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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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Jeudi
28 septembre 2023

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Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 September 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 septembre 2023

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

WEARING OF PINS

Hon. Rob Flack: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order.

Hon. Rob Flack: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to wear gold ribbon lapel pins in recognition of September being Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Flack is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to wear gold ribbon lapel pins in recognition of September being Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Agreed? Agreed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EVENTS IN CAMBRIDGE

Mr. Brian Riddell: Summer in my riding of Cambridge was truly one of celebration.

On July 1, my wife, Suzanne, and I had the pleasure of taking part in the Canada Day parade. It was amazing to see thousands of children and adults line the parade route to celebrate our country's 156th birthday. It is the commitment of sponsors, organizers and volunteers that make the Cambridge Canada Day parade celebration one of the biggest and best in the entire country, and it was truly an honour to be part of it. The parade as well as the celebration that followed in Riverside Park was also an opportunity to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the city of Cambridge.

Later in the month of July, my community hosted the Cambridge Scottish Festival. Year after year, thousands of residents and visitors descend on Churchill Park to celebrate everything Scottish. The pipe bands, dancers, athletes and vendors do a wonderful job of highlighting their Scottish culture and heritage.

Finally, the much-anticipated grand opening of the Gaslight District took place in late July. Literally thousands of people of all ages attended the free three-day event to witness the transformation of the historic Grand Avenue property. It was amazing. As the member of provincial Parliament, I am proud of this development and happy to see so many people near and far experiencing everything that we have to offer.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Joel Harden: Last Thursday, I left Ottawa at 6:30 in the morning on my bicycle, bound for this place. We called it the #SafetyRide. Our goal was to get here in four days, and I'm proud to say we made it, with the support of colleagues and friends along the way. We stopped in Kingston, in Brighton, in Oshawa, in Scarborough, and we ended here on the front lawn of the Legislature. Our goal was to hear from people and families about vulnerable road users and to talk about our private member's bill we're working on: Bill 40, the Moving Ontarians Safely Act.

Speaker, as we stopped in community after community, we heard stories that I will never forget. I talked to Anita Armstrong about her daughter Serene, who is now 14 years old and will live the rest of her life with a critical brain injury after being hit, as she crossed the street in Ottawa, by a driver who fled the scene. We met with Jess Spieker and Meredith Wilkinson, two cyclists in this great city of Toronto who have critical, lifelong injuries after being hit in our streets. I talked to Chris, a paramedic, who was responding to an emergency at the side of the road and whose paramedic bus was hit by a driver who was driving recklessly.

Speaker, the unfortunate reality is that the number of pedestrians and cyclists and other vulnerable road users being killed is not going down. Today, statistics bear that 20 vulnerable road users will be brought into emergency room departments after being struck down by a careless driver. We have to change our laws, and I urge members to support Bill 40.

1020

SPORTS FACILITIES

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Speaker, sport is so much more than a game; it is a means to inspire collaboration, confidence and teamwork.

When I got elected in 2018, I was shocked to know that we have two high schools in Malton and both lacked much-needed sports facilities.

Fast-forward: Colleagues and the residents of Mississauga-Malton, I stand here today to share, with great joy and gratitude, that Malton has two high schools and both have approvals for new track and field facilities.

Thank you to Premier Ford and Minister Lecce for your leadership and providing tools for local youth to unleash their potential. Your support means the world to me, for making my dream come true.

The construction of the track and field facility at Lincoln Alexander is already under way. And the track

and field facility at Ascension of Our Lord Secondary School stands approved, with funds released to make it a reality.

With the support of local councillor Carolyn Parrish, trustee Thomas Thomas, parent council chair Flavienne, principal Kylie Richardson, all the staff and the parents, the youth of Malton will now have the tools to repeat the history of achieving gold medals at the Olympics.

Once again, it has been proved that working together is the best way to achieve anything.

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Ms. Sarah Jama: September 30 is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, an important day for all settlers across so-called Canada to reckon with the ongoing colonial impacts of colonization on Indigenous communities across Turtle Island.

As the MPP from Hamilton Centre representing a riding on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe territory, it is important for me to name in this House the current impacts of colonization today. In Hamilton Centre, Indigenous people represent a disproportionate number of houseless community members, and there is actually an encampment of mainly Indigenous people in Victoria Park in my riding. Parts of Six Nations still do not have access to clean drinking water either, a direct result of colonization. It is embarrassing that we are on stolen land and that the rightful owners of this land do not have access to what they need in order to survive.

I call on this government to end the boil-water advisories in this province, to give land back, to listen to the demands of Grassy Narrows First Nation, and to stop putting profit before the lives of people in this province.

I will be at Gage Park on September 30 in celebration and in reflection with Indigenous community members—and I ask that everyone do the same on this day.

BRIDLETOWNE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Mr. Aris Babikian: On June 19, 2023, after years of delay and failed promises, the Bridletowne Neighbourhood Centre, BNC, became a reality. It was my pleasure and honour to join the Premier at the groundbreaking ceremony. It was a historic day for Scarborough—Agingcourt and Scarborough residents.

Once completed, this critical hub will provide vital health and social service and job opportunities to our residents. The state-of-the-art building will provide a space for community organizations such as Carefirst seniors association, Hong Fook Mental Health Association, and Senior Persons Living Connected. These institutions will provide mental health services, health and fitness support, licensed child care services, much-needed seniors healthy active living programs, and health promotion. The facility will also have an indoor pool and gymnasium. The Scarborough Health Network's dialysis and chronic disease clinic

will have 45 dialysis treatment stations and nine home-training stations. All these services will provide our residents and families with healthy living to enhance their well-being and improve their quality of life. People of all ages will benefit from this facility.

I am gratified to deliver on my campaign promises.

Thank you to the United Way, YMCA, Scarborough Health Network—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Members' statements?

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, by an overwhelming majority, the most common issue in my office we hear about is housing. Regardless of whether the dream is of ownership or renting, so many working Ontarians find it almost impossible to find a safe, affordable place to live.

Beyond that, the situation is much more grim for those most vulnerable members of our community who are literally dying on waiting lists for placements for rent-geared-to-income housing. My staff work with homeless individuals, low-income seniors and families on a weekly basis, desperately struggling to find affordable housing.

One of my constituents, Rodrigo, has been on the social housing waiting list for three years. He is sick with cancer and has epilepsy and diabetes. His wife has fibromyalgia. Despite having urgent status, he is still languishing on the wait-list with no end in sight. He's an ODSP recipient but cannot find an affordable place to live within the confines of the meagre ODSP allowances. The housing crisis is mentioned daily in this building, yet the government refuses to take meaningful actions that would help people like Rodrigo.

Ontarians deserve real rent control; policies to increase the supply of affordable, co-op and subsidized housing; meaningful improvements to the Landlord and Tenant Board to provide tenants and landlords alike fair and timely access; and an increase to social assistance rates to give people a livable income.

This government needs to commit to policies that will help those in need instead of focusing on solutions to help their insider friends.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mr. Ric Bresee: Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and speak about the wonderful community of Bancroft and the amazing community members there—for bringing new diagnostic care to Quinte Health North Hastings Hospital.

The Back the Cat initiative, as it's known locally, launched a grassroots community project to help raise funds for a new CT scanner in Bancroft last April, with a goal of \$2.8 million. In that short time, I am incredibly proud to say that they have achieved 99% of that goal. They are so close, in fact, that they've already started construction of the space in anticipation. This is incredibly exciting for a community of only 4,000 people.

I have to thank the Minister of Health for approving the installation and supporting the effort by approving the operating costs for the CT scanner. These services will improve the lives of people in North Hastings county for years to come.

Anyone in North Hastings requiring a CT scan right now has to travel more than two hours each way to the nearest scanner. For many of these trips, they need to use an ambulance and have a nurse travel with the patient.

This CT scanner will provide not only faster and more comfortable patient services, allowing the family to stay with them, but it will also result in literally hundreds of thousands of dollars of savings. Thanks to the—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Members' statements?

BEECHWOOD CEMETERY CIMETIÈRE BEECHWOOD

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Located in my riding, Beechwood Cemetery is Canada's national cemetery and has been serving Canadians since 1873. It is my pleasure to rise today to congratulate Beechwood Cemetery on its 150th anniversary. I had the privilege to participate in two great events to commemorate this anniversary. One was an appreciation gala with 150 special guests, and the burial of a time capsule to be opened in 150 years—of course, I won't be there for that one.

Beechwood has been a feature of Ottawa and continues to be the final resting place for many Canadians, members of the Armed Forces, veterans, RCMP, and Ottawa police, as well as countless cultural and religious communities.

Mais ce qui rend le cimetière Beechwood encore plus spécial est son volet communautaire, car le cimetière accueille la communauté à travers différents événements d'intérêt. Que ce soit une visite guidée historique du site, un souper-bénéfice pour la banque alimentaire ou l'accueil de toute la communauté pour la journée de réflexion sur la vérité et la réconciliation, le cimetière est définitivement un endroit à découvrir.

Since 1873, Beechwood Cemetery has been an important landmark for both Canada and the city of Ottawa, with a long-standing focus on community, dignity and remembrance. Beechwood has seen Canada become the country it is. I am proud that Beechwood is part of my riding of Ottawa-Vanier, and I'll be there this weekend for the truth and reconciliation day.

1030

MARKDALE HOSPITAL

Mr. Rick Byers: Colleagues, this morning I'm very pleased to rise in this House to tell you about an historic day for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound—the opening of the newly constructed Markdale Hospital. September 14 was a beautiful morning in Markdale—as most are—and it was so great to welcome the Premier and Minister of Health to our community.

The new Markdale Hospital is an absolutely stunning model for state-of-the-art health care. The rooms are spacious and beautifully equipped, the hallways are wide, the ceilings are high, and there is high-tech equipment everywhere.

Thank you, Premier, Minister of Health, and our PC team for your commitment to build new health care infrastructure all over Ontario.

Thank you, Centre Grey Health Services Foundation, Darlene Lamberti, Harvey Fraser, the board of directors, and especially our Markdale and Grey Highlands communities for your incredible support to the hospital.

Thank you, Bright Shores Health System, CEO Gary Sims, board chair Joanne Flewwelling, the management team and the entire board for your leadership in delivering this beautiful hospital.

Thank you, Bill Walker, our outstanding past MPP for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, for your determined efforts to make this project a reality

Thank you to the incredible team at Bird Construction for delivering this project on time, on budget.

Thank you, Mayor Paul McQueen, Deputy Mayor Dane Nielsen, and current and past members of council.

Colleagues, this is the future of health care in Ontario, and it was great to see it on that morning in Markdale.

PROSTATE CANCER

Ms. Patrice Barnes: Today I rise to highlight the closing of September as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, a time when we come together to raise awareness and support for those affected by this disease. The Walnut Foundation, a non-profit charity, is at the forefront of this advocacy, tirelessly working to educate and provide vital support for prostate cancer.

In June, I had the honour of participating in the ninth Walk the Path walkathon, along with Minister Parsa and Ivan Dawns from the union of painters and allied trades, who exemplifies the power of community advocacy.

One in eight men will face a prostate cancer diagnosis in their lifetime. Black men are 76% more likely to be diagnosed and 2.2 times more likely to succumb to this disease.

However, it is imperative to understand that early detection makes an overwhelming difference in this disease.

For those in the higher-risk groups, continual vigilance is very important. For you, your tests are covered fully by OHIP.

I encourage all men to take charge of your health, schedule your annual physicals, and engage in candid conversations with your doctor and family. Prostate cancer is not the end. Remember, a diagnosis is not a death sentence. Early testing holds the power to save lives. I encourage you to be proactive, have hard conversations, and get tested today.

In closing, let us recognize the valuable work of organizations like the Walnut Foundation and of Ivan

Dawns, whose unwavering dedication provides support for those impacted by this disease.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): A number of members have informed me that they have points of order they wish to raise.

The Associate Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: Yesterday, during second reading of Bill 131, I mistakenly referred to it as Bill 1. I would like to correct the record to show that I was referring to Bill 131.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That is a valid point of order.

The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Point of order, Mr. Speaker: Also, in debating Bill 131 yesterday, I said I gave schedule 1 an A+. I misspoke. I really meant to say I give schedule 1 a D+. I should have checked my—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That is not a valid point of order.

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in recognition of Saturday, September 30 being the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group, and five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to make statements in recognition of Saturday, September 30 being the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group, and five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the member for Kiiwetinoong.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I am a survivor of the colonial system.

I was born in Sioux Lookout Indian Hospital. The zone hospital was a segregated hospital for First Nations people. By the 1960s, there were 20 fully functioning Indian hospitals in Canada—places that delivered substandard care. It was a form of apartheid.

My parents raised me in the bush. My first language is Anishiniimowin, also known as Ojji-Cree. We lived with the seasons, hunting, fishing and trapping. We lived peacefully on the land, taking only what we needed when we needed it.

When it came time to go to elementary school, I was sent to an Indian day school, one of over 600 Indian day

schools run and funded by the federal government across Canada. I had no choice. I had to go.

Once I graduated, I attended an Indian residential school for high school. I attended Stirland Lake Indian residential school, or the Wahbon Bay Academy, just outside of Pickle Lake. Run by Mennonites, it opened in 1971 but didn't close until the 1990s. I attended Stirland Lake in grades 9 and 10. I lived in a small house, a dorm for the boys. There were four boys in my room. I had a bunk bed and only one drawer in a chest of drawers for my clothes. We were constantly watched by staff. They censored our letters home to our parents, reading every word we wrote. The older boys used to be heavily punished, sometimes for no reason. They would be beaten, they would be strapped, until they were black and blue.

I have no memory of grade 10. I see my photo in the grade 10 yearbook. I can hardly believe it. It's as if the entire year has disappeared from my life. The pictures in the yearbook say I was there, but I remember nothing.

There's also a photograph of a convicted pedophile, Ralph Rowe, who used to fly to the school on his float plane to administer to the Anglican boys. He was a notorious sexual offender with upwards of 500 victims.

When I flip through the yearbook, many of my friends, the faces I see staring up at me, have died. They have left too young for the spirit world—violent deaths, suicides, addiction. Why have so many left us? Their spirits were broken. They could not carry on. Why? Because of Indian residential schools, because of the abuse, violence and their demons imposed on them. They did not ask to be born into this history, one of oppression, one of subjugation, but they were. All over Canada, we see the horrors of this history that this country has largely chosen to ignore.

1040

We are searching for our children, for our families, our family members all over Turtle Island. They are in the shallow graves outside old churches, residential schools, on what is now private property, and they are buried in the lands surrounding old Indian hospitals, TB sanatoriums and asylums. Over 10,000 suspected remains of children have been discovered all over the place on Turtle Island. Yet still, people deny it is true. They deny that Indian residential schools were horrible places. These deniers have websites and post on social media what has become an acceptable form of hate: denying the truth of Indian residential schools. This must end.

Since the government of Ontario was a party to children being in residential schools in the first place, since they were part of the system, the government of Ontario must do its part to combat denialism. Where is the public advertisement campaign about Indian residential schools, admitting the harms, and fighting against those who deny our history? Where is the province of Ontario's reformed education curriculum, one that makes it mandatory, not a choice, to teach all children in Ontario schools from kindergarten to grade 8 that Indian residential schools happened and that our children, our loved ones, never came home from these institutions? Why isn't the truth of our treaties being taught?

Speaker, as I reflect on today, these are the things that occupy my mind.

Ontario, you can do your part. Awake from your slumber and open your eyes to our true history. Only then we can walk forward together.

Applause.

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

I recognize the member for Don Valley East.

Mr. Adil Shamji: It is an honour to stand here in solidarity and solemn remembrance ahead of our country's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. We gather here to confront the realities of our past, to acknowledge the ways in which they still shape the present, and to recommit ourselves to healing the deep wounds wrought by the history of residential schools, colonialism, assimilation and so much more.

Today, we remember the children who never came home; we listen to the stories of the ones who survived. We honour the beautiful tapestry of Indigenous cultures and traditions that our country once tried so hard to erase. We take note that the last residential school was not closed until 1996. Many people choose to describe this period as a dark chapter in our country's history, but to do so implies that that dark chapter has ended, and it hasn't. What does it say when an Indigenous person with a treatable illness does not seek that treatment for years or even decades because they are afraid to see their doctor? It says that this dark chapter is not over. It says that it continues to reverberate across generations, and that our government needs to take real initiative to address it in all its forms.

But I have seen the strength and resilience of Indigenous people first-hand. I've witnessed their warmth and their hospitality, having been invited into their homes and communities to hear their stories and understand their needs. Their flame burns bright.

All levels of government across this country must work together to honour the principles of truth and reconciliation in everything that we do. That means consultation. That means partnership. That means contribution. And that means respect. As you all know, we still have lots of work to do, and today, we push on together. Thank you. Meegwetch.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, I am both humbled and honoured to rise today to stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples to mark National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. We must never forget sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles and children tragically lost to the violence and abuse in residential schools and the intergenerational trauma of the colonial legacy, past and present, that inflicts harms on Indigenous peoples.

We have an obligation to confront the truth—the truth that the member from Kiiwetinoong just shared with us—no matter how painful that truth is, as the first step to healing. We must confront the truths of colonialism, systemic racism, broken treaties and residential schools.

We must also reflect on the strength, the courage and the resiliency of Indigenous peoples and nations who have

fought so hard and worked so hard to defend their people, land, language, culture and communities.

Speaker, I ask all of us to take a moment to reflect on the wisdom of the Seven Grandfather Teachings carved in this House; to reflect on what the land alliance chiefs and marchers said yesterday about consultation and consent, about treaty rights, poverty, housing and clean water; to reflect on what Regional Chief Hare said about respect—and I emphasize respect—during the raising of the Survivors' Flag on Tuesday here at Queen's Park.

We all have a duty to confront the truth and commit to the hard work of building respectful relationships as we walk along the long journey to reconciliation.

May we all walk together on that path to truth and reconciliation with a commitment to respect and healing. Meegwetch.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Mr. Kevin Holland: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and meegwetch.

I want to start by thanking the member opposite for sharing your very powerful, very personal story with us here today.

I rise today in recognition of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. The day is an opportunity for us to honour the survivors of Indian residential schools and those who did not make it back. It's a day for us to take time and reflect on the intergenerational trauma caused by residential schools and commit to breaking the cycle of harm.

1050

Thanks to the grassroots efforts of Indigenous peoples across Canada, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was first marked on September 30, 2021.

Learning the truth of Ontario's dark history of Indian residential schools is the foundation of the path towards reconciliation. We all must do the work to understand the history and how this history impacts us all today.

Today, we continue to work with Indigenous partners and communities to understand the supports needed to bring the children home, to right the wrongs of the past, and to set forward a path of healing and of understanding the intergenerational impact of residential schools. We have a duty to survivors and their families to learn from the mistakes of the past and work together to build a brighter future for Indigenous people across the province.

Today, I can say Ontario leads the country, having committed \$62.3 million to date to support the identification, investigation, protection and commemoration of burials at former residential schools across the province. This builds on previous investments to ensure that culturally responsive and trauma-informed mental health and wellness supports are available. In 2021-22, we worked across government to provide over \$20 million in Indigenous-focused mental health and addiction support funding for Indian residential school survivors, families, elders and communities as this critical work proceeds.

This summer, we launched a new application-based fund called the Indian Residential School Community

Engagement Fund. The fund provides a new source of funding for additional Indigenous communities and organizations that have not been eligible for funding previously because they have not directly been leading work at one of the 18 Indian residential schools in Ontario. It also provides an opportunity for existing partners to apply for additional funds to support their participation in Indian residential school investigations at other sites where community members attended. As we continue to advance meaningful reconciliation, the province is also working with Indigenous partners to explore opportunities to deepen Ontarians' collective awareness and understanding of the trauma from the legacy of the institutions.

When our government came into power in 2018, we established an Indigenous Women's Advisory Council made up of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and 2SLGBTQ leaders on violence prevention to provide culturally relevant advice, expertise and input on issues impacting their communities. I had the opportunity to stand beside these strong leaders on Tuesday when we raised a flag on the front lawn of the Legislature to commemorate National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Ontario is continuing to honour the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission while we focus on practical initiatives to improve outcomes for Indigenous peoples in Ontario. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action set out a path for advancing meaningful reconciliation, but we still have much more work to do. Ontario is committed to the continued implementation of the TRC calls to action and our collective reconciliation journey. We are working to foster relationships through fair, respectful and meaningful agreements, and advancing the social and economic sustainability of Indigenous communities.

Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to listen to the perspectives of Indigenous peoples, to support practical actions and initiatives for advancing reconciliation and to ensure that meaningful opportunities are available to Indigenous communities across Ontario.

I invite all members of the House to honour National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and to walk with us on the path of reconciliation. Thank you. Meegwetch.

Applause.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the honour of acknowledging that today's page captain Sophia Rose is from Niagara West, and her father, Stephen Rose, is joining us in the gallery today. Unfortunately, her mother, Corrinne Rose, couldn't make it, but I know she's watching. I want to welcome them to the Legislature today.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I would like to welcome my constituent Rakesh Kumar Parmar. With him is his father-in-law, Chandubhai Dabhi, who is a four-term MLA from Gujarat, India; his wife, Bhagwati Parmar; and Mudra Parmar. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Today, we're joined by the Society of United Professionals union. They're represented by the president, Michelle Johnston; vice-president for the ESA union local, Rob Mitchell; as well as Mike Belmore; Raymond Chan; Claire Loucks; Saira Husain; Ray Yousef.

I also want to welcome a former usher now working for an Ontario ministry: Edwin White Chacon.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's an honour to mention that today's page captain Isabella Forodi is from Mississauga-Lakeshore. With us today are her parents, Sangita and Kevin, and her brothers Benjamin and Edward.

MPP Jamie West: Joining us today is David Gale, the president of ACTRA Toronto. As well, he's joined by other ACTRA Toronto councillors. Welcome.

Hon. Stan Cho: There's a very hard-working ADM at the Ministry of Long-Term Care by the name of Gillian Gillespie whose son James happens to be a page here. And now his name is part of the public record forever.

Thank you, James.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I'd also like to welcome members of the Society of United Professionals and employees at the Electrical Safety Authority: Freda Lam, Aisling O'Doherty, Jamie Oakland, Kishan Vipul.

Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: She's not here today, but my mother is watching at home. It's her 69th birthday, so I'd just like to wish her a happy birthday today.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: It's an honour to welcome Angelica Cruz. She is my communications director. She has been driving the message home for all of these award-winning announcements that we've had land in the province of Ontario. Today is her last day, and while we will certainly miss her, we are very grateful for the efforts that she has put in.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I'd like to welcome to the House Salman Sima and Farzaneh Rostami, who are visiting us today.

Welcome. I look forward to meeting with you after question period.

Ms. Doly Begum: I would like to welcome Tien Huynh, our placement student from Toronto Metropolitan University, who's joining us in the House today. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the Leader of the Opposition has a point of order.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, thank you. Good morning, Speaker. I seek unanimous consent that government notice of motion number 17 be called at the commencement of this afternoon's orders of the day in order to comply with the deadline set out in the Members' Integrity Act.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Leader of the Opposition is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that government notice of motion number 17 be called at the commencement of this afternoon's orders of the day in order to comply with the deadline set out in the Members' Integrity Act. Agreed? I think I heard a no.

It's now time for oral questions.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: What a first week. It's Thursday, the end of the legislative week, and this government still hasn't tabled its promised bill to return lands to the greenbelt. They talk a big game, but their action on greenbelt accountability this week boils down to, "Just trust us." Speaker, we could have had this done by now—in fact, this side of the House tried.

To the Premier: What's the holdup?

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

1100

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I said, of course, I will be tabling a bill in the very near future that will not only return the lands that had previously been removed from the greenbelt through regulation; I will be presenting a bill that will in fact guarantee the borders of the entire greenbelt, with the addition of 9,400 acres that we had previously suggested will be put in. So we'll be presenting a bill that will guarantee those borders in legislation, removing the ability of government to change those borders simply through regulation. We'll be presenting that bill to the House very soon.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Kicking the can even further down the road.

In 2018, the Premier was caught on video in a back-room promising land speculators that he was going to open up the greenbelt, and then he backed away. He said, "Oh, they don't want me to touch the greenbelt. We won't touch the greenbelt."

Now we know that before the 2022 election, senior staff in the Premier's office were discussing removing lands from the greenbelt. They knew it would be unpopular, so they went to great lengths and spent untold amounts of taxpayer dollars on lawyers to keep their mandate letters secret. This Premier knew what he was hiding.

Why did the Premier keep his plans to remove lands from the greenbelt a secret from voters?

Hon. Paul Calandra: We ran the last election on building homes for the people of the province of Ontario, full stop. We ran the last election on ensuring that the economy was strong, that we created jobs. We've done that.

At the same time, it is absolutely true that we brought forward a policy that would have opened up lands in the greenbelt to build houses, and the Premier has apologized for that. We acknowledge the fact that the people of the province of Ontario were not in support of that proposal. That is why we returned those lands to the greenbelt.

But we will not be strayed from our mission of continuing to build the economy. We will not be strayed from our mission of building 1.5 million homes. We will work with our partners. We will ensure that we build those

1.5 million homes within the urban boundaries. We'll work with our partners to do that, despite the fact that I'm already getting calls and messages from the members opposite telling me that their communities have already done their part, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell you this: All communities in the province of Ontario are going to be asked to do their part to build 1.5 million homes so that we can get people out of their parents' basements and into homes.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, Speaker, I'm going to try again.

Back to the Premier: It wasn't just the mandate letters they attempted to keep under wraps. The government forced non-political public servants working on the greenbelt project to sign non-disclosure agreements, NDAs. Ministry officials described special steps they took throughout the project, including not using email and instead using Microsoft Teams to share documents.

Why did the Premier go to such extreme lengths to keep his change in government policy a secret?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Well, thank you for the question.

I think I was pretty clear—I know when we went down the wrong road. I admitted the mistake. I apologized. We're moving forward.

But as the minister just mentioned, that's not going to deter us from building homes. We're going to be building homes in each and every one of your ridings, for your people who voted for you. We're going to build homes for newcomers who arrive here for a better life. We're going to build homes for the young people. They're out of the housing market right now. And to be very frank, if we'd left it up to you, they wouldn't have a home right now; they wouldn't have a home under the Liberals or the NDP, because you don't believe in building. You don't believe in building roads. You don't believe in building hospitals or long-term care in your own ridings. And you always say no to everything.

We're going to continue with our mandate that we got elected on, and that's building homes, building infrastructure, creating a strong economy, creating strong jobs—

Interjections.

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

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

The next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, yesterday I asked the Premier about his private cell phone use.

Well, let's talk about emails. It seems that a powerful bad apple can spoil the bunch. The Auditor General found that, contrary to the freedom-of-information laws and cyber security guidelines, Conservative staff were regularly using their personal email accounts to

communicate with lobbyists. It's right here. Not only that, but emails were also regularly being deleted.

Back to the Premier again: Did government staff, staff in the Premier's office, or the Premier himself delete any emails or documents that are relevant to their decision to remove lands from the greenbelt?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind the members that we don't use documents as props.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs to reply.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, I refer the honourable member to page 135 of the Integrity Commissioner's report: "In fact, I have found that the Premier's office staff were not providing such direction. The Premier's office was kept in the dark by Mr. Amato as to the process he drove for the selection of properties to be removed from the greenbelt until very near the end."

The commissioner went on to say, on page 140, "I accept the purpose of the decision to remove lands from the greenbelt was to address the housing crisis."

We have never shied away from the fact that there was a housing crisis in the province of Ontario, largely built on the backs of the Liberals and the NDP in their time in office, when they put obstacle after obstacle after obstacle in the way of people owning homes. From day one, we began to untangle the mess that was left behind by the Liberals and the NDP, with housing plan after housing plan aimed at removing obstacles. Time and time again, they have voted against it.

This isn't about anything else but the opposition's desire not to build homes for the people of the province of Ontario. We will—

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Actually, let's be very clear. Page 67 of the Auditor General's report found that this government's political staff followed the Premier's lead and also used their personal devices and email accounts to hide what they were doing. They took a page out of the Liberals' playbook and they regularly deleted emails related to the greenbelt. When the Liberals did that, they broke the law and someone went to jail.

