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Mercredi
18 octobre 2023

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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 18 October 2023 / Mercredi 18 octobre 2023

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Member's conduct

Hon. Paul Calandra	5443
Mr. Trevor Jones	5446
Hon. Todd J. McCarthy.....	5446
Ms. Peggy Sattler	5450
Mr. Anthony Leardi	5451
Debate deemed adjourned	5452

Visitor

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes).....	5452
--	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Challah for #Israel

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy	5452
---------------------------------	------

Community Health and Wellbeing Week

Mme France Gélinas	5452
--------------------------	------

GO Transit

Mr. Mike Harris	5452
-----------------------	------

SafePoint

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	5452
-------------------------	------

Events in Markham–Thornhill

Mr. Logan Kanapathi	5453
---------------------------	------

Women in politics

Ms. Catherine Fife.....	5453
-------------------------	------

Jewish community

Mrs. Robin Martin.....	5453
------------------------	------

Riding of Kanata–Carleton

MPP Karen McCrimmon	5454
---------------------------	------

The Great Pumpkin Trail

Ms. Natalie Pierre	5454
--------------------------	------

Ghost Walk for Charity

Mr. Nolan Quinn	5454
-----------------------	------

Request to the Integrity Commissioner

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	5454
-------------------------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

Mme France Gélinas	5454
Mrs. Daisy Wai	5455
MPP Andrea Hazell	5455
Miss Monique Taylor.....	5455
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	5455
MPP Andrea Hazell	5455
Hon. Jill Dunlop	5455
Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens	5455

Mr. John Fraser	5455
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson	5455
MPP Jill Andrew	5455
Mr. Rick Byers	5455
Ms. Peggy Sattler	5455
Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon	5455
Mrs. Robin Martin.....	5455
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	5455
Hon. Stephen Lecce.....	5455
Ms. Bhutila Karpoche	5455
Mr. Adil Shamji	5455
Mr. John Jordan.....	5455
Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal	5456
Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam.....	5456
Hon. Michael Parsa	5456

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

Government accountability

Ms. Marit Stiles.....	5456
Hon. Paul Calandra	5456

Government accountability

Ms. Marit Stiles.....	5457
Hon. Paul Calandra	5457

Government accountability

Ms. Doly Begum	5458
Hon. Paul Calandra	5458
Hon. Doug Ford	5459

International trade

Ms. Laura Smith.....	5459
Hon. Victor Fedeli.....	5459

Small business

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam	5459
Hon. Paul Calandra	5459

Colleges

Mr. Will Bouma	5460
Hon. Jill Dunlop.....	5460

Ontario Place

Mr. Chris Glover	5461
Hon. Kinga Surma.....	5461
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	5461

Climate change

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon	5461
Hon. Andrea Khanjin	5461

Tourism

Ms. Natalie Pierre.....	5462
Hon. Neil Lumsden	5462

Government appointments	
Mr. Joel Harden.....	5463
Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria	5463
Consumer protection	
Ms. Goldie Ghamari.....	5463
Hon. Todd J. McCarthy.....	5463
Firefighters	
MPP Lise Vaugeois.....	5464
Hon. Graydon Smith	5464
Mr. Guy Bourgouin.....	5464
Housing / Economic development	
Mr. Will Bouma	5465
Hon. Rob Flack	5465
Health care	
Mme France Gélinas	5465
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	5465
Housing	
Mr. Trevor Jones	5466
Hon. Rob Flack	5466

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Change of Name Amendment Act, 2023, Bill 138, Ms. Scott; Ms. Smith / Loi de 2023 modifiant la Loi sur le changement de nom, projet de loi 138, Mme Scott; Mme Smith	
First reading agreed to.....	5466
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	5466
Rapati Design and Construction Ltd. Act, 2023, Bill Pr30, Mr. Dave Smith	
First reading agreed to.....	5466
592605 Ontario Limited Act, 2023, Bill Pr26, Mr. Bresee	
First reading agreed to.....	5466

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Rare diseases	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5466

Change of name	
Ms. Laura Smith.....	5467
Tenant protection	
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam	5467
Tenant protection	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5467
Social assistance	
Miss Monique Taylor.....	5467
Ontario Place	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5467
Social assistance	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5468
Climate change	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5468
Employment standards	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5468
Health care	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	5468

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Attacks on Israel / Attaques en Israël	
Mr. Dave Smith.....	5469
Mr. John Yakabuski	5471
Mr. Mike Harris	5473
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy	5474
Ms. Natalie Pierre.....	5476
Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto	5477
Mr. Nolan Quinn	5478
Hon. Stephen Lecce.....	5481
Hon. David Piccini	5484
Mr. Amarjot Sandhu.....	5485
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	5486
Mr. Ross Romano.....	5489
M. Stéphane Sarrazin	5490
Hon. Stan Cho	5492

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 18 October 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 18 octobre 2023

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MEMBER'S CONDUCT

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that this House expresses its disapproval of, and dissociates itself from, continued disreputable conduct by the member for Hamilton Centre, most specifically her use of social media to make anti-Semitic and discriminatory statements related to the existence of the State of Israel and its defence against Hamas terrorists; and

That this House demands the member desist from further conduct that is inappropriate and unbecoming of a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario; and

That the Speaker is authorized to not recognize the member for Hamilton Centre in the House until the member retracts and deletes her statements on social media and makes an apology in her place in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved government notice of motion number 19.

