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Assembly
of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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Mercredi
7 juin 2023

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Wednesday 7 June 2023

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mercredi 7 juin 2023

The House recessed from 1208 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Chris Glover: I'd like to welcome to the House Patrick and Laura Porzuczek and Ashley Fox, who are here from rural hospitals.

I'd also like to welcome to the House, from Brock University, James Maxwell-Barillas, Alyssa Hall, Aishah Sonekan and Carleigh Charlton. Welcome to your House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

1376122 ONTARIO LTD. ACT, 2023

Mr. Shamji moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr27, An Act to revive 1376122 Ontario Ltd.

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

First reading agreed to.

CAPTAIN CRAIG BOWMAN ACT, 2023

**LOI DE 2023 SUR LE CAPITAINE
CRAIG BOWMAN**

Mr. Burch moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 127, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to primary-site esophageal cancer in firefighters and fire investigators / Projet de loi 127, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail à l'égard du cancer primitif de l'oesophage chez les pompiers et les enquêteurs sur les incendies.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member please briefly explain his bill?

Mr. Jeff Burch: This bill is the Captain Craig Bowman Act, and I'm pleased to be joined by the family of Captain Craig Bowman. Craig Bowman passed away on Sunday, May 21, 2023. We're joined by his wife, Alisen, daughter, Lexi, his son, Colin, Carol Damiano, Craig's mother-in-law, and Carrie Bowman, Craig's sister-in-law.

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, currently sets out a presumption that applies in respect of a worker who is a firefighter or a fire investigator and who

suffers from and is impaired by a prescribed disease. Provided any prescribed conditions and restrictions are satisfied, the disease is presumed to be an occupational disease that occurs due to the nature of the worker's employment as a firefighter or a fire investigator unless the contrary is shown. Currently, the regulations provide that in order for the presumption to apply in respect of primary-site esophageal cancer, the length of employment must have been at least a total of 25 years before being diagnosed. The bill amends the act to provide that the length of employment required in order for this presumption to apply is at least a total of 20 years before being diagnosed.

DISABILITY PRIDE MONTH ACT, 2023

**LOI DE 2023 SUR LE MOIS DE LA FIERTÉ
DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES**

Madame Collard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 128, An Act to proclaim the month of July as Disability Pride Month / Projet de loi 128, Loi proclamant le mois de juillet Mois de la fierté des personnes handicapées.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Will the member for Ottawa-Vanier please explain her bill briefly?

Mme Lucille Collard: The bill proclaims the month of July in each year as Disability Pride Month. By proclaiming July as Disability Pride Month, Ontario is prioritizing the need to listen to the disability community when addressing their needs and priorities. Disability Pride Month is about recognizing the important contributions of Ontarians with disabilities and the place of disabled people in Ontario's diverse society.

RARE DISEASE STRATEGY ACT, 2023

**LOI DE 2023 SUR LA STRATÉGIE
EN MATIÈRE DE MALADIES RARES**

Ms. Karpoche moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 129, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act to implement the recommendations of the Rare Diseases Working Group Report / Projet de loi 129, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la

santé pour mettre en oeuvre les recommandations du Rapport du Groupe de travail en matière de maladies rares.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Will the member for Parkdale–High Park please briefly explain her bill?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This bill, the Rare Disease Strategy Act, requires the government to implement the recommendations set out in the Rare Diseases Working Group Report of 2017. The bill aims to improve the lives of Ontarians living with rare diseases, diagnosed or undiagnosed, by improving the delivery of health care and improving access to medicines.

PETITIONS

HOME CARE

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I have the honour today to table a petition that was circulated by the members of the Trinity United Church justice committee within my riding and signed by 73 members living in my riding, including Pamela Sheehan.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the treatment of seniors in Ontario has been disappointing;

“Whereas Ontario’s long-term-care homes should not be built and managed by for-profit companies;

“Whereas for-profit long-term-care homes sustained a higher percentage of loss amongst residents and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic;

“Whereas seniors in Ontario should be able to stay at home for as long as possible so that they can receive consistent and affordable care;

“We, the undersigned, call on the government to significantly increase resources and funding to home care.”

I fully endorse this petition, will add my name to it and send it to the table with page Shlokh.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I’d like to thank Dr. Sally Palmer for sending me these petitions. It is titled “To Raise Social Assistance Rates.” And it reads:

1510

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s social assistance rates are well below Canada’s official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and \$1,227 for ODSP;

“Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

“Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens well below the poverty

line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

“Whereas the government of Canada recognized in its CERB program that a ‘basic income’ of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my signature to it. Thank you very much.

ACCESSIBLE PARKING PERMITS

Mr. Ted Hsu: I have a petition circulated by Mr. Michael Judd of my riding of Kingston and the Islands and signed by other people from Kingston and the Islands. It reads as follows:

“Whereas:

“Free parking for the disabled should be harmonized across the province and Canada;

“Within Canada there is federal and provincial continuity in most matters concerning rights and accessibility rights;

“The matter of free parking for the disabled is not addressed in current law uniformly, and that it is one very important area of accessibility;

“The cost and effort of parking for the disabled and mobility challenged presents a barrier to accessibility;

“Not having free APP (accessibility parking pass) parking, and continuity with it, is a significant challenge for those with mobility issues that travel to new areas, cities, and provinces;

“It can be even harder for those travelling here from other countries, ones that have addressed this challenge;

“Caregivers and families need this continuity when they are called upon to help with transport;

“Several Canadian cities, including Toronto, Mississauga, Burlington, Niagara Falls, Ottawa, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Windsor, Sarnia, Sault Ste. Marie, Cornwall, London, Brampton, Halifax, and Quebec City, allow for free parking for APP holders; and

“Several countries, including Switzerland, Turkey, Costa Rica, Iceland, Argentina ... Great Britain, almost the entire EU, and more, all allow APP free parking, even for disabled who are visiting from other countries, and we should as well;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and residents of Ontario, Canada, call upon the Legislature of Ontario to harmonize free parking for all APP holders within Ontario, and to work with the federal government, and other provinces and territories, to make parking free for all accessibility parking pass holders nationally.”

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s my honour to present the following petitions on behalf of the class of 2025 medical students from the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at Western University. It’s titled “Repeal Bill 124.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 124 removes the right of public employees to negotiate fair contracts;

“Whereas Bill 124 limits the wage increase in the broader public sector to a maximum of 1% per year at a time of unprecedented inflation;

“Whereas Ontario’s public servants have dealt with two years of unheralded difficulties in performing their duties to our province;

“Whereas those affected by Bill 124 are the people who teach us, care for us, make our hospitals and health care system work and protect the most vulnerable among us;

“Whereas the current provincial government is showing disrespect to public servants to keep taxes low for some of our country’s most profitable corporations;

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

“Immediately repeal Bill 124 and show respect for the public sector workers.”

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

POLICE FUNDING

Mrs. Daisy Wai: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas police provide protection to some of the most vulnerable members of our society; and

“The provincial government has launched the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy; and

“The 2023-24 budget commits an additional \$13.4 million to this strategy;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario reject the ‘defund the police’ position, and continue funding police, seizing illegal guns, suppressing gangs, and supporting victims of violence through the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy.”

I fully support this. I sign my name to it and present it to Christopher.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition entitled “Pass the Safe Night Out Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we are experiencing a sexual violence epidemic, with Statistics Canada reporting in 2021 that sexual assault was at its highest level in 25 years and community support organizations reporting more crisis calls than ever;

“Whereas 65% of women report experiencing unwanted sexual advances while socializing in a bar or restaurant, and incidents of sexual assaults involving drugs and alcohol most often occur immediately after leaving a licensed establishment or event; and

“Whereas there is no legal requirement for the people who hold liquor licences and permits, sell and serve liquor, or provide security at licensed establishments and events

to be trained in recognizing and safely intervening in sexual harassment and violence;

“Whereas servers in licensed establishments also face high risk of sexual violence and harassment from co-workers and patrons;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately pass the Ontario NDP’s Safe Night Out Act to make Ontario’s bars and nightclubs safer for patrons and staff by requiring training in sexual violence and harassment prevention, by strengthening protections for servers from workplace sexual violence, and by requiring every establishment to develop and post a policy on how sexual violence and harassment will be handled, including accessing local resources and supports.”

I couldn’t support this petition more strongly. I affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Silas.

AGRESSION SEXUELLE

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Je voudrais remercier M^{me} Josée Guindon, la directrice du CALACS à Ottawa, pour avoir réuni ces signatures sur cette pétition.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que :

« L’agression sexuelle constitue le seul crime haineux qui ne cesse d’augmenter chaque année;

« Une agression sexuelle est commise toutes les 17 minutes au Canada;

« 81 % des CALACS de l’Ontario ont vu le nombre de demandes d’aide augmenter durant la pandémie;

« Le financement des CALACS est demeuré le même depuis 2016;

« Nous, soussigné(e)s, adressons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Nous demandons que l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario entreprenne une étude du programme des centres d’aide et de lutte contre les agressions sexuelles (CALACS) de l’Ontario afin :

« —que les victimes d’agression sexuelle aient accès rapidement et gratuitement à des services de soutien et d’accompagnement;

« —que le financement des CALACS permette de répondre aux besoins actuels des victimes d’agression sexuelle, y compris celles du trafic sexuel;

« —que les employées travaillant dans les CALACS soient assurées d’une sécurité d’emploi incluant un salaire et des avantages sociaux respectables et compétitifs. »

J’appuie cette pétition. Je vais y mettre ma signature et l’envoyer à la table avec page Cyndi.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Chris Glover: I dedicate this to Patrick and Laura Porzuczek, who are in the House. It will probably be the last time I read this one.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Haliburton Highlands Health Services board of directors has, without consultation with the affected stakeholders, announced the permanent closure of the emergency department located in the municipality of Minden Hills, Ontario, effective June 1, 2023;

“We, the undersigned, petition that a moratorium of this decision be implemented by the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care immediately for a period of a minimum of one year to allow for consultations with all affected stakeholders to occur.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and pass it to page Amara to take to the table.

ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE

Mr. Adil Shamji: Mr. Speaker, I may need more than one legislative page for this one.

I’m pleased to present a number of petitions on behalf of over 30,000 people to save the science centre. I shall read the first one.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Science Centre is a community institution for the people of our province; and

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“Whereas the elimination of the Ontario Science Centre will cause detrimental social and environmental impacts; and

“Whereas the government’s decision to eliminate the Ontario Science Centre was done without community consultation and has treated Ontarians as an afterthought;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact the following measures:

“(1) Halt any plans for the demolition and relocation of the Ontario Science Centre;

“(2) Hold community consultations regarding the Ontario Science Centre and its future;

“(3) Uphold the decision provided by the community during consultations about the Ontario Science Centre.”

I fully support this petition, affix my signature in the corner, and I’m pleased to hand this stack of petitions to page Halle.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I’ll remind the members it’s best just to read the text of the petition and not use the petition itself as a prop.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s my honour to present the following petition on behalf of Paula Jesty from M.I. Understanding. It could not be more timely. It’s titled “Protect 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities and Drag Artists.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas anti-2SLGBTQIA+ hate crimes and harassment are increasing across Ontario;

“Whereas drag artists have been specifically targeted for intimidation by anti-2SLGBTQIA+ extremists;

“Whereas drag performance is a liberating and empowering art form that allows diverse communities to see themselves represented and celebrated;

“Whereas drag artists, small businesses, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities deserve to feel safe everywhere in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Protecting 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities Act so that 2SLGBTQIA+ safety zones can deter bigoted harassment and an advisory committee can be struck to protect 2SLGBTQIA+ communities from hate crimes.”

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

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Chandra Pasma: It’s my honour to rise and present this “Petition for Better Staffing, Better Wages and Better Care in Ontario’s Public Hospitals” that has been signed by hundreds of Ottawa residents.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas registered nurses and health care professionals are the backbone of Ontario’s public health care system; and

“Whereas nurses and health care professionals are fighting for better staffing, better wages and better care in Ontario’s public hospitals; and

“Whereas the government has the power to direct the funding and priorities for the Ontario Hospital Association in this bargaining process;

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

“Support nurses and health care professionals represented by the Ontario Nurses’ Association in their collective bargaining with the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) by demanding the OHA reach a negotiated agreement with nurses that results in better staffing, better wages and better care in Ontario’s public hospitals.”

I fully support this petition, will add my name to it and send it to the table with page Aananya.

ONTARIO PLACE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Save Ontario Place” and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario Place has been a cherished public space for over 50 years, providing joy, recreation, and cultural experiences for Ontarians and tourists alike and holds cultural and historical significance as a landmark that symbolizes Ontario’s commitment to innovation, sustainability, and public engagement;

“Whereas redevelopment that includes a private, profit-driven venture by an Austrian spa company, prioritizes commercial interests over the needs and desires of the people of Ontario and it is estimated that the cost to prepare the grounds for redevelopment and build a 2,000-

car underground garage will cost approximately \$650 million...;

“Whereas meaningful public consultations with diverse stakeholders have not been adequately conducted and the Ontario NDP has sent a letter of support for a public request to begin an investigation into a value-for-money and compliance audit with respect to proposed redevelopment of Ontario Place;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to halt any further development plans for Ontario Place, engage in meaningful and transparent public consultations to gather input and ideas for the future of Ontario Place, develop a comprehensive and sustainable plan for the revitalization of Ontario Place that prioritizes environmental sustainability, accessibility, and inclusivity, and ensure that any future development of Ontario Place is carried out in a transparent and accountable manner, with proper oversight, public input, and adherence to democratic processes.”

I support this petition. Save Ontario Place.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have for petitions this afternoon.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'd just like to acknowledge that Jason Stevens is in the House this afternoon. Jason's father, Jack, worked as a manager for ComSoc from the 1970s to his passing in 2004. Welcome to the House, Jason.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER SCHOOLS AND STUDENT OUTCOMES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES ÉCOLES ET DU RENDEMENT DES ÉLÈVES

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 7, 2023, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to amend various Acts relating to education and child care / Projet de loi 98, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'éducation et la garde d'enfants.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: This afternoon I'll be sharing my time with the member from Simcoe–Grey. I'm happy to speak to this bill, which is Bill 98, also known as the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, and I'm proud to be here making these submissions on behalf of the hard-working people of the county of Essex.

As you know, I live in the town of Amherstburg, and I speak to parents in Amherstburg on a regular basis. I also speak to my constituents in other parts of my riding, and they've told me on numerous occasions that they believe

the education system needs to do a better job of preparing young people for the challenges of tomorrow, and it must be more accountable to parents and taxpayers.

Though in my opinion the Minister of Education has been doing an amazing job of updating the curriculum, there's only so much one Minister of Education can accomplish without making some changes to legislation. And so, I want to thank the minister for his hard work up to this point and for introducing this important legislation, which proposes reforms to help improve academic outcomes for Ontario students and support their lifelong success.

This legislation makes sense to me for a number of reasons, but most importantly, these reforms are designed to ensure that our education system here in Ontario is focused on what really matters, which is actually improving student outcomes. It's about making sure that our young people have the skills that they need to enter the workforce, find careers and achieve success in the future economy. It's about accountability for families and taxpayers. It's about having transparency over how the \$27 billion of taxpayer money that's spent on Ontario's education system is actually transparent to the taxpayers who provide the money. It's about making sure our school boards are communicating with parents, so moms and dads are updated on the progress in key educational priorities like literacy.