Back to the Premier again: Why did your staff delete emails?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'll ask the members to make their comments through the Chair.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: To be clear, when the Liberals did that, that member's party stood with the Liberals and kept them in office one, two, three, four years more. It's the same pattern we see from the NDP in Ottawa. When there was a big crisis, the SNC-Lavalin crisis, who propped up the Liberals in Ottawa? It was the NDP. When Canadians went to them and said, "A carbon tax is killing us," who propped up the Liberals and brought a carbon tax? It was the NDP.

I was at Walmart a couple of nights ago, and I came across Carol. She's a senior, a farmer. Do you know what she said? She said she couldn't believe the price of food. And she said to me, "Do you know why? Because

everything I do costs me more, from my tractor that I bring to the field to the seeds that we put in the ground. Everything costs more." And do you know who's paying for it? All these people here at Walmart who are trying to buy produce. Do you know why? Because they stand for higher taxes, they stand for red tape and regulation.

We stand for moving economies—

Interjections.

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

Stop the clock. Members will please take their seats.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: You can always know when we're getting close to something, when they come back with answers like that.

Let's follow along—page 6 of the Integrity Commissioner's report. The Premier's chief of staff hand-selects every minister's chief of staff. They gave Ryan Amato, an inexperienced, untrained staffer, one of the biggest files in government. And the Integrity Commissioner found that he led a "chaotic and almost reckless process" that "led to an uninformed and opaque decision which resulted in the creation of an opportunity to further the private interests of some developers improperly"—in the words of the Integrity Commissioner, page 6.

To the Premier: How are we supposed to believe that Amato alone rigged the whole system when the Premier's hands are all over this?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

1110

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, Speaker, if the member reads past page 6, she will get to the other parts of the report. In that report, again, the Integrity Commissioner said, "I have found that the Premier's office staff were not providing such direction."

The Premier has acknowledged that we made a mistake when we brought forward a policy that the people of the province of Ontario did not support. The Integrity Commissioner himself suggests, as we have said along, that the policy was driven because we wanted to do something immediately to impact the housing crisis across the province of Ontario. We want kids to be out of their parents' basements.

The other day, I talked about a young family—his first child—and instead of being able to go to a home, he's going to his bachelor apartment condo that he bought. That's not who we are in the province of Ontario. We can do better and we will do better. But why are we there, Mr. Speaker? Because, as I said yesterday, the legions of doom and gloom brought this province to its knees. High interest rates are taking thousands of people out of the market.

We can do better. We will do better. We'll continue to remove obstacles, and we'll get the job done, not only for young Canadians but for all Ontarians who want the dream of—

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

GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Premier.

Yesterday, the people of Toronto were disappointed yet again after the CEO of Metrolinx, Phil Verster, announced that the Eglinton Crosstown LRT remains indefinitely delayed. When reporters demanded more information about when this project might open—information every member of the public deserves—Mr. Verster said, “Give us some space.”

Mr. Verster has not only had over a year to explain the latest delay, but he has received massive pay increases and enjoys the support of 59 vice-presidents, who all seem unable to hold the P3 contractor to account.

Why does Mr. Verster still have a job?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I know how important this project is for the thousands of commuters who will rely on it to get to where they need to go every single day, and I know that the public wants certainty on this project. That’s why the CEO of Metrolinx was out there yesterday and will continue to deliver those updates to the public, so they can have that information. This is a very complex project.

But we have delivered for the people of Toronto and this province the largest transit expansion plan in the history of this province and North America.

In fact, we are building the Ontario Line, with shovels already in the ground.

When we look at the Eglinton West Crosstown extension, we’ve got tunnelling almost 50% complete.

We’re doing things differently.

This is a bad contract that the previous Liberal government left us with. We’ll deliver it. We’re going to make sure it’s a safe and reliable transit system.

But we will take no lessons from the members opposite—

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Problems with the Eglinton LRT P3 contract were flagged by the Auditor General five years ago. She found that the P3 contractor was submitting deficient designs, building at risk, and failing to meet performance targets. Instead of holding the P3 contractor to account, Mr. Verster gave them a \$237-million payout that the auditor said should never have been paid. The payout didn’t get this P3 project back on track. In fact, two years later, the auditor revealed that the problems identified in 2018 had gotten even worse.

Why does the Minister of Transportation continue to defend Mr. Verster?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

If the member for Ottawa South and the government House leader want to have a conversation during question period—if they could perhaps go out in the hallway, that would be better.

Start the clock.

The Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you for that question.

The Auditor General’s report back then—they were talking about the previous Liberal government. Maybe he might be able to come out and step up.

In saying that, anything that we inherited from the previous government, if it was not building long-term-care homes, not building hospitals, not building roads, not building bridges, not building transit—this is where we’re at now.

Where we’re at now is pretty remarkable. In about four and a half years, from a plan, we got funding from municipalities, we got funding from the federal government, we have shovels in the ground on the Ontario Line, we’re halfway through Eglinton West, we’re moving forward on the Yonge extension, and finally, Scarborough has a subway, which is being tunnelled right now. We have doubled the size of the subway line—the largest in North America—in the last four and a half years. I find that absolutely remarkable. And we’re going to continue building transit.

EDUCATION

Ms. Natalie Pierre: My question is for the Minister of Education. Parents in Ontario know that children need to be in classrooms with their teachers, learning the life and job skills they need to succeed. We know how important it is to have students in class, surrounded by peers and educators, to support their well-being, mental health and academic learning. And I know that our government has committed to making sure parents can expect their children to receive a stable, uninterrupted school year. By doing so, children can focus on what’s most important: learning the foundations of reading, writing and math.

Can the minister elaborate on what steps our government has taken to ensure children receive the world-class, quality education they deserve, free from interruptions?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member from Burlington and our entire Progressive Conservative team, because together we have delivered a deal that’s going to keep kids in the classroom. That is amazing news for the children we represent. Speaker, 400,000 English public high school children have the stability they deserve—and that should be the aspiration for every child in this province. We’ve been able to land a deal that has been overwhelmingly ratified by 78.4% of OSSTF members, and it is now our intention—our message to the other education unions is to come to the table, to sign a deal, and to keep children in class. There is no time for delay.

We have demonstrated that we can put kids first. We are going back to basics with additional funding and additional staffing. We are raising the standards in Ontario’s publicly funded schools, because we believe these kids

need to achieve their full God-given potential in this province.

So work with us, work together to keep these kids in class.

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

Ms. Natalie Pierre: It's reassuring for parents to remain informed about the progress our government is making to ensure that children are in their classrooms, where they belong.

Our government has invested in the priorities that matter most to families—initiatives and investments that will help improve reading, writing and math skills for our students. Our government must remain steadfast in this commitment, and thanks to the leadership of the Premier and the Minister of Education, we're getting it done for our students. Because of our government's targeted investments in literacy and STEM education, we're seeing results.

Can the minister please outline his plan to keep kids in class, learning the skills that will set them up for long-term success?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you again to the member from Burlington for her leadership in this House.

Mr. Speaker, of course, stability is key. It is the cornerstone of our objective, as a government, to keep these kids in school as we go back to basics in Ontario schools. And because of our plan—our increase of investment; our \$180-million plan to lift literacy rates; our doubling of math coaches; our modernized curriculum that connects to the job market; the fact that we are restoring literacy, phonics, financial literacy and coding in Ontario's schools—for the first time in a long time, we are seeing stability according to EQAO results. Reading, writing and math are stable or up in every single grade, as assessed in this province.

So, yes, our plan is working. It is incremental. It is moving in the right direction, and there's much more to do. The way we deliver better outcomes for these children is keeping them in class.

So we urge the unions to get to the table, to sign a deal and provide stability for every single child in this province.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: In his mandate letter, the Premier directed the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to develop a policy for changes to the greenbelt, including swaps and contractions. Andrew Sidnell, the Premier's former deputy chief of staff, told the Integrity Commissioner there was usually a "back and forth" between the Premier's office—the PO—and the ministry when it came to implementing the priorities in the mandate letter. He said the PO would normally be the "senior partner" in this back and forth. The Integrity Commissioner was unable to find evidence of this normal back and forth with respect to the greenbelt project—something one would expect.

Did the Premier or any of his staff make a decision to suspend this normal back and forth, including the PO's senior partner role, with respect to the greenbelt project?

1120

Hon. Doug Ford: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the Integrity Commissioner is pretty clear when it came to myself and my office.

But what we're going to do here—we're going to build homes. And the students up in those chambers are going to remember this day because the homes that they're going to buy in 15 or 20 years will be part of the 1.5 million homes that we're building. We're going to make sure that their families can afford a home. We're going to make sure the young people can afford a home. The newcomers who are coming to our province—800,000 a year that we're seeing—need a place to live.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Doug Ford: Folks, let me remind you, it's this government that's building homes for those folks up there—not the Liberals, not the NDP. We're the ones building the homes and the transit and the roads that they're going to be using. And they're going to be riding on the subways that we've built.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again, to the Premier: I just want to note, the commissioner was very clear that there were no records—highly unusual.

Assistant Deputy Minister Sean Fraser also told the Integrity Commissioner that it was usual and expected practice for political staff within the ministry to receive direction from the Premier's office with respect to the details of a government priority. Mr. Fraser said, "In my experience, political staff work with political staff. They may be ultimately responsible to the minister, but granularity like this is something that typically is dealt with at a staff level." Mr. Fraser said such direction would come from the Premier's office.

Did the Premier or any of his staff make a decision to avoid leaving evidence of such direction with respect to the greenbelt project?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, what the Integrity Commissioner said is, "I have found that the Premier's office staff were not providing such direction." He made it very clear in the report that he was not providing such direction.

We made a public policy decision that the people of the province of Ontario were not in support of. We made that decision because we know that we are in a housing crisis, and we wanted to move fast to try to address that crisis. We made an incorrect decision. We're returning those lands to the greenbelt, and we will focus on building homes in communities across the province of Ontario.

But you know what will be consistent is that member and that party will vote against every single initiative to

build homes. The Premier just talked about it. They voted against subways. They voted against housing. They voted against long-term care. They voted against hospitals. This member here doesn't want to build anything. For the love of God, this is the one member in the NDP who is asking a question about building anything?

You voted against everything—

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

The next question.

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Ms. Laura Smith: My question is for the President of the Treasury Board. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Finance on the release of the public accounts this week. It's absolutely great to hear that our government is implementing measures that focus on bringing fiscal stability to our province during this time of global economic uncertainty. Ongoing supply chain disruptions, inflation and increased interest rates have created pressures for people across Ontario. Individuals and families need to see that our government is continuing to implement initiatives and investments that will make life more affordable.

Can the President of the Treasury Board please explain what actions our government is taking to strengthen our province's economic resilience and ensure that Ontario is prepared for the future?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you so much to the member from Thornhill for that question.

Ontario's economy remains resilient, but the province does face potential economic uncertainty ahead. That's why it is so important that we make prudent and targeted investments to support the people of Ontario.

As the Minister of Finance and I highlighted in the public accounts yesterday, our approach is working. We're building hospitals, schools, highways and transit. We're investing in better services across the board, and we are keeping costs down for the people of Ontario. And we are doing this in a prudent and a responsible way that respects taxpayer dollars. In fact, we received a sixth straight clean audit in a row from the Auditor General, which is a refreshing change from the fiscal mismanagement of the previous Liberal government.

What our government will continue to do is make targeted investments that support families, businesses and workers today while laying a strong fiscal foundation for future generations.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: My supplementary question is for the Minister of Finance. It's positive and encouraging news to see that once again our government received a clean audit opinion from the Auditor General—unlike under the previous Liberal government, who received

qualified or reserved audit opinions on the government's consolidated financial statements.

The Minister of Finance spoke about the fact that Ontario is not isolated from the conditions contributing to global economic uncertainty. That's why our government must show leadership and demonstrate a strong economic vision and a plan that will help individuals and families during this unpredictable financial period.

Can the minister please explain how our government is continuing to work on behalf of Ontarians during these challenging economic times?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member opposite for that very important question. And yes, a \$14-billion improvement in the deficit is meaningful to the people of Ontario and the fiscal health of this province.

But let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, just yesterday, Statistics Canada outlined that Ontario's population grew by 151,000 people. That's the most since 1971.

Now let me ask you a question: When we attracted the Volkswagen plant in St. Thomas—16 million square feet and tens of thousands of jobs—did the opposition vote yes or no? No.

When we started drilling the subway in Scarborough that's already tunnelling down there, supporting 700,000 people in Scarborough, did they vote yes or no? No.

The Ring of Fire, bringing prosperity to the north—did they vote yes or no? No.

This is a government that's going to get it done. We're going to keep going, and we're going to continue voting yes.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. The nurses represented by ONA from Hastings Prince Edward Public Health have been on strike for over a month. After three years on the front line of a pandemic and this government limiting their compensation to 1% with Bill 124, they want respect.

Public health nurses keep us safe from events like E. coli outbreaks in daycares that make hundreds of children sick.

We know the government is focused on their wealthy friends, but could the Premier please focus on these nurses and the important work that they do?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: We are absolutely focused on building our health care capacity, which is why we have programs like the Learn and Stay program, led by the Minister of Colleges and Universities. What does that actually mean? It means that individuals who want to practise and train in the province of Ontario can do that with having their tuition and books covered and in exchange are able to work in underserved communities. We'll continue to build the health care capacity.

We absolutely understand the critical value that public health units and public health nurses bring to our communities, which is why, during August, at the Association

of Municipalities Ontario, we announced that we would be continuing to invest and support our public health units.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: While this government refuses to show any sign of respect to these striking women, my leader joined them on the picket line.

On September 22, public health workers represented by CUPE also had to go on strike to get fair compensation. These public health workers keep Ontarians healthy. They make sure that our water is clean. Remember Walkerton? They make sure that the food at the restaurants we eat at is safe. The list goes on.

We know that this government likes to waste time and money in court, but will the Premier show these nurses and public health workers the respect they deserve, fund our public health units and stop its appeal of Bill 124?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The women and men who work in nursing professions across Ontario, whether that is in hospitals, home care, private facilities and yes, absolutely, in our public health units, have been critical as we protect the citizens of Ontario through the pandemic and moving out of it, and we have had an opportunity to support public health units in a very tangible way as they support our communities. We will continue to do that work, and we will ensure that as we build the health care workforce, we have opportunities across Ontario, across sectors.

1130

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Premier.

Your \$8.3-billion greenbelt scandal has outraged Ontarians and shattered trust in your government. People have questions about the contents of brown envelopes, good luck massages at Vegas hotels, and the mysterious Mr. X; about how your cabinet handed over \$8.3 billion in windfall profits to wealthy elites; about the flawed processes that gave insider access to Conservative-connected speculators.

Speaker, the best way to get honest answers for the people of Ontario and recommendations to prevent a scandal like this from ever happening again is an independent public inquiry. I want to give the Premier an opportunity today to back up his greenbelt apology and say whether he will say yes to an independent public inquiry.

Hon. Doug Ford: To my friend from the Green Party: Not one single penny was spent of taxpayers' money—not one cent.

Interjection.

Hon. Doug Ford: And to your neighbour who's speaking beside you: Let's not forget about the eHealth boondoggle that cost a billion, the gas plants that cost a billion dollars that we're still paying for, not to mention the Auditor General's report—eight out of 12 you failed because she didn't believe you, and we have six out of six.

Mr. Speaker, in Guelph, they have the slowest housing that there is in the entire province. We're going to continue to build housing in Guelph. And guess what? We're going

to build residences for students that their council refused to build. We're going to build Highway 7 that the Green Party will vote against, going from Guelph to Kitchener. And mark my bottom dollar, if the leader of the Green Party goes to Kitchener ever, he's going to be going on—

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

Supplementary question?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, this is exactly why we need an independent public inquiry to get the honest answers the people of Ontario deserve—because we are not getting them in this House.

People in this province want to know why the government was more focused on land grabs for wealthy, well-connected insiders—\$8.3 billion in windfall profits—instead of building homes that ordinary people can afford in the communities they want to live in.

I've put forward two bills that would make it legal to build multiplexes, make it easier to build missing middle housing. I've put forward proposals to get speculation out of the housing market. I've put forward proposals to build deeply affordable, non-profit, co-op housing in this province. But instead of having a government focused on that, they're focused on benefiting wealthy and connected elites.

So will the Premier—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Guelph to withdraw the unparliamentary comment that was included in his question.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Withdraw.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I guess what the member is highlighting is that he has been really spectacularly unsuccessful at building anything in his own community. They have one of the slowest paces of home construction in his community. They can't even get student residences built in his community. In fact, it was this government that had to step in to build long-term-care homes in his community. So we'll take no lessons from him on how to get things done.

The Premier is right; when he goes back to his riding, he'll go back on Highway 7 that we have built. He'll visit and campaign in long-term-care homes that we built. And he'll go into residences that we built. He'll go into schools that we expanded. He'll do like the NDP do—they'll be there to cut the ribbon and take credit, but every single time, in this House, will vote against all of it. That is what they do.

We get the job done for the people of the province of Ontario, and we'll continue to do so.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The agri-food sector is a significant economic driver for our province. In Brampton, this industry contributes over \$1.3 billion annually to Canada's GDP and employs over 8,500 people across 300 companies.

Food producers in my community and across our province expect their government to implement solutions that are innovative and that will address their needs and challenges. That said, our government must continue to do all that we can to enhance the productivity of Ontario's agri-food sector and position it for continued growth.

Can the minister please share how our government is strengthening our agri-food industry to ensure an efficient, reliable and responsive food supply for Ontarians?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate the question from the member for Brampton West, because—did everyone hear that?—there are 300 food and beverage manufacturers in the city of Brampton alone, and, ladies and gentlemen, we're going to keep on growing.

Our Grow Ontario Strategy that we discussed at the summit has been incredibly well received across this province. Our actions are attainable—because through our strategy, we're going to grow the consumption of Ontario-grown-and-produced food by 30%, right here at home, in this province. We're going to grow the food and manufacturing opportunities and capacities by an additional 10%, and that's going to translate, as well, into an increase of about 8% of exports of Ontario-grown-and-processed food over the next 10 years.

Ladies and gentlemen, we're listening—and those summits are important, because we're introducing programs that are resonating and that are going to keep our food and beverage manufacturers strong and competitive for years to come.

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

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the minister. It's great to know that our government is implementing measures that are helping to position Ontario as a leader in food and beverage processing.

However, in order for Ontario's agri-food businesses to further grow and develop, they must be exposed to opportunities for expansion in domestic and international markets.

It is up to our government to create the right conditions so that food processors and producers are able to undertake the work of developing new projects and implementing marketing strategies.

Can the minister please explain what action our government is taking to help agri-food businesses to reach new markets?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, I hope everyone in this House is proud of the fact that never before has Ontario's food and beverage manufacturing centre had confidence in a government that not only understands their sector—but they have absolute confidence in the direction we're heading because of the programs.

We've introduced an energy-efficient program worth \$10 million. We've introduced biosecurity programs for our beverage and food sector, where applicants can apply for up to \$7.5 million. We also have a \$6-million program to help grow our market potential in this province of Ontario; applicants can apply for up to \$60,000 per business and up to \$125,000 for programs to promote around

the world that Ontario is the jurisdiction of choice when it comes to safe and quality food produced right here—not only in Brampton, but around this province.

We're strong and competitive worldwide.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: An Ontario judge recently stayed a repeat offender's charges. JP Kelly was charged with 17 counts of intimate partner violence, including assault, sexual assault, choking and threatening death.

Justice Lori Thomas said, "This is a case that cries out to be tried on the merits." Instead, Judge Thomas was forced to stay the charges after more than two years of inexplicable delays.

Let that sink in: JP Kelly is now back in the community without supervision or counselling.

One survivor told the press, "I hit the floor, I was beyond disappointed in the Ontario judicial system, and I wept for the entire day."

Will the Premier apologize to survivors who will never receive justice because his government has failed to fix the courts?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: This is a very serious matter. I won't speak to the specifics as you have, as I can't, but I can tell you that this government is taking intimate partner violence very seriously. We have started initiatives that have never even been thought of before. We've invested in our partner assistance response program, we've invested in human trafficking—beyond that. We've put many, many resources, and we are taking it seriously.

1140

As for the operation of the courts, we are working closely with our justice partners, the chief justices, at all levels.

Today happens to be opening of the courts. When you hear their speeches, you will hear of the collaboration and co-operation to make our system work the way that Ontarians expect.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Intimate partner violence is an epidemic in Ontario, as it is in Canada. The court delays the survivors across Ontario are enduring are inexcusable.

There was a stabbing and a shooting in Barbara Hall Park, only a few steps away from this House, on Tuesday. The frustrated Toronto police have informed me that one of the assailants apprehended was actually out on bail—he was wanted for a warrant.

A year ago, I asked this government to take action to keep all our communities safe. Since I asked this question, things have only gotten worse under your watch. Violent repeat offenders are being released back into neighbourhoods because Ontario's justice system is literally collapsing on our heads.

Can the Attorney General explain to Ontarians why he spent his summer setting up and awarding King's Counsel

honorific titles to PC insiders instead of fixing our collapsing courtrooms?

Hon. Doug Downey: I would like to remind the member opposite that it was this Premier and this government that wrote the letter to the federal government that said we need bail reform. It was this Attorney General and this Solicitor General that went to Ottawa and achieved bail reform, and it's happening now.

I will take no lessons from a member who will not even support the police in our communities. Mr. Speaker, it's shameful—

Interjections.

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

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I don't normally do this during question period, but we've got the clock stopped.

In the Speaker's gallery today is a former member who served in the House in the 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st provincial Parliaments, representing Niagara West—Glanbrook, Erie—Lincoln, and Niagara South. Welcome back to the Legislature Tim Hudak.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Start the clock. The next question.

HOUSING

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: My question is to the Premier, because when I see him answering questions in the media and here in this chamber, I sense frustration. He must know conditions to build 1.5 million homes don't exist in this province, and yet there are ads from this government welcoming more people.

Government does not dictate the housing market; it's supply and demand that dictates the market. More people means more demand and less affordability. In the current environment, it's clear that Ontario cannot support the people already here, so why subject 800,000 newcomers to a province where critical services we all rely upon are in chaos? I hear a lot of "we're going to do this, we're going to do that"—but get it done.

Speaker, through you, to the Premier: Will he stand up for Ontario and tell Ottawa that we must take stock and get critical services back on track before welcoming more people?

Hon. Doug Ford: You know something—to the member from Haldimand—Norfolk: We're building homes. We're getting it done.

There's no bigger advocate for Ontario in talks with the federal government than this government.

I just want to remind the member from Haldimand—Norfolk that we're building not only a few homes, but we're building thousands of homes right in your own riding. Hopefully, you'll be there and you'll support us on any housing bill. You're welcome to come and cut the

ribbon. There are going to be thousands and thousands of more homes to support the workers at Stelco who live in your riding, who can't afford the home—to support the family members who need a place to live; who are going to be working at Volkswagen, who will be able to live in your area as well.

I think the member means well—I truly do—and is a good member, but it's better just to come on board when we're cutting the ribbon.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, I'll remind members to make their comments through the Chair, not directly across the floor of the House.

Supplementary.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Thank you, Speaker, and through you to the Premier: Yes, I do mean well. I believe that the Premier means well too, but I'm not certain that he has his facts correct on Stelco.

Anyway, the average cost of a home in Norfolk county last year, in 2022, was \$830,000. I spoke to a family last night who were packing their bags because they see no hope in this province.

And I'm not buying what this government is selling on the labour front because there are signs that even potential newcomers have discovered that we are not the land of opportunity, as permanent resident applications have plummeted.

As I travelled my riding this summer, all I heard from constituents was that life has become unaffordable—and they don't care whose fault it is. The member from Thornhill mentioned this this morning.

Speaker, through you to the Premier: What is this government's plan for making life more affordable for the families of Ontario working so hard to make ends meet and yet falling further and further behind?

Hon. Doug Ford: I agree; government doesn't create homes, but we create the conditions and the environment for companies to come there and build homes and build businesses.

What are we doing to make things more affordable? I can't remember if you voted or not, if you voted for the licence plate stickers—eight million people got a cheque right at their front door from our government. We cut the tolls on the 412 and 418. We reduced gas prices by 10.7 cents.

I do agree with the member—who holds the federal government accountable on the carbon tax? We do. We mention it non-stop—the extra 15 cents they're paying at the gas pumps. The delivery of every product we have in the province is being affected by the worst tax this country has ever seen—it's a useless tax—and that's the carbon tax.

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

The next question.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Ms. Laura Smith: My question is for the new Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Our government must be committed to building a stronger and prosperous Ontario. This commitment must include ensuring that Ontario is a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting our province's biodiversity.

Under the previous Liberal government, Ontario missed out on key opportunities to be part of the electric vehicle revolution that could have helped in advancing transportation technology and supporting the environment.

Ontario is home to a significant source of critical minerals that are essential for our province's future. That is why our government must continue to take thoughtful and meaningful actions to ensure that these minerals are extracted in a responsible and environmentally safe manner.

There are some people who believe that there's a trade-off between growing the economy and protecting the environment. They believe that the focus on one requires sacrificing the other. Does the Minister of the Environment share that zero-sum perspective?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I want to thank the member from Thornhill for that great question.

I also want to thank the community in Barrie–Innisfil for putting their trust in me to be elected in this Legislature—and for the Premier's confidence in putting me in the role of being the environment, conservation and parks minister.

Our government has proven that we can both have a clean environment and a strong economy. Under our plan, we are already taking historic action to cut pollution and also create new jobs. We are well under way in creating a made-in-Ontario supply chain for electric vehicle manufacturing. We negotiated a deal to protect thousands of jobs at Dofasco while making a once-in-a-generation green steel deal. We are also unlocking critical minerals in the province and helping spur new investments in battery technology. Under our plan, we are securing good, high-paying jobs for Ontario workers while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It's not about choosing the environment or the economy; we're choosing both.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: Congratulations on the minister's new role.

This response will be welcomed by my constituents, who strongly support the importance of collaboration when it comes to planning for the future.

Unfortunately, opposing voices repeat the tired argument that development opportunities and protection of our natural resources cannot be reconciled. These stubborn and rigid opinions do little to help local communities, businesses and our province as a whole.

As our government continues to build partnerships with communities throughout Ontario and with leading industry leaders, there is tremendous potential and many reasons for optimism.

1150

Speaker, before our government came to office, businesses were fleeing Ontario due to high energy costs and high taxes.

How is our government securing Ontario's prosperity?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Speaker, picture a family—a house in the suburbs, a car in the driveway, a mom and dad with good jobs, and kids who are safe when they walk or bike to hang out with their friends. So much about this picture—the car, the suburbs, and the safe streets—terrifies the opposition. The opposition centres their policies around making this dream unaffordable and impossible to achieve. Under this government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, soon that family will be driving a made-in-Ontario electric vehicle or will be stepping into a new Ontario Line subway station. Maybe their destination will be one of the new provincial parks we've created, or one of the new schools we've built, or one of the new jobs we've helped unlock.

Speaker, under the leadership of Premier Ford and this government, we are making record investments to secure the future of Ontario. We won't let the opposition take that bright future away.

LABOUR DISPUTES

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My question is to the Premier.

The government is quick to pick up the phone when it comes to helping their friends, so will they encourage the management of the Electrical Safety Authority to prioritize the safety of Ontarians and respectfully bargain a fair and equitable deal with their professional safety employees?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, I recognize the minister.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

As the new minister responsible for this, as one of 12 administrative authorities under the jurisdiction of my ministry—Ontarians' well-being is a top priority for our government, and my ministry and I hold our oversight over the ESA very, very seriously. That is why we continue to ensure and enhance public electrical safety in the province of Ontario, through the ESA.