Further debate?

Hon. Paul Calandra: At the outset, let me just say that I will be splitting my time with the deputy House leader, the member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington, and the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, the member for Durham.

Fundamental to our system of government is the ability of a Parliament to maintain institutional respect and dignity so it can fulfill its constitutional duty. This is why, since the foundation of our Westminster system of Parliament, the two most significant rights which Parliaments have maintained are the collective rights to discipline and to regulate their internal affairs.

It is expected that members will hold varied and sometimes unpopular opinions. They may even compromise their own personal dignity at times, but what cannot be compromised is the respect for the institution itself. This is why over the course of history, when faced with conduct so unbecoming that it reflects upon the entire institution, Parliaments have sparingly but swiftly exercised their disciplinary powers to protect the institution from actions of any individual, whether a member of the public or a member of that Parliament. This is why I have put forward the motion of censure before us today.

It is my contention that the member for Hamilton Centre, by way of things she has done and left intentionally undone, has placed this House and its members in such disrepute that as a Parliament we have no choice but to act to defend the dignity of this institution on behalf of our constituents.

We know that in the early morning hours of October 7, unprovoked and by surprise, the terrorist organization Hamas launched a massive rocket barrage and manned incursion into the State of Israel from within the Gaza Strip. We know that the horrific attack has taken the lives of more than 1,400 innocent Israeli citizens and wounded thousands more. Further, Hamas continues to hold more than 200 hostages, who they forcibly abducted and secreted back into Gaza.

Only three days later, on October 10, the member for Hamilton Centre took to social media and posted an image of a statement on her MPP letterhead, bearing her name, her title and the Ontario coat of arms. Rather than condemning the terrorists' atrocities, as most of the Western world had already done, the member chose to justify the Hamas attacks on the basis of an anti-Semitic allegation that the mere existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavour.

I will paraphrase elements of the member's statement because, obviously, quoting it at great length will only further proliferate the member's hateful rhetoric. The member states outright that the existence of Israel is a generations-long occupation of Palestine, that Israel is an apartheid regime and that for its entire short history, it has furthered only violence through what she calls "settler colonialism." Further, the member ties her anti-Semitic ideological conjecture directly to the present war.

At no point in her offensive tirade does the member acknowledge that the present conflict exists only because of an unprovoked terrorist attack aimed at Israeli citizens, civilians, and carried out by a militant terrorist group with a core mandate to annihilate the Jewish homeland. The member's musings at any other time would still have been offensive and unacceptable for any elected representative of the people of Ontario, but to make them in association of a violent act of unrepentant and unprovoked terrorism is repugnant and intolerable to the greatest extent of those words.

On October 7, more innocent Jewish men, women, children and infants were killed—Mr. Speaker, this is, I think, an important part. On October 7, on the day of the terrorist attack, more women, children and infants were killed than at any other day since the Holocaust. It was not enough for the member for Hamilton Centre that their families and friends would never see their loved ones

again. She felt justified in spreading her belief that the victims and their surviving friends and families were in fact somehow responsible for their own tragic fate. Inexplicably, the member's statements, whether intentional or impetuous, blame the mere existence of the State of Israel for the thousands of rockets launched at civilians and the invasion of thousands of militants who killed, raped and kidnapped with no regard for the dignity of human life.

The context, as well as the content, is unbelievably offensive, which is why I have seized the House with consideration of this rare motion of censure. The member's own leader recognized the blatant inappropriateness the very same day the statement was posted and quickly called upon the member to apologize and retract it. For unknown reasons, the member took more than 24 hours to post a half-hearted apology, buried in the comment section of her own post. Additionally, her so-called apology ultimately reaffirmed her position against Israel's right to self-defence. At present, the member has still not deleted the original statement, which has now been seen more than 3.1 million times. The NDP leader has inexplicably changed her position on the appropriateness of the member's offensive remarks, and now actively defends her in the face of pressure for real action from the press and the public.

In early 2022, when the past member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston made derogatory and racist remarks about a federal cabinet minister and used social media to post messages inciting violence, this House swiftly came together to unanimously censure him in much the same words as the motion before us today. At the time, the House ordered apologies be made by the member. It asked the Speaker to assess the sincerity of such apologies and ordered the member to desist from further conduct unbecoming of an MPP.

0910

No apologies were ever made by Mr. Hillier, but the position of this House disavowing the member's conduct as being unacceptable will stay on the member's record forever. Today, we are asking that the House apply the same standard as it has done in the past.

No one questions the inappropriateness of the member's statement, not even her own party leader, who was one of the first to condemn it. The member's statement received almost immediate condemnation from the people of Ontario. I believe it is beneficial to review some of the condemnation so that members of the House can be fully aware how the member has disparaged the reputation of this House. I will read you some quotes, Madam Speaker.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs:

"Israeli babies beheaded, Israeli young women raped, more than 100 Israeli men, women, & children kidnapped, and 900 & counting murdered at the hands of # Hamas terrorists and this is what Ontario MPP @SarahJama_ has to say.

"This statement is *filled* with lies that will do nothing to create peace & will only serve to foment hatred against #Canada's Jewish community."

"We call for the immediate removal of Jama."

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member has to withdraw the unparliamentarily language.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Okay, I withdraw.

Another quote from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs:

"It has now been almost 24 hours since" the member "was asked to retract her statement, and yet the post remains up.