And it's about giving our school boards more tools through the implementation of standardized, mandatory training for all trustees, to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to help our children. These proposed reforms also establish a code of conduct, so our trustees understand their roles and obligations to their constituents and to the students, and that also goes for directors of education.

All of this would help ensure that there is consistency for students right across the board and across the province, ensuring that every student in Ontario has access to education that will help them take steps towards lifelong success. By bringing more consistency across school board performance and focusing on student achievement, we can help more families and students in Ontario. The results are clear: better outcomes for students and children.

With our laser focus on improving the fundamentals will come a consistent, evidence-based approach to teaching and learning across the province. This will ensure students across Ontario are gaining the critical skills they need in areas like math, literacy, special education, mental health and technology courses, to gain the skills and knowledge they need to take their next steps in life, and that means making sure our school boards and our trustees and our educators have the tools and the knowledge they need to help Ontario's next generation succeed. They'll need that knowledge if Ontario will continue to be among the top-performing education systems nationally and internationally.

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But we know we have room to improve. Right now, about 11% of Ontario's 72 school boards have consistently

performed the poorest in five-year graduation rates over the last nine years. Parents know that's not good enough and their children deserve excellence in schools, no matter where they are in Ontario.

But what we hear from parents is that many of them feel powerless without the knowledge they need about their rights and their ability to affect their children's education. That's why we're proposing to establish consistent requirements for school boards to share information with parents. We're giving parents the tools they need to measure success right across the province, and that's important because if this legislation passes, it will establish consistent information and approaches to student learning. So, students will get the education and knowledge they need regardless of where they live, because where people live should not determine the quality of their education.

If passed, this legislation will also ensure that Ontario's curriculum is not only reviewed on a regular basis, but also that students are prepared for lifelong success for jobs in the future. The reforms proposed in the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act will be supported by targeted initiatives, including the following:

- \$140 million to help students struggling with the fundamentals of reading, writing and math;

- almost \$40 million over the next three years for summer mental health supports to support the continuity of care for students with mental health concerns; and

- nearly \$20 million for the hiring of additional para-professional staff, educational assistants and custodians to enhance student safety and maintain cleaning standards.

On top of that, demonstrating this government's commitment to our education system and these important reforms, we've invested \$693 million more in public education for the next school year as part of the Grants for Student Needs, or GSN, and Priorities and Partnerships Funding. That's a 2.7% increase in the base funding from last year, which is already a historic amount. The money is supporting nearly 1,000 more educators in classrooms right across the province. In addition, the Priorities and Partnerships Funding investment of \$473.6 million will enable school boards and third parties to undertake important curricular and extracurricular initiatives that promote student success, development and leadership.

As we move forward, we need a strong education system with a clear focus on fundamentals so all our students are ready for their next steps in life. Indeed, that is what the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education said in a written statement regarding Bill 98: "There should be a stronger focus on getting back to basics such as reading, writing and math, as well as adapting to the new tech world." I agree. I agree wholeheartedly with that statement, and so does our government, which is why we're taking action to update the curriculum with a stronger focus on reading, writing, STEM learning, financial literacy and digital fluency.

I add that under the GSN funding formula, school boards in Ontario's publicly funded education system are receiving more money than ever before in our province's

history. After a decade when the previous Liberal government closed over 600 schools across the province, including schools in my riding, our government is investing approximately \$15 billion over the next 10 years to build new schools, improve existing ones and create child care spaces for parents.

Bill 98 is a crucial step, Madam Speaker. By introducing this critical legislation, we are making sure students have what they need to succeed and parents have more tools than ever when it comes to the accountability and transparency of our education system.

I am pleased to add that Bill 98 enjoys widespread support among key stakeholders. In fact, the Ontario Human Rights Commission recently submitted a written submission on the bill which read, "The Ontario Human Rights Commission is pleased to see that Bill 98 lays the ground work for an education system unified with a focus on improving student outcomes in the important lifelong skill of reading."

I could go on further, but I know that my other colleagues will be speaking on this important legislation, so let me conclude by saying that this bill will help prepare our kids for the jobs of the future and make Ontario's 72 school boards more accountable for families and taxpayers.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank my colleague from Essex for his comments. While they are eminently worth repeating, I will do my best to not do that.

Speaker, it is certainly my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak in support of the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act. Ontario needs this legislation. Currently, Ontario is home to a variety of school experiences. There are four unique publicly funded school systems, 72 district school boards, over 3,900 elementary schools and 870 secondary schools.

To contrast the needs of our education system across the province, in the GTA there are schools with over 2,000 students while in northern Ontario and in my riding of Simcoe–Grey there are schools with under 200 students. While each of the schools uses the same curriculum, the learning experience is vastly different, and this proposed legislation includes one set of priorities for all school boards to make sure that we are equipping our students for the challenges of tomorrow.

The world is changing, and our education system must change to better reflect the challenges and opportunities of the day, and to better serve our students across the province to equip them for the challenges they will face tomorrow. I want to start off by acknowledging the commitment and the dedication of our Minister of Education, who has been doing a remarkable job modernizing Ontario's curriculum to ensure that it prepares our young people for the world of tomorrow. On this side of the House, this means focusing on STEM learning and math, including financial literacy and digital fluency, and encouraging kids to take a good look at rewarding careers in the skilled trades.

It is my honour to represent the people of Simcoe–Grey, and I take every opportunity to listen to the concerns of the hard-working families in my riding. My constituents are resilient and engaged, they're optimistic about the future and they're very firm about a number of points regarding the education of their children. They want the education system to prepare their children for the challenges of tomorrow and they want to know that their tax dollars are being spent effectively, efficiently and wisely to make sure that that happens.

Families in the Town of the Blue Mountains, in Collingwood, in Wasaga Beach, in Alliston, in Everett, in Essa and everywhere in between in Simcoe–Grey understand the importance and the critical role that public education plays in developing the future minds that will run our province. These families tell me two things, Speaker. First, they see the local school boards as big, inaccessible and impersonal bureaucracies; and, second, they believe that the education system has to do a better job preparing their children, our future, for the workforce and life ahead.

As I indicated, Minister Lecce is doing a great job of modernizing the school curriculum and getting new schools built, but you can only drive so much transformational change without updating and modernizing the legislation in this area. That is why Ontario families need the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act. Should this chamber pass the act, parents and taxpayers will receive some long-overdue accountability and the minister will be able to set province-wide priorities such as improving reading and math outcomes, among other key subjects, to ensure that our children are getting the education that they need, that they deserve and that will equip them for the challenges of tomorrow.

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Speaker, this legislation will do a number of things. Chief among these, it will drive provincial priorities and expectations for Ontario's education sector from the province through to Ontario's classrooms to enhance accountability and transparency. It will enable more effective governance through reforms to education-sector boards of trustees and directors of education. It will help to maximize the considerable real estate assets of school boards. It will ensure Ontario's teachers are trained for the needs of their classrooms for today and into the future. And it will provide the information and tools necessary to ensure consistent approaches to student learning, including student learning about mental health and well-being, an issue that we have seen a dramatic rise in since the pandemic.

Many of the problems within the education system are longstanding and, unfortunately, instead of fixing them, previous governments had decided to kick them down the road, and now that is catching up. It's time for action.

I hope that my colleagues opposite will take some time to look at the report issued by the Royal Commission on Learning, chaired by Monique Bégin and Gerald Caplan in 1994. The report contains many interesting observations and insights. Speaker, I'd like to share one quotation in particular. I read from the report as follows: "Many

parents came to us with shocking evidence of kids who finished high school yet wrote with all the sophistication of a nine-year old, of report cards that seemed deliberately contrived to sound like gibberish, of schools that made them feel unwelcome, intimidated, indifferent to them and not much more engaged with their children."

Speaker, there are many parents across the province who feel the same way in 2023. Those same parents may not feel comfortable challenging the teachers in their children's school, let alone the local school board—and that needs to be fixed. The lack of accountability from school boards is a major reason why this government is bringing this legislation forward now.

The bill we're discussing has wide-ranging changes and includes a number of much-needed reforms. School Bus Ontario is one of many stakeholder organizations that provided written submissions regarding Bill 98. Their submission included the following: "The enhanced accountability and transparency in the bill along with the funding formula framework are a welcome step forward for the student transportation sector."

This legislation has a number of critical reforms that will enhance transparency and accountability, and one such reform, Speaker, is the issuance of a handbook for parents that will spell out their rights, roles and responsibilities within the education system. As I had said earlier, many parents across the province view their local school board as a big and impersonal bureaucracy. That needs to change. Our government understands that parental involvement is crucially important in a child's education. In fact, studies show that where parents are involved, student outcomes are enhanced.

I want to be clear that on this side of the House we know that the vast majority of teachers are dedicated public servants who do their very best. Teaching is a tough job and I absolutely respect the work they do, and on the Take Your MPP to School Day I certainly witnessed, first-hand, the dedication and effectiveness of the teachers in Simcoe county.

But our party believes that the Ministry of Education must put the interests of children and their parents first. Providing parents with a handbook that outlines their rights and responsibilities will enhance parent-teacher conversations and encourage more parents to voice their opinions and get involved in their children's education. As I've said, encouraging parents to understand their rights and responsibilities and increase their involvement in their children's education is an important step in improving the outcomes for their children.

By way of context, our \$27-billion education budget, which represents 13% of the overall budget and is our second-biggest line item in the province, is overseen by about 700 trustees who come from varied backgrounds and varied training. They do not have consistent training or a standard code of conduct. Moreover, the Ministry of Education is limited in its ability to drive provincial priorities directly from the minister's office to the province's classrooms. We need to make sure all of Ontario's school boards are following provincially established priorities and are managing their resources responsibly.

This act would enable the minister to require school boards to report publicly against standardized categories of spending twice annually. It would strengthen the minister's authority to direct and, where necessary, prohibit board participation in prescribed activities that could place the board at financial risk. It would establish the minister's authority to prescribe financial policy and accountability matters for board-controlled entities.

These reforms are very much in line with the royal commission's recommendations of nearly three decades ago. I wish to quote from that: "We recommend the transfer of several key responsibilities away from boards. We believe that determining the level of each board's expenditures, for example, should be the ministry's job." The primary responsibility of school boards is to translate general ministry guidelines into viable local practice.

Speaker, it's time for change, and this is much-needed change that will enhance the future of our children, to ensure that they get the education they deserve now and into the future.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I've spent a great deal of time in classrooms as a guest artist educator and what I've seen again and again is that when classroom numbers are too large, it's very difficult for teachers to give everything that students need to receive.

What I've heard this morning is a lot of finger-pointing at teachers—teachers are bad, boards are bad, trustees are bad—but I hear nothing about classroom sizes. I hear nothing about the actual crisis that has been in schools for years, with not enough EAs and teachers with too many students in the classroom. Can you please respond to classroom sizes?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I've noted that the member who just spoke has a tendency to say things were said that were not said. I can tell you this: I have the utmost amount of respect for the teaching profession in this province. As a matter of fact, anybody who has heard me speak in this chamber has heard me speak several times—several times—about the great love that I had for the teachers who taught me at Anderdon Public School and the great respect that we were given for teachers who taught us. Anybody who even knows anything about me personally would know about the great love and respect that I have for teachers in the province of Ontario.

On the topic of class sizes, those regulations are in place. I've seen classes myself on many occasions. We'll continue to provide the best education in the province of Ontario for our students.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Essex, could you repeat what you said? Was it that the member was saying something that wasn't said? I'm sorry, I missed it. We need to be very cautious about calling each other—

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Because you asked, Madam Speaker, the member was attributing to me comments that I had not made.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you so much.

The member from Durham.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: My question is for the member for Simcoe–Grey. We know that student success is so very important to all of us. I'm sure that all members agree that students need to be given every opportunity to learn and prepare for the jobs of tomorrow so they can succeed in the workforce, whether they choose university, a trade or another path.

Recently, our government announced that, starting with students entering grade 9 in September 2024, all students will be required to earn a grade 9 or 10 technological education credit as part of their Ontario secondary school diploma. This is just one example of how our government is supporting students. Can the member for Simcoe–Grey talk about how this bill, if passed, would further support student learning for the jobs of tomorrow?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you very much to the member for his question. As has been indicated, our government is making an historic investment in Ontario schools by providing a projected \$27.6 billion in public education for the upcoming school year. Part of that is targeted initiatives to make sure that we have shop programs reintroduced. I've certainly seen first-hand in my riding the impact those programs are having in getting kids started on a career and directing them in a way that they know what they're getting into.

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In addition, our Minister of Education recently announced we're investing more than \$180 million in the upcoming school year, specifically in math and reading supports for Ontario students in the classroom. This builds upon our previous \$200-million investment which supported students with a four-year math strategy. We believe that establishing these priorities and providing a laser focus for the curriculum and for our teachers to impart to our students makes sure that they get the best education now so that they have the skills for tomorrow and can have successful careers in our economy.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to respond to a comment that I heard from the member from Simcoe–Grey minimizing the role of school boards. The reason I am here today is because as a parent I started fighting Mike Harris's Conservatives' cuts to education. His goal was ultimately to privatize our education system. The Conservative government of that day underfunded our publicly funded schools by \$1.2 billion, and they created a private school tax credit for \$700 million. The only thing that stopped their privatization agenda was that school boards stood up. Particularly, the school boards in Hamilton, in Toronto and in Ottawa refused to make the cuts that that Conservative government was demanding of school boards across the province.

Does the member from Simcoe–Grey recognise that one of their fundamental roles is to protect our publicly funded schools and our public education system from privatization? I'll ask a supplementary question to that, too: Does your Conservative government have an agenda to privatize our publicly funded—

Mr. Brian Saunderson: As I said in my response to my colleague's question, this government is spending unprecedented amounts, investing it in our public school system: \$27.6 billion. We've heard, and I cited in my comments, segments from the reports of commissions that have looked into our education system and have found the need to augment the power of the province to direct school trustees so that we can ensure that the education our students are receiving on the ground, in the classroom, gives them the skillsets that they need in the future.

This government is committed to the system we have. I described it in my comments. We have a variety of different school boards—four publicly funded school boards—across a very vast province, with schools from 2,000 to less than 200. What we're trying to do in this legislation is ensure that in each of those schools our students get the best education on the ground. We feel that working with trustees to direct and focus them, give them a code of conduct to focus their efforts will enhance that system.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: My question is to the member from Essex. Picking up on the past member's question, I'd like to point out that I'm a parent. When my child was in the school system during 2011-16, the student outcomes were horrendous—horrendous. I am proud of the fact that our government wants transparency, because we are putting in all kinds of investments, not reducing the amount of education. We are actually putting in a record amount of investments.

I'd like the member to talk to me about this transparent process for parents to track the correlation between record funding with respect to helping students and getting us better outcomes, if you could please speak to that relationship between—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. The member from Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Sure. As my colleague from Simcoe–Grey pointed out, the education budget in the province of Ontario is \$27 billion. There are 27 billion reasons why we are committed to the public education system.

