. Energy efficiency and conservation are cheaper than burning gas, right? They put people to work. They reduce the cost of electricity, less air pollution, less pressure on the climate. It's really cost-effective to do this. The IESO says it's cost-effective to do it. The IESO says it's reliable to invest in efficiency and conservation.

The city has rejected the gas-burning approach. Your ministry has said, "We will respect municipalities." You have the power to reject this, to take the course of action that's less expensive and better for environment. Will you do so?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Again, I'll remind the members to make their comments through the chair.

The member for Kitchener South-Hespeler can reply.

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** Again, I do, of course, find it ironic to hear the words about "expensive" coming from the opposition when we have a member in the party who so actively supports an increased carbon tax.

I think the issue here is the opposition continuing to fail to understand the complex interplay when it comes to a greener planet and greener energy. We are producing clean green steel here in Ontario to keep our manufacturing industry on board. What the opposition doesn't understand is that these products will come from elsewhere. Under our monitoring, these products come from Ontario, made to the highest environmental standards possible.

Understanding a greener economy is looking at the whole picture, not just one ideological, unfounded perspective.

#### ONTARIO FARMERS

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. My office has been overrun with emails from farmers from across Ontario who are very concerned with Bill 97 and the provincial planning statement.

Speaker, members opposite must be getting the same message, because yesterday, in this House, the Premier seemed to be backing down. I guess the question remains: How do we go from zero severances to three per farm? This government's preoccupation with building houses is clouding judgment as this proposed policy puts over 510,000 acres of Ontario farmland in jeopardy, and in



Oxford county, they've concluded in a recent report that 10% of its prime agricultural land could be lost forever. Farmers don't want to hear how important it is to build these houses. They see the value in one succession planning lot, but three?

Speaker, through you to the minister: What was the significance of the three lots to begin with, and how will this government proceed on this policy?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to rise in this House today to share that the purpose of moving Ontario forward is that we're excelling on all cylinders, and that includes our agri-food sector. It means making sure that we have employees and family members who want to work on the farm close to home so they have access to that farm. But the most important part in all of this conversation today is to recognize that our government put forward a consultation on the provincial policy statement. The whole concept behind a consultation is that you position; you put out ideas so that you can hear people's perspectives and bring them back and understand where priorities lie. And in that spirit, I am so pleased to share with you, as the Premier shared yesterday, that the live-stock commodity organizations and other organizations, as well, came forward, exercised their respectful voice—

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

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** While I appreciate the answer, consultation after the fact is really a moot point. This winter, I introduced my first private member's bill, a bill designed to protect Ontario's most productive lands, a bill supported by Ontario's top farm groups and everyone in this House, except those purporting to be pro-farmer. Before I introduced my bill, I met with farmers, I met with farm organizations and I solicited their opinion ahead of time.

In the past few days, we hear this government backing down on the original proposal, but where will we land? A government in touch with rural Ontario would have known this was not a good idea to float in the first place. So with all due respect, farmers and the people of Ontario don't need more time. They don't need until August 6 to tell this government how they feel about this policy.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Will this government announce today that their trial balloon has been popped and will they back down on this policy?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. Order.

To reply, the Premier.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank the member for the question. You know, we came out all in good intentions talking to farmers. As I mentioned yesterday, the number one concern is that the kids are leaving the farm and they have no place to live. There's many jurisdictions that won't even allow the farming families to build a home for their kids.

The other big concern, and I mentioned it yesterday in the House—I talked to a farmer yesterday, and he has 100

temporary foreign workers that have no place to live. So we're listening to the farmers, and as I mentioned yesterday, again, we sat down with the farmers, all the associations, and they thanked us. They thanked us for always having their back. They said that there's never been a government that supported the farmers more than we did. We're going to listen to the farmers, Mr. Speaker.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. David Smith:** My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. All seniors in Ontario deserve to be treated with dignity and to receive the quality of care that they need and deserve. Under the previous Liberal government, many issues in long-term-care infrastructure were not properly addressed. After the people of Ontario elected our government in 2018, there has been a renewed focus on addressing our health care infrastructure.