"It is clear" the member "shows no remorse for her heinous remarks.

"We are calling on" the NDP leader "to show leadership and remove" the member "from her caucus."

Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs:

The "Ontario NDP leader ... called for" the member "to retract her *egregious* & harmful statement.

"It remains online. She did not retract it. This apology—buried in the comments—is far too little, and far too late."

The member "must be removed."

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center:

"We are outraged by this statement from" the member "and her refusal to acknowledge the atrocities committed by the terror group Hamas against Israeli civilians....

"Not for the first time, she has caused hurt and harm to the Jewish community and brought shame to Ontarians, including her constituents in Hamilton Centre. It's long past time for the @OntarioNDP to take decisive action and remove her from its caucus, once and for all."

B'nai Brith Canada on October 10:

The member "has never properly apologized to the Jewish community for her prior offensive statements. Now, as our community faces an onslaught of barbaric terrorism, your comments are void of even one word of condemnation against Hamas.

"You do not deserve to sit in the opposition's caucus in Ontario ... we call for her immediate removal from the @OntarioNDP."

Andrea Freedman, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa: "It is appalling that that particular MPP is choosing to blame the victims in all of this. Hamas is a terrorist entity, labelled a terrorist entity by our government. They conducted a massacre of civilians. They went into people's homes, murdered and slaughtered entire families. They took babies captive, they took senior citizens, ill people, captive back to the Gaza Strip. This MPP should be ashamed, and she should be censured by her party."

Hershl D. Berman, 40-year member of the NDP, former federal and provincial NDP candidate:

"This week" the member "caused great harm to the Jewish community in Ontario. While Hamas was attacking our friends and family she posted remarks on her 'X' page that were inappropriate and deeply hurtful. She was asked to withdraw them but she did not, and her subsequent statements were inadequate and unacceptable.

"This is the latest incident in a pattern of anti-Semitic behaviour that predates her election to the Ontario NDP caucus. Her actions demonstrate that she is neither fit to

“speak for the New Democratic Party nor to hold elected office.”

The public sentiment is clear and the member's actions indeed reflect upon all of us. As we have observed recently with the unfortunate decision of Speaker Rota to honour a former Nazi in the House of Commons, the actions of individual members of Parliament can challenge the dignity of the House as a whole and always must be taken seriously.

Speaker Rota chose to resign as a result of his error and noted poignantly in his resignation that “the work of the House is above any of us.” The Premier has called for the member for Hamilton Centre to resign, and I agree that that would also be appropriate in this instance, but this is a decision obviously for the member and for another day and is not what this motion is about today.

What remains before us is an apology to this House for bringing it into disrepute and the deletion of the offensive statement so it is clear she has truly retracted it. If that is too great a burden for the member for Hamilton Centre, then in my view, she will have confirmed to the House that she in fact stands by her shameful position and ought not to be recognized further in this place.

Madam Speaker, as I said earlier in my comments, when the statement was first put on X, people moved very quickly to condemn the statement. As I said, in fact, the leader of the NDP herself said this in a press release on October 11, 2023: The MPP's “statement yesterday did not unequivocally decry the violence against Israelis by Hamas and it caused harm to Jewish people who are feeling pain and fear right now. It did not reflect our party's positions on the war and was sent without approval.” It goes on to say, “At the same time, I have made it clear that all members of our caucus condemn Hamas's terror attacks, and we stand in support of the federal NDP's position in calling for an end to further bloodshed.”

That was the NDP leader's position on October 11 when she was clear and unequivocal that the member's statement was wrong, when she asked the member to apologize and she asked the member to retract that statement. We can debate the sincerity of the apology, and I know that's in part what this is about today. The member then failed to go that extra step. Not only was the apology, in my estimation, a half-hearted apology at best, the member then doubled down and left the statement there, a statement that the NDP leader herself claims is hurtful, a statement that we have heard from countless people, including former NDP candidates, is hurtful and brings the member and this House into disrepute. The statement remains.

In fact, the member has gone even further and has pinned the statement to her X feed. What does that mean? That means that that statement is pinned, and every time somebody goes to that feed, they need not look for it; it's there permanently pasted to the top of her page. Madam Speaker, I think that speaks volumes of the intentions of the member for Hamilton Centre.

There can be no doubt, as I said at the early part of my words, sometimes we are all passionate about things that

we believe in. All of us are. The place would be a very boring House if we were not passionate. Sometimes, we are forced to make apologies. In fact, one of my worst days in politics was an apology to the House for something I did wrong. In fact, the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas is fond of sometimes screaming that and reminding me across the floor of that. I consider that one of my worst days in politics, but I did what was right for the institution and ultimately for myself, Madam Speaker. I made a mistake; I apologized.

In instance after instance, members who have made mistakes have gotten in their place out of respect for the institution and the dignity of the House and have apologized. As I said earlier on in my speech, we moved very quickly when the former member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston, Mr. Hillier, made comments unbecoming of a member of the House, horrific comments attacking a federal Muslim cabinet minister. This House moved very quickly to bring forward a motion of censure to that member.

0920

And yes, that member never came back into this place after that censure. He never came back—he never apologized, he never fulfilled the motion that we brought forward—and frankly, Madam Speaker, I think this House is better because of that. I think this House spoke very clearly at that time that we will not tolerate that, and I thought that was a good day for Parliament, if a bad day for the member.