If you take a look at the bill itself, it sets out provisions for what I'll call accountability. Here it is: "The act is amended to" empower the minister to make regulations, to make "provisions, respecting provincial priorities in education in the area of student achievement." Because you know what? There might not be other parties who believe in accountability for taxpayers' money, but I sure do, especially when it comes to \$27 billion. Parents in my riding contact me and they want to know: What are the outcomes for their children? What are the outcomes at the board level? Are they getting value for their money? I support those parents, and I support those taxpayers.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: To the member from Simcoe–Grey, there was a support added for mental health, which was good, but unfortunately, it's not connected to the children's mental health agencies in the region. It actually

stops at the end of the school year and is largely unsupervised. I'm wondering why the government chose not to connect the mental health that's being provided in schools with the children's mental health agencies in each region.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Quick response.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank the member opposite for his question. As he noted, there are significant investments in student mental health, and those programs are being implemented now. They were just announced in the 2023 budget. But there is provision for those programs to continue throughout the summer, not to end, and so we will make sure that happens.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: As I begin my remarks today, I'm thinking of the Brown family. Recently, I wanted to congratulate Colin Brown, who organized, with the help of Madame Fraser at Louise Arbour, the very first ALS walk to support his father. You see, Colin's father Matt unfortunately received a diagnosis of ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, and Colin writes, "During the pandemic, my father and I started running together regularly. Only a year ago, he was able to run a 5K with almost no trouble. Now he can no longer go up or down stairs."

Colin says that six months ago he was uncomfortable talking about ALS, but he has published a brilliant ALS advocate paper, part of the Lawson competition. I just wanted to thank Colin for his advocacy for his father. I'm thinking of you, Matt, Katherine, Jayson as well as Colin, as you have this battle.

Matt has reached out as well, and I just want to add his words to this debate. He has said, "Access to life-extending drugs should not be blocked due to age, disease progression rate or private health coverage." I could not agree more, and I hope you'll get a proper response from the Ministry of Health soon about proper funding for drugs that will help you with this terrible diagnosis of ALS.

Now, as I turn my remarks toward Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, it's very clear from the title of this bill alone that students are secondary. We've heard many government members stand in this chamber and speak in a very negative fashion about educators. It seems as though the ideological tirade that Conservatives had taken against educators back in the Mike Harris days really has not ended to this day. Student outcomes or student well-being are clearly secondary to this government.

When we look at 21st-century skills that students are expected to have in order to enter the workforce, things such as collaboration, co-operation and problem-solving are really key attributes that employers are looking for in the new people that they are hiring to new positions. It's strange that the government themselves clearly don't understand the meaning of these words—co-operation, collaboration and problem-solving—because they did not involve major stakeholders in the development of Bill 98, and it is abundantly clear that the voices of experts are missing within this legislation.

I had the opportunity, as well, during the Take Your MPP to School Day with London's Thames Valley District School Board trustees—which was an excellent experience. I had the opportunity to meet with trustees Sherri Moore, Leroy Osbourne, Beth Mai, Lori-Ann Pizzolato—the board chair—as well as Marianne Larsen, Christian Sachs and the student trustee, Ayesha Hassan. I got to tour such schools as Jeanne Sauvé with the principal, Tom Muth; St. George's with the principal, Kim Robertson; Clarke Road with the amazing principal, Mark Flumerfelt; Montcalm with Jeff Beynon; as well as Westminster with Kerry Mastrandrea, really seeing what was happening with education on the ground. Because my background is in education; it's near and dear to my heart. Every time I have the opportunity to speak about the importance of public education, I jump at the chance.

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It's very strange, however, that during the process for Bill 98, Thames Valley trustees reached out and wanted to appear at committee, but unfortunately were shut out. They were turned down. They did provide for purposes of consideration a written submission, and I'd like to make sure to add their voice so that this government is actually listening to trustees in their discussion.

In their presentation, they talk about needing to have a clear commitment from this government to the concept of subsidiarity. It's the principle that every issue should be decided at the lowest level possible and to make sure to involve those who are most directly impacted. It makes good sense. Why are we bringing out these legislative hammers and disrespecting people who are actually making the decisions and understand them best at the ground level?

Furthermore, in their presentation they stress those 21st-century skills, the need for collaboration and consultation with school boards and other stakeholders to develop these regulations and policy documents, which are so incredibly important and instrumental in education. They also say they look forward to the opportunity to work with the province, which is very strange because the province has not chosen to really consider their viewpoints whatsoever in the development of Bill 98.

If we look at much of the legislation that this government has been trying to pass in their mandate—goodness knows, we wouldn't have a very clear sense of their mandate because they won't release their ministerial mandate letters because they keep going back and back to court to try to hide what is hidden within those letters. But it seems to me that you can take much of their legislation and put it into three buckets, one of which is a power grab. The other would be a land grab, and the third would be other legislation, sometimes supportable, sometimes consequential and sometimes simply just as a distraction from the land grab and power grab that's most of what they're trying to do during their mandate.

Now, the Thames Valley District School Board trustees are asking for clarity. They say more details are needed. They want to know the minister's interest in disposing of school board property or otherwise further directing this

work. It's essential that the school board “understand the problem that the minister is seeking to resolve” in order to respond to these.

They also call for the education system to be fully funded before implementing Bill 98 and committing to what appear to be significant additional costs. Their recommendations are as follows:

- recognize and maintain autonomy of locally elected trustees;

- fully fund the implementation of all changes to legislation, regulations or other governing documents resulting from royal assent of the final version of Bill 98;

- consult with locally elected trustees and associations and/or trustee associations on any changes that impact public education in Ontario; and

- consult with all other impacted stakeholders on changes that will impact public education in Ontario.

We hear a lot of very negative speeches about educators and the education system from government members, which is, quite frankly, disturbing to hear. They're honestly creating a boogeyman out of the education system, and it's their justification for making cuts and under-funding to education.

The trustees go on, and amidst this government's use of buzzwords and empty, vacuous statements and ironic titles for bills, they call for things such as transparency and accountability.

I would like to see them implement this recommendation from the Thames Valley trustees. They have a proposed addition to Bill 98. Their recommendation is an amendment to the Education Act, section 8, the powers of the minister. They state, “In keeping with the spirit of this bill's aim to be more transparent and accountable to the public, we recommend that Bill 98 include the following addition to the Education Act, section 8, under ‘Powers of minister’: ‘The minister shall, on an annual basis, prepare reports relating to provincial responsibilities in education, make available to the public in formats that are accessible and easily understood the reports relating to provincial responsibilities in public education.’”

They state, “We request that the reports extend beyond the reports currently provided to include the following and for the reports to be easily accessible to public,” and under the bulleted list, a list of identified capital needs of school boards, school-board-reported deficits in special education funding, staffing, school board correspondence to the minister or ministry relating to the minister or ministry's responsibilities to public education, and credit attainment, in a format that is accessible and easily understood. Should this government really truly understand the concepts of transparency and accountability, they will do this.

Further, when we look at the concept of funding when it comes to education, this government has ignored many calls from the Thames Valley District School Board for cost increases that they have simply ignored. The chair of the board, Lori-Ann Pizzolato, provided a letter to the minister on June 6, and the chair has indicated in this letter that since 2019, TVDSB has estimated approximately \$12.2 million in additional EI and CPP statutory benefit

increases. This government has not addressed that. They have really created a funding shortfall through the GSNs for the Thames Valley District School Board, meaning that they have had to actually use funds that could have been directed towards student achievement and well-being initiatives, and instead having to make up the deficit that this government refuses to address.

Chair Pizzolato has indicated that this has been, first of all, reported to the minister in 2019—pardon me, it was July 2021; I apologize—and then there have also been numerous ministerial calls and informal discussions. And yet, this continues to be ignored. That is not accountable and that is not transparent, if they have to continue to ask for money that this government owes. These are legally required benefit expenses that this government—they have some very strange notions when it comes to accounting, as well as accountability.

When it comes to accounting, the government has also underfunded education in terms of special education for a number of years. I first put my name forward, because I saw how many children were placed within classrooms without supports. It was called “inclusion” under the Liberal government, and it’s actually abandonment. Many EAs were pulled in multiple directions, having to share their time between two different students for half of the day, or sometimes entire classes were created just to accommodate two students, because they were only allocated a half-time EA.

These educational assistants were brilliant, they did their very best, but it was incredibly difficult when—for instance, I’m thinking of a friend of mine who ended up in a classroom and had a student who was two grade levels higher, but they were a runner. They would frequently try to escape the school. The other student that this educational assistant had been combined with was someone who was physically violent; they would bite other children. So this educational assistant was pulled in two directions: If they chased after the student who was running from the school, then they were unfortunately releasing a student who might be violent on other children in the classroom. And that’s not that child’s fault; that’s because the government chooses not to fund special education and education properly.

In terms of special education expenses in Thames Valley—my goodness. The school board spends more on special education year after year after year, because this government does not provide enough. It’s an arbitrary statistical model that was convenient for governments who want to cut the budget on the backs of students, rather than making sure that the students who need those supports have them.

So in terms of special education expenses, the Thames Valley school board spent \$3.4 million additionally in 2023-24. They also spent the same in 2022-23. As it turns out, this year they will have a deficit of \$6.677 million, as a result of this government’s neglect of the education system. That’s just in one area, Speaker; this is happening all across the province.

It seems to me that this is a theme that has been happening since the 1990s with Mike Harris: We see the same sort of top-down—it has been called punitive—attitude towards education. I believe it was Minister Snobelen who was caught on a hot mike deliberately making cuts into education and stating that the minister was going to create a crisis in education in order to make privatization the only answer. In the Hamilton Spectator, they said that during the Harris times, much like now, teachers and boards of education were blamed for whatever problems public education had and that all of these different changes were being done regardless of local knowledge and professional expertise—it’s all these sorts of “thou shalt” sort of decrees from a government that does not want to understand education; they simply want to break it down as much as they can.

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In terms of funding, in 2020-21, \$2.2 billion of education funding went unspent. In 2021-22, education was underspent by \$1.4 billion.

The Conference Board of Canada said that for every dollar that is spent in education, \$1.30 is generated. It is an investment, which I wish this government would understand.

We also have seen many people presenting at the 2023 budget consultations and talking about the increasing epidemic of school violence. It is shocking when you hear the voices of educators who are concerned, parents who are concerned.

In my area of London, there was a letter-writing campaign where students talked about what was happening in their schools from their perspective, and I wanted to quote them in this debate today, because this government has not mentioned school violence in their budget and they have certainly not mentioned it in Bill 98, because they do not want to admit that it’s a problem. One student wrote: “I am in grade 1. I really love school, but I do not like when other students block the front foyer. Sometimes kids get hurt. I do not like that.” The second student is in grade 3 and stated: “I’m feeling a little nervous to go to school.” The third student, in grade 2, wrote: “I don’t like lockdowns. I get scared, and my friends get scared too.”

It’s absolutely horrifying that this government utterly fails to acknowledge the violence that is happening each and every day in our schools.

The Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario conducted a survey between February 8 and March 22 of this year and they surveyed almost 25,000 members. Their statistics are shocking: 80% of respondents said that the number of violent incidents in elementary schools has increased since they began working; two thirds, 66%, say the severity of violence is getting worse and worse; more than half, 52%, of members have had an attempt of physical force against them just this year; and 44% have experienced actual physical force against them. This is the environment where our kids need to be safe in order to learn. As soon as a child is feeling threatened, learning stops; it is fight or flight.

Each and every day when there are lockdowns in schools, when kids with mental health needs and special needs are not getting the supports that they require, then everyone in a school is affected.

It's absolutely disgraceful that this government talks about accountability and transparency yet refuses to really take those principles and reflect them back on themselves.

Front-line supports aren't available to educators as well as students. ETFO reports that educational assistants, 61%; social workers, 56%; and child and youth workers, 53%, were only available some of the time, rarely or never this school year. What's also really frightening is that almost a third, 30%, of educators' injuries should have had a Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claim, although they weren't always submitted.

This is a time when this government would attack education, would attack educators and really fail when it comes to providing students with the supports that they need. How they can do this with a straight face and with a clear conscience is utterly beyond me.

We hear this minister stand up when asked about the school repair backlog, when asked about school violence, when asked about the needs of students with mental health exceptionalities within the classroom, and again we hear the word salad, we hear the pivoting. We see discussions of completely unrelated topics and a failure to address what is actually going on with our schools.

This government could make accountable and responsible decisions, such as opening up the funding formula to ensure that students are funded based on their actual need, to make sure that students are getting the supports that they require. When it comes to so many different things—whether it's school violence, whether it's special education funding, whether it's making sure that we're maintaining schools in a proper way—this government has failed. They have maintained the disastrous history of education, the disinvestment, the disregard, the disrespect for educators as well as students. They have maintained that. It has continued to this day. It is disappointing that we see the same trends that were happening in the 1990s, when Mike Harris stripped a billion dollars out of education. This government is doing yet worse.

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

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: This bill, if passed, would increase school board transparency in funding and outcomes. It would help parents and students succeed and know what's going on in their school boards.

Now, it seems to me, Speaker, as I listened to the member opposite, that he's talking about something that has nothing to do with this government, and so my question is this: Why is the member opposite against trying to speak on behalf of parents, and why is he not allowing parents to speak for themselves? In other words, surely he must agree—and there's my question starting with "surely" once again. Surely he must agree that parents belong at the table, as this bill would facilitate. What makes the member opposite think that parents don't belong at the table for their children?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's disturbing to me, Speaker—and I would like to thank the member from Durham for the very strange question, which did not address the main topic of my presentation. It's no wonder; this government wants to ignore the facts that students are struggling within school because of the increases in violence and mental health needs.

It's really quite surprising that this government, in their ideological manipulation of situations, trying to pit parents against educators—it's not going to work. When this government, back in 2018, tried to mandate those online-learning classes for students, educators fought for students, and if it were not for the pandemic, we would see this government would never introduce that again, because people were standing up. People believe in educators. Educators are respected. I'm really tired of this government trying to undermine educators again and again and again.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question? The member from Nepean.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Oh, sorry. It was the opposition's question.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Sorry about that, Jennie. I didn't mean to cut you off—

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: That's okay. You'll be up next after this one.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod:—but I was prepared to.

Laughter.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the member in London North Centre for an excellent presentation. I'd like to thank the member, as well, for bringing forward the concerns in this House often about supporting inclusive classrooms.

As the member has pointed out, mental health is absent from this legislation, and in London, as in my community and across Ontario, families are seeking mental health supports for their children. Students are more in need of inclusion, acceptance and support right now than ever before, and this bill does nothing to address the strain of mental health for our students.

My question to the member is: If the legislation allows for establishing policies for respecting mental health, how critical is it to include real measures for your community, that these policies come from funding, and not promises and shortfalls?

1620

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from St. Catharines for the question. She's absolutely right: When the official opposition has questioned this government about the access to mental health professionals, such as social workers, counsellors and nurses, we've heard a lot of government spin about how these are available in schools when this government knows that they are not. When pressed upon that issue, this government will then talk about the supports that are available within

the community, but we know that children in Ontario can face up to two years of a wait time for mental health supports. That is incredibly difficult; that is incredibly long. The access to speech and language pathologists, which makes such a difference in education—and students are waiting on never-ending wait-lists. Their education is falling behind. Their emotional development is falling behind. Their respect for education is falling behind, because they're not getting the supports that they need.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question? The member from Nepean.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's my turn now, finally. Thank you.

I listened intently to the member opposite and, of course, his colleague. I have a great respect for both.