While we have seen many improvements, there is still a need to increase the capacity in our long-term-care homes. Our government must continue to expand on the critical investments made because of the Premier's leadership.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please provide an update on our government's plans to build long-term-care infrastructure in our province?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you very much to the member. The government is currently making an unprecedented amount of investment in long-term-care facilities across the province. Last Thursday, I joined the Premier and the Minister of Long-Term Care to open the doors of a new long-term-care home in Toronto. Humber Meadows will bring 320 new beds to the residents of Toronto and has opened next to Humber River Hospital. The location of the home itself is so critically important because this long-term-care home now will be integrated into the broader health care system in the province of Ontario, and it will allow the long-term-care home to have additional services within the home, such as dialysis, to make sure that the seniors are taken care of and have the best service possible.

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

**Mr. David Smith:** It is extremely important that Ontario continues to build up our critical infrastructure to address our province's needs. The previous Liberal government failed to plan ahead for the needs of seniors in our province. Former Premier Kathleen Wynne even admitted that her Liberal government did not do enough when it came to improving long-term-care infrastructure in our province. That is why it is so critical for our government to make critical investments now, to ensure we are meeting the infrastructure needs for our province's future.

1130

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is building more long-term-care infrastructure faster for the people of our province?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. If the government House leader and the member for Ottawa South want to have a conversation, it would be appreciated if they would take it out into the hallway.

Start the clock. The response, the Minister of Infrastructure.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you very much to the member. Mr. Speaker, this long-term-care home was part of Ontario's accelerated build pilot program, which was part of our government's \$6.4-billion commitment to build 30,000 new beds and, of course, upgrade 28,000 long-term-care beds in the province of Ontario. Now, the whole concept of the accelerated build program was to leverage hospital-owned land, which is always a challenge in urban settings, to use provincial tools and resources in order to make sure that we can get the approvals necessary and use accelerated construction techniques.

We built a long-term-care home in 13 months in Ajax. We built a long-term-care home in Toronto, Humber Meadows, within 28 months. We have two more long-term-care homes which will open very, very soon. But the most important point of this, Mr. Speaker, is we can't take eight years to build a long-term-care home in the province of Ontario. We need to do better.

#### SHELTER SERVICES

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** My question is to the Premier. Maria, her husband and their four-year-old daughter have been living at the Christie refugee centre, a shelter, since February. The family found a rental home, applied for funding to help cover the cost of rent and were getting ready to move in when they were told that funding to this rent supplement program had been cut by the Conservative government and the program is no longer available to them.

Premier, what is your plan to help families like Maria's move out of the shelter system into rental homes so they can build their lives here in Canada?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Part of our plan has been, right from the beginning—part of the plan is that we understood how important it was to build houses across the province of Ontario, but not just single-family detached homes. We wanted to ensure that we had more purpose-built rentals because we were hearing stories like this on and on and on again.

One of the things the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has raised is how important it was that the federal government continue to contribute to the province of Ontario, but that they actually equalize that support. As you know, Mr. Speaker, they have reduced our funding by—I think it's about \$500 million when it comes to the housing support program in the province of Ontario. So I'd ask the member opposite if she could actually—the opposition could do us a favour. The NDP, of course, hold the balance of power in Ottawa, like they did here. If the NDP in Ottawa could do us a favour, if they could ask

Jagmeet Singh to inquire with the federal government if he will equalize and send us that cheque for \$500 million that is so important to the people of the province of Ontario so that we can continue to provide this valuable support.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'm asking what this government is going to be doing to help people in Ontario. The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit helps people in shelters find permanent homes by helping cover the cost of rent. This year, the Conservatives cut funding to this program by 23%, at a time when the demand for shelter services has never been higher because the shelter system is at capacity.

The city is asking for \$20 million in funding from the Ontario Conservative government to help shelter residents move into permanent rental homes so they can rebuild their lives. Can this government say yes to the city of Toronto's request?