Ultimately, that is what this motion before us would have us do. It would have us recognize that in this place we are held to a higher standard; that in this place, while we can debate our positions on certain things—and we should debate. You've heard me say it many, many times that we should be fierce in how we debate, that we should be serious in how we debate, but at all times we have to remember that it is the institution and the people we represent.

Now, why is this so important? Well, we heard speeches yesterday that, I think, were—when I heard the Solicitor General speak and the Minister of the Environment speak yesterday about the very real impact that this was having on their family, their friends and on themselves, one could not help but feel not only touched but somehow a desire to participate in the debate to show some form of understanding and some form of respect.

In this instance, Madam Speaker, I again refer back to what happened on that day. There can be no discussion about what happened. A terrorist group, Hamas, a terrorist—we are all members of provincial Parliament. Parliament has decided, the government of Canada has decided—which I support, and presumably all members should support—that they are a terrorist organization. A terrorist organization broke through borders, helicoptered or flew or parachuted in, crossed the borders, started at a music festival and slaughtered people—slaughtered them. They went into villages. Terrorists did this: They went into villages and slaughtered people.

The horrific images of babies and families wiped out, the images of citizens—not soldiers—in shelters, trying to

avoid conflict and grenades being thrown in to kill all of them, that was perpetrated by terrorists. The images of captives being dragged back across the border, kidnapped, held as hostages, paraded through the streets of Gaza, bloodied, it was perpetrated by terrorists.

This is not about how people might feel about the existence of the Israeli state, because frankly, those who deny the Israeli state has not only the right to exist—that in itself is anti-Semitic and discriminatory, obviously. But this was perpetrated by terrorists—the most horrific actions against the Israeli and Jewish people since the Holocaust. There should be no doubt in anybody’s mind about where we stand on that incident on that day. There is no confusion on this. This is not a debate about Middle East politics; this is a debate about a terrorist action that has killed and injured thousands of people in the most brutal of ways. I think it’s six Canadians who have been killed in this action.

We cannot debate whether that is appropriate or not, and we should be unified—Madam Speaker, I would suggest to you—in condemning that. We should be unified in condemning that. There is not one member of this House who should justify that in any way. And when a member does that, they bring themselves and, more importantly, the institution into disrepute, Madam Speaker. As I said, we refer back to what happened in Ottawa. We refer back to what happened in Ottawa: an instance where a Speaker brought in a former Nazi. This incident, rightfully so, made its way around the globe—around the globe. For people who don’t think that what we do here can have an impact, I suggest to them that they are wrong.

I think the member for Hamilton Centre is fully aware of the impact that her statement would have, and that is why the statement is still online, that is why the statement has been pinned and that is why the member is unwilling to apologize, because it is meant to be hurtful. It is meant to make the statement that she is trying to make. It is a statement that her own leader has suggested is inappropriate and should not have been allowed to stay.

Yesterday the leader of the NDP said that, somehow, we’re trying to make a political point, that this is playing politics. We weren’t playing politics when we sanctioned the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston. We spoke in a unified voice. Presumably, if I take the leader of the NDP at her word, on October 11, the leader of the NDP wasn’t playing politics when she demanded a retraction and an apology from her own member. I took the Leader of the Opposition at her word, that she understood the seriousness of what the member for Hamilton Centre was doing.

Now, it is up to the Leader of the Opposition to explain to this House, to the Jewish community, to the people of the province why she has changed her mind, why she is not doing what this House must do on behalf of all of the people of the province. This House is now seized with the motion to censure a member, to seek an apology, to retract a hurtful statement—acknowledged by the Leader of the Opposition—because the Leader of the Opposition refuses to do the basic things that a leader must do.

The leader must first and foremost respect the institution of Parliament. We all take an oath when we are sworn

in here. We all understand that we are representatives of the people and that long after we are gone, this place will still be here. And while we debate fiercely, we rent the seats here for a short period of time and somebody else replaces us after. It is Parliament that always must be held in the highest esteem. When one of our members fails that test, it is important that we all work together to ensure the dignity of this House.

Madam Speaker, I won’t belabour it. I will leave it at that.

In closing, I will just say that I hope the member will do the right thing eventually. I hope the member will truly apologize. I hope the member will take down the statement. I hope the member will reconsider her pinning of the statement on her X feed. And I hope she will consider the voices of the people who have told her that this is harming them.

We have had other instances in this House, other members on the opposition benches who have done similar hateful things. I’d like to think that they have learned from that mistake. In one instance, I think there has been some growth and a better understanding of the issues. But we cannot, Madam Speaker, as a Parliament allow this to stand, and that this has gone on with the member for this long is now forcing us to act quickly in this House.

0930

We will be seized with this until we come to a conclusion on this, Madam Speaker, because it is that important. That is the importance of maintaining the dignity of this Parliament above all else. With that, Madam Speaker, I will yield the floor to the member for Durham, and I thank you very much for your attention.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): I recognize the deputy government House leader.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Good morning, Speaker. Thank you. It’s a privilege and an honour to rise in this chamber to represent my beautiful, safe communities of Chatham-Kent–Leamington.

Speaker, I have an amendment to the motion. I move that the motion be amended by deleting the words “defence against Hamas terrorists” and replacing them with “defensive action in the face of reprehensible violence by Hamas.”