Speaker, I'm going to give an alternative to what I've been listening to. I'm not sure where their children go to school, but my daughter, Victoria, is graduating grade 12 this month, and as a result of the great education system—and, I'd like to think, a few good genes—my daughter has been accepted, with scholarships, into the University of Ottawa, Carleton University and Saint FX, which is my alma mater, in Nova Scotia. I can tell you, having been a parent during the pandemic, had it not been for the investments that Minister Lecce put in place for online learning prior to COVID-19—I would hate to see where we would have ended up. In many cases, I thought that the experience was okay for my child; on the occasion, however, I would catch her lying in her bed while she should have been studying, but I'm not alone.

The other issue—and obviously, everyone here knows I'm a mental health advocate. Our government has initiated over 555% increases in mental health in our schools. I appreciate where the member opposite is coming from. Yes, we could always give more and we can always invest more. But at what point does the member opposite not recognize that some of the things the minister has put forward have been very successful in this province?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Nepean for her comments. I also want to offer my congratulations to your daughter on her acceptance. You've raised her well.

I want to thank you as well for not bringing up into debate divisive and negative talk about educators. I'm sure that your daughter relied on wonderful educators who helped her forward with her future. It's really frustrating when we've seen this government really try to drive this wedge, the same wedge that was driven in the 1990s with the Harris government. It's really upsetting and unnecessary. It's creating a crisis when there already is one that is being ignored, which is the plight of school violence.

This government has bulldozed ahead with this insistence on online learning. Not all learners are suitably equipped to handle online learning; and further, not all educators are suitably equipped to deliver online learning in that format. It is a very specific skill set, and this government is ideologically attached to it, which concerns me, because it really smells of the privatization of education.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Thank you to the member from London North Centre. We've heard a number of times about the billions of dollars being spent on education, but at the same time, we know that there's a huge shortfall because of COVID expenses that have not been refunded and also not meeting the rate of inflation. So I'm wondering if you can—to me, this is a math lesson, and the math does not add up to more; it adds up to much less support for students.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: This comes down to accounting and accountability. This government frequently will rely upon federal monies that are ear-marked for child care, and they will use that in their education funding announcements, re-announcing money, pretending it is for something when they're actually disinvesting from the education system.

The Financial Accountability Office of Ontario has been very clear in the billions that this government has underspent, deliberately, in education. It's very strange. This government seems to be involved in this sort of shell game where they don't really want people to pay attention to where the money is actually going. I've brought forward the examples from my school board: the increases in EI and CPP that this government is refusing to pay properly. It's a legal obligation, and it's something this government isn't really that worried about, with all of their court cases, their never-ending losing battles. How many is it now? They've lost 15 courts cases and one is still in appeal? I forget; I lose track all the time. They're never upset about losing or wasting the public purse on—

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

We have 52 seconds. We'll do a quick question, quick response.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Sorry; I thought we had more time.

The member opposite keeps saying the bill is about attacking teachers; this bill is about accountability. I don't think there's anything in this bill that attacks teachers. There are some provisions to make sure that teachers who are having problems with a complaint and discipline committee are properly dealt with, but that's all. Could the member say where we're attacking teachers? I didn't see that anywhere in here.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The member must have misheard or misunderstood the words that were coming out of my mouth, and that was that during debate, we were hearing from government members who are deliberately pitting parents against educators and speaking very negatively about education workers. I think that's very unfair. It's very unpleasant. It's unbecoming of government. It's divisive. It's very detrimental in nature and not—

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

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Good afternoon, Speaker. It's an honour to rise and speak to third reading of Bill 98.

I've got to say, though, Speaker, it's rather odd to debate a bill titled Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act that is more focused on how to sell off schools and reduce local decision-making than it is on student achievement or investing in more student supports. It's hard to trust a bill that is supposedly about improving student outcomes when the very people on the front lines of improving student outcomes have clearly stated they were not consulted in the development of the this bill. Key stakeholders, from teachers to education staff to local school board trustees to parent associations, have raised concerns about this bill.

Now, I know that this government doesn't often agree or support those working on the front lines, but you would think they would actually take the time to get input from the very people who are somehow delivering some of the best student outcomes in the G7 even though they're working in schools with a \$16.8-billion repair backlog; in schools that are experiencing increased levels of violence as students struggle without proper supports such as much-needed additional educational assistants and mental health workers; in schools with increasing class sizes as the government underspends its own education budget by \$844 million, has a \$1.4-billion underspend in what's needed in our schools and, according to the FAO, will underspend by \$6 billion over the next six years.

Speaker, as I travel across this province—and I love spending time in all parts of Ontario—it is clear to me that one-size-fits-all solutions don't work. The needs in Guelph are certainly different than the needs in Toronto or Ottawa or Kenora or Timmins, and yet at the core of this bill, schedule 2 would centralize control of public schools in the hands of the Ministry of Education, stripping school boards of the ability to tailor programs and supports to the communities they serve. It would also remove safeguards that ensure local transparency in how public education is delivered. By centralizing power in the hands of the minister, this bill undermines the valuable insight and knowledge that local educators, education staff, parents and students bring to the table.

Speaker, I contend that increasing student outcomes must be a collaborative approach between government, local trustees, educators, students, parents and communities. Without proper consultation at the local level, I'm seriously concerned that this bill will actually undermine student achievement and the unique needs that students have in different communities in our province.

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

1630

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you to the member from Guelph for his contribution to the debate. I'm not sure if he was able to participate in the committee process, but he may have heard our critic, the member for Ottawa-Nepean, talk about the 60 amendments that were proposed by the NDP—by the official opposition—during clause-by-clause consideration of this bill. Those 60 amendments were based directly on the submissions that were made to the committee, either verbally or in writing. I wondered

what the member of Guelph thinks about a government that voted down every single one of those 60 amendments that were proposed by the NDP—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Yes, I do have a point of order because I did hear the member—and she perhaps was mistaken on the riding. She said “Ottawa-Nepean,” and I just wanted to confirm that that was not the member from Ottawa-Nepean, but perhaps the member from Ottawa West-Nepean.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The education critic?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Yes. Thank you very much for that. I would like to correct my record. The member for Ottawa West-Nepean proposed 60 amendments based on the input provided that was provided to committee. What does the member for Guelph think about the government's decision to ignore every single one of those amendments?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Yes, do you know what, Speaker? This is exactly what's wrong with the bill. We had so many people who are experts in the education system come and raise concerns, including at committee, and that's exactly, I'm assuming, why the member from Ottawa West-Nepean put forward so many amendments.

Certainly I would have been happy to read some amendments from the member from Ottawa-Nepean as well, but—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Well, why don't I comment?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Yes, send some over. Send some over in committee.

But that's exactly the problem here. So many educational experts have talked about flaws in this bill. They have not been corrected. They were not fixed at the committee process. That's why I'll be voting against this bill.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I've been listening to debate, and I hear, whether it's the NDP or the Liberals or the Green Party, they constantly talk about the term “experts.” I had a constituent who was watching the debate a little bit this morning and the last time this bill came up who wanted me to relay the frustrations and pointedly ask questions whenever members start using that phrase, because she was an educator and took time to raise her five kids, and she's now a parent. She said, “How can they be so tone-deaf by saying that parents aren't experts too?” She has five kids and, damn it, she feels like she's an expert. So, what are you saying to parents in not calling them experts?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I would encourage the member to listen more intently during debate, because when I talked about the need for local collaboration, I specifically said local school board trustees, educators, educational staff, students, parents. Those parents at the local level vote for school trustees. They vote for people who they trust to be good stewards of local school boards, and this

bill taking power away from those trustees and from the very parents who elected them.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: This bill authorizes the complaints committee to require a member to undertake a specified continuing education or remediation program. That empowers the complaints committee to order somebody to take a program when the complaints committee essentially finds they need a program. We all know what type of people need a program. So my specific question to the member is this: Does he support that part of this bill, and will he vote for it?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Well, having accountability for anybody in any workplace is important; there is no doubt about that. But we also need accountability at the local level, and that's exactly what school board trustees bring: accountability to their community. That's why they run for office. That's why parents and other community members elect them: because they are connected to their local communities, the students in those communities, and they are held accountable to the voters in those communities. This bill further erodes that accountability at the local level.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: Good afternoon, Speaker. On behalf of hard-working Hamilton families, it's an absolute pleasure for me to stand in my place and to offer strong support for both the Minister of Education and our government's necessary and comprehensive legislation, Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act. I will be sharing my time this afternoon with the member for Barrie–Innisfil.

There is no question that our province is facing a very real shortage of skilled labour, and we need to take action now to address it. In just a few years, it's estimated that one in five jobs in Ontario will be in skilled trades, yet the average age of people entering the trades is 29. Unfortunately, there is still a stigma attached to careers in the trades, especially among young women. Women make up 47% to 48% of the Canadian labour force, but they hold fewer than 4% of jobs in the skilled trades, about 12% of jobs in construction and less than a quarter of jobs in the tech sector. Clearly, we are missing out on a talented demographic, and one that could impact our province's long-term future, so I applaud the Minister of Education for encouraging young women to take a really good, hard look at lucrative and rewarding careers in the skilled trades.

Madam Speaker, you might be surprised to learn that while almost 39% of Ontario's secondary students were enrolled in a tech ed course in 2020-21, nearly 63% of those students were male. The good news: Our government's new requirement that secondary students must take a grade 9 or grade 10 technical education course to graduate, starting in September 2024, will provide more young women with opportunities to explore technology and the trades.

I'd like to thank the Minister of Education for advancing the cause of women's education, and I applaud him for

signing an agreement with Shoppers Drug Mart to distribute free menstrual products to schools in all 72 school boards. Now, that is a perfect example of taking action to make our schools more welcoming and inclusive learning centres.

Madam Speaker, as I mentioned a moment ago, our province is experiencing a profound shortage of skilled labour, so it is critically important that we update the curriculum to ensure it prepares our young people for the jobs of tomorrow. On many occasions, Hamilton families have said to me that the education system really needs to get back to basics. Parents in the riding that I am very, very proud to represent support the minister's focus on more math, more science, more financial literacy and greater exposure to the skilled trades, but they believe that much more needs to be done and that school boards are not accountable to families, to parents.

Ontario's \$27-billion education system is overseen by about 700 trustees who do not possess a consistent set of skills, training or a standard code of conduct. The majority of school trustees are diligent and caring public servants, but this system of local governance is badly in need of reform.

Speaker, if I may quote the 1994 Royal Commission on Learning that was created by then-Premier Bob Rae and chaired by former Liberal cabinet minister Monique Bégin and long-time New Democrat Gerald Caplan: "Trustees are elected by a tiny proportion of the electorate, if indeed they don't win by acclamation. It might be embarrassing to discover how many constituents know their trustees' names. Board agendas too often reflect matters that are light years away from what happens in their schools; anyone who has sat in on a meeting of a school board knows that it can be a truly surrealistic experience."

The royal commission outlined a number of deep-seated problems in education that have been with us for a very, very long time. And before my friends on the opposition benches complain that the royal commission was 30 years ago, let me briefly share some remarks made by the member for Spadina–Fort York when he served as a school trustee with the Toronto District School Board back in 2015:

"As a trustee with the Toronto District School Board for the past four years, I'm angry. I'm angry with trustees who behaved as if they'd won a coronation rather than an election. I'm angry with trustees who, for the past year and a half, engaged in feuds with each other, lobbing missiles through the media, thinking they were hurting only their opponents, but who were destroying the board's reputation."

1640

Madam Speaker, it's clear that if we want to truly reform the education system to prepare our young people for the jobs of tomorrow, we need legislative action today.

If passed, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act will increase accountability by giving parents new tools to navigate and understand the education system and to establish basic qualifications for the directors of education

who oversee school boards. The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act will also allow the minister to establish key priorities to ensure students have the skills and knowledge they need, especially in areas such as reading, writing and math. Indeed, that is what the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education recently said in a written submission regarding Bill 98: “There should be a stronger focus on getting back to basics such as reading, writing and math, as well as adapting to the new tech world.”

Many of my colleagues are understandably excited about the act mandating a handbook for parents that would outline their many rights and responsibilities within the education system. One of the best ways to hold school boards accountable to families and taxpayers is to remind or even, in some cases, inform parents that they have rights when they deal with their local board. A handbook for parents is clearly a great idea that is long overdue in our province, but the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act goes further than mandating a handbook. Our legislation will ensure that all trustees have the knowledge and skills they need to perform their duties and that their conduct is held to provincial standards.

The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act would amend the Education Act to require mandatory training for trustees, as prescribed by the Minister of Education. It would create a standardized trustee code of conduct that would be binding on all trustees and set clear expectations for how trustees should discharge their duties. This should not be a controversial measure.

Back in 2009, the Report of the Governance Review Committee to the Minister of Education of Ontario specifically said that the minister should establish a code of conduct for trustees and the board of trustees should be required to adopt a code of conduct for board members that, at a very minimum, would include all provisions of a provincial code of conduct. One of the members of that committee was a trustee with the Thames Valley District School District Board, who now serves as the member for London West.

The media has at times publicized some high-profile disputes between trustees. Such disputes are costly, they’re time-consuming, and they erode public confidence and detract attention away from a school board’s primary duties to promote student achievement.

Our legislation would establish a clear and impartial process for resolving trustee code of conduct complaints using integrity commissioners who would be empowered to conduct investigations, to dismiss complaints made in bad faith, to determine whether or not the code of conduct has been breached, and impose binding sanctions on trustees.

Madam Speaker, these reforms are very much in line with the royal commission’s recommendations nearly three decades ago. To again quote the report: “We recommend the transfer of several key responsibilities away from boards. We believe that determining the level of each board’s expenditures, for example, should be the ministry’s job.

“The primary responsibility of school boards will be to translate general ministry guidelines into viable local practice. Their job is to make local policy consistent with both provincial policy and local realities.

“They set clear expectations and guidelines for their schools and work with them to make sure they’re progressing towards those ends.”

Madam Speaker, Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, will help our children prepare for the jobs of the future and make Ontario’s 72 school boards more accountable to families and taxpayers. I think that’s something all of us in this chamber can be proud to support.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Barrie–Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I’m glad to be able to add my voice to the debates this afternoon on behalf of the constituents of Barrie–Innisfil. I’ve heard much about the topic of education, and even this past weekend when I was at the annual Wing Ding event in Cookstown, a few folks came up to me and this was top of mind.

This bill and much of what we do in education go down to the fundamental belief in the power of education to really transform lives, lift communities out of poverty and really put in that quality of equal opportunity. I look around my riding and we have a lot of newcomers, a lot of new immigrants, many starting out like my family did when we came to Barrie, and how they’re navigating the education system and how it’s really providing equal opportunities to those families, like it did for me. Those families are going through similar situations, where they may have young children who are starting in the education system and English may not be their first language.

Certainly when I came to Canada, I enrolled in elementary school at the age of four and a half, and I didn’t speak English. I spoke Spanish and I spoke Russian, neither of which my fellow kindergarten students spoke. But with time, Speaker, I was able to speak English, went on to grade 1 and was able to correspond with my colleagues. I certainly see the ability in our education system to do that.

And the importance that ESL plays: Of course, my family had its own opinions of ESL. My grandma staunchly believed that I should not be in ESL, even though I did not speak English when I went to school, because she wanted me to be with other students. So I think that just shows you all parents—my parent being my grandmother—have strong opinions in terms of how their children should be raised, and so they also need a very important place in the education system.

Many of the bills and much of what we’re trying to do as a government are to allow space for all Ontarians to have a perspective and a place in policy decisions and, of course, better outcomes for their children or their grandchildren. So I’m really pleased to be able to stand and add the voice of residents of Barrie–Innisfil to the debate of Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act.