The ESA has advised that as of the morning of September 20, 2023, the Society of United Professionals has commenced strike action. The union represents about 12% of the ESA workforce, primarily in the engineering, IT, communications and licensing departments. The remainder of ESA employees continue to work, including inspectors and customer service call centre representatives. Any questions regarding the collective bargaining process should be directed to the ESA.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question? The member for Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: My question is for the Premier.

Speaker, 6,000 ACTRA commercial workers have been locked out since April of last year. Before locking them out and hiring scab workers to do their jobs, the ad agencies demanded huge cuts to their wages and the elimination of their benefits and pensions.

At the one-year mark, I asked the Premier to stop using advertising agencies that use scab workers. Five months

have passed, and the Conservative government continues to buy ads from wealthy union-busting agencies like FCB, Wink, and Leo Burnett. In fact, the MOT is about to record another non-ACTRA commercial. ACTRA Toronto has contacted the ministry several times about this—crickets.

Will the Premier halt this Ministry of Transportation commercial, and will he commit to stop using advertising agencies that use replacement scab workers in Ontario's government-funded ads?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I thank the honourable member for the question.

Of course, we will continue to follow all of the rules that we must, ensuring that when we do our advertising or any other government procurement, it follows all the rules as established through legislation.

But at the same time, of course, we're going to continue to ensure that we advertise and we get the message out to the people of the province of Ontario. Much of the advertising that we do helps inform people, whether it's on some of the very important initiatives through health care or some of the other safety initiatives that come across through various ministries.

So, no, we're not going to stop doing advertising, because it's a very important part of helping ensure that the people of the province of Ontario are aware of initiatives that are important to them and their families.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTIVITIES

Mrs. Daisy Wai: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

Ontario's diversity is one of our greatest strengths, with people from all backgrounds, faiths and walks of life representing our province. The people of this province represent the best in abilities, perspectives and experiences that should be respected, valued and appreciated. Unfortunately, discrimination and barriers to inclusion and acceptance still occur in our province. Any experience with discrimination, harassment or stigma negatively impacts a person's self-identity and well-being. Our government must continue to invest in strategies that promote diversity, equity and social inclusion.

Can the minister please explain how our government is building safer, stronger and more inclusive communities for Ontarians?

Hon. Michael D. Ford: Thank you to the member for Richmond Hill for that question.

There's no question that Ontario is a global leader in celebrating diversity and is home to people from all backgrounds, faiths and cultures. Our diversity and inclusivity is essential to who we are and remains a source of great strength for the province of Ontario. Nonetheless, as the member mentioned, there's always more that we can do to strive to build a stronger and more welcoming community and province.

Just last month, I was proud to release Building a Stronger and More Inclusive Ontario: Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan. We are taking an all-of-government approach to dismantle barriers to success and

empower communities. The revised strategic plan outlines over \$130 million from my ministry alone, with additional support from ministry partners. The strategy highlights the meaningful work that is already under way to drive positive change, while laying a foundation for future action.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Safety and social inclusion are central to creating a cohesive society and a strong economy that will secure Ontario's future growth and prosperity.

Especially in my riding of Richmond Hill—we have a lot of different diversity living in that community.

Acts of discrimination, hatred and violence have no place in our communities. That is why our government must continue to take action to implement measures that will combat hate and will protect the people of our province. Investments and approaches by our government must be innovative and meaningful within our local communities.

May I ask the minister to please elaborate on the steps our government is taking to ensure that Ontario is a safe, inclusive and accepting place for all?

Hon. Michael D. Ford: The member is completely right.

Ontario's anti-racism strategy contains over 40 unique initiatives across 14 partner ministries and millions in investments by our government to remove barriers and build a more inclusive Ontario—this includes the Minister of Education, who implemented destreaming of grade 9 students, ensuring that all students can be successful in and pursue any post-secondary pathways they so choose; to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs, who has made critical investments to support economic development priorities in Indigenous communities and provide increased access to capital for Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs; to the Minister of Health, who has expanded the High Priority Communities Strategy to remove barriers and improve access to health care for Indigenous, racialized and low-income Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the initiatives outlined in Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan that are already driving real change in—

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

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Doly Begum: My question is to the Premier.

The Premier has used immigrants as an excuse to justify his greenbelt grab, despite the government's own housing task force saying that they do not need to build on protected farmland. In fact, Environmental Defence reported that there is enough available land to build three cities the size of Paris, France, without touching the greenbelt.

If the government really wanted to build affordable homes, why haven't they started building on the 59,000 hectares already available right now?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, Mr. Speaker, because we have been spending the last five years untangling the mess of obstacles and intrusions that were put in place by the Liberals and NDP.

But I give the member my word, and every member of that caucus over there, that yes, indeed, we will be moving very aggressively in each and every riding of this province to build new homes for the people of the province of Ontario.

I referenced it in one of my own first news conferences—I have a very close affection to the member opposite because my parents' journey to home ownership started in her riding, on Dentonia Park, with the entire Calandra clan in one home, in basements, all in that one place. And from there they moved to 6 Lombardy Crescent, a wartime home in the member's riding. My dad was a hairdresser on Birchmount, in the member's riding. Then, they got another home. That's where their journey ends. Do you know why they came to Canada? Because we offered them the pathway to that dream. I won't take that away from the next generation of the people of the province of Ontario, and I hope she'll join with me to make sure that we deliver that dream for them.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the government House leader wants to rise on standing order 59.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I thank all colleagues for a very productive week back.

On Monday, October 2, by order of the House, of course, we will not be sitting, in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

On Tuesday, October 3, in the morning, we will be dealing with Bill 131, Transportation for the Future Act. In the afternoon, we will have opposition day debate number 1, and in the evening, private members' business standing in the name of the member for Thornhill and the member for Mississauga Centre, which is Bill 121, Improving Dementia Care in Ontario Act.

On Wednesday, October 4, in the morning and afternoon sessions we will be debating a government bill that will be introduced later today. In the evening, we will be debating a bill from the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry: Bill 123, Erin's Law.

On Thursday, October 5, in the morning, we will be debating a government bill that will be introduced later today. In the afternoon routine, there will be a ministerial statement on Women's History Month. Immediately following petitions, there will be a tribute to former minister Monte Kwinter, the MPP for York Centre from 1985 to 2018. In the afternoon, we will continue with debate on a bill that will be introduced later on today. And there will be no business in the evening designated, pursuant to standing order 100(e).

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1203 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I'm not too sure if they are here—they were making their way up to the chamber—but I would like to introduce a school from Aurora, . One of the students of that school is my son, Robert John Murphy, who's here today for the tour. So I wanted to welcome them, but I think they're slowly getting in here.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated September 28, 2023, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

AFFORDABLE HOMES AND GOOD JOBS ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 POUR DES LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES ET DE BONS EMPLOIS

Mr. Calandra moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 134, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the St. Thomas-Central Elgin Boundary Adjustment Act, 2023 / Projet de loi 134, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi de 2023 sur la modification des limites territoriales entre St. Thomas et Central Elgin.

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 minister care to briefly explain his bill.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The proposed Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act would amend the Development Charges Act and the St. Thomas-Central Elgin Boundary Adjustment Act.

These legislative amendments, along with other measures we are proposing, would help complement the actions our government has already taken to help build at least 1.5 million homes by 2031. This includes updating the definition of affordable residential units.

The proposals we are putting forward today would also support Volkswagen Group and PowerCo SE's historic investment to build an electric vehicle battery cell manufacturing facility in St. Thomas.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my honour to present the following petition, entitled "Health Care: Not for Sale." It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians should get health care based on need—not the size of your wallet;

"Whereas Premier Doug Ford and Health Minister Sylvia Jones say they're planning to privatize parts of health care;

"Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of our public hospitals, making the health care crisis worse;

"Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to privatize Ontario's health care system, and fix the crisis in health care by:

"—repealing Bill 124 and recruiting, retaining, and respecting doctors, nurses and PSWs with better working conditions;

"—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario, who wait years and pay thousands to have their credentials certified;

"—10 employer-paid sick days;

"—making education and training free or low-cost for nurses, doctors, and other health care professionals;

"—incentivizing doctors and nurses to choose to live and work in northern Ontario;

"—funding hospitals to have enough nurses on every shift, on every ward."

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

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

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

"Whereas two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, gender-diverse and intersex communities face significant challenges to accessing health care services that are friendly, competent, and affirming in Ontario;

"Whereas everyone deserves access to health care, and they shouldn't have to fight for it, shouldn't have to wait for it, and should never receive less care or support because of who they are;

"Whereas gender-affirming care is life-saving care;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the reintroduction of a private member's bill to create an inclusive and representative committee to advise the Ministry of Health on how to realize accessible and equitable access to and coverage for gender-affirming health care in Ontario."

I'll be proud to affix my signature and send this petition back to the centre table with page Isabella.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

"For Meaningful Climate Action Stop Gas Plant Expansion.

"Whereas our planet is undergoing significant warming with adverse consequences for health, for agriculture, for infrastructure and our children's future;

"Whereas the costs of inaction are severe, such as extreme weather events causing flooding and drought;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop fossil gas and invest rapidly in lower-cost, proven renewable energy and conservation technologies."

I will sign my name to that and give it to page River.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to thank the many residents of London who have signed a petition entitled "Health Care is Not for Sale." It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians get health care based on their needs, not their ability to pay;

"Whereas the Ford government wants to privatize our health care system;

"Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of our public hospitals and will download costs to patients;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to privatize Ontario's health care system, and fix the crisis in health care by" helping "recruit, retain, return and respect health care workers with better pay and better working conditions;

"—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario; and

"—funding and fully utilizing public operating rooms."

I fully support this petition, affix my signature, and will send it to the table with page Bella.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is entitled "Health Care: Not for Sale.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians should get health care based on need—not the size of your wallet;

“Whereas” the Premier and the Minister of Health “say they’re planning to privatize parts of health care;

“Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of our public hospitals, making the health care crisis worse;

“Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to privatize Ontario’s health care system, and fix the crisis in health care by:

“—repealing Bill 124 and recruiting, retaining, and respecting doctors, nurses and PSWs with better working conditions;

“—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario, who wait years and pay thousands to have their credentials certified;

“—10 employer-paid sick days;

“—making education and training free or low-cost for nurses, doctors, and other health care professionals;

“—incentivizing doctors and nurses to choose to live and work in northern Ontario;

“—funding hospitals to have enough nurses on every shift, on every ward.”

It’s my pleasure to support this petition and give it to page Clara.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The petition I am honoured to present today is entitled “London’s Urgent Homelessness Crisis.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas London shelters are running at over 100% capacity on a daily basis while vacancy rates hover around 1%;

“Whereas there are almost 2,000 people on the city’s homeless registry, and more than 300 Londoners are experiencing chronic homelessness;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act on ... effective solutions to London’s homeless crisis:

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“—immediately release \$20 million in emergency funds to London’s homelessness prevention system, including shelters, as well as mental health care and harm reduction providers for vital wraparound supports; and

“—work collaboratively with city officials to create and fund affordable and supportive housing for people in crisis and ensure they remain housed with the supports they require.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TRANSPORTATION FOR THE FUTURE ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 POUR UN RÉSEAU DE TRANSPORT ORIENTÉ VERS L’AVENIR

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 27, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 131, An Act to enact the GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023 and to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 131, Loi édictant la Loi de 2023 sur le financement des stations du réseau GO et modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Since our government was first elected, we have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to building world-class public transit systems across the province. We are spending more than \$70 billion over the next 10 years to build new subways, electrify our GO train fleet, improve service centres and give municipalities the support they need to deal with increasing ridership.

Speaker, our population is growing faster than ever before. The need to invest in public transit has never been greater. I have lived in Richmond Hill for over 30 years. We’ve been waiting and waiting year after year to get the subway up to Richmond Hill and finally, this government is bringing the subway to Richmond Hill. What a gratifying thing for the whole riding and all the people that will live there.

Our government has a bold vision to breathe new life into our transit infrastructure. Not only do we want to reduce the gridlock and greenhouse gas emissions, we want to get the people to move from their destination quickly and safely. This will improve the lives of Ontarians across the province.

Speaker, when we emerged from the pandemic, transit ridership rebounded to levels not seen in many years. Municipalities across the province were faced with a sudden spike in transit riders and the government of Ontario was there to make sure municipalities had the support they needed to deal with increasing demand. Through the provincial gas tax program, we provided \$379.6 million to 107 municipalities. This funding helped ensure communities across Ontario could continue to deliver safe and reliable transit services. The funding was used to pay for public transit operating expenses, invest in new capital projects and to add to existing reserves. By working in collaboration and co-operation with our municipal partners, the government of Ontario helped make public transit more accessible no matter which part of the province you call home.

Our government is delivering the largest transit expansion of its kind in Canadian history, and we moved quickly to get this done. That is why we passed the Building Transit Faster Act in 2020. This legislation introduced a number of measures to accelerate the delivery of priority transit projects throughout Ontario: projects such as the

Ontario Line, the Yonge North subway extension, the Scarborough subway extension, the Eglinton Crosstown West extension and the Hamilton LRT. We can't get people moving when transit projects are held up by bureaucracy and red tape. The Building Transit Faster Act cuts through the red tape by streamlining project delivery and reducing administrative burden. We are minimizing the delays transit projects may encounter when they're in close proximity to another development.

We are making it easier to remove physical barriers that impede new construction. We are enhancing coordination and engagement with members of the public and key stakeholders. This does not only get shovels in the ground more quickly; it ensures that everyone's voice is heard as we build a better future for the province.

Speaker, our government is building the transit that the people of Ontario need and deserve, regardless of where they're located. Our people in Richmond Hill are very excited that we call Richmond Hill home and we're building the Yonge North subway extension. The Yonge North subway extension will extend Toronto's Line 1 subway approximately eight kilometres north of the city, running from Finch station up through Richmond Hill. This is an exciting thing to relate to all of you now.

This cross-jurisdiction project spans the city of Toronto and York region and includes sections with the city of Markham, the city of Richmond Hill, and the city of Vaughan. The Yonge North subway extension will be a game-changer for commuters north of Toronto.

The extension will put 26,000 more people within a 10-minute walk of a subway station. It will accommodate 94,100 boardings each weekday. It will significantly reduce vehicle traffic during the morning rush hour, slashing green house gas emissions by 4,800 tonnes per year, and it will reduce time to travel to Toronto by as much as 22 minutes. That is so great for all of us who live in Richmond Hill.

By making transit more accessible to people north of Toronto, we'll reduce traffic congestion and create thousands of jobs. During construction, the Yonge North subway extension will generate \$3.6 billion in economic benefits.

Of course, when we don't get stuck in traffic congestion, this is really coming and giving us all the time that we can to develop more business. Preliminary work on this vital piece of infrastructure began earlier this year at Finch station, which is currently being upgraded to accommodate additional subway service.

In April, we issued a request for qualifications for the advance tunnel contract. The Yonge North subway station will completely reinvent how people in Toronto and the surrounding area go about their daily lives. I will be one that gets impacted from this.

We will continue to collaborate with our municipal partners to ensure we deliver world-class public transit. This will reduce gridlock, shorten commutes and revitalize our economy. No matter where Ontarians live, access to reliable public transit is essential. That is why we're investing in public transportation in every region of the province. The Ontario Community Transportation Grant

Program is a great example of how we can make life easier for people living in areas that are currently unserved or underserved by public transit.

Many small and rural municipalities have access to public transportation, but the service levels typically aren't as high as in the large urban cities. Because of that, public transit in this location isn't a reasonable alternative to other modes of transportation such as personal vehicles. This disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, including members of Indigenous communities, seniors and people with disabilities, people living on low income and racialized peoples.

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But we're working on this and fixing this. Through the Community Transportation Grant Program, we are providing up to \$44 million over the next seven years to 43 local and intercommunity transportation projects in 38 municipalities that currently have limited options for public transit.

This program has provided reliable transportation to people seeking employment opportunities and social programs. This will help them to attend appointments, visit friends and family and maintain an independent and active lifestyle. This will also help them to be able to socialize in their communities. This is very important, especially to the senior communities. People who depend on public transit in their day-to-day lives will find that this is going to get a relief for them. We are applying the lessons learned from the program to inform the development of future initiatives to address transportation service gaps as we continue our mission to deliver a world-class public transportation network for the people of Ontario.

Speaker, in addition to the historic investments and giving communities the support they need, we are also making it easier to take transit by offering more ways to pay. For instance, we launched a new payment option for Presto customers in May. Riders can now tap their debit card—including cards stored on a smart phone or a smart watch—to board GO Transit and UP Express, Brampton Transit, Burlington Transit, Hamilton Street Railway, MiWay, Oakville Transit and York Region Transit. Wow, this upgrade marks a major milestone for anyone who uses Presto cards.

I had the honour to be with Minister Cho before, and also Minister Mulroney, when we introduced this. We are all excited about this change. It is now so much easier for commuters across the GTA to get to work, home or to school. It is so much easier for them to choose transit instead of taking the car. This means we're taking vehicles off the road, reducing gridlock and giving Ontarians more time with their families.

And in Toronto, it's never been easier to ride the TTC. In August, we introduced credit and debit card payments for anyone who boards a subway, streetcar or bus in Toronto. Riders no longer have to worry about topping up a Presto card when they are trying to catch the bus at the end of a long shift or even if they have to scramble to work in the morning or get out to visit family on a long weekend; all these are made a lot easier.

Speaker, all the progress we've made to date wouldn't have been possible without working in co-operation with our municipal partners and transit agencies. This spirit of collaboration has made it so much easier to get the hard work done. Actually, this act that we are presenting is just that: We're working very closely with our municipal partners.

Infrastructure is the backbone of our province. It shapes our daily lives, impacts our economic prosperity and influences our economic and transportation—it's the most important thing: infrastructure that will help our future and will support building a stronger Ontario.

I want to reiterate a lot of the points that my colleagues have already mentioned before, that this act is going to be building more GO Transit stations. This will help people to be able to take the GO train, and we will be able to have more transit stations partnering with municipalities. It will definitely accelerate the transit expansion. Working with them, having the transit-oriented communities as we build more houses around the transit-oriented communities around the subway stations, is going to help all of us not only to resolve the housing crisis but build the economy. It will integrate the city of Toronto with the regional transit networks. What a great way for me, who comes from York region, to be connected with regional transit anywhere, not just only to Toronto. It will make our life and travelling a lot easier.

More importantly, this in itself helps the economy. As I was serving on the chamber and the board of trade, the number one key issue that all the members want is transportation. We really need this to be done properly. That was back at least 10 years ago, and after 10 years—in fact, after five years—nothing got done. They heard what we asked for, but nothing got done. But this government started it and worked on it, one thing at a time, regularly, and now, we're going to have the Yonge North subway extension up to Richmond Hill. This is going to help the businesses as they go from places to places.

When I was running my own business, I used to serve a lot of clients right in the city of Toronto. But if I go to the city of Toronto, I can only visit one client and will waste my whole day, so I have to quit a lot of clients and move everything up to Richmond Hill. This is not helping economic development, so I'm sure with this change and with all these efforts that we're making on transportation, this will help resolve this and will build the economy.

It's not only the economy; it will help jobs. With all this work that we are working on the transit system, we're also creating a lot of jobs. And of course, I've already mentioned how it will sustain the environment, and the collaboration and the innovative way we're working with municipalities makes this act, makes this bill a lot different, because I believe that it is not just the province working; it includes everybody. Municipalities—we will be there to support them. They asked for it. We'll work together with them. So I'm so happy that this act is being introduced. I'm here to support this building better transit systems for the future act.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I am now going to invite questions to the member for Richmond Hill with respect to her remarks.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Richmond Hill for her comments. Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Infrastructure about the broken promise that the Conservative government made prior to the 2022 election about the additional \$160 million to improve the GO Transit service to London and area at the heart of southwestern Ontario, and I just wanted to reiterate for the member that that broken promise lets down so many rural communities in southwestern Ontario who need a regional transit model, not just the GTA.

I speak with many great farmers in the London area who can't get workers into the good-paying jobs that are there waiting for them. Some businesses have even resorted to hiring their own bus to get people to work. Areas like Sarnia-Lambton, areas like Perth and many more can't get the people there and they have to do it on their own because the government has let down rural Ontario.

My question: When will this government stop neglecting rural Ontario and invest in regional transit that meets the needs of southwestern Ontario and meets the needs of Ontario's wonderful farmers and agri-foods industry?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to the member from London North Centre. Thank you for that question. It is exactly because of that that we have this Transportation for the Future Act. We know that we are going to work together with municipalities, we're working together with the regional transit system, and this is what this act is about. We are building on this and working towards that.

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That's why we ask for your support to get this bill passed, so that what you're asking for is going to be fulfilled. This is exactly why this bill is being introduced.

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

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the member from Richmond Hill. Our government is taking action, Madam Speaker, to build Ontario by introducing this Transportation for the Future Act, 2023, which, if passed, would help build more GO Transit stations, support housing around transit and make it more affordable and convenient to travel across the greater Golden Horseshoe, helping families save money while increasing ridership.

My question to the member from Richmond Hill is, can the member explain to the House how the station contribution fee will accelerate transit expansion across the greater Golden Horseshoe?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you, member from Brampton West. Yes, this is part of the expansion we're working towards. That's why we're working with the municipalities to build this special transit system to the Golden Horseshoe area. This is why we're introducing this bill, in order to move things faster so that we can get the economy and get the project that we have planned for in the Golden Horseshoe area to come to reality. Thank you for your question.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Speaker, through you to the member for Richmond Hill: For over a decade as a city councillor, now as St. Catharines's MPP, I've been advocating for GO train service with the city and Team Niagara. While it's a positive step that we recently secured a few additional trips, the hard-working commuters of St. Catharines are still awaiting all-day GO service from Niagara to Toronto. Why does this legislation prioritize new transit stations instead of ensuring and funding continuous services that already exist, like those in Niagara? When will we see all-day GO from Niagara to Toronto?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you, member from St. Catharines. I can understand your feelings. This is exactly how I felt when, for 30 years in Richmond Hill, I was waiting for a subway. For me, it's already come to be a reality. I'm sure you'll experience the same excitement, the same joy as I have, as we are working on this.

That's why we are doing this Transportation for the Future Act. That's why we're working with municipalities. They can come to us and work together with us with this collaboration. You will soon see; the same thing happening to me will be happening to you as well, and I'm looking forward for you to tell me the joy and excitement that you have shared, like what I'm sharing now.

That's why I ask you to support this act. Let's work together to build a better transit system across the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question? I recognize the member for Atikokan—no?

Mr. John Jordan: Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

Mr. John Jordan: Close enough. Thank you, Speaker.

Thanks for the presentation, to the member from Richmond Hill. A follow-up to the question from the member from London North Centre: Could you describe for us the communities or type of communities that will benefit most from this bill?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to the member for asking this question and following up on the member from London North Centre. Actually, this bill is not only for London North Centre but, as I mentioned, it is for everyone across the province. We are working closely with municipalities when they come to us, and we are going to work with them and also support them with grants so that they can fulfill their needs. This is why we are asking the municipalities to come and work with us.

That is why we have this special—the transit-oriented communities—we are helping them to have the station contribution fee. We are working with them so that they can build the transit system that they need in their municipalities. We believe the municipalities themselves know what their needs are, and we will work closely with them.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: There are provisions in the bill that suggest that the province is not planning on funding

the building of all GO stations. Rather, they're looking for already-strapped municipalities to come up with the money.

My question is, would there not be more than enough provincial dollars available to build GO stations without pressuring municipalities if the government reined in the gravy train currently being ridden by the 59 VPs of Metrolinx?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to the member from Thunder Bay—

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Superior North.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Superior North. Thank you for your question. In fact, as I mentioned before, we are working with all municipalities across the province. But it also has to come from the municipalities themselves that they see the need and come to work with us. Plus, they also have to come up with a plan, a way that will make a difference for their municipalities. So we are already moving along this line, and I hope that we will work very closely with all of you.

If you have any good suggestions, please ask your municipalities to come up with a good plan so that we can work with them on what we call the SCF, the station contribution fee, so that we can work with them to have more homes built around the community and fulfill their needs as well.

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

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to thank the member for Richmond Hill for her comments. Would she agree that the times that we're in, with the housing crisis that we have, have precipitated the urgency and the need for us to move forward with this legislation? Because the boundaries are seamless to a person who's looking for a home. They need to find a home where they can, and they have to have access to transit that's seamless, municipality to municipality. I wonder if the member could comment on that.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you, for the member from York Centre. This is exactly why we have this bill. We are really developing with the municipalities the transit-oriented communities. When we have the communities built around subway stations, that is making it easier for them for transportation; plus, it is going to build the economy. This is why we build a lot more houses that are closer to where the transportation and the subways are. This is going to help not only to resolve the housing crisis but also help the community to not have too many cars on the road. But they can go directly onto the subway.

That is why, in Richmond Hill, I understand there will be a lot more transit-oriented communities built around that area. I cannot wait to see the economy that it will bring to Richmond Hill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That is all the time we have for questions and answers.

Further debate?

Ms. Sarah Jama: As the disability critic for the official opposition, I am honoured to rise to debate Bill 131. Transit is very important to me. I moved to Hamilton at 18 years old for school about 11 years ago. To be honest,

Hamilton was the first city I felt I could freely travel around without the risk of getting stuck or being harmed. The subway systems in Toronto at the time were, and are still, difficult to navigate if you're someone with an assistive device. Wheel-Trans had at that time, and continues to have, consistent backlogs. These reflections, Madam Speaker, are from my experiences in Toronto over a decade ago, and not much has changed with regard to barriers facing disabled people across the GTA.

I remember being stuck in a TTC subway station as a teenager because an elevator was not working. I actually got off the subway, tried to get up out of the station, and I couldn't go backward because there wasn't a line that went the opposite way. So a security guard had to actually help me up the stairs—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Just one moment. May I see the back of your computer, please? The laptop—you may have to cover that up.

Ms. Sarah Jama: Okay. Is it okay if I put a paper over it?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): You may do whatever you have to do.

Ms. Sarah Jama: Okay.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Thank you. You can continue.

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Ms. Sarah Jama: I couldn't get up out of the station because the elevator was broken, so a security guard actually had to lift my, at that time, 299-pound wheelchair up dozens of stairs and I had to slowly climb my way out of the station. To be honest, I'm still kind of nervous around taking the subway because it's not accessible and it's not as accessible as it should be.

The great thing about Hamilton's HSR system is that it's currently free for people with disabilities who use assistive devices, and every bus is fully accessible. And it's because of this functioning system that I was able to travel around Hamilton for work and school and to actually live fully and independently—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Just stop the clock for one moment, please.

Can you go ahead and help the member from Hamilton Centre so that she can read properly?

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That's great, thank you.

Is that okay? Can you see?

Ms. Sarah Jama: That works.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Okay, thank you.

You can start the clock again, thank you.

Ms. Sarah Jama: The great thing about Hamilton's HSR system is that it's currently free for disabled people who use assistive devices and every single bus is fully accessible. It's because of this functioning system that I was able to travel around the city for work and school fully and independently.

As a former founding member of the Hamilton Transit Riders' Union, and as someone who still commutes using

our public transit system and GO Transit system to get to work as an MPP, I really value fully functioning transit systems and see this as a disability justice issue. Functioning transit systems for many disabled people across Ontario are liberatory, and that's why we support efforts to broaden access to public transit and to improve service levels and the quality of public transit.

This is what the city of Toronto just accomplished under the leadership of Mayor Olivia Chow. The city of Toronto cancelled proposed cuts to TTC services, utilizing operating funds that were intended to operate the delayed Eglinton Crosstown project, and this will ensure TTC riders can count on prompt service.

As my colleague in Ottawa Centre highlighted in debate just yesterday, there are aspects to Bill 131 that do need work and this is what I intend to talk about today. Firstly, schedule 2 implies the existence of a new Transit-Oriented Communities Program, of which the details remain unknown. The original idea was for Metrolinx to negotiate deals in which developers would fund a new GO station in exchange for development rights. Now the government evidently expects municipalities to assume funding responsibilities. We don't really have any idea based on what's written here what sort of funding agreement the government has in mind, or how risks will be allocated. Municipalities may be required to assume risks related to cost overruns without having any control over procurement or delivery.