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Chatham-Kent–Leamington has moved the motion that the motion be amended by deleting the words “defence against Hamas terrorists” and replacing them with “defensive action in the face of reprehensible violence by Hamas.”

Further debate?

Mr. Trevor Jones: I’ll cede my time to the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): I recognize the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I want to begin by moving for a further amendment to the further amendment. I respectfully ask, Speaker, that the amendment be amended

by adding the words “the terrorist organization” before “ Hamas.”

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery has moved the amendment to the amendment that the amendment is amended by adding the words “the terrorist organization” before “ Hamas.”

I recognize the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Speaker, we are here today, first and foremost, to reiterate our commitment to stand up against terror and violence and against hate and anti-Semitism. Let me be clear: Ontario and, indeed, all of Canada will forever stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Israel in the defence of their homeland, no matter how vicious Hamas terrorists might be in their efforts to spread death and destruction. We can never lose sight of that commitment and we must never allow for any room in this assembly, nor in this province, for any support or sympathy for the sadistic terrorists who are responsible for the murder of innocent Israeli citizens.

I am appalled by the statements made by the NDP member for Hamilton Centre, statements that seek to justify the murder, torture and rape of women, children and the elderly at the hands of Hamas terrorists. I join our government and our Premier, the Honourable Doug Ford, in calling for the leader of the official opposition to remove the member for Hamilton Centre from her caucus and to condemn her well-documented record of anti-Semitic statements as nothing less than unacceptable.

Ultimately, this is a stark reminder of the NDP’s disturbing history of anti-Semitism. So much so, Speaker, that in an article written by former NDP riding president Emma Cunningham in January of last year, we can clearly see that time and again, the NDP have vetted and recruited candidates to represent their party despite their recorded histories of anti-Semitism.

In 2015, NDP candidate Alex Johnstone admitted she had never heard of Auschwitz after being questioned for making mocking remarks on social media about photos of the concentration camp.

In 2018, the NDP nominated Tasleem Riaz, who had seemingly shared a pro-Hitler post on her public social media channels—something that the NDP vetting team appears to have forgotten to scan for.

And then, in 2020, NDP nominees accused Israel of stealing vaccines—and even had no idea that Auschwitz was a real place at one point.

And then there is former, of course, Ajax mayor from the region of Durham, Steve Parish, who was dropped as a candidate for the NDP in the last provincial election after it was revealed that when he was mayor in 2007, he presided over the naming of a street after a high-ranking Nazi officer from the Second World War. To make matters even worse, in 2020 he spoke against changing the name of that street at a town council meeting, despite opposition from local Jewish community members.

Speaker, the failure of the leader of the NDP to remove the member for Hamilton Centre from her caucus is

nothing less than a failure in moral leadership. And it paints a clear picture for all Ontarians to see that the NDP is either acting incompetently by failing to vet anti-Semites from their list of nominees and candidates or that it simply does not care about our province’s Jewish communities and their long history of persecution and oppression. Either alternative is sad, Speaker, but we must shine a light on the complacency that the NDP members and its leader demonstrate by allowing this anti-Semitic record to continue even today through the member for Hamilton Centre. I think that the NDP voters and Hamilton Centre citizens expected better and deserve better.

Speaker, the monsters responsible for the killing of innocent Israeli civilians are not freedom fighters, they are not activists, they are not a government and they are not a resistance movement. They are sadistic terrorists bent on genocide, and to mistake them for anything else is nothing short of categorically abhorrent—something which the NDP member for Hamilton Centre should be ashamed of and held accountable for.

There is no place in Ontario for sympathy with anti-Semites and we must continue to condemn anyone who chooses to support—much less celebrate—the terrorists responsible for this wave of discriminatory violence. I am particularly troubled and disgusted by reports of recent hate rallies right here in our province celebrating the killing and kidnapping of Israelis. These so-called demonstrations are a reprehensible display of hatred and anti-Semitism that brings about nothing less than our strongest opposition.

I was also disturbed to see reports on local news of anti-Semitic threats made against a Hebrew school here in Toronto just last week. This terrorist threat to target our children, our educators and their families is despicable, and it results from statements like those of the member for Hamilton Centre—and every member of this House must be unequivocal, therefore, in loudly condemning any terrorist sympathizers, wherever they may be.

I do want to take a brief moment to applaud the efforts of police services from across Ontario to increase their vigilance amidst fears of potential violence against Jewish communities. I also want to applaud my good friend and colleague the Solicitor General, the Honourable Michael Kerzner, for his steadfast leadership in ensuring that our brave officers have the direction and resources necessary to keep our communities safe amidst the disturbing threats to the safety of our Jewish communities. The impact that Hamas’s terrorist attacks have had on them cannot be overstated, Speaker.

It is those very same reports of threats to schools and rallies celebrating death that show the true face of anti-Semitism. That is precisely why we must continue doing everything in our power to protect and support the Jewish people as they fear for their safety.

0940

Now more than ever, this is the time for our province and our world to reaffirm our solidarity with Israel and to defend its right to protect itself and its people in accordance with international law. The principle of a

state's right to defend itself from all aggressors, both foreign and domestic, is a fundamental right of any sovereign state, and Israel's right to defend itself within the bounds of international law must be respected. Our support must be loud and clear, so that every man, woman, child and senior fearing for their lives and safety knows that they will never stand alone in the face of terror, whether at home in Israel or at home here in our province of Ontario.