When I speak to constituents, as I was mentioning—and I mentioned it a little bit during the debate today—

they finally feel a breath of fresh air. As Rathika, who was the one who was actually watching debate, tuned in—and she normally wouldn't tune in, because she has got five children and she has got better things to do. But she was tuning in because she really cares about what's happening in the education system. This is an individual who sits on parent councils. She goes to all the meetings. She really supports her children. She is a former educator but took time to raise her kids, which is very respectable.

She was really frustrated by what was happening. She has got children of all different ages, and she remembers learning math, and then her kids would come home with math homework. She said, I remember—this is a few years ago, but she would say, “MPP Khanjin, I'm not sure how I'm supposed to tutor or help my kids through math, because the way I learned math is not the way my kids are coming back with their math homework.” So she was really, really frustrated, and her kids were struggling as a result.

Her youngest child now is going through the education system, and she feels like there's a bit of a breath of fresh air, because, of course, the math curriculum has changed, and she was able to give me lots of feedback throughout the consultation period, both as a former educator and as a mom for the rest of her life—it's something she will not retire from. That was definitely a breath of fresh air for her.

But there are other parents like Chelsea, who also actually ended up taking leave from work to fully raise her children. She actually pulled her kids out of the education system, is now homeschooling all of her children because of her frustrations and, again, really paying attention to the debate. This provides her hope, saying maybe she's going to go back into the workforce, because she feels like she could trust the education system, to enrol her kids back into the public system.

I spoke to parents like Lynn, who is a mom of five as well, and she's a local trustee. She was really frustrated when she was elected, because she felt that she didn't have a lot of—she was located democratically, but felt that she had no power or no voice when she went to these meetings as a trustee. She combed through this bill and provided great feedback and said she's very supportive in terms of the intent of the bill and as a mom is very pleased that there will be lots of transparency and that she'll have a stronger voice as a trustee.

1650

Then there's Oksana, who I also spoke to at one of the round tables I hosted, who was also really keen on the emphasis on STEM and science. She works as a scientist in the health care field, and certainly remembers what she learned when she was in Latvia. Now, she obviously immigrated, and she's in Canada. She has got her young daughter who's going through the school system and just saw how starkly different the education system was, and she said, “Never in my life did I think coming to Canada would actually put my child on a lower footing, not a higher footing, coming from Latvia.” She thought they would come here for better opportunities. She loves being

a Canadian and she loves Canada, but she definitely saw the differences in the education system in terms of the quality, how it challenged students, and definitely believes we should challenge them more and keep our curriculum up to date, so that our students here have the best footing as they have to compete on the Canadian stage.

Then there was Mark. Mark also came to one of our round tables. He has been in the skilled trades for a long time. He has two daughters. Both have gone on to post-secondary education, but he really wished that they had the ability to kind of have respect for something he does—they obviously have a lot of respect for their dad, but just to have the hands-on knowledge in things like shop classes and be able to have more STEM education. So he was really pleased to see that those are, again, some of the things that we're doing to improve our education system.

Then there's Irina. She's of Ukrainian descent, and she practises as an accountant. She has two daughters, and she basically supplemented her daughters' education. They're out of the elementary school and high school system now. They're both in post-secondary. But she said, as they were growing up, she supplemented their education by doing a little bit of home-schooling on the side, by teaching them math, because she saw how important it was. When she came to Canada, she said, “I may not have had the best English skills, but I quickly had the best math skills,” and she wanted to pass that on to her children, because she knew her children were obviously going to learn better English than she did. They wouldn't have an accent as she did, because she came to Canada later in life and her kids were young so they were able to learn English here. But that showed her—and something my grandpa used to say: “Andrea, I may not speak good English, but I speak the international language of numbers.” Irina came from a similar mindset to that.

But aside from the things I'm hearing from constituents and parents, who always want to ensure that their children are receiving the best education, overall, parents in Barrie–Innisfil really love their local teachers, and they love being able to be a part of the education system. They give good feedback to great teachers, and it always reminds me of great teachers I had growing up, many of whom I still keep in touch with, including Madame Potvin, my former French teacher.

But overall, I think parents want to have hope that the education system is there, is accountable to families, is accountable to taxpayers and focuses on the fundamentals. They really want it to be focused on reading, writing and arithmetic, so that their children have the best step ahead. Really, education starts with teaching children to read and write, the fundamentals.

I know this has been quoted quite extensively in the Legislature, but I wanted to make sure that I also include it. If I may quote from the report that was issued back in 1994, as someone who loves history and doesn't want to repeat it: In 1994, the Royal Commission on Learning, established by then-Premier Bob Rae, said, “Helping children master basic reading and writing skills is a critical first step, and every teacher of young children must be

proficient at it.” I know the opposition don’t like it when we on the government side quote this particular commission, but I think that shows that there was a huge opportunity just in the early 1990s—that’s when my family was in Canada—to really strengthen our education system. And here we are—I think the quote is—we’re here in 2023. We’re past the millennium. We have cell phones, we have Internet, we have computers, and yet this quote is still very relevant, even though it’s from 1994.

I will add, Speaker, that also the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education recently provided a written submission to Bill 98, and I wanted to quote the written submission here in the Legislature for those who weren’t able to follow at committee: “There should be a stronger focus on getting back to the basics such as reading, writing and math, as well as adapting to the new tech world.”

If we want to attract billion-dollar investments to our province, and if we want to grow key sectors such as the clean-tech economy, artificial intelligence or the great life-sciences sector, Ontario must have a well-educated workforce and we must focus on the basics. It’s really simple.

Our students today are competing on the world stage, and we need to give them the best home-team advantage.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks for the comments from my colleagues across the way. The member from Flam- borough–Glanbrook: I have to say, I’m a little surprised by your comments. I served as a trustee for over 10 years in Waterloo. I was the president of the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association, chaired 71 school boards across this province. They’re good people who run for trustee in the province of Ontario, and those are very competitive elections.

This is a very prescriptive piece of legislation, and there are many issues going on right now in our school boards. In a question to the Minister of Education last week about the York Catholic District School Board deciding not to raise the Pride flag—I just want to put on the record why it was important to ask that question and why the answer disappointed Ontario students. A student once said to me, “When I see that Pride flag flying outside of my school, I feel seen, and when you are seen, you know that you matter.”

In this instance, why would the Minister of Education not ensure that at the very least, in a piece of legislation, school boards are following the mandate of the Ministry of Education?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Back to the member from Waterloo: This legislation is giving all Ontarians an opportunity to hold school boards and trustees accountable for their decisions.

It also makes our boards act with more accountability. The parent handbook is something I would have loved to have had when I was a parent of kids who were in elementary and in the high school grades, and as the chair of the local parent council. This is absolutely necessary. I met with a group of parents from my riding last Friday, and they were angry that they were unable to get answers,

answers that they’ve been asking for and seeking from the school board for over a year about the number of EAs in their class. This will force school boards and trustees to show where money is being spent, be held accountable for their decisions and make sure that their policies align with those of the minister.

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

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to thank both members for their remarks. Probably the member for Barrie–Innisfil might be well suited to answer, given her reference to the Royal Commission on Learning. I went through Ontario’s elementary system during the transition. I was in grade school during the Bob Rae government, and in high school during the Bob Rae government as well, leading into the Harris government, and so my experience was with, formerly, the English Catholic board, and then came the French Catholic board.

Undoubtedly, we have four unique publicly funded school systems in Ontario: 72 district school boards, 3,900 and 870 secondary schools. Each of these schools uses the same curriculum, but the learning experience in each of the boards is vastly different, and I can certainly tell from my friends who were in different boards that their experiences were different from mine.

So I’m wondering how this might be beneficial, to have in this legislation the one set of priorities for all boards, given that there are different needs in each of the boards.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you for that question. Going back to the commission, I think it made it clear, the fact that despite having a lot of unique communities, and certainly this bill leaves room for that, it’s the frustration that many trustees—I actually heard this from Lynn, who keeps in touch with me quite often and sends me numerous texts on various issues. But I think, to this point, the feedback I got from her was this is finally going to add clarity and more organization to what she first described in the first few days as organized chaos. She certainly found it frustrating.

So I think it will kind of level the playing field and ensure that there is very clear, fair direction, and certainly still leave that flexibility for unique needs like the north.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I was intently listening to both members opposite’s remarks. I believe my question is probably most appropriately answered by the member from Barrie–Innisfil. I was thinking about the tradesperson who was a part of your round table, and also thinking about the importance of proper funding and local collaboration with local school boards and parents.

1700

I was recently touring a school in my riding that has a fantastic auto repair shop and a fantastic woodworking shop, training tradespeople, but they don’t have enough spaces for all the students who want to participate in those courses to go into the trades. And so, is the government going to step up and close the \$6-billion six-year funding gap, so local school boards are able to make those local

good decisions to accommodate and expand classroom spaces for people in the trades?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Mark, who I was talking about, who is in the skilled trades, certainly sees the fact that we need to build more homes in Ontario, and certainly he's contributing to that as a skilled tradesperson. We need to graduate more people in the skilled trades to build those homes.

We also need to build more schools, and so he was really glad that in our budget we put in \$27.6 billion in 2023-24, and that's on top of things like \$15 billion for actually building new schools. We're investing in updating the curriculum, and he was really pleased that we had that in our budget. I note that the member asking the question didn't support that budget, but certainly Mark is happy that we're continuing on with our agenda to improve not only funding to education, but to see the writing on the wall, which is the future: to train more people in skilled trades.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: This question is for the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook. You mentioned just now about the importance of transparency and accountability from the trustees and the boards. You also mentioned about how the code of conduct is very important from them. Can you elaborate a little bit more on that for us, please?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Back to the member, my friend from Richmond Hill: The code of conduct is long overdue. We've all read stories and witnessed incidents where some trustees may be acting out of line, whether it's intentional or perhaps because they haven't been given the training that many would require, overseeing these multi-million-dollar budgets and operations across the province of Ontario.

But the Ontario school boards must be able to effectively have transparent, ethical and responsive governance and leadership that ensures that students have the skills that they need to be successful, and that families and communities are confident in the public education system. In recent years, as I said, we have seen that boards of trustees can be distracted by inappropriate conduct of their peers.

Changes related to codes of conduct would strengthen codes to ensure they are used as intended and reduce disruption on boards so that trustees can fully focus on their core functions, their core mandate, which is that of helping students achieve their goals.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Speaker, through you to the speakers on the other side: I just want to say my mother was a school board trustee for the Lincoln county separate school board for many years, and she also taught in the separate school board for many years. She is now retired.

Through you, Speaker: Trust is critical, as my mother always told me. It has to be earned, and is never given freely. Today I did my member's statement during Pride Month. At schools in my community, Pride flags have

become a target of intolerance. Trustees have used hate language and bigotry has been spray-painted on our schools. That's happening in my community.

I read it; it says, "Better Schools and Student Outcomes." Well, better schools would be if we were proud and we had pride to be able to fly our Pride flags in every school and every safe spot, and I don't see where in this act, under the Education Act, the minister can use various powers to promote safety and inclusion. With hate on the rise in all of our schools, what guidelines will the minister look at to make our schools in all of our communities safe and allow them, and mandate it, that Pride flags should be flown high, with pride?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): A quick response.

Ms. Donna Skelly: As we have both mentioned, the member from Barrie–Innisfil and myself, part of this legislation is to ensure that trustees and boards of education across Ontario are held accountable and that they follow guidelines and that they—

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

Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise to participate in the debate on Bill 98 on behalf of the people I represent in London West. This is legislation that the government calls Better Schools and Student Outcomes.

Now, this is third reading debate, so we're reconsidering a bill that went to committee, had some public input, and was reconsidered by MPPs. It comes back to us exactly as it went to committee, exactly as it left second reading debate.

I had the opportunity to participate in second reading debate and made some comments, which I'm going to repeat because they are worth repeating.

The first comment I would like to make, as someone who served as a school board trustee for 13 years, who was a vice-president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association along with my colleague the member for Waterloo, who was president of OPSBA—school board governance matters. School board trustees get into public education because they care about what's happening in our schools. They want to make sure that schools are properly resourced to support students, that there are enough caring adults in the building to be able to support students and that provincial legislation and policy actually responds to local needs.

When the last major review of school board governance was undertaken in the province of Ontario, it was in 2009. Then-Premier Kathleen Wynne had created a governance review committee. There were six members of the committee. I was honoured to be a member of that committee as the voice of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. But in order to conduct that review of school board governance, there was an extensive consultation process. There were meetings with representatives of 70 school boards, including 137 trustees, 54 directors of education, 71 parent representatives. There were 148 written responses to a consultation paper that was circulated about

school board governance. That is a stark contrast to the process that this government utilized to come forward with this legislation. They didn't consult with school board trustees. They didn't consult with directors of education. They didn't consult with any stakeholders in the sector. They certainly didn't consult with unions, and not only that, they didn't consult with parents.

The day that this legislation was introduced, CBC reported, "If the government actually did in-depth research about what Ontario parents feel, it didn't reveal any on Monday" when it was tabling its legislation. "There were no public consultations about this move, whether with parents, students, teachers or anyone else involved in the school system."

Annie Kidder, the director of People for Education, said, "This is a big piece of legislation and it appears to have been crafted with no previous consultation. It seems to be a surprise to everybody working in the system."

Now, the government had an opportunity, at the time they got this feedback that there was no consultation—so they had the opportunity during the public input stage to actually get some of that feedback that would be useful to improve the bill and make sure that it actually responds to the priorities that have been identified for public education in Ontario.

There were deputations that were made to the committee that was considering the bill. There were a number of verbal presentations, deputants who appeared before the committee. There was a long list of written submissions to the committee. The individuals and the organizations who appeared to share their perspective on this bill had some really useful suggestions. They made recommendations as to how this bill could be strengthened, how it could be improved to actually address the needs of students in the province of Ontario, and we listened to those suggestions.

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Our critic, the member for Ottawa West—Nepean, on behalf of our caucus, brought forward 60 amendments to this legislation that were based directly on the presentations that were made to the committee and that reflected what this government would have heard if they had undertaken the consultation that was necessary before tabling the bill. However—I guess not surprisingly—this government voted down every single one of those 60 amendments. As a result, we have legislation that was developed without consultation and that continues to dismiss, ignore and simply not take into account what the people of this province feel and what people who are involved in the education system believe needs to happen in public education.

I got an email from a constituent in London West who interestingly noted—and I'll quote from his email—"Bill 98 is very heavy on clauses that strip duly elected school board trustees of governance powers, and transfers those governance powers to the provincial government instead. Is this a bait and switch by Minister Lecce, to further erode any say that parents have in how school boards are governed, through their duly elected trustees? That's what it's looking like to me." We hear this government talk about

respecting parents, but that is what duly elected trustees do—they represent the voices of their communities, they represent the voices of parents. They are a level of government whose only responsibility is our school system, whose only responsibility is to ensure that our kids have the resources and supports they need to be successful and to thrive—not only their academic learning, but also their overall well-being. That is a fundamental duty of school boards: to monitor not just student achievement but also student well-being. By centralizing power with this legislation in the provincial government and overlooking that democratic role of school boards to be the voice of local communities, of local parents, this government is ignoring those local concerns.