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

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I do want to thank the member for the question. Our Community Housing Renewal Strategy is providing over \$4.4 billion in funding dedicated to sustaining, repairing and growing community housing and addressing homelessness. And as part of this, \$1.2 billion through the social services relief fund is to improve housing and homeless shelter solutions, as well as support vulnerable people. And in January 2022, we launched the Streamline Development Approval Fund that makes more than \$45 million available to Ontario's 39 largest municipalities, including Toronto, to help them implement these initiatives. This is a government that has been providing and will continue to provide more than \$936 million in much-needed funds to municipal service managers and Indigenous program administrators in 2023-24 and 2024-25 through many of these initiatives. It's this government that's getting it done. We—

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

#### FIRST RESPONDERS' MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

#### SERVICES DE SANTÉ MENTALE POUR PREMIERS INTERVENANTS

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** My question is to the Solicitor General. Our front-line police, fire and EMS professionals across Ontario are regularly exposed to traumatic events while responding to ever-increasingly complex and dangerous situations. This workplace stress and trauma takes an immeasurable toll on the physical and mental health of our dedicated front-line members. In the past, many attempted to cope with this trauma on their own and without professional help. Our first responders deserve to have access to the care and supports that they need when they need them.

Can the Solicitor General please explain what actions our government is taking to support the health and wellness of all front-line first responders?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** I want to thank my great friend from Chatham-Kent–Leamington for his question. And I'd again like to welcome the fire chiefs from Ontario who are with us here today.

Our heroes on the front line deserve nothing less than our respect and support, and our government will always do everything we can to support and to protect all those who need our help. We care about their safety and their security. That's why our government is investing over \$45 million over the next three years in programs that will focus on early intervention and provide access to specialized mental health services.

Monsieur le Président, je suis fier de soutenir nos policiers et nos pompiers et tous ceux qui assurent la sécurité de l'Ontario tous les jours.

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

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** It's so encouraging that our government is making real investments into mental health supports for our first responders. The situations encountered by our front-line officers are always unpredictable and often threatening. The need for specialized services and resources is urgent—and needed now more than ever.

Family members are also affected by the demands and occupational risks experienced by their loved ones who work as first responders. The mental health of families can also be impacted, particularly when the life of a first responder ends suddenly and tragically.

Can the Solicitor General please explain how our government plans to expand support for first responders and their families?

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** I want to thank my friend for the question. I really appreciate it. I agree with the member; it's important that our government continues to support our front-line officers, our first responders, our firefighters and their families every day.

I'm pleased that we've announced an additional \$9.6-million investment to support Runnymede Healthcare—and under the leadership of Premier Ford, we are moving forward with the construction of the Runnymede First Responders Post Traumatic Stress Injury Rehabilitation Centre in Caledon. We're proud of it because it is a first-of-its-kind, world-class facility—a place of respite. This will be a place of healing that is long overdue. Our government is committed to seeing this dream be a reality in the coming years, and we are determined to make this happen.

Mr. Speaker, a safe Ontario is a strong Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The next question. The member for Mushkegowuk–James Bay.

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** A strong Ontario is a safe Ontario—I agree with you, but that includes First Nations.

## FIRE SERVICES

### SERVICES D'INCENDIE

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** Premier, who can forget the tragic fire incident that took the life of a 10-year-old girl

in Peawanuck as well as others in Kiiwetinoong? These communities have been waiting years for appropriate fire suppression equipment to combat fires.

What did we learn from this? I received a call last week from Fort Albany because they don't have a functional fire truck. They currently can't suppress fires—only evacuate people and let the fire die out. We must equip communities up north.

**1140**

Premier, what will your government do to get a new fire truck in Fort Albany and ensure all First Nations have proper firefighting equipment to avoid another tragedy?

*Interjections.*

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

To reply, the Solicitor General.

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we stand with all communities across Ontario. We had terrible tragedies in Pikangikum, as the member knows, earlier this year. I've spoken to Chief Shirley Keeper many times. This is of importance to us, and we're going to continue to work co-operatively with the federal government—as the member knows we have to—at the community level to ensure there is no red tape in responding to fires.