Let me be clear about what we are talking about with this motion and our remarks in the House today. Gershon Baskin, a paragon of the Israeli left—described as such in today's *Globe and Mail*—67 years old, an individual who always sought peace and mediation as a solution: Even after the deadly attacks by the Hamas terrorists on October 7, even after that, he attempted to reach out to try to mediate, and yet he has concluded as a result, from his home in Jerusalem, according to today's *Globe and Mail*, "After what they did on Saturday, there's no doubt in my mind that the end result of this war has to be the non-existence of Hamas as a governing body in Gaza and as a military threat to Israel." Just as the Nazi governing apparatus—a hideous apparatus, as described by Sir Winston Churchill—it is a military threat to the world, a terrorist organization filled with hate and anti-Semitism. Just as the Nazi organization had to be removed as the governing body and as a military threat, so must Hamas.

That's what this motion is about. Anyone who sees it any other way is morally wrong, and the member for Hamilton Centre is therefore—by making those statements and maintaining those statements and pinning those statements—acting in way that is dishonourable to this House, to the traditions of Parliament, conduct unbecoming a member of this House. That is the reason why I support this motion.

I am concerned about the effect of these statements for the safety of the hundreds of Canadians currently left in the region, for the safety of Canadians and members of our Jewish community here at home. We know that at least six Canadians have died at the hands of Hamas terrorists, and at least two others are missing since the beginning of the October 7th attacks. Efforts are under way to safely evacuate the remaining Canadians from the region and find those who are missing. I pray that we are able to locate those who are missing and bring everyone back home to safety as quickly as possible.

The sad reality, however, is that these terrorists are only interested in creating more death and chaos, and they will stop at nothing to damage Israel and her allies at every turn. After all, their promise to eradicate Israel and its people is an inherent part of the genocidal goals of Hamas; let there be no confusion about that. Let's not forget that, in their original charter, Hamas goes on to say that Israel will exist and continue to exist only until the very moment that they are obliterated, eliminated. Hamas is dedicated to terror, violence and hate. That is the difference.

The member's statement attempts to confuse and ignore or sanitize that reality. That is why the statement is unbecoming, and deserving of condemnation.

As the *Globe and Mail* reported one week after the October 7th attacks, it is reminiscent of "the standard catechism of the hard left's visceral loathing of Israel and Israelis." The *Globe* editorial board came out specifically naming the member for Hamilton Centre in its October 14th editorial, calling it "moral myopia," moral blindness, "nebulous language" that is "a tell ... reminiscent of an earlier generation of leftist apologists who disinfected the crimes of Stalinism with sterile phrases." And yet the leader of the NDP continues to refuse to remove her from caucus.

The Honourable Lincoln Alexander once said, our former Lieutenant Governor, that when it comes to any matter that we take on as members in the House, our duty is not to be just average; our duty is to set a higher example for others to follow. To quote Lincoln Alexander about setting a higher example, he said, "I did. You can. You will." If we pass this motion, we will follow that call for a higher example, that call to condemn comments that sterilize violence, hate and anti-Semitism.

It's important that we call upon the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the NDP, to remove that member from caucus, because to do nothing is to be complicit. As Dr. Martin Luther King noted, about how evil can flourish, those who remain silent in the face of evil are complicit in that evil and perpetuate that evil. That is why it is incumbent upon this House to adopt this motion. That is why it is incumbent upon the NDP to remove the member for Hamilton Centre from her caucus, because to do nothing, to remain silent, to look the other way and to be morally blind is to be complicit in the evil and all that stems from it.

People across this province, across Canada and around the world are aware of these hurtful and hateful statements and the evil that arises from them. We must in this House be clear about our position, and so must the leader of the NDP. We must have moral clarity. We must have that leadership.

When it comes to Hamas—because that is what we are talking about; that is what the member's statements attempt to forgive or overlook, that commitment to hate and anti-Semitism, violence and terror—there will be those who continue to loudly deny the terrorist nature of Hamas. They will tell you that this is a form of resistance. They will tell you that they are merely fighting to be free and represent the Palestinian people. But we know better. We know better than to allow ourselves to be led astray by statements like the member for Hamilton Centre made. We know better than to be misled by those who wish to hide and sanitize the crimes of terrorists.

Hamas has murdered entire families, killed parents in front of their children and slaughtered hundreds who gathered for concerts or just to socialize. Hamas members have even hid behind civilians and used them as human shields, in contravention of the rules of engagement, only to spread as much death and destruction as possible. Yet we have the "yes, but" crowd, who try, as apologists for crime and terrorism have decades ago, to distract people from the truth. Well, we're here to speak about the truth and to condemn misinformation and distractions.

The truth to those who wish to justify terror is not something they can hide from. So statements like those of the member for Hamilton Centre must be challenged and must be opposed with every fibre of our being. History has taught us all too well that the cost of silence can be most destructive. So we cannot stay silent. We will not stay silent. It is why we must speak out to protect the right of Israeli civilians in the face of this vicious assault on their very lives.

For 75 years, Israel has been the sole guarantor of security for Jewish people around the world. For those 75 years, they have made it a core tenet of their state to never allow the past to repeat itself. So why would we, by staying silent, by failing to condemn and by trying to sanitize what is really going on or looking the other way? We would be contributing to the past repeating itself.