If the government had cared to listen to what local school boards had to say, they might have found it useful to consider the recommendations from the Thames Valley District School Board, the school board that I was proud to serve in for 13 years. Thames Valley made a written submission to the committee that was reviewing this bill and had a number of very important recommendations. I'm just going to highlight a couple of them. One was around the financial implications not just of this legislation but of other requirements that the government imposes on school boards. They said, "We strongly encourage the province ... to verify that its current responsibilities to the education system are fully funded before implementing Bill 98 and committing to what appear to be significant associated additional costs." They further recommended that the implementation of all changes to legislation, regulations or other governing documents resulting from royal assent of the final version of Bill 98 be fully funded and that consultation with locally elected trustees or trustee associations on any changes that impact public education in Ontario be held.

That point about the urgency of ensuring that there is full funding for any changes resulting from this bill is demonstrated by some of the budgetary pressures that the school board is currently facing. Thames Valley, ever since I was a trustee under the Liberal government, certainly under this Conservative government, has, year over year over year, faced a chronic shortfall in the special education budget line. The special education monies that are allocated by the province are nowhere near sufficient to actually meet the special education needs of students in our system.

Currently, the Thames Valley District School Board is facing an annual budget shortfall of \$3.4 million in that special funding line. The Thames Valley District School Board, because of statutory changes at the federal level to employment insurance deductions and CPP deductions, has accumulated a cost of \$12 million that the school board has had to pay, above and beyond what they are receiving from the province, since 2019 because of these federal changes. The school board is legally required to pay these amounts for EI and CPP. It has added up to \$12 million since 2019, and there is no acknowledgement from the provincial government as to the additional financial burden that this imposes for school boards.

The Thames Valley District School Board is looking at a cost of \$22 million each year for staff absences. I will speak more in a moment about why we are seeing such an increase in staff absences—it's related to the crisis of violence that we're seeing in our schools—but this \$22 million is not something that the school board has typically budgeted for. This is a significant increase in the monetary cost.

The Thames Valley District School Board has a deferred maintenance deficit of \$700 million, and that is just basic replacement maintenance costs. It doesn't even touch the cost of asbestos abatement, AODA compliance or air conditioning in classrooms.

Altogether, what this means for the Thames Valley board this year is a preliminary deficit of \$6.7 million. Now, we know that school boards are not permitted to run deficits, so the school board has to look to their surplus budget in order to fund that deficit. If the government came to the table—aside from the fact that they should be investing more in public education, but if they just came to the table to deal with some of these requirements that are imposed on school boards—that would mean \$6.7 million that Thames Valley would have to invest in the needs of students.

But not only is the government not keeping up with the cost pressures that school boards are facing; they are actually reducing the funding that is available for school boards. We saw that the GSNs, the Grants for Student Needs, were announced earlier in the spring, and when you look at what the grant would be per student if it had been adjusted for inflation, we see that this government has been spending \$1,200 per student less since they came to power in 2019 than they should be if the grant had been adjusted for inflation.

Altogether, we're seeing our education budget has been underspent by \$2.5 billion since this government took office, and we know why. The FAO, in a recent report, showed that the government is spending \$1.1 billion less than it had allocated in 2022-23. This underfunding of school boards has consequences, and it has consequences in the violence that we're seeing in our schools and in the lack of support for students in our classrooms.

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I want to share some of what I've heard from just one school in my riding, W. Sherwood Fox elementary school. The chair of the school council at that school wrote, "The current school year at Fox has proven to be the most challenging and traumatizing that we have seen. Our school is regularly experiencing violent and traumatic incidents that impact the entire school population."

She goes on to say, "No student should spend 6.5 hours of their day in an overwhelmed and agitated state such that they regularly experience episodes of unregulated violence. Without proper support in place for these students, they are failing to receive a quality education that meets their needs."

Other children in the school are also being affected as well. We saw letters from students at that school. A grade 2 student says, "I don't like the lockdowns," because what

happens when a student is unregulated, doesn't have the proper supports in place, a code yellow is declared and the classrooms are looked down.

A grade 2 student says, "I don't like the lockdowns because it stops me from going to the bathroom, going outside, filling my water, getting my lunch, and leaving music and gym."

A grade 6 student said, "In one of the lockdowns I was crying because my sister was in the halls and my mom was in the office to pick me up."

So everybody in the school community is affected by this underinvestment in public education and the government's refusal to adequately support students in our schools.

In particular, teachers are affected. We saw a survey from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario that says three quarters of teachers across the province have personally experienced or witnessed violence against another teacher. Almost half—43%—of ETFO members have been injured or made ill as a result of workplace violence. There is a need for a comprehensive, anti-violence action plan to be undertaken by this government that includes those critical investments in education workers to make sure that students are supported appropriately.

Speaker, the other consequence of this government's lack of investment is around the capital needs of our communities. The Thames Valley District School Board's capital plan shows that there are 18 new elementary schools required board-wide. Nine of those new elementary schools are needed in London, in addition to one new secondary school in London. London is Ontario's fastest-growing city. We saw that in the last census. We are having a lot of population shift, newcomers arriving in our city, people moving from other communities in the province. This has really put pressure on our school system to meet the needs of those families who are moving in.

Another school in my riding, Sir Arthur Currie—beautiful school, wonderful school—opened with close to a thousand students four years ago and now has double that number of students, with 22 portables on-site. I note that Bill 98 includes requirements for school boards to collaborate with municipalities around the establishment of child care centres. Wouldn't it be wonderful if there were some kind of proactive requirements put in place by this government to enable joint planning between school boards and municipalities to prevent situations like we're seeing at Sir Arthur Currie school in London where, as soon as the school board opens its doors, immediately we see dozens of portables have to be moved on-site because when the capital funding was approved, when the per student spaces were approved, it didn't take into account the actual growth of that community, which we would know about if there was that kind of collaboration with municipalities? That is the kind of measure that would have really assisted school boards to respond to the needs of their communities, in addition to the funding that is needed to support our students and support education workers in Ontario.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I was listening intently to the member's remarks, and I couldn't help but quickly look up a bit of history. I know the member opposite served as a trustee before being elected and certainly has given great feedback back to public service, and I commend her for her years of public service. But I couldn't help but notice, when she was a trustee, she actually called for strengthening the code of conduct—very much what this bill does. So I just want to ask, why the change of heart?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The recommendation to strengthen the code of conduct, as I said, was based on consultation with 70 school boards, 137 trustees, 54 directors of education, 71 parent representatives. That is the kind of consultation that this government should have undertaken before this overhaul of school board governments.

Bill 98 includes a lot more than simply strengthening the code of conduct. It includes many more changes for the role of school boards, and it also allows the province to take over much of the local decision-making that used to be strictly in the hands of school boards—and for good reason, because school boards know their local communities.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: We know that students are being underfunded; regardless of how big the numbers are, it actually amounts to \$1,200 less per student. We also hear a lot about transparency and accountability, and yet we don't have access to the mandate letters. So I wonder whether you can surmise what we might see in those mandate—what are the intended effects of underfunding education? Would we discover what the desired outcome was if we were able to see those mandate letters?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much to my colleague for the question.

What we do know from this government is that they have an agenda. We saw that in the health care system. We saw the chronic underfunding of health care, such that they now claim that the only solution to long waits is to privatize public health care services, and I wouldn't be surprised if that is what is in the mandate letter for public education.

And we know from the Harris years, when the then education minister, John Snobelen, talked about creating a crisis in public education to undermine public confidence in public education, in order to siphon people out of the public education system and over to private, for-profit education delivery—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Speaker, we know that our government is making record investments, through this year's budget, in mental health and addictions. We know we have a minister devoted to mental health and addiction issues. And by this bill, we propose to tackle the emerging problem of student mental health. Whether students are worried about peer pressure, being steered in the wrong direction, their grades, problems associated with not being

able to talk to an adult, with this bill, we're continuing—not only with the entire community, but with schools—to make historic investments in student mental health and proposing legislative action that would focus the system on tackling it. Does the opposition want an unfocused approach? Does the opposition not care enough about mental health to support us in this bill?

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Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have raised several times in this House the experiences of families that I am working with in London West whose children have no access to the mental health supports and resources that they need. To ensure that kids' well-being is maintained in our school system, we need more caring adults in our classrooms. That is what this government has failed to address.

We need more education assistants. We need more social workers. We need more guidance counsellors. These are the caring adults who provide that circle of support around a child to prevent the kind of mental health crisis that has escalated in Ontario.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I want to thank the member from London West for her excellent presentation. The member has always been a leader, one at the forefront of empowering women in Ontario. This act deals with child care, which is a big part of the women's workforce participation. We are still operating at less than 60% capacity in child care centres in Niagara, and that's a fact.

Regarding the clause that requires boards to collaborate with municipalities for early and integrated planning of school sites and child care centres, how vital is it that we see funding that respects the work of the ECEs and is made a priority so that women-dominated work can ensure women can get back to work in order to make any planning like this even make sense?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: As the member knows, the Minister of Education is also responsible for child care. In both fronts, the minister continues to fail to recognize the absolute, fundamental importance of human resource needs in our systems. It's the same thing for child care. You can build as many spaces as you want, but if you don't have that qualified, professional early childhood educator workforce to deliver child care, we are not going to be able to meet the child care needs of families in this province, nor are we going to be able to deliver on the promise of \$10-a-day child care.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I don't know what education system the member opposite has experience with, but I can attest, as a parent whose daughter is graduating this month—I'll continue to say that just so it continues to happen. But I don't know what she's looking at. We've made unprecedented investments into children's mental health and youth mental health. I've seen it in our schools. We've made unprecedented investments into digital and

online learning, which the members opposite will complain about; however, our children would not have been in school for two years had we not made those investments.

The Minister of Education has spent day in and day out working with our unions in order to achieve collective bargaining. All I'm hearing from the member opposite is negativity. I can tell her something. Out in our community, wherever you live in this province, people are not paying attention to this debate because they know we're on the right track. What would the member opposite change, I want to know, that she would have done with the Liberals when she propped them up 97% of the time?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: During Education Week last month in May, I had the privilege of touring a number of schools in Thames Valley along with my colleagues the member for London North Centre and the member for London–Fanshawe. At each of those schools, we asked the principals, “What about student mental health? Are you getting the student mental health supports that kids in your school need?” In each case, they said no. They said that the supports are not there, that students are struggling with unprecedented levels of mental health needs.

It's the same thing I hear when I talk to community agencies. Vanier, a centre for children's mental health in London, has been chronically underfunded. They've seen no increase in base funding in years, and they are overwhelmed with the level of demand for those youth mental health services.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): We're at 45 seconds. We're going to move to further debate. The member from Ottawa–Vanier.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak. I did speak in favour of Bill 98 at second reading, and I will speak again in favour at third reading, with perhaps a slightly different focus.

I've listened to all the debate. I understand that the bill is not perfect. No bill is. But as a mother of four and a former school trustee, I do believe that education is the root of our society. That's where the shaping of our society happens and that's why it is so important that we support our school system adequately. Providing our children with the best learning environment possible is essential to allow them to become the best version of themselves with a desire to build a better world.

While Bill 98, like I said, doesn't solve all the issues and challenges—because no bill ever does—it brings new measures that were long overdue that should allow for a more accountable system and a more receptive environment for the well-being of our students. The code of conduct, the process for review by an integrity commissioner and the training requirements for trustees, for instance, will be useful tools to ensure that school board trustees fully understand their role and that the board meetings are focused on the quality of education for our students.

On the other hand, I also want to acknowledge some of the very relevant comments and recommendations received during committee review, specifically as they relate to francophone realities in terms of priorities. I know that

they are relevant because they are the same comments and recommendations we've been making for years. I acknowledge that there has been some progress on some of those issues, and I wouldn't want to totally dismiss the work that has been done by the Minister of Education and by the Minister of Francophone Affairs, but work remains to be done.

I will be switching to French, for those who are listening and would need to pay a different kind of attention.

Cependant, il est important de reconnaître et de comprendre que les défis auxquels font face nos conseils scolaires francophones diffèrent considérablement de ceux de leurs homologues anglophones.

Un problème crucial est le manque d'écoles francophones pour desservir nos communautés. Il est remarquable de constater qu'au cours de la dernière décennie, les conseils scolaires francophones ont connu une croissance soutenue de leurs taux d'inscription. Pourtant, l'approbation des projets de financement des immobilisations ne correspond pas à la demande, ce qui a pour résultat très malheureux de se retrouver avec un énorme montant de portatives dans nos cours d'école qui réduisent l'espace et qui ne fournissent pas un environnement approprié pour enseigner.

Mais la demande pour plus d'installations scolaires n'est pas seulement pour soulager nos écoles surpeuplées, c'est aussi pour construire des écoles là où il n'y en a pas pour desservir les communautés francophones des régions éloignées. En revanche, plusieurs conseils scolaires anglophones se retrouvent dans une situation différente, avec des propriétés excédentaires et des installations sous-utilisées alors que le taux d'inscription dans les écoles anglophones a diminué. Ce contraste saisissant met en évidence le besoin de solutions sur mesure qui répondent aux besoins spécifiques de chaque conseil scolaire. Ce qui marche pour l'un ne fonctionne pas nécessairement pour l'autre.

Une disposition de ce projet de loi traite du moment où un conseil peut ou doit vendre, louer ou autrement disposer d'un site scolaire. Cela devrait faire en sorte que les propriétés excédentaires appartenant aux conseils scolaires anglophones puissent être mises à la disposition de nos conseils scolaires francophones, les aidant à surmonter leurs problèmes d'infrastructure. Je suis fière d'avoir proposé certaines de ces modifications que le comité a acceptées dans une certaine mesure.

Je dois aussi parler de la pénurie d'enseignants qualifiés qui demeure une priorité importante pour nos conseils scolaires francophones. Malgré l'augmentation des inscriptions d'étudiants, attirer et retenir des enseignants francophones qualifiés demeure une lutte constante. Les exigences linguistiques et culturelles uniques rendent le processus de recrutement plus difficile.

Des infrastructures adéquates et du personnel qualifié pour enseigner sont des conditions essentielles pour pouvoir offrir une éducation de qualité en français. Et ça, madame la Présidente, c'est une obligation légale. Je sais que le ministre est pleinement conscient de cette obligation en vertu de l'article 23 de la Charte. C'est

pourquoi, moi, je veux l'encourager, encore une fois, à considérer activement les recommandations du groupe de travail qui a été mis sur pied il y a deux ans avec pour mandat précis de proposer des solutions à la pénurie d'enseignants francophones. Cette pénurie a maintenant créé une crise et le ministre a le pouvoir d'y remédier. Ça me fera plaisir de travailler avec lui, s'il le désire.

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In conclusion, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, Bill 98, is an essential piece of legislation that brings accountability to our school boards and addresses some of the pressing issues faced by our education system. Nevertheless, we must remain vigilant and continue our efforts to provide all students, regardless of their language, with the quality education they all deserve. This includes addressing the shortage of qualified teachers in francophone schools and finding innovative solutions to optimize teaching resources in anglophone schools.

Let us continue working towards a better education system that meets the specific needs of all of our students. Together, we can ensure that every child, regardless of language, receives the quality education they deserve.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to the member for Ottawa–Vanier. This is a very prescriptive piece of legislation. As I mentioned earlier, I served as a trustee for 10 years and chaired a board of 71 school boards from across the province of Ontario. Those were very good people who were committed to public education. We cared deeply about equity as well, and we pushed the government of the day to move forward on the equity agenda.