I believe transit ought to be publicly owned, operated and maintained. Adding developers into the mix and offloading responsibilities onto municipalities could make it harder to keep jobs local and to contribute back to our communities. My faith in these P3 deals, in Metrolinx and in the government as it relates to these transit projects has really been shaken. Hamiltonians have been waiting years for a hypothetical LRT project that has displaced many people from their homes along the LRT route, with no real, tangible plans in place to give back to the community for these losses. And I was someone who was very pro-LRT when this project was first proposed in Hamilton.

I met with Metrolinx in late August to ask about a constituent who had recently been evicted from his apartment unit along the proposed LRT route due to the build, and I was told by Metrolinx that he would be compensated for his loss, but there was no real plan or tangible outcomes in place. Meanwhile, we know that there are a handful of Metrolinx properties that are no longer on the proposed LRT route in Hamilton that could be put toward housing people right this minute.

Madam Speaker, I have also met with people living in encampments in Hamilton, living in tents, who did live along the proposed LRT route who now have nowhere else to go. Often, they were on fixed incomes such as ODSP and could not find new places to live on the current rates. This government and Metrolinx need to move with more care as they continuously tend to push through transit projects because I do not want to see more people displaced for a transit line that is epically failing, like the Eglinton Crosstown. People deserve more well-thought-out planning, and that includes people in Hamilton Centre.

Secondly, the government has also said, without much detail, that municipalities can only levy a station contribution fee on developers building housing projects and amenities at GO stations provided an incentive of some kind is offered. Given recent instances when this government has engaged the private sector in controversial or questionable infrastructure projects, this is concerning. They cannot keep offloading the responsibilities of what should be a public good or service onto developers. A transit station charge offers a more focused revenue tool in which developments most likely to benefit from a new station are responsible for more of the costs, as opposed to a development charge that applies to all developments across a municipality, including those that would not benefit much from the station.

Thirdly, I echo our transit critic's ask that schedule 1 of Bill 131 must be repealed, as it is unnecessary. The Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113's collective agreement already allows for transit service integration, provided reciprocity of service is assured with other transit agencies. An interest arbitration award confirmed this union rate. If the government opens up the TTC's collective agreements from this House, transit workers will push back. And as the member from Ottawa Centre said yesterday, they are proud of their collective agreements and have worked for decades to ensure the quality of TTC service and well-being of TTC workers. An unconstitutional intrusion into their workplace will not be well received.

In Hamilton, the Keep Transit Public coalition, alongside ATU Local 107, are fighting for their right to maintain and operate Hamilton's future LRT system, which could bring dozens of jobs to Hamilton. The Hamilton Community Benefits Network have also struggled to get real agreements from Metrolinx and the province on the ways the LRT system can cause the least amount of harm to workers locally. I echo the calls of the Keep Transit Public campaign to allow Hamilton's LRT to be publicly maintained and operated.

There are serious concerns about this bill, including the potential interference with collective bargaining as well as a potential plan to download financial responsibility for provincial infrastructure onto municipalities. In the midst of issues with the Eglinton Crosstown and the Hamilton LRT, and in light of the ability for Metrolinx to commit to finishing projects that they start, we ought to move cautiously and ensure that this government does not continue to set itself up to fail in the realm of transit by clearly biting off more than it can handle. Like TTCriders, for reasons of accessibility, I also do support fare and service integration that would allow riders to travel seamlessly across transit agency boundaries without paying multiple fares or waiting for the right kinds of bus, but there has to be a fair agreement between the TTC and the union.

There is also a lot of other work that this government is neglecting around meeting its accessible transit deadlines for 2025. Creating accessible transit doesn't always mean coming up with quick, new projects. We need to commit to making sure the transit systems that we currently have available are actually accessible, and I've received several

calls specifically from people with visual impairments who find the current GO train system very difficult to navigate. I have also had many calls and have experienced myself how unreliable the West Harbour GO train times have been and continue to be.

I would urge this government to consult with disabled community members about what is and isn't working and commit to creating an accessible Ontario by 2025, as promised, rather than continuing to start and fail multiple times at creating new transit systems and projects. We need to focus on a transit system that gives back to communities and stops these failed public-private partnerships.

Interjections.

Ms. Sarah Jama: Sorry; I didn't realize I could say I was finished. Thank you for the time. That's all I have for right now.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for questions and answers.

Mr. John Jordan: Thank you to the member from Hamilton Centre. Accessibility, of course, is very important to this government and, as you know, all new stations will have to meet the high accessibility standards that are currently in place. I'm wondering if the member could tell us if she feels that having more GO stations in closer proximity to where people live will assist with accessibility.

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Ms. Sarah Jama: It depends on if the station itself is accessible. There are also issues in the station that have created difficulties for people to navigate, including how things are labelled and just people's ability to get around in the actual station.

So, yes, in some ways, having more stations could help with accessibility, but unless this government actually commits to building an accessible Ontario by 2025 and meeting its real targets, more of the same problem isn't going to fix the underlying accessibility issues.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Thank you very much for talking to us, really, about the situation for people with disabilities on public transit. I was recently at Yonge and Bloor. I finally discovered the accessible entrance and the elevator. I stood there for 10 minutes and the elevator didn't come. I saw somebody who really, really needed that elevator, and he'd been standing there for 10 minutes too. There was no signage at all saying it was out of service, and there were no directions as to where to go if the elevator wasn't working.

I'm wondering if you could just talk a bit about how frequently that kind of situation comes up.

Ms. Sarah Jama: It happens a lot. Even for me, as someone who has to actually take public transit to get here every day, I'm actually terrified to go to Queen station or College station, because there's construction everywhere, and I feel like—I'm worried about getting stuck. So instead of actually hopping into the subway station, I commute 30 minutes to get here from Union by driving

my chair like a bike. But that's not going to be possible in the winter.

We really do need to fix the subway system, because it's not clear where to enter for people in wheelchairs or walkers, or who struggle to get around, and when construction is added into that, it's just really unsafe.

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

Mr. Rick Byers: Thank you so much to the member for your remarks. I understand. I was on the board of the TTC about 10 years ago, and I saw these issues being discussed first-hand. No doubt, making the system accessible has taken way longer than it should, and it's an ongoing, challenging project.

Building transit, as well, is challenging. So much of it is creating the substantive infrastructure around stations and whatnot. But I certainly acknowledge its impacts on the accessibility of the network.

My question, though, is: Our goal here is to, as the previous member questioned, integrate these transit systems more closely with housing, having transit-oriented communities so that you're right next to the network. I guess my observation would be that I would think that would make it broadly more accessible, and I would appreciate your perspective on that goal of the legislation.

Ms. Sarah Jama: Theoretically, yes, it could be possible that it would make things better, but what I'm seeing in Hamilton Centre is that people have actually been displaced and made homeless because of promised transit projects by this government. The LRT doesn't exist yet, but people are living in tents and encampments. And so we can keep saying more bills and shiny new projects will fix the issues, but I'm really losing faith in this government's ability to actually deliver real solutions.

And then continuously saying these solutions are going to help people who are struggling with housing, when I'm seeing the opposite—these failed transit projects, over and over again, whether it's the Eglinton Crosstown or the Hamilton LRT, are actually making people's housing issues worse, in my opinion.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I do want to thank the member for Hamilton Centre for her speech on Bill 131. I also think it's so important to have people with diverse experiences come to this place and represent the people that they were elected to serve, and to put that lens on a piece of legislation like this. Certainly accessibility is a huge part of transportation—a lack of access to adequate transportation becomes a huge employment barrier for so many people across this province.

My question specifically, though, because she touched on the affordability: This new station contribution fee, which is essentially now a download to municipalities to pay for infrastructure—we know that municipalities are already struggling to pay for municipal infrastructure, especially after Bill 23. Now this government is signalling that municipalities will also need to pay for provincial infrastructure if they want transit any time soon. Do you

believe that the city of Hamilton is in a position, given all of their cost pressures, to actually fund the development of GO stations?

Ms. Sarah Jama: Absolutely not. The municipality is already inundated with costs. I think we just really need to focus as a government on solutions to fixing what we currently have in front of us rather than keep introducing new projects that the municipalities need to be responsible for, because it's not responsible ways of governing.

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

Mr. Ric Bresee: Again, we greatly appreciate the comments today from the member from Hamilton Centre. I do appreciate the member's comments, especially the personal touch with regard to the member's own use of the transit systems to get to this facility to do this amazing job.

I'm wondering if the member can speak to the idea that the people, especially the people who have accessibility challenges, in Bowmanville, in Durham region, across the larger region, shouldn't have the similar advantages and the access to transit systems that the people in Hamilton have to be able to get to this centre.

Ms. Sarah Jama: I definitely agree that everybody should have access to good transit systems. I think what I'm just worried about is—we do have transit options in Toronto, for example, but they're just not accessible. I think rather than continuously introducing new projects with no real plan about how to ensure accessibility or to make our province accessible by 2025, I can't in good faith say that for sure this bill will lead to more accessibility for people with less transit, because that hasn't been the case for people who have transit options right now.

I think we need to go back to the table and think about how we're going to make our current transit systems accessible, rather than continuing to introduce shiny new projects that often continue to fail.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to thank my colleague the member for Hamilton Centre for her powerful and insightful remarks based on sharing her personal experiences as someone who uses a wheelchair and tries to use transit, which often fails her.

My question is around the government's Transit-Oriented Communities Program, which has been very, very short on details. There is certainly a cloak of secrecy that surrounds that program. In light of that, does the member feel confident in the government's ability to ensure a transit system that actually meets the needs of all Ontarians, including Ontarians with disabilities?

Ms. Sarah Jama: No, I don't. I think there definitely needs to be more work to think about and talk about how we're going to make Ontario actually accessible by 2025. That includes transit. I know that members from the NDP have tried to move forward legislation to make transit and the TTC more accessible and that has been voted down.

I just don't see a way forward that shows me that this government is prioritizing disabled people when we do talk about transit.

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

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the member opposite. Madam Speaker, I heard the members opposite speak about investments in rural Ontario. There's no government in the history of Ontario that has made more investments in rural Ontario. Not only are we investing \$184 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years, we're making unprecedented investments in transit.

My question to the member opposite is, will the member opposite vote in favour of this bill and support the people of Ontario?

Ms. Sarah Jama: I haven't made up my mind yet, but just given what is going on with the Eglinton Crosstown, the Hamilton LRT and a lot of the transit projects that are being fumbled—I'm waiting to see an actual plan going forward, and I look forward to listening to more of the debates on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That's all our time for questions and answers, right to the second.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker, and good afternoon.

Interjections.

Mr. Lorne Coe: And thank you to my colleagues for that nice applause.

It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 131, the Transportation for the Future Act, 2023.

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Speaker, when you step back and you read the bill—it's not a long bill to read, as you know—there are some key aspects in it. One of the underpinning aspects is that it delivers on our plan to build a stronger Ontario, doesn't it? It does. The proposed legislation, if passed, will improve transit service and convenience and help the province and municipalities like Whitby, Pickering, Ajax, Oshawa and eventually Bowmanville to build transit-oriented communities along the GO rail system, going east and west, allowing for more homes, affordable housing options, parkland, retail and office space near transit.

Speaker, the proposed legislation is a response to requests from the municipalities that I just referred to in the region of Durham and other upper-tier governments across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area for a new optional funding tool that will enable municipalities to raise revenues to build much-needed transit and housing. The new tool is called the station contribution fee. Speaker, it's going to allow municipalities to fund and design the construction of new GO stations and recover the costs over time, as transit-oriented communities like Whitby, Oshawa, Clarington, Pickering and Ajax build around some of the future stations as we move further east, beyond Oshawa, going forward. What this will also do is help speed up the construction of new GO transit stations while also creating new opportunities for mixed-use communities around those stations.

That particular statement that I just made is a good segue into a statement that I received from the mayor of Clarington. You'll remember that we're going to go

further east beyond Oshawa to Bowmanville. When the mayor read the news release related to Bill 131, he was prompted to provide this statement, in part from a news release that he posted on the Clarington website. Here's what he had to say, Speaker:

"The planned extension of the province's GO Transit network to Clarington will introduce significant economic and employment opportunities to the community. The faster the two stations planned for Clarington can be built, the quicker the GO train can come here, bringing better transit options for Clarington residents and a better quality of life. Regular GO Transit service has the potential to transform the Major Transit Station Areas ... in Bowmanville and Courtice. Clarington thanks the Ontario government for their determination to complete the GO Lakeshore East extension and strengthen the economic potential of Clarington and"—yes, Speaker, the region of Durham.

It's not only Clarington that is pleased about the announcement on Bill 131. As you would expect, the region of Durham, which is the upper-tier government in Durham that's comprised of eight municipalities—the announcement by the Honourable Kinga Surma about Bill 131 also initiated a response from the regional chair. This is what he had to say:

"This legislation brings Durham region one step closer to its vision of vibrant, livable and sustainable communities near new rapid transit stations. We applaud the province's innovative approach to economic development, enabling new legislation to help make the four new stations along the GO Lakeshore East extension into Bowmanville a reality."

That's John Henry, the regional chair and chief executive officer for the region of Durham.

Speaker, the recent steps undertaken by the government—and this is an important step because it's inter-related to the underlying principles of Bill 131—to extend GO Transit service to Bowmanville are a strong step forward in affecting this particular legislation, because every day, thousands of residents from east Durham can commute to work in or around the greater Toronto-Hamilton area.

Now, as communities continue to grow within the region of Durham, the need for more and better transportation options is clear. I see it every day commuting from Whitby into Queen's Park. That's why the Bowmanville GO extension will be a game-changer for residents along the Lakeshore East line, improving access to jobs, housing and local landmark destinations.

But, Speaker, there are many more benefits that I want to share with you and my colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly, and those are:

- moving people from their vehicles to public transit, thereby reducing congestion on the 401;

- enabling sustainable, walkable transit-oriented communities; and

- increasing the provision of housing, including affordable housing units.

Speaker, the extension of the Lakeshore GO Transit East is a signature project in the region's post-pandemic

recovery framework and action plan. I had the occasion last night to speak at the Ontario power corporation headquarters to an audience of about 325 people—entrepreneurs, but other representatives of the broader community across the region of Durham. Included in that group was the executive director of economic development for the region of Durham, and he was absolutely ecstatic that this particular legislation has been brought forward because it's going to be the kick-start for the implementation of the recovery framework and action plan going forward.

Speaker, going forward, the extension will also support job growth, reduce traffic, connect students—and we've got two universities in the region of Durham: Ontario Tech, Trent Durham and, of course, Durham College, which is in my riding.

I want to take a moment, Speaker, at this juncture of my remarks—and I'm conscious of the remaining time that I have; it is 12 minutes, but there are some key points that I think are material in the discussion of this legislation and its relative impacts. I want to take a moment to explain how the proposed station contribution fee would work.

Key to me, Speaker, as a former member of the Durham regional council for seven years, and six years prior to that on the Whitby town council, is that it's going to give municipalities—the eight municipalities within the region of Durham—the flexibility to determine what works best for them. Municipalities could recover the cost over time by levying a station contribution fee on development that gets built around a GO Transit station, like those presently located in Pickering and Ajax and Whitby and Oshawa.

The fee would be a voluntary tool—that's another key point—for municipalities, and they would apply to the province to use it. It means that this legislation, if passed, would create a new and voluntary funding tool for municipalities that would help spur the construction of new GO Transit stations, accelerating transit expansion while building vibrant mixed-use communities and much-needed housing.

Speaker, station contribution fees will also facilitate earlier GO station construction by spreading the cost of delivering the stations across multiple developments and over multiple years, and new stations would also spur the development.

What's clear to me, as I review the legislation, is that we know that our province, like many areas across the country, is facing a housing crisis. We also know that we're experiencing the fastest population growth in years. As an example, in the region of Durham in the next two and half years, we're going to have a million people—a million people in the region of Durham. Therefore, we need the necessary infrastructure to support this rapid growth, and that's why we've introduced the Transportation for the Future Act that, if passed, would build more GO Transit stations, resulting in a more convenient commute across the greater Golden Horseshoe for hard-working families.

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With the proposed legislation, we're seizing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build vibrant mixed-use

communities around transit stations. That, Speaker, has been a feature of the official plans of the eight municipalities within the region of Durham and indeed the official plan that our upper-tier government has in the region of Durham.

Speaker, these transit-oriented communities also will bring more housing, jobs, retail, and public amenities close to transit, and once again that responds to what the Durham MPPs have been hearing from our communities for a long time. I've heard it as a representative both at the local level and regional level, and for the past eight years as an MPP, and so have the other MPPs in Durham.

I'll move along here. Speaker, there are some examples of work that's already under way. We're working with partners to explore a transit-oriented community at the new Woodbine GO station in Etobicoke along Highway 27, and this proposed station will help residents in Etobicoke and surrounding areas connect to the GO line and get where they need to go, while serving as a future hub for economic development and jobs and increasing housing opportunities.

We're also working on constructing key improvements to the existing Mimico GO station. If anyone has ever been on the GO train and you stop at Mimico, it's long overdue, believe me. Now that's happening, and that's a good thing. That includes the new fully accessible main station building and the extension of a multi-use greenway path for pedestrians and cyclists to use to access that particular station. Another feature is that the transit-oriented community is expected to create more than 2,000 housing units, including affordable housing options, along with a retail plaza, a passenger pick-up and drop-off area, and enhanced station amenities including hundreds of new underground parking spaces and spaces for bike storage. It will transform the Mimico GO station and the surrounding area and, as I just pointed out, bring more housing as well.

Speaker, this legislation, if passed, will also impact transit service integration by enhanced cross-boundary transit service integration. This has been a long-standing request of upper-tier governments for five, six, seven years. We've listened, we've responded, and it's happening. We're doing that by matching routes with the ways people travel across the region. Local transit providers can plan and offer more convenient services for transit riders, and riders will be able to take the first bus available regardless of which transit agency provides that service. The proposed changes will also make it easier for people to take transit and help families. This is an important feature. We all want to spend more time with our families, don't we? Well, what I'm talking about is going to affect that and also increase ridership at the same time. These changes will be a step towards a more integrated transit network.

Also, Speaker, the province will be working with municipal partners like the region of Durham to integrate transit services across the greater Golden Horseshoe and to create a plan to remove double fares across the transit system. In May of this year, following a broad consultation

with municipalities, we launched debit payment across much of the Presto system—including GO Transit; UP Express; Brampton Transit; Burlington Transit; my home, Durham Region Transit; Hamilton Street Railway; MiWay, Oakville Transit; and York—allowing riders to get on board with just a tap of the debit card, including if it's stored on a smart phone or smart watch. This upgrade marked another milestone for the Presto system, giving transit riders yet another convenient payment option when travelling for work, school, leisure and more and yet again—yet again—demonstrating our government's commitment to making the transit experience easier for people in all of our communities across Ontario.

The launch of the credit and debit payment on GO and local transit agencies around the 905 serves as another example of making transit more convenient. Once again, by increasing transit payment options we gave more people more options to access public transit in ways that work for them. That's an important characteristic, isn't it? It's a reflection of the level of consultation that took place before we proceeded along those lines.

Now with more people returning to public transit, our government was happy to provide municipalities with the funding they needed to accommodate more riders, because those riders are there. They're getting onto the buses.

In February of this year we were pleased to provide more than \$379 million to help municipalities operate and improve their local transit systems. That funding, Speaker, which was delivered through the provincial gas tax program, was used to extend service hours; buy transit vehicles, which occurred in my region; add routes; improve accessibility, which is key; and upgrade infrastructure.

To make up for reduced gas sales during the pandemic, we provided an additional \$80 million to municipalities to ensure they could continue to support their transit systems as ridership began to increase. Throughout Ontario, 144 communities across 170 municipalities benefited from this funding, which helped them, in the process, deliver reliable service to riders at a time when ridership was booming after two years of slowdown.

This is just one more example of our commitment to working in co-operation with municipalities across the province to improve public transit. Again, I can't stress enough the level of consultation that has occurred that brings us here this afternoon with this bill and the effect of this bill.

At a fundamental level, the City of Toronto Act amendments proposed in the bill are proof that our government is a collaborative government, a government that is willing to work with our municipal partners to get it done for the people of Ontario. The COTA amendments are a direct response to the city of Toronto's request to run its transit system the way it sees fit, to better serve its residents and neighbours.

In sum, the proposed changes provide the city of Toronto with the tools to better integrate its transit services with other regional transit networks by allowing the TTC to enter into cross-boundary service agreements with

neighbouring transit agencies. This is great news for commuters who, at the end of the day, don't care what colour bus they're getting on, they only care about getting from point A to B safely, quickly and affordably.

The fact that the Toronto city council has endorsed this particular approach is a good thing. It's a good thing, but, again, it's another example of the level of collaboration that has occurred.

Speaker, I'm going to wind up my remarks right now because I said at the outset that this particular bill and the content of it is underpinned by the key themes in the Ontario budget, Building Ontario. Two key aspects stand out for me: building key infrastructure projects faster, attracting more jobs and investment, but also getting more housing built and allowing more families and residents to spend more time with their families. That's what this legislation does. It's a responsible approach to help people today by laying a strong foundation for future generations.

Through the legislation our government is strengthening and connecting communities, expanding and integrating Ontario's transit network, supporting economic growth, creating more jobs and housing and improving the lives of Ontarians for generations to come.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I was listening to the member from Whitby talk about all the GO stations that have already been built, and how great they are, how accessible they are and how bright, and opening. I have to say, those stations were built by the province. We have a long-standing tradition of supporting the stations and funding the rails in between, whereas right now this piece of legislation is going to introduce this new tool called the station contribution fee, which is essentially a download onto municipalities.

Actually, it was supposed to be Metrolinx that was going to do it. Metrolinx was going to negotiate deals in which developers would fund a new GO station in exchange for development rights. This government definitely has a problem now with developers, so they've moved away from that, and now the government evidently expects municipalities to assume funding responsibilities. In what world does this government think, with all of the cost pressures that are happening right now in the province of Ontario, that municipalities—like Kitchener, for instance, which doesn't have a GO station; we have a Via station that's sometimes open and sometimes closed.

How are they going to afford to build GO stations?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Well, you see, this is what differs between the official opposition and the government: We listen to municipalities, Speaker. We listen.

The policy is voluntary. It's absolutely voluntary. Without the SCFs, the ability to build, for example, upwards of 30,000 homes in my region, in Durham, would cease to exist. That's the reality, right? It's voluntary, and it allows municipalities to create new revenue streams solely for the purpose of funding GO station delivery costs where the market-driven approach is not feasible.

That's where the difference is between the opposition—

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, I was listening to the member. What wonderful information he has provided. He, along with all of the other members, is supporting the communities at large.

What I want to know from the member: For his own riding, how will this bill impact, and what will be the benefit to, the residents you serve because of this bill?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Through you, Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I talked about the economic development benefit. I talked about the accessibility benefit going forward. What it allows for the residents in Whitby is to be able to access other services and programs outside of Whitby, as well.

There are other local attractions, for example, in Clarington, in Bowmanville, that many of the residents in Whitby want to access. While I have some agricultural communities in the north part of my riding, there are other features of agriculture that the residents in the town of Whitby want to access, that are more resident in Bowmanville—in the north part of Bowmanville, but further north as well. There are some farming communities that they want to participate—like Watson Farms, which is a multi-use farm, but it's an opportunity for young people to learn about farming and the values of agriculture in our community going forward.

I thank my colleague for his great question.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: This is a bill that is relevant to southern Ontario, but doesn't have anything to say about transit in northern Ontario. That's the part of the province you see when you flip the map over.

Years ago, the Mulroney Conservative government killed passenger train transit to Thunder Bay. During the last few years, we lost—well, all communities lost—access to Greyhound bus transit. We went for months with no intercity transit at all, and now we have a patchwork of expensive bus services. Right now, it costs \$350 to get from Geraldton to Thunder Bay—that's about a three-hour drive—for a medical appointment, but the Northern Health Travel Grant only covers about half of that cost.

There are two parts to my question: (1) Will the government take the transportation needs of northerners seriously and reduce the costs of transit in northwestern Ontario? (2) Will the government increase the Northern Health Travel Grant so that northerners can afford to access health care when and where they need it?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like to bring the discussion back to the bill, Bill 131. Perhaps the member opposite hasn't read the full bill, because actually, the whole purpose of this bill is to help build new stations predominantly outside of the city of Toronto.

I understand that some of the caucus members in the official opposition are predominantly from Toronto, but this particular bill speaks about—the purpose is to help

build new stations, predominantly outside of Toronto, and we've done that, with wide and purposeful consultation with communities across the province of Ontario.

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

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I really want to thank my friend our member from Whitby for his insightful remarks. I want to ask him, again, on the tremendous housing crisis that Ontario is faced with because of the tremendous immigration every week coming into our province—which is wonderful. But would the member agree that this is exactly why we need to move forward with this bill, because we want to have seamless integration of transit all throughout our province in order to build homes and to make sure that people who live in other municipalities can go seamlessly to work, to shop and to raise their children throughout Ontario?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I thank the Solicitor General for his thoughtful question, as typically is the case when he participates and is able to participate in the debate.

I'll take us back to the effect of the station contribution fee in particular, because that particular fee, even though it's an optional tool, allows municipalities to impose a fee on new residential and commercial development, as well. But out of my discussions with some members of Durham regional council, as well as some of the local-level councillors from the eight municipalities that comprise the region of Durham, this effect is going to be significant surrounding new GO stations. Municipalities are looking forward to this, applying innovative approaches to the actual construction of affordable housing units, but also commercial and residential as well.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you to the member from Whitby for his words on this bill. My question is, considering that Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113's collective agreement already allows for transit service integration with reciprocity of service, why does the government believe that schedule 1 of Bill 131 is necessary, and how does the government plan to address potential pushback from the transit workers if their collective agreements are opened up?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you for the question from my colleague, who has done great work in collaboration with me on seniors and supporting the Legion, since we are both members of the Royal Canadian Legion.

But that question, the exact question—Speaker, through you—was asked to our minister the Honourable Kinga Surma, the Minister of Infrastructure, and I'm going to read her response, if I may, please, Speaker, because I think it's material to the conversation this afternoon:

"I think that all of us in this House deeply express our gratitude to the front-line workers, the transit workers who kept transit going during one of the most difficult times....

"That being said, we are mindful and respectful of collective bargaining, which is why I think the intention of this bill that's before us is really to work with the city, to work with the TTC, in order to look for ways in which we

can make transit more convenient for riders—and,” importantly, Speaker, “respectful of the collective bargaining that is occurring.”

Thank you for the question.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Unfortunately, there is not enough time for another question. We will resume debate.

Further debate?

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: It’s always a pleasure to rise in this House to speak on behalf of the people of Parkdale–High Park. Today we are debating Bill 131, Transportation for the Future Act. I’ve got to say, when I read the title, I had to shake my head. This government is not building transportation for the future. This government is not building transportation for the future. This government is not even building transportation for the present.

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Eglinton Crosstown is the biggest example right now: 12 years of construction, tens of thousands of people’s daily lives disrupted, over \$13 billion already and we don’t know how much more. It’s a bottomless pit, and we still don’t know if the transit will ever run. So what future is this government talking about when we don’t know if, after everything related to Eglinton Crosstown, the transit will ever be built?

I know that this P3 contract for Eglinton Crosstown was signed by the Liberal government—big mistake on their part. But in 2018, when the Auditor General audited the Eglinton Crosstown, she said that there were numerous things that were going wrong and Metrolinx wasn’t doing their part to hold the Crosslinx consortium to account. Two years later—2020—the Auditor General did a follow up report and said that not only did everything that she raised not get addressed by this Conservative government; things were actually worse now.

The only thing that has actually happened since the Auditor General’s report was lawsuits and more payout from the public purse to the consortium. Now, we still have no credible plan, no timeline. It’s an indefinite delay. So this government, we can say confidently, Speaker, does not know how to build transit, does not know how to deliver on transit projects.