0950

I urge this House to support this motion to ensure that that's not the case. Because if we don't speak out, we will be failing to follow the words and example of Pastor Martin Niemöller. He was an individual who lived in Nazi Germany who spoke out against it too late and was imprisoned in one of the concentration camps. He lived a long life after the war and after he gained his freedom. He talked about the need to speak out, even when you are not part of the group that is being persecuted, opposed or subjected to terror. If we do not speak out for Israel now, if we do not condemn those statements that condone terrorism, hate and violence against innocent people, then we will be in the same position as Pastor Niemöller was: For "when they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me." Let us not be that passivist, that individual or that Parliament that looks the other way.

History teaches us that we must stand loud and strong to condemn violence and those who would condone violence or categorize it in a way that sanitizes it. Terror is terror. Hamas's terror and commitment to violence and hate is akin to the hideous apparatus of the Nazis.

Now, it was through the strength and resilience of the people of Israel that they gradually were able to achieve some of that longed-for security, despite the threats to their borders from Hamas, Hezbollah and the regime in Iran. At that time, when the world was only just reeling from the aftermath of the Holocaust and when Israel was just a young state, all of what they have come to achieve today seemed unthinkable. But through the same kind of solidarity and perseverance we see in their support today, they overcame the challenges laid before them and built a home for themselves from nothing.

We have now seen them bring about real attempts at long-lasting peace by mending old rivalries, like they did when working to normalize relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain through the Abraham Accords, and even moving forward towards a normalized relationship with Saudi Arabia. It is this precise ability that Israel has had for decades to overcome and overachieve that they have garnered the hatred of enemies like the terrorists of Hamas, who have decided to throw a wrench in these important negotiations in the region through the senseless and brutal violence we are witnessing today.

This is where the inherent right of Israel to defend itself within the bounds of international law is so important: their right to go after Hamas; their right to locate, rescue and bring home their hostages; their right to deter further incursions; and, perhaps most importantly, their right to build security and peace for the people of Israel and the region as a whole for the long term.

Again, in the words of the peacemaker, the mediator Gershon Baskin from his home in Jerusalem: Just like the Nazis as a governing apparatus had to be removed, "the end result of this war has to be the non-existence of Hamas as a governing body in Gaza and as a military threat to Israel."

October 7 is a moment among some of the darkest moments in human history. We cannot let this dark moment be the subject of apologist language that invalidates the pain felt by the Jewish people over centuries. It is this same kind of language that is a slap in the face to the families of the Israeli civilians who have died since Hamas began their reign of terror.

Speaker, my heart goes out to the victims of this terror and their loved ones. The people of Israel deserve better than to live in fear. Our own Jewish communities here in Ontario deserve better than to live in fear. All deserve better than having to justify their very existence to the rest of the world—particularly Israel and Israelis.

This moment is among the moments when true evil rears its ugly head, unleashing itself upon the unsuspecting, upon the innocent men, women, children and the elderly, aided and abetted by narratives that are wrong and unfair and misleading. We cannot stand idly by and allow this act of sheer evil to go unchecked. We cannot allow it to be aided and abetted by hurtful statements from those in this House, like the member for Hamilton Centre, or anyone else in our civil society in our province of Ontario. Just as generations before us, we cannot allow war crimes to go unanswered or unchecked. We cannot allow them to exist here at home, in Ontario. Our precious freedom, our precious democracy, the precious harmony that exists in our civil, diverse society is at risk if we do nothing or say nothing or fail to swiftly and clearly condemn, if we fail to show moral leadership in this dark time. Whether it is through violence and terror or through hate and anti-Semitism, these manifestations of evil have no place in our province or in our world, and they deserve clear condemnation by this House as representative of Ontario's society.

I implore my colleagues, Speaker, and I implore every Ontarian that during this time of crisis for the people of Israel, we do not remain silent in the face of terror, violence and anti-Semitism. This is the time for strong moral clarity. Our Premier, the Honourable Doug Ford, has said so clearly and unequivocally. We in the government stand with him. We stand in favour of condemning the statements of the member for Hamilton Centre. We stand in favour of urging the leader of her party to remove her from caucus.

And let's make no mistake about the distinction between Palestine and Hamas, just as there was a distinc-

tion between Germany and the hideous Nazi apparatus. This motion is about statements that purport to distract us from what Hamas is really about. This motion is about condemning language and statements that would do anything less than ensure the removal of Hamas as a governing body in the Gaza Strip and as a threat to Israel. This is about condemning Hamas for the hateful terrorist organization that it is. It has no place in our international society that must be based on peace and harmony and love and respect.

The member for Hamilton Centre and some who have supported her talk about freedom or freedom of speech. St. John Paul, formerly Pope John Paul II, spoke about freedom. He grew up in Poland when it was occupied by the Nazis, and later, the oppressive Soviet Union. When he spoke about freedom, St. John Paul said that freedom consists not in doing what we like but in having the right to do what we ought to do. Freedom of speech is like that. Just because we have the right to say it in our free society doesn't mean we ought to say it. But when it is said, when misleading comments condoning or indirectly supporting a terrorist organization like Hamas, when statements are allowed to remain public and are even pinned, as those statements by the member for Hamilton Centre have been, remaining unchecked even by her own leader, when that happens, we have to ask ourselves, is it fair to have unlimited free speech in any way, shape or form just because we can do it, or ought we to stand up against it and condemn it? Having freedom, as St. John Paul indicated, is having the right and the freedom to do what is right, to say what is right and to condemn what is wrong.