What does the member say when the government is willing to bring in a prescriptive piece of legislation like this but not willing to ensure that a school board and those trustees are actually following through on the mandate to raise the Pride flag? Because as I mentioned before, students who identify as queer have said to me that when they see that flag flying outside of their school, they see that they matter. They feel seen. When you feel seen and when you feel like you matter, then you actually—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Ottawa–Vanier.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you for the question. I, too, served as a school board trustee for 10 years, and I was also the chair of the board for a couple of years and a member of the association of francophone school boards as well. Regarding the piece of legislation and the equity piece that you're bringing up, obviously it should be part of all our schools. I don't think that there is a link to be made between the legislation itself, as it doesn't speak to the Pride aspect of it. I believe that the minister has the power to do what is necessary to make sure that school boards are respecting the values of this province. I encourage him to do that much.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: I want to ask the member opposite my favourite question about this bill. I'm really impressed

by the attempt to get transparency on funding, especially for special-needs funding, because I want to see what the money is being used for. I personally have been told by people who teach special needs and by parents that they are not seeing the funding come to their schools, their classrooms. So I would like to see how it is being allocated within the school boards. Would you agree that it's good for us to know where special-needs funding is going so that we know if there's enough, not enough, if it's being used in the best way, etc.?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you for the question. Transparency is obviously very, very important. Parents always ask about these questions. Now, that transparency cuts both ways. We also need to understand where the province is allocating the funding and how much they are allocating for special needs, because I don't believe that right now, even with the funding—the important funding that the government is saying it's providing—it's actually addressing the need in all our classes. I would like to know, in terms of transparency, how many more resources are we actually getting for each of our classrooms to assist the teachers and assist the students with special needs?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Quick question, quick response.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member from Ottawa–Vanier for her comments. I wanted to ask—there's obviously a mental health crisis in our schools. Does she believe—I believe you said that you were voting in favour of the legislation—that there is enough in this legislation to address mental health? We've heard it from government members, as they've spoken, that they believe there is—especially given the fact that the mental health supports are not actually linked to the children's mental health agencies in each region in Ontario.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you for the question. That's a little bit of the same as to what I responded earlier. It would be great to understand, with the funding that the government has announced, what does it mean in terms of resources in each of our classrooms, in each of our schools, actually? Because I don't think that the funding is sufficient to even have more than one person devoted to mental health in our schools. The need is increasing. It's been rampant. It needs to be addressed. So I think there needs to be a lot more money allocated to help with mental health. We see kids are struggling with anxiety, with all sorts of problems, and the support needs to be there.

I do encourage the government to consider allocating a lot more than has been allocated so far.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I rise to speak on education Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act.

First of all, the budget here represents significant cuts to education when inflation is taken into account. As we heard this morning during question period, the money that school boards spent from their reserves on COVID remediation has not been replaced by this government. So the government can make the claim that the budget has been increased, when in fact it has been decreased, and

money spent from reserves has never been replaced—even though there was federal money to do just that. And of course, as I said, the reserves haven't been replaced and inflation has not been accounted for.

The independent Financial Accountability Office found that the government failed to allocate \$600 million in COVID-19 response funds and underspent its education budget by \$432 million as of the third quarter of the 2022-23 fiscal year. More specifically, the Toronto District School Board used approximately \$70 million in board resources to support the continued learning and safety of students and staff during the pandemic in such areas as reducing class sizes, technology and PPE. But that \$70 million has not been restored. The Toronto District School Board is already starting the year with a deficit, and a deficit produced by actions of this government—or inaction by this government.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board used approximately \$60 million of reserves during the pandemic. Their current year shortfall is \$25 million, plus an additional \$10 million in unfunded sick leave. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board also spent close to \$10 million of their own funds to provide COVID supports to students, and in each case none of that money has been returned to schools. So, school boards are starting out with a deficit.

The minister can talk all he wants about historic increases to education, but until those pandemic expenses have been made up and budget increases match the rate of inflation, claiming there has been an increase is inaccurate. Perhaps it's time he should use some of those dollars he sent to parents to get some math tutoring himself, because adding the adjective "historic" does not mean the numbers add up, because they don't.

Hmm, but where have I heard that claim before? Oh yes, the historic increase to ODSF rates cut impossibly low during the Harris years. Then, when the Ford government came into power, the planned increase—the Liberals had actually planned an increase—well, they cut that in half. So here again, a math lesson would be useful. A 5% increase on next to nothing is still next to nothing.

1750

Let's start by looking back at the earlier education plans of this government. In 2019, the government announced a plan to eliminate 10,054 teaching positions by 2023-24 through increased class sizes and mandatory online learning. Teachers and parents fought back and mitigated the damage. Yet during the ongoing pandemic, the government demonstrated a clear disinclination to make schools more resilient. Think about that. It seems to me, as I recall, the notion was that you were going to eliminate all of those teachers, make larger class sizes, and somehow this was going to make kids more resilient because they'd have to tough it out in class sizes where the teacher couldn't possibly give them individual attention—pretty silly, really.

Most of the COVID funding for education came from Ottawa or school boards' own reserves. The government began sending money directly to parents instead of to

classrooms. It also expanded the scope of online education, justifying cuts to brick-and-mortar schools. Last year, when funding became available for tutoring, it had to be partially spent on third-party providers, so again, removing money from the school system, where it can be put to use to support students, and disbursing it.

Does anyone remember how insistent this government was about moving as many courses as possible online as another way to cut teaching staff and reduce face-to-face relationships amongst teachers and students and amongst students and students? It was this Minister of Education trying to sell everyone on that bad deal, and now he's offering another bad deal for students. Funny how that story changed.

Then let's go back to the Harris government. What about the cuts to education during Harris Conservative government? The government likes to point to the Liberals—by the way, the Conservatives were the official opposition for at least 58% of the time the Liberals were in power; somehow they forget that detail. They like to pretend they were powerless during this period, but they were not. In fact, the Liberals were continuing a destructive process already begun by the Mike Harris government. It's important to remember that, because this current bill, however the minister tries to sell it, is a continuation of the same process begun by the Mike Harris government.

In Harris's first two years, education dollars were cut by \$1 billion, or 5%. The centrepiece of the program was a 14.3% cut in funding to universities. We're talking mostly about schools here, but I worked in universities as well and I certainly have felt the effects of those cuts. Ontario post-secondary funding fell by 21% during the 1990s while enrolment increased by 8%. That's an old statistic, but I've been living the crisis of funding in post-secondary settings for years and, as in public education, the demands keep going up while the resources keep going down.

Interestingly, by 2000, Ontario's funding rank per university student had fallen to 10th out of 10 provinces. I looked that up again today and that statistic, as far as I can see, has not changed. As Rob Prichard, then University of Toronto president, recalls, Harris's policy "was devastating. These funds have never been restored. New funding ... has tracked to enrolment growth, but the base per student has never come back."

Not surprisingly, this is exactly what is now taking place in our publicly funded schools. Funding per student is down \$1,200. So whatever the minister is saying about historic increases, schools are facing a significant decrease in per-student funding.

It was this same minister and these same government members—shouting with the enthusiasm of a paid theatre claque—that they were in full support of using the "notwithstanding" clause as a weapon against education workers, the lowest-paid workers, working with the most vulnerable students in the province. That didn't go so well for the government. The government was forced to rescind that bill. But I will never forget the chorus of Conservative

MPPs shouting their approval for removing human rights and charter rights from education workers.

It should have been cause for some thoughtful reflection about ramming through legislation with only a narrow set of opinions guiding Conservative goals. But here we are again, with legislation crafted without any prior consultation with teachers, administrators, education workers, trustees, parents—without consultation with any of the people who actually do the work of teaching and supporting students.

Then, when you do hold consultations, you shut out every single suggestion from the people who do the actual work and the people who know the challenges that students, parents, teachers, support workers and administrators are facing, as with many other bills that your government has brought before the House. The dissolution of Peel bill is just one; apparently, that one doesn't warrant even the pretense of consultations.

Let's look at the refusal to take up the 15 amendments that came out of consultations with the AODA Alliance. I really ask myself, why would the minister not want to do right by students with disabilities? I can tell you, many schools in Thunder Bay are not accessible. They're older schools. They have long staircases and no elevators. Teachers and principals do their best to accommodate their students with disabilities, but it isn't easy. There's no funding for that.

Then there are the playgrounds. There are currently no accessible playgrounds in Thunder Bay. I know of a school that is fundraising so that they can build a fully accessible playground, something that will inevitably benefit all students, but they are having to do this by fundraising.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Reserves funds would pay for them.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Yes, reserves funds might well have been able to pay for that. There is no funding for making playgrounds accessible.

I've been in many classrooms, I have to say, especially in elementary schools, where teachers are buying supplies for their students because there's no budget for it or busting themselves to fundraise so that their students can receive extra opportunities like visits from artists and so on. So when the minister claims that schools are accessible, he's really being quite selective about which schools he's including in his assessment.

Blaming trustees for all the funding shortfalls is very, very disturbing. Blaming boards for funding shortfalls is very disturbing. It's supposed to be the boards' fault and trustees' fault that there's not enough money there to support students with special needs? We know there's not enough money there; we already know that. But there's an unwillingness to acknowledge that, so much better to point fingers and say, "Oh, the problem must be there's an abuse of spending taking place here," when the money wasn't there in the first place.

I don't know if I want to keep talking. You didn't listen before presenting this bill to stakeholders, to the wide range of people which—schooling affects most people at

one time or another. And you've refused to listen since. We brought forward 60 amendments; fifteen of those came from the AODA Alliance. Even those were ignored.

Is it any wonder that people think there is another agenda other than the talking points that we hear repeatedly? Once again, I'm reminded that the government is so worried about the content of their mandate letters that they continue to spend taxpayer dollars to keep them hidden from the public. That may be the most telling thing out of all, because as many times as somebody wants to speak about transparency or being ethical or being accountable—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you to the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

1800

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Billy Pang: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery should investigate the issue of notice of security interests with respect to direct agreements for goods prescribed for the purposes of subsection 43.1(1) of the Consumer Protection Act, including the feasibility of requiring suppliers of goods to disclose to consumers prominently in the direct agreements the amount of security interests and imposing a penalty to suppliers who fail to do so; and report back to the House by the end of 2023.

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

Mr. Billy Pang: I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to rise in the Legislature today and present my motion. My motion addresses a pressing issue that is affecting many consumers across the province. It calls for an investigation into the matter of notice of security interests, specifically in relation to direct agreements for goods outlined in subsection 43.1(1) of the Consumer Protection Act. These goods are generally HVAC-related equipment, such as water softeners, water heaters, furnaces and air conditioners etc. According to the current requirements of the Consumer Protection Act, customers are merely informed of the possibility that a security interest may be registered on the goods they acquire without any disclosure of the amount of security interests. This lack of transparency leaves consumers vulnerable to unforeseen financial obligations, particularly when selling or refinancing their homes.

Currently, the Personal Property Security Act authorizes creditors to register a notice of security interest in a land registry office if the rented equipment or collateral is or includes fixtures. A fixture is a type of property that straddles the line between real property and

personal property. It is sufficiently affixed to the real property so as to become part of it; for instance, a furnace installed in a home.

A notice of security interest, colloquially known as a lien or referred to in the media in a similar way to liens, is a form of security interest registered on the title of a property when homeowners enter into agreements for rented equipment.

A notice of security interest registration does not provide an interest in the homeowner's real property, but rather gives the creditor the right to remove and repossess the equipment if the customer defaults on their payment obligations under an equipment rental or lease agreement. By registering a notice of security interest, the creditor is also claiming an interest in the equipment installed in one's home. The notice does not necessarily represent the value of the equipment installed but rather the value of the contract in place.

A notice of security interest is most often registered by the financing company or billing department associated with the contracting company. It is important to note that a secured lender does not require any consent of the landowner or any mortgagee to file the notice of security interest. If the borrower has granted the lender a security interest in the equipment and the lender determines the equipment will become affixed to the land, the lender is entitled to register its notice of security interest against the land, even if the borrower or the lessee is not the owner of the land.

Changes to the Consumer Protection Act in recent years have established certain rules with the aim of increasing protections for customers in door-to-door sales transactions, which are also referred to as "direct agreements." Under the current rules, certain listed products and services can no longer be offered or sold at a customer's home unless the customer initiated the transaction. These restricted products and services are HVAC-related, such as water heaters, furnaces, air conditioners, water treatment devices, etc.

According to the Consumer Protection Act, businesses providing restricted products must include a mandatory cover page on the direct agreements to inform consumers of their rights. However, there is no disclosure requirement regarding the amount of security interest that a business may register on the title of the property.

The current avenue to dispute a Notice of Security Interest registered on title would generally be bringing an application to the Superior Court of Justice. Provisions of the Personal Property Security Act allow a party to bring an application to the Superior Court to discharge or partially discharge a notice of security interest. The court can order the land registrar to amend the books of the land registry office to indicate that the security interest has been discharged or partially discharged, as the case may be. Under the act, the applicant must pay the disputed amount into court pending the outcome of the case.

Where courts have found that a business did not meet its obligation under common law to bring onerous contract terms to the customer's attention, or otherwise engaged in

unfair practices, courts have been willing to cancel the contract and award certain repayment to the homeowner. Even so, these are without doubt lengthy and costly procedures for customers.

In 2020, the Competition Bureau Canada issued an open letter to Ontario's Minister of Government and Consumer Services, now the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, regarding the rental appliance industry. The bureau pointed out that Ontario's rental appliance industry represents a very significant source of complaints dealt with by the bureau's Monopolistic Practices Directorate over the past several years.

The bureau made recommendations with respect to the Consumer Protection Act. They noted that, while the existing legislation provides protections for customers, such as disclosure requirements for suppliers and rental appliances, there may still be areas where consumers would benefit from further effective disclosure, particularly in the context of home purchases.

Regarding the purchase of homes that already have rental equipment installed, the bureau has stated many Canadians may not be aware that home purchase contracts can include a clause whereby the homebuyer assumes a contract for a rental water heater. Only after the home purchase has been completed do these consumers realize that there are hefty fees to exit the water rental heater contract. In this regard, the Competition Bureau recommends prospective homebuyers check the terms of the contract before signing if they are about to buy a home that includes rental appliances such as a water heater, furnace or air conditioner.

Against this background, my motion seeks to address the insufficiency of existing requirements under the Consumer Protection Act regarding the issue of notice of security interests. Consumers often enter into direct agreements with businesses without knowledge of the specific amount and formulation of security interests. Consequently, when homeowners decide to sell or refinance their properties, they are blindsided by the exorbitant amounts of security interests registered against their homes. This motion aims to rectify this situation by requesting the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery to investigate the issue comprehensively.

1810

The investigation should focus on the feasibility of requiring suppliers of goods to prominently disclose the amount of security interests in the direct agreements and to impose penalties on suppliers who fail to comply. By doing so, we can empower consumers with crucial information and create a fair and transparent system that protects their interests.

The media has repeatedly reported on the issue of notice of security interests, shedding light on the challenges faced by unsuspecting homeowners, including some in Markham–Unionville. Reports have highlighted instances where such notices were placed on homes without the owners' knowledge, often resulting in financial burdens far beyond the value of the rented equipment. These

stories underscore the urgency and importance of addressing this issue promptly and effectively.

It is the responsibility of the government to protect and advocate for the rights and interests of consumers in Ontario. This motion aligns with the government's priority to review and strengthen the Consumer Protection Act. It ensures that consumers are equipped with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions, safeguarding their financial well-being.