There are numerous issues with Metrolinx, and the previous transportation minister did not hold Metrolinx accountable. And it seems that the current Minister of Transportation is following in the same direction. The Metrolinx CEO is one of the highest-paid public servants—almost \$900,000 a year in salary. Fifty-nine vice president positions at Metrolinx, 19 C-suite executives—all of whom seem to be unable to hold a P3 contractor to account.

Get this, Speaker: There’s no engineer at Metrolinx; it’s all consultants. The work is all farmed out. You have contractors hiring subcontractors. The whole structure is very opaque, I would say deliberately, because then it becomes very hard to hold somebody to account.

Metrolinx has forgotten that they are a public transit agency. Metrolinx has forgotten who they work for. Did the government learn from the Eglinton Crosstown fiasco?

They blamed the Liberals, but then what do they go ahead and do? Award more P3 contractors for the Ontario Line project and award even bigger contracts. We’ve seen the same thing happen in Ottawa. It’s happening at Finch, at Eglinton. Why is this government continuing to go down the same path? They don’t seem to be learning the lessons, and they certainly don’t seem to be respecting public dollars.

The government side talked quite a bit about the tap feature—credit and debit tap. I have to say, I like it. I use it; it’s convenient. But then, we have forgotten what it took for us to get here. This was announced with great fanfare, but let’s not forget that the technology has existed for decades. The city of Toronto actually wanted to go with tap service 13 years ago, but what happened was that the Liberal government forced Presto on the city of Toronto. And that Presto system not only took years to roll out; there were so many problems. It was expensive: a billion dollars. Add it to the list of numerous billion-dollar scandals and problems that the Liberals had.

Also, by the time Presto was being offered to, or rather forced on, the city of Toronto, Presto technology was already out of date. The Liberal government signed a contract, in secret—we can see there’s a lot of similarities with how Liberals do and what the Conservatives do—with Accenture to deliver it. I remember—and actually it happens still very often as a transit rider—Presto systems not working, especially in the early years. What does that result in? Lost revenues for the TTC.

Now we finally have tap, 13 years too late, a billion dollars wasted. So, no, in this province we don’t have transportation for the future, because we don’t have what is needed for the present. We are so behind.

In this bill there are two schedules. The first schedule re-enacts un-proclaimed schedule 1 of Bill 2, a previous bill, the Plan to Build Act, which allows the Toronto Transit Commission to enter into service-integration agreements with neighbouring transit agencies despite the TTC’s statutory monopoly on transit service within Toronto. Such an agreement is not a sale or transfer of the TTC under the Labour Relations Act. It also adds a new provision that clarifies that such service-integration agreements do not constitute contracting out for the purpose of the collective agreement.

We support fare and service integration. It makes sense. As a transit rider, I think it will make life easier. TTC riders certainly strongly support fare and service integration, because it allows riders to travel seamlessly across transit agency boundaries without paying multiple fares.

The NDP does support transit fare and service integration. However, we do not support interfering in collective agreements. So we have to make sure that this schedule—schedule 1 of this bill—does not interfere or undermine collective agreements.

What the impact of schedule 1 is on the ATU’s collective agreement is not quite clear in this legislation. I understand from ATU that there is a way forward, because ATU’s agreement already allows for transit-service integration, provided reciprocity of service is assured with

other transit agencies. What does that mean? It means that you don't replace a TTC bus that comes every 15 minutes with another region's bus that only comes once an hour. An interest arbitration award has confirmed this as ATU's right, so if the government opens up the TTC's collective agreement, just know that transit workers are going to push back. It's an unconstitutional intrusion into their workplace. It will not be well received by transit workers, by transit riders and the general public.

So I urge the new Minister of Transportation; the Associate Minister of Transportation; the new Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development; and the Minister of Infrastructure to sit down, to get on the phone and engage the leadership of the ATU—Marvin Alfred, John Di Nino. Work together and get a deal, because when you get a deal that works for ATU, we know it will also work for the riders.

Speaking of fare and service integration, I also want to make note that the Conservative government still refuses to reverse the cuts that were made by previous governments; that is, refusing to cover 50% of operational funding for municipal transit. It used to be that way, that the province covered 50% of the operational costs of local transit. Because of decades of underfunding, the result has been unreliable service when it comes to—I can certainly speak for the TTC, because that's my local transit. Transit doesn't arrive on time and the service wait times between buses and subways take much longer.

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If people cannot rely on the TTC to get to work on time or to get to school on time, what happens? They start looking for alternatives. And that means more cars on the road. It means more traffic. It's bad for the environment. It costs more.

We need to fund public transit to a level where, even though people have a car, taking transit and having that option is the better way. That's when you know we have strong public systems and services in the city and around the province, because it's the thing that everybody does, regardless of their income, regardless of where they live in the city or in other areas.

In Toronto, very specifically, we also had conservative leadership for the last 12 years, who also underfunded transit. Thankfully we're moving in a different direction now, with a new mayor. They're still not quite at the pre-pandemic level of service, so the province needs to step in, provide operational funding and ensure that the TTC runs smoothly, it's reliable and there's higher frequency of service.

I also wanted to talk about safety. I'll just say for now that one of the things around TTC reliability and people's confidence in the TTC system is it also needs to ensure that people feel safe. For over a decade now TTC had been trying to engage with the big three—Telus, Rogers and Bell—to provide cell service, but they were not interested. Come on: 2023 and we still don't have cell service to make an emergency call or to call a loved one, if needed? We pushed very hard with the previous Minister of Transportation. The Minister of Transportation simply pointed a finger back to the TTC.

It is another area that we need to ensure we take action on because if people do not feel safe taking public transit, then it doesn't matter how often transit runs. We just won't have the ridership. We need to make sure we do that.

I want to go into schedule 2 of this bill. In schedule 2, it allows the municipality, with the consent of the minister, to impose a transit station charge—which the government is calling a station contribution fee—on new developments within a designated area around a proposed new GO Transit station. The objective of this fee would be the recovery of the construction costs of the new GO station and, of course, the revenues must be used for the intended purposes. There are some other requirements in order to proceed with that.

Essentially, in plain language, what schedule 2 is saying is that the province is telling municipalities, “We will allow you to assume the risk to build GO Transit”—provincial infrastructure, mind you—“because we can't be bothered to build it ourselves, really.” It basically requires the municipalities to assume the risk to build this infrastructure. It's a clear downloading of responsibilities.

There are some municipalities, I understand, that are very eager to do this. They're only eager to do this because the government of Ontario hasn't bothered to build important transit stations in their communities. This, unfortunately, has happened under successive governments, both Liberal and Conservative.

Already the responsibility to build and operate transit and the cost is not being appropriately shared between the province and municipalities. With this bill, Bill 131, it is possible that the situation could get worse. Think about it. Let's say that this bill moves forward and some years down the road, a GO station is built in a particular municipality. What about the operations? The member from Waterloo, even before I got elected, in 2018, I remember has been fighting for two-way GO service—11 years.

If this Conservative government is not going to fund the operations of public transit, they're not really building transit that people can use. It has to be there when people need it, and that means weekend service. It means more frequent service. It means things like having bike racks on GO trains and GO buses—simple things. Everybody that wants a GO station in their community knows what needs to happen, and municipalities absolutely cannot do it by themselves.

As well, this bill, with this option for municipalities to assume the risk to build a GO station, is coming at a time when the government has dramatically reduced revenue capacities of municipalities through their controversial Bill 23. Over a billion dollars in municipal revenue province-wide—gone. The government is basically saying, “We're going to take away revenue tools through Bill 23. We will give you new tools, but then that means you have to take on a whole set of responsibilities that used to be provincial.” The government has also said, without much detail, that municipalities can only levy a station contribution fee on developers building housing projects and amenities at GO stations provided an incentive of

some kind is offered. Given the recent instances where the government has engaged the private sector in controversial and questionable infrastructure projects, I would say there's cause for concern.

While it is possible to imagine ways in which this particular schedule, schedule 2, could serve the public interest, the Minister of Infrastructure's Transit-Oriented Communities Program is still cloaked in secrecy, and I would say it's not deserving of public trust. The Minister of Infrastructure's secrecy extends beyond this particular program, and we know that very well in Toronto, because we still have not seen the agreement between the province and Therme spa. A 95-year lease—it's secret. Why is the government not releasing the lease? No one in Toronto or outside of Toronto, no one you speak to, buys that for 95 years, there's going to be a spa in that location. So why award a 95-year lease? That's not good business.

Also, the government announced that 850 mature trees at Ontario Place are going to be cut down. They sent a press release out. These trees are healthy, mature, and should be saved. It's very hard to grow trees in urban settings, even harder to grow them at the waterfront. And the trees are being mostly cut down on the west island. That island, conveniently, was not included in or part of the environmental assessment, which is one of the parts of the entire Ontario Place redevelopment plan.

Just recently, the province removed the temple bell, less than a month after the creator, architect Raymond Moriyama, passed away. Speaker, that bell commemorates the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to Canada. This government continues to do things in secret, last-minute—things that either people find out on very short notice or find out as things are happening. The Conservatives also want to destroy the Ontario Science Centre, which is another masterpiece by the same architect. This is from the *Globe and Mail*, and this is what they wrote: "The late Raymond Moriyama built boldly in an era when public spaces mattered. We must save his legacy from the small thinking of our time." The small thinking of our time—

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

Ms. Sarah Jama: Thank you to the member from Parkdale–High Park for your contribution to this debate. My question to you is this: Out of all of the issues that you highlighted in your comments about issues with this bill, what do you think causes the most hesitation with this bill for you?

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Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I would say—I mean, there are only two schedules in the bill, and both schedules are cause for concern, because in schedule 1, it is possible—it's not clear yet, but it is possible that the government is going to interfere with ATU's collective agreements. We do not support that. The courts don't support that.

In schedule 2 of the bill, again, the government is down-loading the responsibility for building provincial infrastructure to municipalities. Think about what happens to municipalities who desperately need a GO station but are

not able to attract the developers, the investors. What happens to them? They don't get a station? Where are the equity considerations? They go to the back of the line. So both these schedules in the bill are cause for concern.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member opposite for your speech today. My question to you, the member from Parkdale–High Park, would be—really, I'm quoting the regional chair of Durham, John Henry, who was quoted as saying, "This legislation brings Durham region one step closer to its vision of vibrant, livable and sustainable communities near new rapid transit stations. We applaud the province's innovative approach to economic development, enabling new legislation to help make the four new stations along the GO Lakeshore East extension into Bowmanville a reality."

So we've got broad support by residents, by different levels of government, and yet it seems—I understand the official opposition certainly has a job to oppose and be an opposition, but when you see good legislation, why aren't you supporting it?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Thank you to the member from Oakville for his question. If he listened to my speech, I did mention there are municipalities who are eager to move forward on this, and Durham, as he raised, is one of the municipalities. Again, Durham is willing to do this and wants to do this because they desperately need a GO station. They want to make sure that the station is there in their community, that they're able to build around the station the transit-oriented communities that everybody talks about, and they're willing to assume the risk.

But let's talk about how they got there. It's because the province failed to build a GO station for Durham. So now, the province is essentially saying, "We'll get out of the way if you want to build it yourself." And heck, Durham is saying, "We'll do it. We cannot wait any longer because who knows when that is?"

So yes, Durham wants to build it. I say go for it, but only because the province failed to do their part.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for her comments. The member stated that the government doesn't know how to build and doesn't know how to deliver on transit and cited the really infamous Eglinton Crosstown fiasco. What we've seen from this government is a disturbing ideological reliance on expensive, wasteful P3 contracts and very little respect for public dollars. It's as though the government wants to take a back seat while others do the driving. They're continuing this party with public money.

In the bill itself, though, it says that they are doing this to "support the creation of local and regional transit connections." "Regional transit connections" shows up once. "Rural" doesn't even show up in up this bill. Does the member from Parkdale–High Park think that this plan will support regional models outside of the GTA such as in southwestern Ontario?

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: Thank you to the member from London North Centre for his question. He referenced the infamous Eglinton Crosstown. I have to tell you, in Toronto, the Eglinton Crosstown is considered a joke, a complete joke. In fact, there's a meme out there that says, "Be like Eglinton Crosstown; never stop working on yourself." I know, it made me laugh too, but that's the point that people have reached. People have given up, and you know what the sad thing is? Hundreds of small businesses were forced to shut down. This is people's livelihoods we're talking about. It's not just a business. There's not another small business that is just going to pop up, especially not if it's shut down for construction for 12 years.

To the second part of the member's question around regional transit, again, when the province is not actively building transit in every part of the province, whether it's urban, rural, south, west, north—it doesn't matter—the province has a responsibility to do that, to connect the entire province, to connect people in the province. And when you leave it to simply developers taking up the incentive, you're not going to have that equitable infrastructure built in this province.

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

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you to the member from Parkdale–High Park for her presentation today.

First, if I may indulge, I want to take a moment to say thank you to this entire House for the ability to honor and raise awareness for childhood cancer. I think all of you know my background and my family history with that, and it is never far from my awareness, so thank you.

With regards to the member from Parkdale–High Park, I want to see if I can get your agreement on something—I'm sorry; I want to see if I can get the member's agreement on something: the overall goal. I will say that the overall goal is not just to get more transit built, but to get more transit built in affordable areas with access to modern facilities, that that goal is actually a positive, laudable goal. But I would also ask if you would agree—if the member would agree—that waiting until all of the problematic issues from the projects from 15 years ago under previous governments, until all of the antiquated facilities in downtown Toronto and all of that is resolved, if we have to wait for all of that, don't you agree that we will never actually get these new, modern facilities built?

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: I thank the member for his question. I want to thank him for his work on the issue—I'm not wearing my pin. But in reference to your question, look, the goal to build public transit and to build it in affordable communities—absolutely. Then why are you not doing it? You're essentially saying, "Municipalities, hey, get along, do it."

It is a goal that is laudable. We agree with the overall goal, but we do not agree with the downloading of that responsibility. We think that provinces must play an active part. And keep in mind the context as well. Municipalities have already lost a big source of revenue because of Bill 23, which your government put forward. And so when you

are putting them in such a tight place, with limited revenue and no transit infrastructure projects happening, they're going to start to look at different avenues to do the work.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: We have heard that this new station contribution fee is voluntary, but the member from Parkdale–High Park raises a very good issue around equity: Not every community or municipality that wants or needs a GO station is going to have the capacity to do what this bill is suggesting, which is, essentially, work with developers to fund a GO station in exchange for development rights. The government evidently expects municipalities to assume funding responsibilities.

Metrolinx is out of the picture; that may be a mixed blessing, given the way that they've been currently working. And we have no idea what sort of funding agreement the government has in mind or how the risks will be allocated. This is very simply a downloading of building GO stations to municipalities who are already stressed. So do you think that this bill should actually be renamed the "transportation for the extreme distant future act"?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Twenty seconds for a response.

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: I will say that, as I referenced earlier, the title of the bill made me shake my head. But in reference to the equity, it is so important that we also remember that it's not just about specific municipalities that are able to attract—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We've run out of time for questions and answers. It's now time for further debate.

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Mr. Deepak Anand: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House. Today, we are debating the second reading of the Transportation for the Future Act, 2023, legislation dedicated to connecting communities and making sure that we are able to help our growing Ontario and Ontario's population.

Madam Speaker, this is a decisive step designed to help create jobs and much-needed housing closer to transit. As we all know, Ontario is growing at an unprecedented rate; the greater Toronto area is growing even faster. But this is not a coincidence. Why? Toronto and Ontario are growing because of the policies of the government. What are we doing? We're reducing the cost of doing business by \$7 billion a year. When you reduce the cost, what you do is you attract more investments. When you attract more investments—and at the same time, as a government, when we make more investment into the people, into the workers, into the job seekers, into the job creators, when we make investment in the infrastructure, what it does is it helps to build further momentum to grow. And that is why we know that the need of the hour is to steer this growth in a way that we have the support and the key infrastructure for the quality of life people need and deserve now and in the future.

Madam Speaker, Ontario's population is projected to increase by 43.6%—that is almost 6.6 million—over the

next 24 years. If you look at now, we are at an estimated 15.1 million on July 1, 2022, to almost 21.7 million by July 1, 2046. The net migration will account for 85% of all the population growth in the province between 2022 to 2046. What does this mean? When more people come, they need jobs. They need housing. They need health care. They need infrastructure. With this anticipated growth, we need to make sure we have the ability to welcome them so they can have the life they chose: a better life.

This bill is not an option. I believe it is a necessity to build a stronger, more resilient Ontario. That is why we are planning well in advance for this anticipated growth to create a sustainable future.

Make no mistake, we want to welcome each and every person who wants to make this province as their home, like me. I came to Canada on January 15, 2000, and I can't thank enough Ontario. I can't thank enough Canada for giving me and my family an opportunity to not only grow but thrive.

Our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, Minister Surma and each and every member of this caucus are working hard to ensure that the people of Ontario have high-quality public transit, housing, jobs, public amenities and social services. Why? Because they chose to come to Ontario for a better life. And how are we doing it? We are making sure we are building a stronger Ontario by refueling and rebuilding Ontario's economy and making sure we are working for our workers. We're putting investment into highways and key infrastructures. We're making sure the cost of living is low and we're investing into health care.

Some of the things our government is doing is investing into 30,000 long-term-care homes, four hours of home care service, 86,000 child care spaces, 1.5 million homes, multiple subways, highways and many, many other infrastructure. We are investing \$184 billion in the next 10 years—a \$50-billion investment into the hospitals. We're expanding the broadband and natural gas so that our northern communities can grow. At the same time, we're making sure that we are investing into IT, we are investing into life sciences and we are making sure that every part of Ontario grows.

Madam Speaker, this is the reason we are doing what we're doing today through this bill. This bill sets out to achieve this goal by moving steadfastly toward building transit-oriented communities to bring vibrant, mixed-use communities to support a booming and growing Ontario. By building transit where people live and work, we are making life more convenient for Ontarians while stimulating economic growth, increasing much-needed housing supply and lowering the cost of building infrastructure for our taxpayers.

These transit-oriented communities—we call them TOCs—will bring more housing so that people can live and build more jobs so that they can work. They can go out and shop, so it will have retail facilities and public amenities right close to the transit. Ontario's Transit-Oriented Communities Program will increase transit ridership because it's easy, it's convenient, it's right there. It will reduce traffic congestion.

It's no secret, Madam Speaker; every day when I come to the legislative building, I see a lot of traffic congestion. By investing into the infrastructure, we are making sure that as we welcome more people, it should not increase the congestion. It should rather decrease the congestion so that those families can spend time with their loved ones.

We're making sure by doing so, we're increasing housing supply, including affordable housing. We're making sure we're investing into the infrastructure so that people can have jobs. It will stimulate the economy through the major projects, bringing retail and community amenities within a short distance of public transit stations so that they have a good quality of life. Offsetting the cost of station construction would save taxpayers money.

By the way, we're not the only place doing it. It has already been successfully implemented in cities like Sydney and Washington, DC.

By doing so, we have learned that in order to build these TOCs, the province and the municipalities need new and innovative tools to accelerate transit expansion. Why do we need to increase and accelerate the transit expansion, Madam Speaker? Because we want to welcome more people. As we welcome more people, we want to give them a good quality of life. I'll give you an example.

When we talk about the number of people, Madam Speaker, just talking about the last five years, we have welcomed, as Canada, over 800,000 international students. When they come, many have their spouses who come with them. Once they come and they are graduating, their parents also come. As we see this influx of people, there is a need to make sure, as people come here to make Canada their home, we're prepared to help them and support them to have a good life. That is what, Madam Speaker, we are doing through this bill. We are making sure that TOCs are a forward-thinking approach to strengthening the relationship between transit, employment, housing, commercial spaces and public amenities to create vibrant, mixed-use communities.

As Minister Surma mentioned, we are making significant progress. For example, on the Ontario Line, we have proposed transit-oriented communities at six stations. We have East Harbour, Corktown, Exhibition, King-Bathurst, Queen-Spadina and the future Gerrard Station. All these stations will provide new housing, retail, jobs and other amenities. Meanwhile, on the Yonge North subway extension, the proposed sites at Bridge and High Tech stations would also bring new housing, parkland, commercial, retail and community spaces, all within a short distance of transit.

As Minister Surma and my colleague PA Sandhu mentioned, we are creating new housing and mixed-use communities around GO and light-rail transit around the GTA. Our government will continue to work closely with the city of Toronto and York region to identify and plan additional opportunities to bring more TOCs to subway stations. Why? Because it is required.

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Madam Speaker, through this bill the province is proposing—I'm going to say this word—a new voluntary

funding tool for municipalities that will help spur the construction of new GO Transit stations. The tool, which is a voluntary tool, will be called the station contribution fee.

In recent years, Metrolinx has had conversations with communities as part of their market-driven strategy to deliver GO stations. Through these conversations, it was clear that, in many cases, while the development community supported the idea of contributing towards the stations, economic and local real estate conditions make it difficult for many stations to be delivered by a single development partner. What we're doing here is we're using an approach, through innovation, to support spreading the costs of stations amongst multiple developers.

The province will be posting the legislation to the regulation registry for public comments. If the station contribution fee is approved, the Ministry of Infrastructure will conduct broader engagement with the development community to inform the design of regulations and implementation.

If passed, this act will allow municipalities to recover costs for funding the design and construction of new GO stations through a levy placed on new development. The station contribution fee—again, which is a voluntary tool—would allow municipalities to create a new revenue stream solely for the purpose of funding GO station delivery costs. And as we proceed, the province and the municipalities will work together to ensure transparency.

This optional tool would also be used in places where the province has determined that the new GO station is necessary for the community. The municipalities must show that they have sufficient borrowing capacity and will be required to transparently demonstrate how the station contribution fee is calculated, as well as how it will be offset through a reduction in development costs. Municipalities can show an offset to the fee through, for example, a reduction in parking requirements, reduction in other fees or development requirements to increase the density of proposed development.

Municipalities would only collect the fee until the full station costs are recovered—so it's not indefinite. All these requirements will be clearly outlined. There will be a regulation that will allow the province to exempt specific types of developments, such as, for example, schools, hospitals and other such institutional uses to that list.

Madam Speaker, the idea of this bill is to make sure there is greater regional connectivity, there is more housing, helping and supporting more job-seekers and job creators, and adding investment opportunities. It will lead to reduced travel times. It will make sure there is better connectivity between rural and urban areas. The other benefits would include diminishing traffic congestion—we know this, how difficult it is now for families stuck on the highways—and encouraging the use of eco-friendly public transit, which the parties opposite always talk about. It would assist municipalities in taking an active role in transit expansion and delivery timelines in their communities. It will create more construction jobs.

Just like housing, creating good-paying jobs is another important goal of our province. As we all know, there are

over 300,000 jobs going unfilled every day. To tackle this labour shortage, our government has made investments through the Skills Development Fund and the Skills Development Fund training stream to find people meaningful work. The province is investing an additional \$160 million in the Skills Development Fund to help an additional, at least, 100,000 workers get free training. Through its first three SDF funds, the government was able to support 596 projects.

And another thing I'm going to talk about is that as we are building a stronger Ontario, Minister Surma said we are not building transit in isolation. We are making sure through this bill that our government is taking action to build Ontario. The proposed legislation will create new voluntary funding. The station contribution fee may also facilitate earlier GO station construction and the province will be working with municipal partners to integrate transit services across the greater Golden Horseshoe. By taking these steps, our government is championing the community, supporting economic growth, creating more jobs, delivering better services and improving the lives of Ontarians today and tomorrow for the generations to come.

To conclude, I would like to congratulate the Ministry of Infrastructure for this out-of-the-box legislation. If passed, this will bring more prosperity to the province through better transit, more housing and more jobs. We will continue to build many more healthy, sustainable vibrant communities and this is only possible if we all come together, work together, support this bill and build a better Ontario, a stronger Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to the member for his comments on Bill 131. I do want to say, though, that he did not address this new funding tool, the station contribution fee, which remains a huge issue for municipalities. While we support fare integration as a concept, there are some issues around schedule 1 as well.

Schedule 2 implies the existence of a new Transit-Oriented Communities Program—a new one—whose details still remain unknown. The member did not clarify that. The original idea was for Metrolinx to negotiate deals in which developers would fund a new GO station in exchange for development rights, but now the government evidently wants and expects municipalities to assume funding responsibilities. We have no idea what sort of funding agreement the government has in mind or how the risks should be allocated.

Can the member explain to municipalities across the province who want GO stations how they're going to negotiate the cost of a GO station with developers in the community?

Mr. Deepak Anand: I think what—I'm trying to understand—the member opposite is asking: How is this station contribution fee going to work? What are the key design elements of this station contribution fee?

Yes, the applicable fee is only to new development. It's voluntary and applies only to new development. It is area-

specific, applicable only within a specified area surrounding a new GO station, identified by municipalities. In fact, until full costs are recovered—so it will not be indefinite. It will make sure that the requirement is to have the background studies, and there will be a fee offset and it cannot be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal. This is how the government is going to make sure that the voluntary SCF will be designed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to say thank you to the member for Mississauga–Malton for his comments. He represents a constituency that very much relies on GO Transit and an apt service. Down my way, we don't have GO Transit. We don't have any provincially supported regional transit so I've got a little bit of jealousy, I have to admit.

I wanted to ask, just because Peel region is different from the city of Toronto, can you explain your experiences with the integration? I'm hearing there is a legislative barrier in the City of Toronto Act that precludes the TTC from picking up passengers from outside its boundaries, but the reverse isn't true. My question to the member is, can he elaborate a bit on that legislative barrier in the City of Toronto Act that means the TTC cannot pick up outside of its boundaries, but other municipalities' transit systems can?

Mr. Deepak Anand: I absolutely agree with this member when he talks about how we have an amazing GO Transit system. He does not have that, but I want to wish that the government continues to work so that he can also have it. Right now, as my daughter goes to University of Windsor—in your backyard—she should be able to take that GO Transit system. Hopefully it will come soon.

What we're doing through this bill, Madam Speaker, is we're making sure that all the municipalities, all the commuters within those municipalities will benefit as we are integrating those transit systems.

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So I wish and I hope that the members opposite are going to stand up for Ontarians and will support this important bill so that not only Toronto but the other municipalities and communities can get the benefit.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: To the member for Mississauga–Malton: He will certainly be aware that there has been a huge breach of trust between the government of Ontario and the people of this province because of the government saying that they weren't going to touch the greenbelt, and then going forward to carve it up for developers.

Now, given the total lack of details that the government has released about its Transit-Oriented Communities Program, given the delays that we've seen with Metrolinx and its failure to deliver on the Eglinton Crosstown, given what we saw with the Ottawa LRT as the result of a public-private partnership transit project, how on earth can Ontarians trust this government to deliver on transportation projects?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to the member opposite for the important question. Absolutely, I actually had an opportunity to meet another MPP yesterday, and what he was telling me—the important part of our job is to serve the people who have sent us here, Madam Speaker. Talking about the confidence of those people in us, the data speaks.

When we talk about 2018 to 2023, 700,000 more people are working. When we talk about building more homes, when we talk about making sure we're on track to build 30,000 new long-term-care beds—we are making sure that we have increased the revenue for the province. These are the key indicators that show that the people of Ontario have confidence in this government, and that is why they sent us back in 2022 with a much bigger majority and I have the privilege to see many more faces—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Malton for the wonderful speech.

Madam Speaker, Ontario is seizing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build vibrant mixed-use communities around transit stations across the greater Golden Horseshoe. The province is currently in the midst of a housing crisis, and these transit-oriented communities will bring more housing, jobs, retail and public amenities close to transit.

My question to the member from Mississauga–Malton is how the member thinks that the station contribution fee will help to unlock more housing for Ontarians.

Mr. Deepak Anand: First of all, I want to acknowledge the work being done by the member. He is doing an incredible job for his residents and is the PA for infrastructure, something which we need today to make sure we have sustainable growth in Ontario.

Building high-density communities around transit has always been the goal of transit-oriented communities. By making sure that we have that mixed community, we're able to make sure that we build those homes wherein people can go and work, there are retail spaces, there are amenities, and they have a better quality of life.