Mr. Speaker, this is a multi-jurisdictional issue. Ontario will not stand by, and just as we were working with dispatch to help the communities of Pikangikum, we will always be there for everyone in Ontario.

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

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** J'apprécie la réponse, mais du « lip service », là, ça n'aide pas la situation. On a besoin d'action; ces communautés-là, elles ont besoin d'action. On a besoin de l'équipement maintenant. Est-ce qu'on attend qu'il y ait un autre décès dans nos communautés pour réagir—qu'on attende toujours?

Je demande au solliciteur général de faire son travail et de donner l'équipement nécessaire aux Premières Nations.

First Nations are 10 times more likely to die in a house fire than the rest of Canadians—and that's acceptable? I don't think so.

The situation is an urgent one. We simply cannot wait for another life to be lost.

Je vous demande, au gouvernement : faites la bonne chose. Do the right thing here.

Communities in Kiiwetinoong, communities in Mushkegowuk–James Bay are dying because we don't have the proper equipment for fire suppression.

So, Premier, will the government act now and ensure that communities are equipped with proper firefighting equipment in First Nations communities up north on the James Bay coast? They need help, they need equipment, and the government needs to act now.

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** Comme je l'ai déjà dit—and I've said it before: We are not standing by. We're not doing nothing. We're treating the safety of all Ontarians with great importance. After the terrible incident in Pikangikum, the Ontario fire marshal was immediately dispatched there. He brought smoke detectors. He brought

fire extinguishers. He brought other important equipment that was required then.

This is something we take seriously. The member knows this is a multi-jurisdictional issue. I will do whatever we can. Our government will do whatever we can to intercede with the federal government, and we will do the right thing. We will always represent everyone in Ontario to keep Ontario safe.

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

Two members have informed me they have points of order to raise. I recognize first the member for Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I just want to say it's so good to see so many red ties in this Legislature again. And I want to let my colleagues across the way know: ontarioliberal.ca. It's free to join, and you know where to find me.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** As you know, many are wearing maroon ties today in support of Ontario's representative at the Memorial Cup. I invite everyone to come down to the main staircase after question period to have our picture taken, and I do have extra ties if any of the independents to my left—because they are a party that cannot be named—would like to join us.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### HAZEL MCCALLION ACT (PEEL DISSOLUTION), 2023

### LOI HAZEL MCCALLION DE 2023 SUR LA DISSOLUTION DE PEEL

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to provide for the dissolution of The Regional Municipality of Peel / Projet de loi 112, Loi prévoyant la dissolution de la municipalité régionale de Peel.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.*

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

On May 29, 2023, Mrs. Tangri moved second reading of Bill 112, An Act to provide for the dissolution of The Regional Municipality of Peel.

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

## Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rasheed, Kaleed
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Rickford, Greg
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Riddell, Brian
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Blais, Stephen	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bowman, Stephanie	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Byers, Rick	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Calandra, Paul	Khanjin, Andrea	Schreiner, Mike
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	Learidi, Anthony	Skelly, Donna
Collard, Lucille	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, Graydon
Dixon, Jess	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Downey, Doug	McGregor, Graham	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Tangri, Nina
Flack, Rob	McNaughton, Monte	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Ford, Doug	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Michael D.	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fraser, John	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Parsa, Michael	Williams, Charmaine A.
Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalia	
Gill, Parm	Quinn, Nolan	

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

## Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harden, Joel	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bell, Jessica	Jama, Sarah	Stiles, Marit
Bourgouin, Guy	Karpoche, Bhutla	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Kernaghan, Terence	Taylor, Monique
French, Jennifer K.	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy	
Gretzky, Lisa	Shaw, Sandy	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 73; the nays are 25.

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

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? I heard some noes.

Government House leader?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I'll refer it to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** So ordered.

There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1154 to 1500.*

*Afternoon meeting reported in volume B.*

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

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

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

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

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

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

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
Khanjini, 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. Kaleed (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	