With this, I ask all members of this House to support this motion and recognize the significance of transparent and equitable consumer protection. By investigating the issue of notice of security interests and establishing stringent disclosure requirements, we can enhance consumer confidence and prevent unsuspecting homeowners from falling victim to exorbitant financial obligations.

In conclusion, let us act in the best interest of the people we represent and champion their rights. Together, we can take a step forward towards a fairer and more transparent system that safeguards consumers' interests.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Right off the top, I want to assure the member, and I want to assure everybody here, we're supporting this. We're supporting this, and do you know why we're supporting this? Because consumer protection is written in the DNA of the NDP. It is written in our DNA.

I want to thank the member for getting up today and choosing, in his second reading, a motion that talks about consumer protection. I want to thank you. On behalf of all of us, I want to thank you.

I have felt sometimes a little disenfranchised in conversations around consumer protection in this House. Sometimes I have felt, if I may say, that the government has taken the position of caveat emptor, which is, let the buyer beware, and what's happening today is a motion that lets all of us understand that when individuals are facing a sale, they don't have all the information they need. They don't know sometimes what's going on; they don't know that a lien is going to happen against their home because something they've purchased is being installed on a wall or whatnot. Today we're discussing a motion that will provide more information to consumers, and so it is my hope that we all stand united on this important issue.

The reality is, when it comes to consumer protection in Ontario, we've got a long way to go, because it is, and I've said it before, the age-old story of David and Goliath. We, as consumers, as regular Ontarians, need more protection, because we don't have it in Ontario. There's so much more that could be done. This is a step in the right direction. It's a motion; it's not a bill. It's not going to introduce legislation that would make those changes. But I hope, in your caucus meetings as government, that you listen to this member. Because he chose to talk about consumer protection here, and I'd like to see legislation come back to this chamber that would actually discuss changes in law to improve the situation.

You know, oftentimes when you sign a contract, the details in there that you either didn't read, couldn't read or

understand mean that you'll have to go to court. That's what happens. Because you know how consumers in Ontario get protection, often, and it's really unfortunate? They have to sometimes bargain on their story being heard in the media. All media divisions have a special division within them discussing consumer complaints. How many times have you turned on Marketplace and you saw or heard a story that boils your blood, absolutely does this? That's the situation that we're facing here.

As an individual, when you're not getting the protection you deserve, you're forced to take on someone worth not only in some cases a thousand times your net worth, but ten thousand times, a hundred thousand times your net worth. How do you do that? What are you supposed to do in those situations?

It's understandable that many in these situations just give up, because what are they going to do? It's bad enough when someone signs a bad deal, but when vulnerable people or seniors—seniors, in some cases, with cognitive impairments—are bullied and locked into contracts that they didn't want or need, it's absolutely terrible. It's reprehensible.

We've heard many different stories, and it happens in all the industries. For instance, an HVAC company might come in and try to tell you there's a problem with existing equipment, as an example. Not only is it old and inefficient but, hey, maybe it's even dangerous. The vast majority of people working in this field are honest, law-abiding people. But when a bad actor comes to your home and takes advantage of someone who's vulnerable—terrible.

Sometimes, they tell you they can lower your bills or help you apply for programs that are out there. When my family first purchased a home, I remember my mother—it was absolute luck that I drove home. I said this before: My mother was poised to sign a contract, and I had to come in there. Literally, it was, "Stop. Stop what you're doing." I took a card. But if I had arrived late, what situation would my own family have been in?

In many cases, persistent, sometimes aggressive, even predatory door-to-door sales can intimidate and mislead people into signing contracts they never intended to. That's why I go back to caveat emptor. Because in many cases, really, is there a real choice in the matter? People are taken advantage of. It's unbelievable.

Now you want to get out of the contract? You've got to pay for a lawyer.

Now, let's talk about the liens. Because what they do is they'll register, in many cases, a lien against your home, unbeknownst to the person who's basically being taken advantage of. Many stay quiet, embarrassed, feeling ashamed to admit that they've been taken advantage of. Worse yet, they don't even know.

So here we are, making sure that people are advised of what's happening to them. Again, I commend the member. This is something we all agree upon. This is something we need to be working toward, but more needs to be done.

We all know the story too well. Many of these contracts have many little clauses that we're not aware of. Companies have contracts that actually increase the price, so

the equipment you've purchased is actually going down in value, and you're paying more. Imagine this.

When Ontario banned door-to-door HVAC sales, many companies are now selling things that aren't banned: insulation, water filters, door cameras. There's lots of stuff out there. There's more work that needs to be done.

When a furnace, water heater or a camera is installed, it counts as a fixture, and it allows the business to say, as the member pointed out, that they have a claim to the property, and they can register a lien.

Lawyer Dennis Crawford, who was interviewed by CBC Marketplace, called the lien "the beating heart" of these scams. It's too easy to register a lien. Only one signature is required, and any amount can be set. Sometimes, companies transfer the contracts to finance companies who register the lien, and the finance company will send a letter to the homeowner's attention demanding payment. Many homeowners don't even know they have these liens, as I have mentioned. A contract can allow for a lien to be buried somewhere in the fine print of a contract. This is precisely the case that was brought to my attention, not even by the person but by a principled, hard-working, honest HVAC salesperson, installer and contractor.

Imagine this: We'll call her Anna. She has the beginnings of cognitive decline and lives with her husband, who is suffering dementia—both in their seventies, living in a modest home. She was visited one day by a salesperson who, despite her protests, pressured her into signing a contract. The salesperson told her that he would lower her monthly payments by consolidating all her bills to a much lower monthly fee, but the very next day, she changed her mind. She tried to contact the company, but they wouldn't answer the phone. What good is the cool-down period, right? When she finally reached them within 10 days, she was told that she couldn't get out of the contract and change her mind. She didn't know the law; she didn't know what she could do. Instead, they sent someone over—listen to this—to remove her old equipment, take it into the driveway and destroy it.

1820

Imagine: Elderly individuals facing cognitive decline, and this is what's happening to them in this province. They told her she couldn't change her mind, and when she spoke to the original salesperson, of course she wasn't warned of this. At the end of the day, Anna was paying for both the new equipment and the old equipment, and there was no cost savings. She was also saddled with an under-sink water filter so large—it was a commercial installation—it caused her kitchen sink to collapse. Two HEPA filters, three water softeners—all of this new equipment didn't even work. To make matters worse, they registered a lien of \$40,000 against her home—\$40,000. Her only recourse was to hire a lawyer. She wants to sell her home now—multiple liens across her property.

This is a common story. The same family—and what has happened to this family? Contractors have—I don't know how. They're sending her information. As vulnerable individuals, multiple contractors are coming to her home trying to sell things. Once, her daughter came to find

a contractor in her home bullying them, and they said "Leave." They had to call the police. It took the police to get the salesperson out of their house. That is the state of what's happening to some families in this province.

This bill—this motion, actually, not a bill—is a step in the right direction, but we New Democrats are calling on this government for all of us to work together. In the last session, I introduced a bill myself for a consumer watchdog because there's just not enough—we don't have, under the current laws, enough to have the backs of consumers. I reintroduced the legislation, a strengthened version in these difficult times, yesterday. We're supporting you; we're asking you to support us, because consumers in this province need all of us working together, standing united, to have their backs.

It is the story of David and Goliath. Today, we all have the back of David. Moving forward, let's keep going in the right direction. We want to see this government, this ministry, working hand in hand with consumers, fighting for them. Today, all us are doing that. Today, we are sending a message to consumers and to people who take advantage of our most vulnerable and who want to harm people living here that enough is enough.

I commend the member. I hope this caucus listens to this member behind those closed doors, and I hope this member will fight, within this government, if necessary, to ensure that real consumer protection is introduced in this province. I'm calling on all of you here in the government to support us too, because we need more. We need to support this, and we need a watchdog to have the backs of every consumer in this province.

Enough is enough. Let's work together, and let's show these predatory salespeople and those who take advantage of consumers in this province that business is over, the party is over. We're all united in protecting consumers.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'll be speaking to this very practical motion put forward by the member from Markham–Unionville. In the very short year that I've had an opportunity to be working with the member from Markham–Unionville, I've found him to be very practical and dedicated to his riding and very hard-working, so I'm pleased to speak to his motion.

What this motion does is that it proposes to direct the ministry to explore the issue of notices of security interest in consumer contracts, and this is worth the time to take a moment to talk about. First, we should talk what a notice is. The notice is rather a legal term. It's a legal notice and it means there will be some legal consequences. A notice is usually something which is publicly accessible through a certain search and the payment of a fee, which is usually quite nominal. The notice is to give public notice to any potential purchaser, typically speaking, of a certain interest that's registered against a property.

The second thing I'd like to speak about is the security interest. The security interest is referring to a right or a legal claim and an interest that is usually secured issues. We have financial interest. That's frequently a legal

interest, and the fact that it's secured means that it's backed by a type of guarantee and that guarantee can vary. There are contracts that provide for this, and the contract will be specifically authorizing one party to register a notice of security interest. Frequently, as the member from Markham–Unionville stated, these contracts often have to do with HVAC equipment or other types of equipment.

This is a very legitimate practice. Registering a security interest and giving notice thereof is actually quite legitimate. When the two parties to the contract are aware of what they're doing and they consent to it, it actually might be a very useful and constructive way for a purchaser to finance a purchase and a useful and constructive way for the lender, the person who is lending money or taking less payment than is required, to get a security or a guarantee that they're going to get paid. It is a useful method of conducting business. It's done frequently.

The important thing to keep in mind is that the parties should be aware of it. That is to say, the party who is granting or consenting to the notice of security interest should be aware that they are granting or consenting to the security interest, and therein lies the difficult problem, because although contracts can, from time to time, be very clear about this, I'm sure that we've all encountered contracts where we've signed quickly and without considering the consequences. And that's where the problem jumps up.

What this is going to do is authorize or direct the ministry to explore solutions to this problem. I will be congratulating the member from Markham–Unionville for bringing this motion forward because it's a worthy question to be explored.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of MPP Pang's motion concerning notice of security interests, particularly as we find ourselves in Seniors' Month.

Speaker, our government believes that seniors have the right to age with dignity—free of financial abuse. Each year, hundreds of thousands of adults over the age of 60 are financially exploited. This is called elder abuse. Most victims of financial abuse are women, but some are men, older adults who have no family nearby and people with disabilities, memory problems or dementia. What's clear, Speaker, is that elder abuse, and particularly financial abuse, will not stop on its own.

We need to continue to build on the great work undertaken thus far by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility led by Minister Raymond Cho and Premier Ford. Ontario was the first province in Canada to introduce a strategy to combat elder abuse, and it's a strategy supported by the 11 largest seniors' organizations in this province. The motion before us this afternoon does exactly that, by calling upon the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery to investigate the challenges associated with notice of security interests, including the feasibility of requiring suppliers of goods to disclose to consumers prominently in the direct agreements the amount of security interests, and imposing penalty to suppliers who fail to do so.

1830

Speaker, as we approach together Elder Abuse Awareness Day, which is on June 15, I urge all members to support MPP Pang's motion to ensure supports for seniors across the province are optimized. After all, these are the people—our grandmothers, our grandfathers—who built the communities of this province. Once again, I urge all the members to support MPP Pang's motion and optimize the supports for seniors.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I would like to thank the member from Markham–Unionville for bringing forward this motion.

Ontarians know well that air conditioning and heating equipment are essentials to get us through this province's frigid winters as well as our summer heat. While there are many potential stressors of owning a home, finding a surprise charge on your property for the rental of HVAC and other types of equipment and goods for your home should certainly not be one of them. And yet, when Ontarians go to rent this equipment, this is exactly what happens far too often.

The equipment on which suppliers can put a notice of security interest not only includes heaters and air conditioners, but electric generators, water heaters, home security or alarm systems, custom kitchen cabinets, built-in pest detection, and more. While it is understood that the notice of security interest allows the lending company to claim an interest on the personal property installed in the home, many people have been taken off guard by the amount of the charge, which is the value of the contract being signed and not the value of the equipment. The fact that this value is not required to be declared up front is how people get scammed, as suppliers do not make this information clear in the contracts they ask homeowners to sign or that they assume—let's listen to that word, "assume." Even though most door-to-door sales have been banned in Ontario, the truth is that, as long as this loophole still exists, suppliers of goods are still able to take advantage.

In my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, I have received constituent calls of concern specific to Enercare—this has included consumer fraud issues to attempting to cancel a consumer agreement.

In addition, I can use my own experience with Enercare, whereby I purchased my home close to 14 years ago and details as to the water heater property agreement were never included. Okay, my bad; I never thought that it was a rental or anything. The hot water tank broke, actually, just this past—I think it was in September. I was in the midst of constituent stuff when I got an urgent call from my husband. He said, "Water is everywhere." I said, "Well, call the local company and get somebody to come in, because we need hot water." Somebody came to the house within two hours. They cleaned everything up. They removed the old tank and put in a new one. I said, "Let's just buy the new one. Let's just go forward." Okay, wonderful. All of a sudden, a couple of months later, as I was examining my Enbridge bill, there was Enercare, with

a charge on my bill for a rental. I was like, “Oh, my God. I didn’t realize that I’m actually renting this thing.” When I contacted Enercare, I ended up having to pay them \$100 for the disposal of an old tank that broke and made a mess of my basement, and I had no agreement to show that I had to pay them, this is—I went by everything they had to say. I could prove that it was taken away—but no. That’s what happened.

This appalling deception needs to end. This motion is a common-sense first step to increasing transparency in these contracts and vastly lessening the chance of a surprise charge.

Now, in my case, the charge was pretty little. Mind you, I did the calculations, and over close to 14 years, with what I was paying per month, let’s just say I bought a brand new one, installed it and got rid of the old one for a thousand dollars less than what I had just been paying for almost 14 years. I guess that charge would just keep going on and on. Anyways, some other people, it sounds like, have been duped for a lot more money, as in the case of the member who spoke from the opposition.

Now, I am proud, especially after hearing my own story, to support the member from Markham–Unionville’s initiative to close this loophole and protect consumers from exorbitant and unclear charges. Let’s all support this common-sense motion that advocates for stronger consumer protection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Markham–Unionville has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Billy Pang: I would like to start by thanking the members from Essex, Whitby and Newmarket–Aurora for your support of the motion. I’m glad that they all shared the importance and urgency to address the insufficiency of existing requirements under the Consumer Protection Act regarding the issue of notice of security interests.

I would also like to thank the member from Humber River–Black Creek for your contribution to the debate of this motion.

To conclude, this motion calls upon the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery to investigate the issue of notice of security interests with respect to direct agreements for goods prescribed for the purpose of subsection 43.1(1) of the Consumer Protection Act. Specifically, the investigation should include the feasibility of requiring suppliers of goods to disclose to consumers prominently in the direct agreements the amount of security interests and imposing a penalty to suppliers who fail to do so.

This motion will enhance transparency of security interests in direct agreements. It will also ensure that consumers are equipped with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions and safeguard their financial well-being. It’s a clear demonstration of this government’s commitment to protect Ontario consumers’ interests.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of the members who are here who took part and listened to this debate. I would also like to thank all of the members who support this motion going forward.

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

Mr. Pang has moved private member’s notice of motion number 56. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): All matters relating to private members’ public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, June 8, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1838.

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	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
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	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
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	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (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	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	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	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaled (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associée du Logement
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	

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