Madam Speaker, we have seen over 800,000 people come to the province of Ontario. We have seen there is going to be a 43% increase in the population, all these people coming with the dream that they're coming for a better life, and we have to be prepared to make sure that we give them the better life. That is what this bill is doing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Questions?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: To the honourable member across the way: Given that Bill 131 could potentially exacerbate the imbalance of the responsibilities between the provincial government and municipal governments in building and operating transit, can the member explain what the government plans to do to ensure that municipalities are not unfairly burdened, especially in light of the revenue reduction from Bill 23?

Mr. Deepak Anand: I want to say again that the station contribution fee, which is a voluntary tool, would allow

municipalities to create a new revenue stream solely for the purpose of funding GO-station delivery cost. In many cases where the municipalities were not able to fund it, there was the possibility of not justifying the cost of having that GO station, which was reducing the number of houses that could be built or creating jobs or providing the amenities. Through this bill, what we're doing is giving those municipalities a choice because it is a voluntary tool to make sure that they have the ability to grow like every other Ontario community.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That's all the time we have for questions and answers.

It's now time for further debate.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It's always an honour to rise in this House to speak on behalf of the great people of Toronto Centre and, in particular, today's debate is around Bill 131, the government bill entitled Transportation for the Future Act.

You know, when it comes to public transit, I have a very personal and deep relationship to this critical piece of infrastructure in the city of Toronto, this essential service that my family and I have used for my entire life in Canada and my entire time in Toronto. My parents never had a car. They never had a driver's licence in this city. I was the first person in my family—believe it or not, Speaker, this might be a very challenging story for folks in the House to comprehend, but I was the first person in my family to actually get my driver's licence here. So, for the majority of my life, right up until being a young adult, if the TTC, the Toronto Transit Commission, didn't take us there—meaning it didn't travel there or the route wasn't covered—we simply didn't go. That meant that my mom, my dad, my grandmother and three children would all pile onto a streetcar or a bus or the subway if we were to make any journey as a family. Imagine that being difficult for newcomers, especially with young children, kids who didn't always listen, who were always being sort of pulled around. That was very, very difficult.

So I am deeply invested in the quality of public transportation, the quality of public transit in Toronto, but also recognizing my experience is not so uncommon, for many people don't necessarily have access to a vehicle. And, if some families do have access to a vehicle, you may have five or six people who need to go in many different routes—someone in the family is reliant on public transit.

This bill is actually very important, especially as we talk about the future of transit in Ontario. I want to be able to support the spirit of the bill because I think that's important, but as we dig deeper into this bill, things start to unravel, and it unravels very quickly, so I am very pleased to be able to provide some thoughts and some feedback with members of this House.

Transit riders in Ontario have been waiting at stations, as well as bus stops, for far too long. We have seen advocacy groups, like those in the city of Toronto called TTCriders, who have been calling for fare integration for literally years and, beyond that, decades. I'm very happy to know that this government is listening, as previous governments have said that they are very interested in fare

integration. This is a long time coming. Fare integration, of course, will reduce expenses for transit users, especially those who have the furthest to travel. Like you and many who are still using transit, I don't want to necessarily spend my time calculating how much my trip will cost. I just want to be able to go in and tap. With the rising costs of gas, insurance and maintenance, fare integration and the reduction of fares overall is actually going to be welcome.

But we're not talking about the reduction of fares; we're simply talking about fare integration. At the same time, the cost of operating transit is on the rise.

Let's not forget that the government has refused to continue the previous Liberal government's commitment to at least reducing GO riders' fares by \$1.50 in 2020. This government scrapped that. There was another short-lived fare integration project that predates this one, and this is where Torontonians were asked to pay an extra \$60 a month for a little sticker that we would have attached on the back of our monthly metro pass that would allow us to ride the GO system within Toronto. While those measures may have been well intentioned, they never really did meet its obligations, and that also was a problem, as it hurt thousands and tens of thousands of Ontarians trying to get through their daily commute.

1530

I worry about the fate of our small businesses in the downtown as more and more people are now working from home and they don't oftentimes go out to buy their lunches or perhaps do their local shopping while they're here. Workers have obviously created their own schedules, and they do this oftentimes in collaboration with their employers, but I would hate to think that small businesses who are actually reliant on the reliability of the connectivity of transit in order to move shoppers and diners through the city—if you don't have a reliable transit system that is going to be properly maintained and staffed, you will also see the decline and the struggle of small business. Of course, we saw that during the pandemic, and many of the businesses in the core of the city have said they are still not up to the sale and revenues of where they needed to be before the pandemic. And we know that many businesses in Ontario are still covered in debt. The average small-business debt these days is \$134,000. When we build transit—good, reliable transit—it's going to foster and help our economy. Not only are we moving goods and services along when we build good roads, a connected highway system, but transit actually allows us to move people along, which then drives the economy as well. So those are definitely good, attainable goals that we should all be striving for, but if the transit isn't there, it's not going to be helpful.

Let me share with you, Speaker, an experience that I have had sitting on Toronto city council, and it was the first of many experiences that we had at city council. On the first day of then-Mayor Rob Ford's tenure, he stood up at city council and he tore up Transit City, which was an \$8.15-billion LRT plan which covered 120 kilometres across the city over seven LRT lines. Shovels were already in the ground. Shovels had to be put down. Contracts that

were signed up to \$1.3 billion were then torn up, and everybody was frozen. They didn't really know what to do. Some 150 Transit City staff were told to stop working, and \$130 million that was already spent was gone, with another \$65 million of sunk costs that we would never recover.

We have a legacy here where we have Conservative politicians coming into Toronto and ripping up our transit plan. In 1995, Mike Harris did the same thing; he came into power with the Common Sense Revolution. Very shortly afterwards, he actually said no and tore up two significant projects that were under way. One of them was the Eglinton West line. A couple of years later, he began the most horrific impact to the TTC that, generations afterwards, we're still living with, and that's when he cut the operational funding and the subsidies to transit in Toronto. To this day and time now, the transit system in Toronto is one of the least-funded—regionally, provincially, state-wide funded—transit systems in North America. What a horrible title that we hold there, Speaker, but yet we are living with the legacy, unfortunately, of Conservative politicians constantly meddling in the affairs of city council, and in this case with the transit plans that the city had already put under way.

But they're not alone, Speaker; they were supported. In this case, with Mayor Ford at that time, he was supported by the Liberals at Queen's Park as well as the Liberals in Ottawa. What we saw there was, if the Liberal government of the day here said no to the mayor—"You shouldn't be tearing up a transit plan. You should build what's already under way. Finish the LRT system"—Toronto would be moving faster today than it ever would be, because that's what would have happened.

We have two significant factors that cannot be ignored where we have Conservatives and Liberals constantly working together in partnership to undermine local transit planning as well as local transit construction. Now we have the Premier who took a crayon, and he decided to redraw the downtown relief line. When he did that, he moved stations around and then dropped stations without any consultation, without any technical review or design. We are now building the Ontario Line—or you're building the Ontario Line—and it's creating a little bit of chaos and a lot of confusion, largely because we are watching the Eglinton Crosstown fiasco unfold—and I would say it's a fiasco. You can ask the residents and the business owners along Eglinton how that line has served them over the past 13 years while it's been under construction. As billions of dollars have ballooned in terms of overrun and with no opening date on the horizon, there is lots of cause of concern for whether or not this will actually work well for the local residents.

Speaker, the other thing I want to point to your attention is that we had a mayor, John Tory, who actually created a new transit plan called SmartTrack. Largely, everyone would agree that that SmartTrack cinched him the 2014 victory. Ten years later, SmartTrack is nowhere to be found. It's a shadow of itself. The project went from 22 stations under the Transit City banner to about five

stations, and who knows if they're going to actually be realized? We have a city that's growing, bursting at the seams. The project has dragged on, as projects sometimes do when you don't have core funding and it's not properly vetted and if it's not properly acknowledged by all parties, and you have it now left sort of floating, again, in the wind.

So it's not that Torontonians in particular don't rely on transit. I just told you my personal story. Without a transit system that's well funded and properly operating, my goodness, my family wouldn't have been able to get to work. And both my parents worked. I hardly saw them because they worked so darn hard. Everybody else who doesn't have a car is reliant on transit. That's why the stakes are so incredibly high.

We now have a new mayor in Toronto who is deeply committed to public transit. Her first few political acts in the city of Toronto have already shown us that she's going to be reversing service cuts, she's going to be putting money back into transit as she can. But Mayor Chow and Toronto city council can't do any of that work on their own. None of that can be done without actual government support here.

And that's what brings me to Bill 131 and why I think we need to be able to move through this very carefully. Cities need to build transit in partnership with the province. That is non-refutable. But when you defer those costs, and you download the responsibilities to the cities, and you talk about building transit for the future when you can't even get transit done today, there isn't going to be a lot of trust. We know that through Bill 23, cities are going to lose about a billion dollars already in Ontario, and so we're also seeing an economic real estate slowdown. Every developer that I speak to, especially in the busiest part of the country, in Toronto Centre, they tell me it's coming.

When you have a bill that's largely structured—that talks about attracting development and levies to build the transit that government should be building, you're walking into a timeline right now that is not going to be proven to have a good outcome. Nothing is going to be built, especially when you have developers who are already very nervous, as they all are right now, about the future of construction, the future of the housing sector because of high interest rates, because of high labour costs, because there's disruption in supply chain. All of that is before us, and you're putting forth a piece of legislation that has very little details, that doesn't say anything with respect to how you're going to operationalize it. It's very vague on how you're going to fund it, except for that some developer, some private sector partnership with the municipalities is going to build it for you. It makes no sense.

Developers will tell you, because it's been tried before in the city of Toronto—many conservative politicians have said, "The development industry will build you transit." They will tell you they are not going to do it. Every single one of them will tell you that transit is provincial, it's a city responsibility or it's a federal responsibility. "You build it. We come to build the housing." That's what they'll tell you.

This strategy, this legislation as laid out, is not going to be producing the transit that you think it will, because it's not going to work. It has been promised over and over again, and it has never, ever really built a network of connected, reliable, affordable, well-operationalized transit.

1540

It's clear to me that the government's actions are going to create that condition where municipalities are backed into a corner, and that corner is: They're starved for transit. They haven't really had working partners in the provincial government that will sit down with them on a regular basis and take a look at their expansion plans and how they want to grow up their neighbourhoods, grow up their cities. They haven't had that mutual relationship and constant back-and-forth feedback loop where everyone is working together. It's always "my plan or your plan," and "If you don't do what I say, I'm going to withhold funding. If you will take up my plan, I might give you a little bit of funding, but you have to come up with more on your own." This is why we have gridlock, and that's why we are struggling in Ontario right now, as we see transit start and stop, transit plans drawn up and ripped up constantly.

I want to join the members of ATU Local 113, the hard-working men and women who actually run Toronto's transit system, in sharing their concern that this bill could have very significant implications to how they operate the system, the largest transit system in Canada. They haven't been consulted. They haven't been asked to come to the table, to work with the government to resolve some of these big loophole questions. You put forward a bill that's going to impact ATU 113 and the transit workers, who are deeply committed to keeping Toronto running, but you haven't talked to them, and that, of course, is a big, big problem. We know that you and I are not going to operate those trains, buses and streetcars, so you've got to talk to them, and that needs to happen as soon as possible.

If Bill 131 interferes with collective bargaining rights or their collective agreements, then you'd better bet that we will oppose it every step of the way, because we are not going to allow anything that will actually upend their collective agreements. The courts will not let you either.

Bill 131 also requires municipalities to negotiate with developers when it comes to the construction of GO stations. I have shared with you that that doesn't work. I'll tell you that if you think you're going to be building housing on the greenbelt, and that it's going to be highly desirable and it's not going to further urban sprawl, there isn't a single piece of construction of transit that's going to connect those new homes, which should be built elsewhere, especially on lands that are already approved, that are already within our urban municipal boundaries.

Any reliance on development charges or any type of levies is really tipping into the P3 partnership. Of course, P3 partnerships have been proven to be an utter disaster for public coffers, for public decision-makers and, ultimately, the public taxpayer. They are always much more expensive. They never finish on time. They're always, always a disaster. We have so many examples to point to, and they don't necessarily need to be transit. It

could be hospitals; it could be other types of public buildings. They're all stuck in the same boat when you're trying to contract out your risks and you think that somebody is going to do it for you without the profit structure. That's just not possible. That's not how capitalism works, and they're not doing it because of benevolence.

What we've also seen with the government's transit agency, which is tasked with building transit in Ontario, is that they've been mired in secrecy. I've experienced that and the good member for Toronto–Danforth has experienced that, when we had political staff in the Minister of Transportation's office direct them to actually exclude us from notification: "Take the names of the member for Toronto Centre and the member for Toronto–Danforth off the notifications." That was revealed in a Toronto Star article. When I tried to ask some questions, it was shut down. When I tried to FOI this information, I was given a very long list of costs. It was very hard, and I am a public office-holder. I have every right to have that information, because a public agency is tearing down 21 trees in my community. It happened on a bitterly cold weekend, and without any notice to my community, which is an absolute disrespect there.

We are now seeing Metrolinx and the Eglinton fiasco unfold even further. It is an absolute joke. It really is a painful pressure point in the city, as it actually has created so much additional gridlock with no end in sight, and the costs continue to balloon. When we ask for accountability, we're told that it's almost like it's not really ours to ask for. Well, it is—it is every Ontarian's right to know what's happening with those billions of dollars being spent with no service being offered, with no infrastructure coming online that we are aware of. And of course we want it to be safe, but we're not getting the answers without a tooth-and-nail fight.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity of speaking to this bill. I look forward to any questions that come forward and it's been an honour to speak to this House.

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

Mr. John Jordan: Thank you for the comments regarding Bill 131. Municipalities have expressed an interest in this strategy and we heard from the member from Whitby about the positive feedback from the mayor of Clarington in the region of Durham.

She talked about the reliance on transit. In my area of Lanark county, there is no transit. You either have a car or you don't have transportation. What this bill facilitates is the expansion of transit to people who don't have it.

I'm wondering why the member would not support something that expands and gives people something that she already has.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you to the member across for the question. I absolutely do support the expansion of transit, especially transit that's well-studied, transit that should connect communities to where they need to go on a daily basis and transit that is funded, not just capital costs upfront, but with provincial dollars for

operating and that is sustained into the future. Without all of that coming together, the transit that's being talked about in this bill, that's being referenced in this bill, will actually not come to fruition. And that's why I have trouble with this bill, because I want your community to have the public transit it deserves and this bill is not going to deliver it.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I would like to thank the member from Toronto Centre for her presentation today. Earlier in the chamber, I have been talking about the cancellation of GO service to the London area. My constituents have reached out to me and said that it was a plan that was set up to fail from the start. It was an eight-hour round trip from London to Toronto and many have called it a half-baked plan.

My question to the member, though: In terms of what's missing from this bill, would the member like to see Metrolinx be made more accountable and more transparent to the public, and would the member like to see increased municipal participation on Metrolinx boards?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you very much to the member from London North Centre. Thank you for that very important question.

Absolutely: Torontonians want further accountability, stronger accountability, more accountability from the provincial transit body. If anything, it's actually been written about in most major newspapers in Toronto and by most transportation and transit journalists covering the issue: It's that Metrolinx is not accountable to the people that they are supposed to be serving and the people that they are supposed to be building for. And in the city of Toronto, things are happening to us and not with us, especially when it comes to transit.

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

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to thank the member for Toronto Centre for her comments in the House today. No one would know better than the member for Toronto Centre about the viability of transit in the city of Toronto. This is where I have always taken transit, to be honest.

In experiencing the subway, I do appreciate the integration that I get to have coming from the train and onto the subway. I've actually never had the chance to use GO Transit, so I wanted to understand a little bit more about the parts of the act that speak to the integration of the system—basically the City of Toronto Act amendments. It seems to be a way to make this system work a bit better together and would unify the systems to make riders get from point A to point B with more ease.

I'm wondering if you have opposition to that component of it.

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MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you very much to the member for the question. I am a firm supporter of transit integration, especially as we have people who are coming from further and further outside of the core of the city to come in to work. We rely on those individuals,

those commuters, to come and actually fill up our office towers. We rely on them to actually help build this economy. To me, it's all about one Ontario, to be quite honest. One southern Ontario is how we're competing region to region.

Fare integration is absolutely critical in order for us to have a successful, well-connected transit system that's reliable. But we also need to make sure that we work with our labour partners. We need to work with the men and women who actually provide the transit service itself—that they're at the table. I hope to see that in the coming days, even if there's an amendment to this bill or if there's an announcement saying that you're going to start talking to ATU 113.

Any time we can support transit integration and do it well, I'm definitely with you.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I do want to recognize my seatmate and colleague for her incredible knowledge of municipal affairs and infrastructure. The first question that came from the government side was sort of that energy of, "How dare you not be in extremely gushing support of this? How dare you even question this?"

My question to her is, having that background, that expertise and that experience at city hall, can you think if there are any members of this Conservative government who might have a legacy that goes back to city hall and their effects on transit, namely putting transit possibly into disarray there with delays and all sorts of changes of projects? Can you explain why we might have misgivings whenever they put forth anything to change transit in the province of Ontario?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you very much to my colleague and seatmate for that question. I don't want to be struck out of order, but we have the Premier here with his brother at city council at that time in 2010, when we saw Transit City—a 120-kilometre, fully funded, 22-station stop—torn up. As I mentioned, this was a project that had \$130 million of funding already spent, an additional \$65 million of sunk cost that we were never able to recover and not to mention a decade of planning.

So, yes, when new plans and new strategies are coming up without actual consultation and deep engagement with municipalities or the transit workers, there is going to be cause for concern, because that has been the history that we've had with the Premier.

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

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the member opposite for her speech. Madam Speaker, this legislation has overwhelming support from municipalities. As the member from Whitby was highlighting, the transit integration was a thing that was demanded from the municipalities for a long, long time. Through this legislation, we are delivering on that.

Madam Speaker, the opposition member continues to deliver false talking points to justify why they are not supporting transit expansion. My question to the member

opposite is, how will the members of her community benefit from transit integration, and will she be supporting this legislation?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm pretty confident that throughout this entire debate, every member on the opposition benches stood up and spoke in favour of fare integration. We all spoke about the need to make sure that we have a seamless system of payment that is reliable and, quite honestly, convenient for the user. That's how we get people back onto transit.

But the bill is not just one schedule, is it? The bill has two schedules, and I think the second schedule is worth digging into and exploring, because that is the section of the bill that I will challenge you and any member of this House to give me an economic study that will tell me and everybody else in Ontario that you can have the private sector pay for transit exclusively without you putting in any money. It's just not going to happen.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further questions? I recognize the member from Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you very much, Speaker. I also want to take a moment to thank my colleague and friend from Toronto Centre for her very informative remarks, because I know she cares deeply about transit across this city and this province and has done a lot of work as a councillor before to make sure that we have transit that is integrated and serves the people.

One of the things that we've always had difficulty with, Speaker, which provincial governments repeatedly failed, was providing the operating funding. The answer that she was just giving—I think there was more to carry forward on that topic as well. Because we have seen governments fail to provide the operational funding necessary for the TTC, and look at where we are right now. I'm in Scarborough; we have a horrible system where people need to wait for 45 minutes to an hour sometimes to get on the bus.

So I would like to hear from the member about what she thinks could have been in this bill, but also, in terms of schedule 2, how this will actually deteriorate when it comes to the services that we need in our transit system.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you very much for that very important question. To all the families living in Scarborough: Quite honestly, my heart really feels for you, because you have been shortchanged when it comes to transit, and transit expansion has been very slow to non-existent in Scarborough. The service there is just shameful. It's shameful asking families to wait 30 minutes, 20 minutes and sometimes longer in snowstorms, when they are just trying to get home or trying to get to their second or third jobs, to feed their families.

What we see in this bill is some troubling outcomes, and the troubling outcome is that it doesn't actually talk about supporting the construction and the funding of transit through this House. This order of government, which has the most responsibility when it comes to regional transit; this government, which actually has the most—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That is all the time we have for questions and answers.

It is now time for further debate.

Mr. Aris Babikian: As the Scarborough–Agincourt MPP, it is my honour to stand in this august chamber to speak on Bill 131, Transportation for the Future Act, 2023. Our government is taking action to build Ontario by introducing the Transportation for the Future Act, 2023, which, if passed, would help build more GO Transit stations, support housing around transit and make it more affordable and convenient to travel across the greater Golden Horseshoe, helping families save money, while also increasing ridership.

The proposed legislation would create a new and voluntary funding tool for municipalities that will help spur the construction of new GO Transit stations, accelerating transit expansion while building vibrant mixed-use communities and much-needed housing. This new tool, called the station contribution fee, would ensure that the developers and landowners contribute to the costs of new GO Transit stations when building new residential and commercial developments within a specific distance of these stations. This would help speed up the construction of new GO Transit stations, while also creating new and affordable housing and mixed-use communities around these stations.

The station contribution fee will also help to facilitate earlier GO station construction by spreading the cost of delivering the stations across multiple developments and over multiple years. New stations will also spur new development and new housing.

The legislation, if passed, is also proposing technical changes that would provide the city of Toronto with the tools to better integrate its transit service with other regional transit networks.

By taking these critical steps, our government is strengthening communities, supporting economic growth, creating more jobs, delivering better services and improving the lives of Ontarians today and for generations to come.

As a resident of Scarborough–Agincourt for the past 33 years, I can attest that such infrastructure plans as Bill 131, if passed, are much-needed and instrumental to our residents. Large numbers of newcomers settle in Scarborough–Agincourt and Scarborough. It is forecasted that in the next few years, the population of Scarborough will increase by more than 100,000 residents. Furthermore, our government is opening a medical school in Scarborough, and many educational institutions, such as the University of Toronto and Centennial College, are expanding their Scarborough facilities to accommodate the increased enrolment requests. In addition, many businesses are investing in Scarborough by expanding their operations and building new facilities.

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The forecasted economic and population growth will require reliable public transportation for the residents to commute to work, send their children to school, attend to their daily chores and keep connected with their society and social activities. This bill, if passed, will address

Scarborough–Agincourt’s and the Scarborough residents’ vital needs and provide them the quality of life they aspire to.

For a long time, Scarborough residents have been ignored and marginalized—not anymore. Scarborough has become the focus of our government’s attention. The mistakes of the past are being addressed.

One project that will greatly benefit the residents of Scarborough is the Scarborough subway extension, a 7.8-kilometre extension of TTC’s Line 2 Bloor-Danforth subway, from the existing Kennedy station northeast to McCowan Road/Sheppard Avenue. The line will include three new stations at Lawrence Avenue and McCowan Road, Scarborough Centre and a terminal station at McCowan Road and Sheppard Avenue.

In addition, the commitment of our government to extend the Sheppard East subway line from Fairview Mall to McCowan Road is one of the forecasted transit plans for Scarborough. Our government has already allocated the financial resources to start the studies on this line.

The GO rail expansion on the Stouffville line will offer frequent electrified train service in both directions, with trains running every 15 minutes or better, as well as access to new stations and transit connections. There will be more trips at every point along the line—from Stouffville to Markham, Scarborough and Toronto, giving transit riders options for doing the things they love, wherever they’re found in the region. We’re transforming the line into a true frequent rapid transit experience, faster, better and easier.

Madam Speaker, building Ontario is a 2023 budget theme and a key priority for the government. The timelines for development and infrastructure approvals and construction in Ontario are relatively slow, burdensome and complicated—resulting in delays and increased cost. These challenges can be specific instances of red tape, processes that could be updated, distributed decision-making between multiple departments and levels of government and other challenges. New proposed legislative and regulatory tools can create conditions to plan, approve and build projects faster than possible today.

The proposed legislation ultimately aims to increase the likelihood that priority provincial projects are on budget, on time, on benefit—projects deliver important economic, social and care outcomes for Ontarians, like new or improved community spaces and highways, while maintaining processes that consider risks and meet duty to consult with Indigenous communities.

The proposed legislation being introduced by the Ministry of Infrastructure with the support of the Ministry of Transportation would create the conditions to plan, approve and build projects faster, including the transit-oriented communities station contribution fee and fare integration.

Madam Speaker, I am confident that, if it is passed, this bill will transform Ontario’s transportation dramatically. It will unlock the gridlock on our streets and highways, relieve the stress of our residents and result in greater region connectivity, more housing, construction jobs, local businesses, investment opportunities, reduced travel

times and better connections between rural and urban regions across the province, benefiting residents, municipalities and encouraging developments near transit.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It’s time for questions and answers.

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to ask the member, because he’s in Scarborough: Why hasn’t he advocated for operational funding for the city of Toronto so that Scarborough could have better services within the TTC?

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you for the question. For a long time, the city of Toronto voted 13 times to build the Sheppard subway line, and nothing happened—until the provincial government stepped in and took over the building of the transit system in Ontario. No government has the magic wand to address issues accumulated over the previous government’s 15 years of reign.

So everything will be addressed on time, and we have already started seeing the results of our government commitment to Scarborough. The three subway stations on the Kennedy line are the best demonstration of that commitment, and the commitment to start the study on the Sheppard East expansion is another demonstration that our government is serious. And the people of Scarborough, they deserve the attention they need from this government.

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

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member very much for his remarks. I’m very interested in his observation about how transit to Scarborough has been talked about for decades, but it was only when that responsibility was uploaded to Metrolinx that the project has gotten under way. I saw that first-hand when I was on the board of the TTC: “No, no, no.” Now, I think the machine is called Diggy Stardust, if I’m not mistaken—anyway, it’s tunnelling its way in Scarborough, and that’s absolutely great.

I wonder if the member could say what impact that new transit service will have in his community and the broader Scarborough community when that project is up and running in a few years’ time.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you very much for the question. It is not only tunnelling the McCowan station, but also, Metrolinx already concluded the double-tracking on the Stouffville GO line. They built the Scarborough GO station, a brand new, state-of-the-art station. Also, they built Milliken station. Everyone in the community is so happy and satisfied with the amount of work that was put on that line and the public transit in Scarborough. Lots of newcomers settle in Scarborough. These people, they need to go to work; they need to send their children to school; they need to communicate with each other. And by building the transit system in Scarborough, it will further the quality of life of our residents.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you for your presentation. It’s always a pleasure to chat with the member when I see him here at Queen’s Park. I know he works hard.

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This is a government that is unashamed about their work in reducing developer responsibilities and developer

charges when they do construct and build. Now, we see in schedule 2, in essence, a form of developer charge. How do you balance the decision-making around this bill in light of so much of your efforts and work to do the opposite of what schedule 2 seems to be suggesting?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I apologize for interrupting the member, but pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you, Speaker. Please continue.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Do we have further time for questions? I believe the clock—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Oh, we do. All right. Response.

Mr. Aris Babikian: I'm confident that once this bill is passed, the provincial government, municipal government and private sector will be able to work together—all of them—for the benefit of our residents, and they will provide the best service available for our residents.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That is all the time we have for questions and answers.

Further debate?

Ms. Doly Begum: It's always an honour to speak in this House on behalf of the good people of Scarborough Southwest. I'm privileged to be entrusted with the support and the responsibility they have given me to advocate for issues such as transit, and always a pleasure to speak to anything to do with transit. If there's a way that we can improve transit across our province, and especially in my community, I'm always eager to be part of that conversation, so I really appreciate the opportunity, Speaker, to be able to be a part of this debate.

Today, we are debating Bill 131, and there are two specific schedules that, on the front of it, it looks good to see that we want integration, and we want to be able to have the municipality have the ability to do the work they need to do and make sure that we have transit that is integrated between the different systems. When I saw that, I thought about when I was a student and I used to volunteer with an organization called Power Unit Youth Organization. It was all the way in Markham, and I lived in Scarborough—I still live in Scarborough—and I would go from my home, sometimes walk or take the bus to Warden station, and then I would take the bus from there to go to Warden and Steeles. If I took the 68 bus that doesn't go past Warden and Steeles, then I'd have to either change bus and pay a new fare to go through the other side to go to Markham Civic Centre, or take the 68B which would then ask you to pay another fare once you get to Steeles. It would be so frustrating because I didn't really make any money at that time. Not only was I volunteering, but you're paying two different fares just to get to a meeting with a bunch of young people who were trying to make a difference.

We used to organize this night market at Markham Civic Centre which was filled with over 100,000 people, and as young, eager volunteers, we were so proud of ourselves and we're still so proud of ourselves to be able to do something like this that brought the community together. It was a Hong Kong-style night market that brought the community together.

But I know a lot of people relied on transit as well to get to that event, and one of the things I always thought about was, "Wouldn't it be amazing if we had integrated transit so I could bring in more people from Scarborough, more people from across the city to come to this wonderful event organized by young people who are eager to make a difference in their community?" It really added on and contributed to the diversity of our province.

So today, when I see this, I'm thinking, "Oh, this is awesome. I'm glad to see that the government is finally thinking about it." It's not like we've had decades to see the problems, have experts tell us about the solutions that we need and to be able to understand and know that there are ways that we can fix it. But unfortunately, we did not have the political will. There are times we did come up with solutions; unfortunately, they were not solutions where the government wanted to take the responsibility.

The member from Toronto Centre talked about how there was responsibility that was uploaded to the people who had to pay extra to have that integration to be able to go from place to place, whether they're volunteering or to school or to their workplaces. But the onus was on the people to pay a little bit more. Honestly, this is the reason why we have a transit system the way we do across our province right now and especially in this city.

When I saw this, the first question I asked was, "Have there been people who were consulted in this?" I know some members talked about municipalities, and I really hope that this government consults with municipalities when they go into it; it hasn't been always the case. But we know that there is one group of people who this government failed to consult with.

When it comes to transit, or when it comes to anything, you want to be able to consult with the people who are in charge of that job, right? When it comes to transit, you have workers who are actually driving the buses and the trains in the TTC: the ATU workers who are working so hard, day and night, to make sure we are getting from place to place. Unfortunately, they haven't been consulted. There hasn't been a dialogue to understand how they will be impacted.

I have so many questions when I look at this bill because not only is it downloading the responsibility to municipalities; it doesn't even clarify whether these agreements will impact collective rights and labour unions and how it will impact the integration, how the whole system will even work out, because you're not even going into the weeds of it. It is very problematic because we know what some of the regulations have done when it comes to ministers taking on the power, once again, to do some of the work that they need to do. It adds on these provisions that actually don't clarify what the impact will be on our collective agreements.

Honestly, Speaker, I don't have a lot of trust in this government when it comes to labour rights, when it comes to workers' rights, because we have seen the really shameful record when it comes to workers' rights and the way this government has tried to trample upon the rights of so many workers across this province, whether it was education, whether it's injured workers, and now we're talking about transit workers. I really hope that the government will go back to the drawing board and make sure that they're actually understanding the impact that this will have on collective bargaining and what it means for transit workers who are actually operating the entire system.

Now I want to talk about the way this bill actually downloads a lot of responsibility. On the front of it, you see how it allows municipalities, with the consent of the minister, to impose a transit station charge, which the government is calling "station contribution fee"—wonderful title as usual; the government comes up with very fancy names—on new developments within a designated area around a proposed new GO Transit station. Honestly, I'm a little confused here. I really hope someone helps us understand. Here we are talking about housing; just a few months ago, the government took away an actual profit that the municipalities made from development charges. You took that away, and we've got municipalities that are now having a really difficult time dealing with their budgets. Then, here you are saying, "Okay, we're going to have these development charges that the municipalities will impose." So, it's the responsibility of the municipality to work with the development and make sure that there are these charges.

Not only are you opening up this whole can of worms for public-private partnership, which we know does not work, but also the fact that you're actually once again doing exactly what previous Conservative governments have done, which is put the responsibility for transit—not only about operation; now you're putting the actual building of transit on municipalities. That is a very dangerous path that we're going forward, because the municipalities, especially in Toronto—the city of Toronto is struggling to keep up with their transit costs. We do not have the ability to build and operate. We need the provincial government to take onus, take ownership and do that work.

The other thing that I found really interesting was how this bill actually misses a lot of the things that we could have been doing with transit.

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We're talking about integration. We're talking about development fees, but it doesn't have anything to do with providing the funding that's necessary. That's the reason why I kept asking questions to my colleagues on both sides of the benches about operating funding, because that is one of the fundamental problems that we're facing with TTC and with transit across the board.

When we talk about people who drive and take the TTC, the reason a lot of people, in Scarborough, for example—and we've got a few of our colleagues here

from Scarborough; people don't have the option to take the TTC in Scarborough. If you live in one community in Scarborough and go to university or college in another neighbourhood within that region, you have to sometimes take two or three buses just to go from one location to another. It is unbelievable.

My constituents in my community cannot go from one part of my riding to my office with one bus. After that, they have to walk. That's how ridiculous, that's how unfriendly and inaccessible transit is.

Oh, and on the thought of accessibility, actually, before I forget, it's fascinating how just months ago, this government unfortunately voted against my bill on transit accessibility. Guess what? Just the other day, we got the report that I think 12 stations within our city will not meet the deadline to be accessible.

Guess what this government told me, Speaker? In this House, it's on record: They said they're not going to vote for this bill because it's redundant, because we're already working on it, that they already plan to be accessible and meet the deadline.

You had 20 years. You had 20 years to put an elevator at Warden station. We still don't have an elevator at a station where so many people have to go to a completely different station and then take a bus and then, come back to their neighbourhood. Like, how are we expecting people to operate, get around, and do the work that they need to do, especially people who are faced with disability? It is impossible. You're making life so much harder for people.

It's so ridiculous. I was actually disheartened when I saw the questions that were being asked to my colleague from Hamilton who has an accessibility device and who has a really tough time coming from Hamilton to here and then getting around the city. It is extremely difficult and I was so disheartened to see the type of questions that were being asked, because she herself knows the struggle that she faces. No one needs to tell her that. She faces it every single day.

I feel for so many of my communities. One group I have been talking to for a couple of years now: a lot of small businesses, a lot of entrepreneurs and a lot of people who lost their businesses on the Eglinton line. This is a conversation that's completely ignored in all of the legislation, especially to do with transit.

For so many years—it's been over 12 years with a budget of over \$12 million now for the Eglinton LRT. Here we are, finding dysfunctional stations and ripping apart things. It made me look into what Gilles Bisson, my colleague from Timmins, used to tell me about, back in the day, what took place in the 1990s when they proposed and actually had shovels in the ground. They were digging up. Eglinton subway was supposed to take place. It was unbelievable. He would tell me stories—and I miss him dearly—about how we would have debates in this House. And an NDP government actually proposed, implemented, and started doing the work to build an Eglinton subway. I'm proud of these guys for doing that work at that time.

Guess what happened? When the government changed, then-Premier Mike Harris came and, literally—literally—

filled the dug-up holes and put cement on it already. Now, here we are, on the Eglinton line, trying to put transit.

You know, as I was preparing these notes—we have our placement student, Tien, who is here today, and he was looking through the bill and we were talking about the briefing notes. He said to me, and this is incredible, that he was seven years old when we started building the Eglinton LRT. He is now 19 years old. He honestly doesn't feel that hope, and I don't feel that hope, as to when we will actually have the line built, when we will actually get it operating and the cost and whether it will actually happen.

And then, what we hear—this morning we asked this question to the transportation minister about the cost as well as the leadership that's in Metrolinx. This is actually fascinating, because yesterday the CEO of Metrolinx, Phil Verster, stated that there is no set deadline for the completion of this project. This is the person who is in charge, by the way. After we're more than five years delayed from the deadline, and there is no clear timeline, it is a serious concern of accountability, of oversight, not to mention that his salary has had significant increases—if I'm not mistaken, it's over 700% increase on the CEO's salary. I don't even know how anyone on this side, on the government's side agrees to paying somebody who has failed to do their job over and over and over again.

It also raises the question about the allocated funds and priorities of Metrolinx, especially in the face of so many project delays, so many small businesses that have closed, and the fact that it's tax dollars. It's people's hard-earned dollars that are being spent on these kinds of mistakes made by governments and these kinds of CEOs who do not care about the people of our communities. I don't even know how that's justified, the fact that this person still has a job.

Metrolinx officials have acknowledged the existence of deficiencies in this project. Originally, there were 260 identified issues. Now that has decreased over the last, I think, year or two to 225. The pace that they're going at is unbelievable, not to mention that every time there is an issue with Metrolinx and when we have called members—and we actually had a meeting with Metrolinx staff and I'm grateful to have some of the people who came forward from the Metrolinx team to listen to some of the community members. We had a community meeting, and you will find this fascinating because we actually had the meeting in front of one of the trains going by, and there are community members whose houses are in front of that line. People have been complaining and saying we need some noise barriers, we need something that protects our homes, and we need to be able to sleep at night. We need our kids to be able to do homework and actually function as sane humans because we are just not able to. The noise is there constantly.

When we had the meeting, when we started, no one wanted to believe the community members. As soon as we started the meeting, the trains started going by, so every five minutes we had to stop the meeting and say "Hold on, we can't hear each other. Okay, now we can hear you." Honestly, imagine someone's life on a daily basis, every

single day, you face that and you can't sleep at night and no one believes you until you bring them forward in front of these homes and say this is the reality of so many community members.

Thankfully, the staff members then believed them. We're hoping that they will take action, but honestly, with the way Metrolinx is functioning, I don't have that faith. I would really like the Ministry of Transportation and the minister to take responsibility, take ownership, show some leadership—and actually, first show some leadership in Metrolinx, take action when it comes to the CEO and the tax dollars that you are spending. The issue surrounding the Eglinton Crosstown project raises so many concerns about the competence of Metrolinx in managing the future of public transit systems and the fact that there are all these other projects that are coming about.

The member from Agincourt just talked how wonderful it is that we're going to get three subway stations in Scarborough. God knows how badly I want those three subway stations. I want to have a subway across our city. I want to be able to get on one subway station in downtown Toronto and go to the end of Scarborough and be on the same subway. But, honestly, it is almost imaginary to think about it, because we still do not have any real plans, any real deadlines as to when we'll actually get a Scarborough subway.

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So please stop using Scarborough as this tool, as this name, as a scapegoat or whatever you do. Please stop using us. Stop using Scarborough as a way to get away with your failure, because we've had it. We don't want to hear it. Unless you're going to give us real results, we don't want to hear it. And unless you actually provide the operating funding so we have enough buses and not the hand-me-down, the second-hand, the old generation trains—we get the older trains, by the way. We don't get the new trains. We get the older trains, we get the older buses. That's what happens. I can't even explain, Speaker, the way we get treated. It's so insulting.

Our roads are terrible. We have so many accidents on our roads, so many, and no one wants to come and actually fix the problem. So if you want to applaud yourselves and talk about what you're doing across the province and use Scarborough, please don't. Take it and show us real results. Give us the funding so we can actually believe in it. And if you have bills like that that are just fluff but actually don't have money in them, then I'm very, very cautious to come forward and give you a round of applause, because I don't see real results in it.

Thank you very much for this time, Speaker. I hope the members were listening.

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

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you to the member opposite for her 20 minutes of conversation around this bill. I just want to ensure that my question will be focused on Bill 131 and the great changes that we're making for the people of Ontario in terms of delivering better transit, and I want to give the member an example of how this bill is going to make the average person's life better as they continue to move on.

When I was a student at York University, you would have to take the bus—the Brampton Züm bus will take you all the way down to York University, but during the winter months, all those poor kids standing at bus stops along the route, that bus can't pick them up. Why? Because there's no collective agreement between the TTC and any of the other transit agencies. They are not able to make those agreements because of the law not existing and those amendments not being in place. So think about the students that are going to be standing around this winter if these agreements don't come into place—and you need to remember that these agreements are already in place when we take a look at the rest of the transit systems that are operating successfully.

So, my question to the member opposite is, would the opposition like to explain how the current updated regulations will benefit Toronto's regional transit network more than the proposed ones in this act, and can they provide some evidence to support that claim?

Ms. Doly Begum: It's great that you could read that question that was prepared for you about something, an example that you're going to give me, because that was a conversation, and you didn't feel like—through the Speaker—when I talked about Scarborough, that that wasn't important enough, or about transit. I'm surprised, because all I talked about was Scarborough's transit.

Speaker, I wish the government actually sat down with ATU and said, "You know what? Here's the problem: In Brampton, we have these kids who cannot get on the bus, who cannot use the service. So let's talk about the collective agreement and actually figure out how we can fix this problem." We could have done that. You could have actually sat down and said, "You know what? We have this proposed legislation that's going to have this schedule. We're going to have fare integration. We're going to have seamless service. Now let's make sure that the transit workers who are actually driving those buses during the wintertime—which is extremely difficult—let's have that conversation about how to fix that."

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you to the member for her presentation.

With respect to this government's claim that the reason to overturn local transit decision-making has oftentimes been the proposition they've put forward, that Metrolinx will build transit on time and on budget—and that's what they said in 2019. They repeated it in 2020, and now we see the Ontario Line, which is, of course, already quite significantly delayed. But more importantly, it's actually the most expensive transit project we've ever seen, which they like to brag about because it's a billion dollars per kilometre. It is one of the most expensive projects being delivered around the world, in numbers and magnitude that we've never seen before.

My question to you is, how can the people of Ontario trust this government with any legislation that hasn't gone through consultation with the community, that has no technical review—and that they expect us to just vote for? Can we trust them?

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you so much. That's a great question, because one of the most, I think, difficult parts about this legislation is, once again, the government telling us, "Just trust us. We're going to get it done." At the same time, in the same week, we had the press conference by Metrolinx which basically said, "We're in this really unhealthy relationship, but give us some space. Just give us some space. We're over budget, over timeline, but give us some space and we'll figure it out." They don't even want to give us a deadline.

The fact that it's so much money being spent—I'm so glad that the member actually gave us an exact amount per kilometre, because that's what's happening. Speaker, within that timeline we've had multiple jurisdictions around the world that announced, put the shovels in the ground and got the job done.

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

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to thank the member for Scarborough Southwest for her comments on this. Dare I say, I found some inaccuracies in what you're saying—we can talk about it offline—but I wanted to just get an explanation from you about the status quo versus the implementation of Bill 131. Is this bill truly making things worse for connectivity and transit support for the people of Scarborough and Toronto versus the status quo?

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you very much. That's actually a great question about the bill. No, I think having seamless integration is wonderful. I fully support that, and we've talked about it many, many times. I think making sure that we have the ability for municipalities to work together, for different transit services to work together, especially the TTC—I started off with an example of me as a student going from one regional transit to another region and how I would have to pay an extra fare, but I also talked about how you need to make sure that we equip our municipalities with the funding that they need and the ability, and make sure that we work with transit workers, who are on the front lines providing that service.

So yes, we need to do this. We need to provide that integration. We need to focus on the way that we can fix it. But we also need the funding and a real dialogue with the people who are the stakeholders.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: In question period, often there's a question that comes and it kind of makes you turn in your seat, and that question came when I learned the fact that there are 59 vice-presidents in Metrolinx, and that they're either giving a raise to the CEO or considering giving the raise to the CEO.

I thought to myself, "I get it. We've got transit shortfalls. We've got issues, and this government thought, 'Do you know what the problem is? We don't have enough vice-presidents. Do you know what? Maybe if we give the CEO even more money, it'll bring down the delays and it'll fix all of the problems.'"

Mr. John Vanthof: And they've had five years to fix that.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: And they've had five years, yes, to fix that.

I do notice a difference when it comes to this government dealing with people wearing white collars at a certain stature versus those who wear the blue collars. How did it make you feel hearing that statistic yourself, when you were here in question period this morning?

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you for that question. Honestly, I'm flabbergasted.

Mr. John Vanthof: They need to build a bigger boardroom.

Ms. Doly Begum: They probably need to build a bigger boardroom, actually. They probably need funding for that. They probably need a little bit more space in terms of how many admin assistants they will need for those VPs.

But honestly, all jokes aside, Speaker, it's actually really painful for people in our communities who are struggling: people in the north, for example, who don't have transit at all. They don't even have it. They don't have the infrastructure. They don't have buses. And then in our community, where we're still talking about the imaginary three stops, because we don't have the real subway stations there.

Recently we had the derailment of the Scarborough RT. It's gone now, and it derailed because it was not maintained and it was expired. We need to be able to talk about these things. We need to be able to understand what actually took place when we had a line that was already getting expired, we knew that for years and years, and yet no one did anything to actually put in a replacement plan or know exactly what will happen when that derailment takes place.

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

Mr. Rick Byers: It's always great to talk about transit, a subject I love.

It was my pleasure to spend three years on the board of Metrolinx. I got to know Phil Verster quite well and I'll tell you, he is an absolutely outstanding transit leader—absolutely outstanding transit leader. And what we're doing here as a government is uploading projects that the TTC and the city of Toronto never got around to building. Metrolinx is doing them: Scarborough extension, Ontario Line, Yonge North extension, Eglinton West LRT—\$70.5 billion over 10 years, the biggest transit expansion in the history of Ontario.

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I would have thought that the opposition would be supportive of that, but I find it kind of—I don't know; I don't want to have these words on the record. To sit there and make jokes about all this stuff? We have an outstanding team there. They're getting stuff done and we look forward to riding those amazing lines with you when they're up and running, on time and on budget.

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, the joke's actually on us. The people of this province and all of us have been turned into a joke. The fact that a member will get up and say, "It will be delivered on time and on budget," when just this morning we talked about how it's not on time and not on budget? I don't even know how to say that in other languages or how else I could say this. It's not on time. It's not on budget.

People's livelihoods were at stake when those businesses closed down on Eglinton. There were so many businesses that suffered. I talked to a lot of those owners. We made a joke of all of those scenarios and all of those people. So no, that's nothing to laugh about. The fact that we're still applauding ourselves—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Unfortunately, that's all the time we have for questions and answers.

Further debate?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Before I begin my brief 10 minutes, a fact came to mind, and that was that a fabulous committee Clerk here at Queen's Park, the committee Clerk for public accounts, where I serve, actually had her first day at the table this week. And so I want to congratulate her on her fabulous work here at Queen's Park and in committee and congratulate her on her first day at the table.

Today, we're talking about transit, and I see that it's a late Thursday afternoon, which is kind of the Friday at Queen's Park, and temperatures are starting to rise, especially in the last conversation that was there. I think people would be happy to go back to their communities and see their families, especially the ones that have to travel quite a distance. I'm lucky and blessed to be here in Toronto myself and so I get to see my family every night and I know that's not a reality for many of you and I sympathize always.

I do want to say, before any of you get mad, especially the new ones, and before you point a finger at what we do and don't support, understand what an omnibus bill is. When a government puts forth legislation, especially in a majority government, they get to pass literally everything and anything. All of it begins with them and ends with them. They pass it or they fail and then it's up to them. And so what they generally do—to the new members, with respect—is of course they construct omnibus bills which will have things in there which we can support as an opposition and which we may not want to support or can't support. Perhaps it's because of battling ideologies or many different reasons, and that's just the reality of it.

So I get it. There's a level of theatre in question period when one of the ministers gets up and spins and says what they want to say. But to get frustrated about the fact that we're not going to support all your bills here, knowing that they're always going to pass? Come on. Let's be a little more cordial with each other.

And yes, is it a joke that I point out that there are 59 VPs at Metrolinx? Yes, I was surprised at the top-heavy nature of Metrolinx, to know that there's literally that many VPs. We have a major project that's happening through my community. It links my community, a little bit of York Centre—the minister's community—and a lot of the Premier's community, my neighbouring riding. It was scheduled to have its construction done by end of year. Let's see if that happens. That's certainly not the case for another project that's happening in Toronto right now that we hear about with a lot of frustration.

There have been challenges. There are great people working at Metrolinx on the front lines; sometimes we'll

talk to them. I've dealt with Metrolinx many times over the years, in many different capacities. But we've had some serious issues there.

Let's talk about a collapse of a garage. Thank God, no one died. There was literally an abutting multi-residential complex right beside Finch, where a garage collapsed, and we still don't, in general, know answers as to what happened.

There was recently a daycare flooding that affected hundreds of children who have been displaced, and I know the phone calls we were getting at that time were about constant service and other disruptions.

Right now, I'm fighting the telecom companies. Of course, now, if you happen to get Rogers in my community and you call and there's poor service, they blame the construction on Finch. It seems like everybody is blaming that for everything, and in part, can I blame them?

We talk about accessibility. There are places where they have to create new stops as a result of the construction, and it's like you're wading through pools of water, on a rainy day, to get to a stop; it's like you've got to climb a barbed wire fence, sometimes, to get there and wait in traffic.

We've had accidents, injuries—not just vehicular, but pedestrian—along the line.

Sometimes you'll get up and there will be one of those safety cones placed along Finch, blocking, yet again, traffic. Why? Because now I'm on the phone with Metrolinx—"What's going on?" "I don't know. In two months, there's going to be some sort of disruption. They've had to call for some utility to be moved." And then guess what? "There's something happening. They don't know when it's coming—it's in two weeks; it could be a month. Let's just block the traffic indefinitely."

People are frustrated. There have been business losses, accidents—you name it. So can we be frustrated about it? Of course. Are the people frustrated about it? Of course.

Today, we're debating Bill 131—amazing title, as always—Transportation for the Future Act, and really, what it is? It's two schedules. Schedule 1 makes me think of the lack of consultation that this government seems to do. Do they do no consultation? No, they do. It's just a question of who they're willing to talk to. They talk to people, it seems, I think they're willing to get a yes from, or someone who is going to be friendly to them in terms of what they're proposing.

Rest assured, you're a majority government, you have a lot of power; it is not an equal conversation for you and municipalities and many people. And I can tell you, because I talk to, probably, some of the same stakeholders you do, not always what they say to you is what they're saying to us. Many stakeholders are walking on eggshells; it's like they're walking on a thin layer of ice, because they know that the province is like their parents and that they always have to be very delicate in terms of when they deal with you.

With regard to schedule 1, there is a potential effect on collective agreements. So did this government reach out to our public workers in transit, in the TTC? I was told no.

Did you reach out to management? I'm not sure. I suspect you would have. And guess what? Management have a lot of answers, but a lot of times their information are data points on a map, on an Excel spreadsheet.

Do you know who the workers are? The people we were calling heroes throughout the pandemic; the ones who were getting us from point A to point B, when most people were indoors. They are literally out there driving the routes; they understand the situation, and they understand the issues of the fact that inter-regional transit between borders—like Steeles.

My community and the Premier's community have Steeles as a border. So you'll bet that there are members of our constituencies who are interested in fare integration, service integration, but they want it to be sensible and something that's going to work for all regions. And there are potential impacts, because when the government introduces a bill and the opposition has all of one day to research what they have a ministry and an army behind—one of the things that was pointed out is that if this isn't done right, some integration could result in lesser service. You might have a particular route, let's say, TTC-operated, and if it's not done right and perhaps another provider outside of Toronto is now, thanks to this government, picking up passengers—who knows—in Toronto, that might tell Toronto management, "We don't have many riders on this particular line anymore. Let's cut this service." And that could have effects too. So you need to really do the math if you're going to do this.

Schedule 2 is very aspirational, but it's evidence, again, of downloading, because, ultimately, here's a government that will do anything to save a developer a service charge or a development fee or any responsibility to a municipality when they're building. And then, what they're doing here is saying, "You know what? We're going to download now the entire creation, potentially, of GO stops"—now they're calling it a revenue tool—"to municipalities." But is that going to happen? Are developers, who really don't want to pay for these things, going to now fund entire GO stops? I don't know. It seems very hopeful on their part. But I get it. People are demanding transit and you want to take action, so you put down a bill that's got a fancy title. It's going to pass. If you have a majority government and you all decide to vote on it, which is what I anticipate, we'll see what happens.

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And the last thing I do want to talk about are these delays. We have these major, major projects that are so frustrating for communities, and especially the delays that tend to happen. And you know what? On these projects, you've got project managers, and if they're paid by the year and projects go on indefinitely and on and on and on—and we have major projects right now that are like huge money holes. And I'm not even talking about the hole that the former Premier, Mike Harris, filled in on Eglinton, where we had a subway that was being built at the time and they thought it would be smart to waste countless millions of dollars backfilling a project with concrete so that you can't even do it for the future. God

knows what probably had to have been spent to clean up the mess that was made decades ago to build that.

So, do the official opposition have hesitation when it comes to this government in particular when they're talking about transit and infrastructure and whatnot? Of course. Because, look, many of the projects begun by the Liberal government before, certainly with their flaws, have just seen the flaws continue with this government. We're hopeful, because your success is the success of the province of Ontario. But if you want to be successful, consult everyone. Reach out and let's have conversations.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's time for questions and answers.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you to the member opposite for their comments on this bill. When we took a look at this bill and before we moved forward into bringing the legislation in the House, I know the minister had many consultations with our stakeholder partners and transit agencies. And this is a direct request from the city of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission. Exactly what they're asking for is exactly what we're delivering.

You keep mentioning why this bill is going to pass. The reason this bill is going to pass is because the people on this side of the House are getting it done for the people of Ontario to make sure they can easily move from point A to point B and get to their destination in a timely manner.

My question is, when we brought forward removing double fares and integrating our transit network, the members opposite voted no to that. So I want to know, will the members opposite finally support this and make sure that giving Ontarians a properly integrated transit network is a priority for the members opposite, as well?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: First of all, if I remember correctly, the member is a York University graduate, in my community. With the advent of the new subway through York University, the issue that you are raising is something that I well know. This is going to pass like everything else is going to pass, not necessarily because it's good or bad legislation, but because it's a majority government, okay? Ask majority governments that you may have opposed in the past or your members would have opposed in the past.

All I'm saying, and it's very simple: If you talk to the management of the Toronto Transit Commission, talk to the workers, too. Talk to the leadership of the workers. You gain something when you talk to the management, and certainly they have ideas and understanding, as well. But talk to the front-line workers and get their perspectives. I think all governments benefit from doing that and I think this is something that this government and all governments should be doing. I think that the best way to create comprehensive policy is to listen to everyone.

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

I recognize the member for Toronto-Davenport.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Danforth.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Davenport-Toronto? Davenport?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Toronto-Danforth.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Danforth. So sorry.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, it's been a long week and I understand entirely. And I, too, sometimes get confused about the title of my riding late on a Thursday afternoon.

My question for my colleague here: As you're well aware, the province downloaded transit costs to the city of Toronto and other places in the 1990s. The TTC has never recovered from that downloading. It doesn't have the funds necessary to operate the system properly. It doesn't have the capital funds that it requires.

Will this bill, in fact, address those shortcomings and, given that I expect you will say no, do you think this bill will actually make transit better in Toronto and the GTA?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Humber River-Black Creek, and once again, I have to apologize to the member for Toronto-Danforth.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I just want to say that I fully sympathize. Not only is my last name usually, not occasionally, mispronounced, but so is my riding, as well. So I fully get it, and I'm okay. I'm pretty used to it, especially the last name part.

That is certainly an issue. We mentioned the Conservative government of the late 1990s, as well, that another one of their great achievements was lots and lots of downloading. Certainly that was one of the issues, and we continue to hear about that. We continue to hear that from the TTC—their management, I'm sure, in those conversations and consultations you've had with them, have told you that they've been requiring, needing, consistent funding and not one-offs.

And so absolutely, from that perspective, if you really want to help transit in the city of Toronto, get back to the table and bring back funding to the Toronto Transit Commission, because it is something that people across Toronto desperately need.

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

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: The member and I share a boundary right at Keele, and not that long ago, I walked from Dufferin and Finch all the way to 31 division to be part of a community barbecue with the Toronto Police Service. When you walk from Keele going westbound, you see the infrastructure that's going in, especially as you get to the Jane corridor. You see the infrastructure improvements, that we are building transit. You can see it for yourself, right on the street corner.

So I want to say to my friend across the way that it's undeniable, the advancements that we're making by building transit, and I want to ask him: Do you not see for yourself, when you walk the streets near Finch, how important it is to build transit? That's why the bill is before the House today.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I think we are all in agreement that we need to build transit, and we need it to be sensible, and it needs to be placed correctly, where it will bring the greatest benefit. Do I see that transit being built? There is, as I mentioned in my 10 minutes, an LRT that is connecting his community and mine, as well as the Premier's.

But what there is a need for, as was mentioned by my colleague, is more operating funds, because when you build it, you also need to operate it.

There have been challenges along that line in particular, but that line, whatever challenges we've faced, pales in comparison to others in the city of Toronto, south of us along Eglinton, and in other parts of the province. That is something that's of concern, and that's something that we hope, as we move forward and build more transit projects, is resolved, because I think all communities where we build deserve not just the lines that are being built, but better during the process of construction itself.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Humber River–Black Creek for his presentation today. Earlier, I discussed the cancellation—or the breaking of the promise that the Conservative government made, not delivering on the \$160 million they promised to London to expand GO Transit.

But I wanted to share a quote with the member and gather their thoughts. This is from the Western University newspaper, the Gazette:

“As someone who has lived in the GTA my whole life and loved the GO train commute, I was disappointed when I recently took a trip from London to Toronto on their new route....

“The route has one direct trip from London to Toronto at the crack of dawn—5:14 a.m. to be exact—ending at 9:13 a.m., and one return trip leaving at 4:19 p.m. and reaching London at 8:19 p.m. These timings are not convenient for Western students—or really anyone....

“Limiting the train to weekday service means there are no trips on Saturday or Sunday when students travel most....

“Students want to know if they miss one train, they're not stuck and that there's going to be another trip in a couple of hours....”

My question to the member: Do you think this is an example of what should be a successful pilot program? And would you visit London, Ontario, if you knew it was going to be an eight-hour round trip?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you for that. Look, this underscores the importance of investing in operating funding. We can build lines, which we should do, but if we can't provide adequate service standards, even in pilot projects, people are not going to be happy. It's not going to get them to and from work. It's not going to work with their busy schedules.

And so, this is something that I really hope, as this government moves forward, is really taken very seriously: service levels that exist in and between different regions and municipalities. It's good to build infrastructure. It's good to build sensible infrastructure. But if we don't have the service levels on existing lines, and if our transit providers are not operating with adequate funding, then we are really doing a disservice to the people, the millions that take transit in whatever form it is every single day.

1700

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

Mr. Rick Byers: I'm very, very happy to get up again and talk about the subject of transit. I know the member was talking about operating costs. I don't know whether I'm allowed to use a prop, but here's a Presto card. You can all take a real close look at it. I used it this morning when I rode the TTC up from Queens Quay to Queen's Park. Interesting for members, perhaps members opposite—I'm curious whether you use the TTC or not; whether we are experiencing the transit we've got in our great city first-hand or we're just hearing about it and otherwise. But I'm pleased to have this card and—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Excuse me. I have to remind the member that we cannot use props in the chamber.

Mr. Rick Byers: My apologies, Speaker. I'll put my Presto card, which I'm very proud to have, back in my wallet. Anyway, I trust the opposition will support us as we continue to grow the transit system in a way in this province that's never been done before. Can we count on your support for those great projects?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Well, thanks for using a Presto card and showing it to us. I'm well aware of a Presto card. In fact, many, many portions of my life, I spent daily on suburban commutes from the suburbs of Toronto downtown, and experienced all the joy that comes with that.

When the government brings forth ideas that we can fully support, we will support them. When this government wants to reach out to us and actually work collaboratively, we will welcome that. When they do it, we will work hand in hand to bring forward initiatives that we think benefit the people of Ontario. And if they want to act in good faith and do that and when it's something we can agree upon fully, they can count on our support. Otherwise—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That is all the time we have for questions and answers. Further debate? Further debate?

Ms. Surma has moved second reading of Bill 131, An Act to enact the GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023 and to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Mr. Trevor Jones: No.

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

Mr. Trevor Jones: Directed to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It is now deferred to committee.

Orders of the day.

Hon. Todd Smith: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Todd Smith: Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you'll find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Do we have unanimous consent to see the clock at 6? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

SKILLED TRADES WEEK ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA SEMAINE DES MÉTIERS SPÉCIALISÉS

Mr. David Smith moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to proclaim Skilled Trades Week /
Projet de loi 117, Loi proclamant la Semaine des métiers
spécialisés.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. David Smith: I rise today in the House to present second reading of my private member's bill. This bill, if passed, would have Ontario recognize every first week in the month of November as Skilled Trades Week.

Before I continue, I want to thank our former Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, Monte McNaughton, for his encouragement in my work to bring forward this proposed bill. After recent conversations with Minister David Piccini, Ontario's new Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, who has offered the same sentiments—thank you.

We know that strategically private members' bills play a key role in shaping policies, giving voice to stakeholders and the public at large and, in this case, responding quickly to emerging social and economic issues. We are facing the largest labour shortage in a generation, which is costing us billions of dollars in the economy. Ontario has over 300,000 jobs going unfilled, half of them being in the skilled trades. Our government has a necessary goal to build 1.5 million new homes by 2031, and our existing skilled trades workforce average is 55 years of age. Our government is moving full steam ahead to get the necessary skills in place to get the job done. Bill 117 will help us reach more Ontarians to get on deck in attaining these goals by closing the skills gap.

The labour shortage in the skilled trades is not only in Ontario, but across the province, across every province in Canada, in all areas, such as pipefitting, tool and die, trucking, painting, welding, windows, drywall, plastering, bricklaying etc., and by 2027, we need to have 70,000 or more of these tradespersons in place to meet our projected targets.

For when we speak in economics and accounting terms, it's simply a matter of demand and supply. Many Ontarians are experiencing price gouging right now, because the demand and supply are not in equilibrium. For

example, people complain of empty shelf space and high costs of food and other goods and services. What is known is the lack of skilled tradespersons available to produce and supply these goods and services will limit the ability to produce the foods and services that we need, which then have to be sold at higher prices in order to manage the demands. However, there is an inadequate labour force to produce more of these goods. Availability for these goods will make prices affordable and influence sales and discount prices. This enables continuous turnover for economic prosperity. This is one example of how all Ontarians are impacted by the labour shortages currently experiencing—demand and supply.

Another example is one we are all seeing unfold today with the current housing crisis. If we do not have adequate and properly trained skilled tradespersons to build homes, and people want homes, we will get into bidding wars. As mentioned previously, the aging workforce in the skilled trades will pose a greater challenge than we see today, and that is why our government is working progressively, very hard, under the leadership of Premier Ford to create a vibrant economy in Ontario to get the right skill sets in the best way that will close these skills gaps.

1710

By establishing Skilled Trades Week and celebrating what it stands for, our government will open more doors to position careers in the skilled trades as critical, prestigious and valued. With this recognition, workers will earn more, and have stability and mobility within the workforce. This is particularly true for those in under-represented communities or equity-seeking groups. The Skilled Trades Week Act will position Ontario to be more resilient in our province's evolving economy.

Right now, there is a general lack of awareness of skilled trades as a viable and rewarding career path. There is a lingering stigma associated with skilled trades. Formal recognition by our government of Skilled Trades Week through this act will create an elevated standard that will reflect a new reality of skilled trades as technologically advanced, diverse and certified professions where you get paid while you learn on the job, advance your skills through training, with big paycheques, benefits and great pension plans that allow anyone to sustain a lifestyle that for many may not have been something that they could imagine. We will make skilled trades a household term. The act will broaden its awareness and build on its recognition across non-profits, unions, colleges and universities, contractors, trade schools, qualified institutions, agencies and involve parents and guardians in guiding their children to making these better decisions on skilled trades.

Currently, as you might be aware, in Ontario there are over 144 skilled trades professions to choose from in many key practice areas, as mentioned earlier. Many recognized trades in Ontario have apprenticeship programs and offer career opportunities in every region of the province. To echo Minister Piccini from earlier this week during third reading of Bill 79, Working for Workers Act, 2023, we can ensure that with the Skilled Trades Week Act, here

too, no one will be left behind. Speaking of which, I would like to thank the members of the Legislature for supporting Bill 79, Working for Workers Act, 2023, to make it a reality.

In April this year, our government introduced second chance hiring. We are investing \$12 million to support nine innovative projects designed to help up to 2,000 people leaving the justice system integrate into their communities through meaningful jobs. Our government recognizes that stable employment has been shown to help address the root causes of crime and reduce the likelihood of someone reoffending.

Also of deep significance is that our government has put programs in place that open doors to young people of all identities who never had access to these types of careers in the past. They now do in jobs that provide big pay-cheques, benefits, and greater pension plans.

I would like to thank Minister Stephen Lecce for his leadership as we explore bringing skilled trades back to young people in the education system in this pilot program.

On March 8, 2023, Minister Lecce said, “To ensure all students can get ahead in this province, we are accelerating pathways from high school to apprenticeship learning and ultimately, a career in the skilled trades. Our government’s mission is to fill the skills gap by better connecting Ontario students to these good-paying jobs, helping many students who may not have graduated, now gain a credential that leads them to meaningful employment.” Thank you, Minister Lecce.

Another important part of this work is the impact that it has on students, women, persons with disabilities, new Canadians, and any person going into a second-career path. Helping women across Ontario, especially, to develop their skills so they can enter these in-demand careers is critical. Earlier this week, we learned from Associate Minister Charmaine Williams how her ministry, the Ministry of Women’s Social and Economic Opportunity, is helping women across Ontario develop their skills so they can enter these in-demand careers.

Since—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): And that is your time, your 12 minutes.

Further debate?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s an honour for me to rise today and to be the official opposition voice in support of the member from Scarborough Centre’s important legislation.

Here on the official opposition side of the House, we look forward to working together to help make sure that we are strengthening the trades. The trades are vital to the economic prosperity as well as the future of Ontario.

Right now, we’re facing such a dramatic shortage of tradespeople and that is something that is tremendously concerning. When we take a look at this, it’s not something that has suddenly appeared within Ontario. It’s something that we have been facing for quite some time. In fact, if we look at statistics, Speaker, the average age of an apprentice right now is 28, but further to that, nearly

one in three tradespeople are 55 years of age or older. That means a great deal of talent, a great deal of knowledge and a great deal of expertise is soon going to be lost. We need to make sure that we’re getting young people into these trades to not only make up those positions that we are losing, but also to further buttress the system by adding yet more.

There’s a lot of work that we need to do within this chamber through legislation to make sure that we are achieving these goals. We support a skilled trades week, but we also want to make sure that this government is proactively looking towards the measures that would help to create and sustain these jobs and further employment within these sectors—one of which would be further investments in unionized training centres, because, as we know, these are the experts in the field. These are the people who know what to do and nobody trains people better than tradespeople themselves. Can we agree?

Interjection: Yes

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Absolutely.

But further, we need to take a look at the skills pipeline. We need to look towards our young people. How are we capturing the interest, the attention, and the career paths of young people? That is the question. We can’t expect people to come to this on their own. We have to make sure that we are giving them that as an option for a pathway.

I’ll never forget that—you know, I was lucky enough to grow up at a time, Speaker, when we still had a shop class in our elementary school. So in grade 7 and grade 8, we were able to work with our hands. We were able to build things. We were able to learn basic joinery. There were a great number of different machines that I got to work on, with supervision, and it was amazing. It was something that I wish that every student in Ontario still had to this day. It gave you wonderful skills that go on for a lifetime.

1720

Now, there were two problems. When you first entered high school, you had to choose a path almost straight away, so people either went into the arts curriculum—so you either went into visual arts or music—or you went into a trades-based profession. There weren’t that many options, unfortunately, and that is a shame. That exposure was very good; I was very thankful for it. But it also became very limited.

Unfortunately, also in the 1990s, Speaker, it was a Conservative government that ripped all of those shop classes out of elementary schools. It was so incredibly wasteful and so incredibly detrimental to the future of so many students within Ontario. We hear so many times—a consequence of that, as well, was a Liberal government that chased hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs out of this province. We have that timeline and it’s unfortunate, so we need to fix that.

We need further investments in education, making sure students have those opportunities within elementary school as well as secondary school. But also, we need to think about how we can incorporate experiential learning activities for students to give them that opportunity to see what the trades are all about.

There are different engagements. Even from grade 1, within the curriculum there is the community helpers. I was proud, as a former educator, to involve many different folks, whether it was police, sanitation workers—they would bring a garbage truck—there would be an ambulance and tradespeople, and it was fascinating to see these kids just absolutely light up when they get to see what these professions are and what they could possibly do. We also need to make sure that guidance counsellors and educators are familiar with these trades and these paths to make sure that they can actually deliver the information to kids so that they know how to build their skills.

But also, trades are not simply good-paying jobs. Trades are a really viable career for possibly the rest of your life. I remember going to high school with a friend of mine by the name of Jon and I remember he, very early, or towards the end of his high school career, went into plumbing and he was able to take that at H. B. Beal Secondary School. I remember some ignorant friends of his who sort of made fun of him at the time. That guy bought the house first. That guy got to have his own business. That guy, who knows, maybe he's retired by now. I don't know, Speaker, but it was an excellent job which he was great at.

But also, we need to make sure we're attracting more women into the trades. Recently—within the last couple of years—I remember running into a former student of mine by the name of Abby. I ran into her with her mother. They were in Victoria Park when I was visiting Sunfest and Abby came right up to me and said, “Do you remember me?” because I taught her when she was very little—great student, very quiet girl—and she was so thrilled to tell me that she completed cabinetry and woodworking at Fanshawe College. She lit right up, and I've got to say, Speaker, I was completely jealous because I would love to have those skills of woodworking and joinery and being able to make with your hands because those are fundamental skills that are absolutely amazing. But just seeing the light in her eyes, I thought, “This is phenomenal.”

During the most recent election, I was canvassing and ran into a former student. Now, I had mostly taught his sister Caroline and I never actually had too many direct teaching experiences with him because I was a teacher-librarian, but Kurtis was a little disengaged, unfortunately. He was a bright kid—a smart kid—but he never really found his passion within elementary school. I always wonder about former students: What are they doing now? Are they okay? Did they find something that sang to their heart? And I ran into him, and he had completed his electrician apprenticeship and he was so proud of himself. He was earning fantastic money; he'd found something that spoke to him, and it just made me so happy to know that he had found something that was a viable career for the rest of his life. So congratulations to Kurtis.

Here on the opposition side, we have many people among our ranks who are tradespeople. Our MPP from Sudbury, our labour critic, is an apprentice. His dad was a millwright, and his father-in-law is an electrician. Our MPP from Mushkegowuk—James Bay is a millwright, and

his son is an electrician. My seatmate, the MPP from Waterloo—her son is an electrician as well.

So these are really important things.

Unfortunately, the trades have been given short shift for a number of years, by educational disinvestment, by not providing the correct information to young people about how viable this is as a well-paying career.

I also wanted to make sure that this government has on the record some recommendations that they could also help workers with within the trades.

We want to make sure, as well, that we have things like paid sick days—fixing the WSIB system that leaves so many workers on ODSP, especially those within the skilled trades.

We also have, within the WSIB system, a system that caps the wages of skilled trades workers and can sometimes force them back to work while they are still hurt. This is incredibly dangerous, because unfortunately many of them will self-medicate. They will look to ease and dull the pain any way that they can, because they know they're being forced to work. We need further addiction support so that people aren't falling into that trap.

Also, we could see legislation pass to stop the use of scab workers.

These are all measures that the government could employ, as well.

So here on the opposition side, we are very happy to support a skilled trades week. It's something that I think will help to provide that information to young people. But let's also see some backup material. Let's see further investments in education. Let's see those shop classes returning to elementary school. Let's see education workers given the correct information about how to engage students on this as a career path, and we will see these numbers—the average age being 28, or so many people aging out of this—change.

I look forward to supporting this government in these aims, because I believe it is something that is incumbent upon all of us. We are providing people with a fantastic future, showing them that they can do wonderful things. They can own their own business and really enjoy a life of security, a life that is fulfilling and rewarding.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, when we come to this House of responsibility—and I always feel we want to say thank you to our residents for giving us an opportunity to serve; at the same time, to create a legacy, a legacy which my colleague the member from Scarborough Centre has brought in today in the form of the Skilled Trades Week Act, to bring the great opportunities in the skilled trades to the forefront of public awareness in this province.

We're facing a labour shortage, with over 300,000 jobs going unfilled. Look at the data: According to the Ontario Home Builders' Association, 41% of Ontario employers are seeking workers with skilled trades training. The highest demand is in the construction and technology sectors—no need to look at the data; look around, and you will see the same. In the construction sector alone, 72,000

new workers are needed by 2027 to fill open positions because of retirement and expected job growth.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, if Ontario's skills gap is not addressed, it could result in 560,000 jobs going unfilled by 2030. What would that mean? It would mean up to \$24 billion in lost economic opportunity for the people of Ontario and \$3.7 billion in provincial revenue annually—\$3.9 billion which we can flow back and serve our Ontarians.

This bill will encourage young people across Ontario to consider and learn more about the amazing careers available to them in the skilled trades, as 39% of Ontario employers have trouble finding candidates with the right qualifications and 21% of Ontario's skilled trades workforce is expected to retire this decade.

1730

This bill will function to destigmatize the skilled trades. Too often, we see young people unaware about the rewarding careers in the skilled trades. Too often, they believe that university is the only path to success. The Skilled Trades Week Act will increase awareness on alternative choices to students and their parents, guidance counsellors and others who give them advice, to consider the options. A career in the skilled trades is a career for life. This means bigger paycheques, and often six-figure salaries, benefits and pensions, and a secure career path. The trades mean a chance to see the fruit of your hard work taking shape right in front of you. You get options to travel or become your own boss.

Speaker, this bill complements our government's other actions to reinforce the importance of skill trades—for example, teaching students as young as grade 1 that careers in the skilled trades are rewarding, and consulting with our partners in the education field to explore new pathways to the skilled trades, including an accelerated apprenticeship pathway for grade 11 students, to enable them to enter the skilled trades faster. Upon receiving their certificate of apprenticeship, these young workers could apply for their Ontario secondary school diploma as mature students.

And this year, we are holding twice as many skilled trades fairs so that we can pass on this information all along the province of Ontario, including Mississauga on Wednesday, November 15, and Thursday, November 16, at the International Centre. Through these fairs, over 25,000 students in grades 7 to 12 will learn about exciting and in-demand careers close to home.

I endorse my colleague's bill. It is the next step in spreading awareness of the skilled trades, helping people find better jobs and bigger paycheques. I wish him the best of success as he creates a legacy, and I urge everyone to come together and support his bill.

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

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'm truly delighted to speak in support of Bill 117, the Skilled Trades Week Act, presented tonight by my good friend the member from Scarborough Centre, given my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh is truly powered by our tradespeople in the manufacturing

sector, and really, skilled trades provide the opportunity to realize your dreams as a young Ontarian.

I'd like to particularly highlight an incredible tradesperson. This is hard for me to say to my big brother, Jim Dowie: He's better than me. He's been practising his craft as a mould-maker for over 25 years. One thing where I lack clarity on is precision; he's got it in spades. He has a keen eye for practicality. It shines through in a way that we book-heavy engineers find truly hard to achieve.

But Jim is not alone. Recently, at LIUNA 625 in Oldcastle, I met a delightful young lady, Breecha Kaantey. She was one of this year's graduates from the construction craft worker level 1 program. And to the comments made by the member from London North Centre: What a fantastic union-run training centre that was, and same with the Carpenters and Joiners Union Local 494 next door. In a nice surprise, though, from the graduation ceremony that Breecha had, Premier Ford was able to present her diploma in person. Truly, she was a personable, optimistic and ready-to-go individual. She has an incredible future ahead in building her career, armed with an array of skills that will keep her continuously in demand.

The same day, in another part of the LIUNA training centre, I met Kylie Tiffin, another truly impressive young adult. She has worked in marketing. She has worked as a restaurateur. And now Kylie is adding a new skill set—electrician—to her vast arsenal of talents as part of the electrical pre-apprenticeship program for women. It was delivered in conjunction with the good people at Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor Inc. Funding for programs like Kylie's and Breecha's are part of the province's \$1.5-billion investment in the skilled trades strategy. LIUNA's training trust in Oldcastle, the UHC Hub of Opportunities, women's enterprise skills training and St. Clair College were all supported with this funding this year.

As I mentioned, next door to LIUNA is the Carpenters and Joiners Union Local 494, who also deliver a truly fantastic pre-apprenticeship program for their students with support from our local school boards. They were telling me that their students are armed with earnings starting at \$60,000 a year right out of the gate. These pre-apprenticeship programs funded by Employment Ontario deliver incredible value to this province, certainly to my community, and they're surely worth supporting.

Skilled trades do Ontario proud each and every day, whether it's making our homes better, fixing the problems that sometimes we've created or building our dreams, truly building our dreams, into reality. Celebrating the skills development, extensive education and achievements of our skilled trades is not just a great idea but is arguably truly deserved.

I thank the member for Scarborough Centre as well as the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for their bill, and I wholeheartedly support it.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise today and speak in favour of Bill 117, the Skilled Trades Week Act, to declare the first week of November as Skilled Trades

Week. I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough Centre for bringing this bill forward.

I want to take a moment to talk to young people because two of the biggest challenges we face in Ontario right now are directly related to getting more people in the trades: the housing crisis and the climate crisis. We know that we need to build at least 1.5 million homes across this province over the next decade, and it is going to take a lot of workers to build those homes. As a matter of fact, Speaker, we already have a shortage of workers in the construction trades right now, so we need to encourage more young people to go into the trades. We need to ensure that we get rid of the stigma associated with the trades. We need to ensure that we make investments in helping make it easier for people to enter the trades. And we also need to make sure that we make the trades a welcoming place for women, Black, Indigenous and people of colour. We've all too often heard about stories and incidents of sexual harassment, or sexual violence, even, in the trades. We've heard, especially on construction sites, some of the disturbing stories about racism that people experience. And so I'm hoping, as we all come together to promote the trades, that we ensure that we promote them in ways that are welcoming for everybody in our communities, and we have enforcement mechanisms in place to ensure all individuals in our communities can succeed in the trades.

I want to take a moment to talk about what it's going to take to address the climate crisis. I want to say to so many young people—and I speak to so many young people who have climate anxiety, are worried about the future, especially after the kind of summer we had here in Ontario. We had toxic skies due to wildfires. We see increasing floods and other extreme weather events. One of the ways that you can channel that anxiety in a productive way is to get involved in the trades, because if we have any hope of reducing climate pollution in Ontario to meet our climate obligations, we're going to have to retrofit 40% of our homes by 2030 and 100% of our homes by 2040. Imagine all the houses in Ontario needing better insulation, better sealing, new windows, new doors, new HVAC systems. Imagine the number of carpenters, drywallers, insulation, HVAC operators, electricians, plumbers, roofers that it's going to take to do a retrofit program of that scale.

And then I think of what else it's going to take to electrify our transportation system. We've all talked about having a mining-to-manufacturing EV system. We've talked about the need to double electricity output, and the lowest-cost way to do that is through renewables. That's why global investors were pouring \$1.1 trillion last year alone into the climate economy. We're on track for them to invest \$1.8 trillion this year alone, most of that going into renewable energy. That's going to take electricians. That's going to take mechanics. It's going to take installers. It's going to take a huge increase in the number of people going into the trades in order to electrify our transportation systems, especially if we're going to meet our goal of having a fully electrified transportation system by 2035. It's going to take a huge number of tradespeople. That's exactly why I've been promoting policies like free tuition for 60,000 students going to college, guaranteeing

them an apprenticeship, as an affordable pathway into the trades. That's why we need, as members of all parties have talked about, funding for union training centres in the trades.

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Speaker, I want to close by also saying that it's why we need to invest more in schools. I meet with schools in my riding all the time and I talk about the need to increase the number of students going into the trades. Some of the feedback I get is, "We would love to have more students in the trades, but our woodshop classes are already overcrowded; our mechanical shop classes are already overcrowded." We're going to need more investment in the infrastructure in our schools to facilitate more people in the trades.

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

Mr. Brian Saunderson: It is a pleasure today to rise in this House to speak in favour of this bill. I'm very encouraged to hear that my friends across the floor also will be supporting this bill. I congratulate my colleague from Scarborough Centre and the co-sponsor, our Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, for bringing this legislation forward. While it's a very simple and straightforward bill, I believe it's one that will have a big impact in our community and across Ontario moving forward.

We've heard that the average age of our tradespeople is around 55 years. We know that over the next 10 years, many will retire. We also know with our targets to create 1.5 million new homes and to create infrastructure and to keep our economy going, we're going to need approximately 100,000 new people in the trades over the next decade.

This bill, Madam Speaker, also has personal resonance for me. As a father of three, my oldest son, Dylan, who's 29 and has a BSc in environmental science, has now gone back to school at Georgian College in Barrie for precision machining, so he will be a member of the trades.

I think it's important to also note that this government is working extremely hard to revitalize the trades in our schools. I know that two schools in my riding in the last year were funded for CAD machines, about \$75,000 per machine. Nottawasaga valley secondary school in Essa and Collingwood Collegiate Institute in Collingwood both have these machines and they're re-energizing their shop programs, which is all very important. And I know that many of the schools—down in Stayner, Stayner Collegiate Institute has a program. It starts in grade 8, and they go from grade 8 to grade 12, where the kids design things and then they learn to build them through CAD and actually manufacture and sell them. I am the proud owner of a wind chime that I was given at the school when I was touring their facility.

Trades are gaining momentum in this province. We are working very hard to make sure that that continues. We are funding three buses to travel across Ontario that will introduce over 250,000 students in the next two years to the trades. We know there are 144 trades, and we have a dire need in every one of them.

I think the thrust behind this bill is to make sure that we are balancing the tables, that people understand the importance of trades, and that we destroy some of the myths that surround the trades. In preparing for today, I was looking out the window of my apartment, and I could see three cranes. Clearly trades are a very important part of our map going forward.

And so five myths turned up when I was looking into this. The first one is that skilled trades jobs just aren't important. That is absolutely not the case. We know that trades are becoming more and more important in our economy as we look to building homes, roads and infrastructure and to refitting existing homes to meet climate change demands.

Myth number two: Trades are in-demand jobs that offer lower wages. Again, that's not accurate. We know that trades are a great way for our kids to get through school and get trained. They earn money while they're being trained to get their certification, and when they come out they can earn salaries in the six figures and they can be their own employers—self-employed.

Myth number three: Skilled trades aren't a viable career option—absolutely not the case, and we know that's not the case. So once an individual has got their red seal, they have that for life. And it is not just a job, it's a career.

Myth number four: Skilled trades are for men only. This is a government that's working extremely hard to blow up that myth. We know that in the last year, we have increased enrolment in the trades by 24% generally, and we know that amongst women, it's up by 30%. This is something we're committed to working on.

The final myth is that skilled trades are for those who don't do well in school—again, an absolute myth. It does a huge disservice to our youth who are looking at getting these types of careers, and we need to make sure through events like this week that we'll be setting the record straight, promoting the trades, promoting careers, and making sure that we have a future that can make Ontario strong.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for a two-minute response.

Mr. David Smith: I'd like to, first and foremost, thank all the members of the assembly here this afternoon who participated in this debate. So I'd like to thank the member for Guelph, the member for Mississauga–Malton, the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, the member for Simcoe–Grey and the member for London North Centre for their contributions.

This is so important. It's such a viable part of our legacy, in my humble opinion. Because a skilled trade is such an important part—the stigma that has been attached to this particular field. I'm glad to know that we all are together on this, to make certain that we continue to work with students and all other agencies to help bring this to a position that allows each and every one of us to be happy that we have the skilled trades set that will allow us to build homes all across Ontario and to contribute to a viable economy.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Smith, Scarborough Centre, has moved second reading of Bill 117, An Act to proclaim Skilled Trades Week.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to standing order 100(h), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

Does the member wish to refer the bill to a standing committee?

Mr. David Smith: The committee I'd like it to go to is the economic and finance committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the finance and economic affairs committee? Agreed. The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. on Tuesday, October 3.

The House adjourned at 1748.

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
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Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
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Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
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McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
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Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
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Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
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Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
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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	
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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, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
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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
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West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
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Vacant	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	