There are times when moral relativism, when situational ethics are not appropriate. This is that time. There is a right and a wrong. The member for Hamilton Centre is wrong. The member for Hamilton Centre, by her statements remaining up and pinned, is contributing to the evil that is Hamas and all that goes with it, including the threat to the safety and security of our Jewish communities here in Ontario. It must be taken down. There must be an apology, and she must be removed from caucus. That is going to take moral leadership from the leader of the NDP.

1000

I'm not sure what the plans are among the members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, whether there will be a free vote; whether some will be courageous enough to defy the silence of their leader, the inaction of their leader. But I urge those members—I'm a relatively new member of this House, but I believe that debate in this House matters. I believe that we can and do listen to each other and can be persuaded by each other.

I urge the members opposite to put partisanship or loyalty to their leader aside and support this motion. There are times when partisanship must be set aside. There are times of moral clarity. There are times when there was a clear right and wrong. There are times when it's not "yes, but." This is one of those times.

We can never lose sight of the history of what brought Israel to be an independent state, that it is the only democracy in the Middle East, that it has threats to its very

existence and that that threat today is coming largely from one organization, Hamas, that is committed to the destruction, the obliteration of Israel, committed to doing so by violence and terror.

The statements of the member for Hamilton Centre are contributing to the myth, to the distraction, to the apology for Hamas, under the guise of freedom of speech. It cannot be allowed to remain the subject of anything but full condemnation by all of us in this House.

If we choose to do nothing, if we choose partisanship or loyalty to a leader over support for this motion, then we are what Dr. Martin Luther King warned us about. To be silent in the face of evil is to contribute to that evil, to perpetuate that evil.

I urge the members opposite to join us and to join the members of the unrecognized party in this House and make support for this motion unanimous, and whether it be before or after the adoption of this motion, I urge the members opposite to urge their leader to remove the member for Hamilton Centre from their caucus in accordance with the intent of this motion.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The days since October 7 have been some of the darkest and most difficult many of us have ever experienced as legislators, as leaders in our communities, as people of conscience. As we have watched the news and our social media feeds, the horrific images from Israel and Gaza have triggered a cascade of emotions, from horror to outrage to grief to anger to shame. It has been agonizing to witness but impossible to look away.

For some of us, Speaker, those with connections to Israel and Palestine, these emotions come from a deeply personal place. We heard yesterday in this House moving and powerful words from MPPs who are Jewish, who are heartsick with worry about family and friends in Israel and how the heinous terrorist attack on innocent Israeli civilians has been experienced as an attack on all Jews. We share the anguish that was expressed here in this House and across our communities about the violent taking of hostages and the devastating loss of more than 1,400 lives to Hamas terrorism, including young people, grandmothers, pregnant women, babies. We categorically condemn these despicable acts. We recognize the unimaginable pain and trauma caused by Hamas terrorists for Jewish communities globally and right here in Ontario.

We also heard during yesterday's debate moving and powerful words about the humanitarian nightmare that is facing innocent Palestinian civilians, who bear no responsibility for the actions of Hamas: 3,000 Palestinians have been killed, many of them children; 10,000 people in Gaza have been wounded; hundreds of thousands are being displaced by an evacuation order but have nowhere to go or are unable to leave. Food, water, fuel and electricity have been cut off. A hospital has been bombed. Borders have been blockaded.

Speaker, the motion before us this morning calls on this House to censure the member for Hamilton Centre for a social media post that caused harm. It failed to acknow-

ledge the terrorist attack by Hamas, the war crimes that were committed on innocent Israeli civilians. The member apologized publicly for her statement and posted a clarification, recognizing the harm. She reaffirmed her agreement with our party's position that strongly and unreservedly condemns the criminal terrorism perpetrated by Hamas, while also recognizing the suffering of innocent Palestinians and the war crimes that are happening in Gaza right now in real time.

We have called on the government of Canada to advocate for the immediate release of all hostages, including Canadians; the protection of all civilians in accordance with international law; a ceasefire and end to the siege and bombardment of Gaza; and to ensure the urgent, life-saving humanitarian assistance that Gazans so desperately need. Anything less is a betrayal of our values and our humanity.

On Monday I attended the reception held by the Council of Ontario Universities. I spoke to a university president and asked about the priorities and challenges her institution is facing. She said that, without doubt, the biggest challenge right now, the challenge that has been consuming her executive team, is ensuring the safety of students and staff on campus in the wake of the conflict.

Globally and here in our province, we have seen a disturbing rise of hate, an increase of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, the need for increased police presence near Jewish community spaces and places of worship, and the vandalism of mosques. Members of this House need to ask themselves, will this motion help students on Ontario campuses feel more secure? Will silencing a member who has family in Palestine and who has apologized for a social media post that she realized caused harm—will this contribute to de-escalating the tensions that are growing in Ontario? Will it help make Ontario's Jewish, Arab and Muslim communities feel less at risk?

The answer is no. Like the motion that was debated yesterday and will come to the floor again this afternoon, this is a divisive motion that is driven more by a desire to distract from their own scandals and RCMP investigation than by their obligation to support Ontarians during a time of incredible trauma and stress in the face of horrific pain and suffering that will only get worse.

The motion also sets a dangerous precedent, Speaker, by effectively barring a member from participation in this House, from the ability to speak and advocate on behalf of the people who elected her just six months ago, because the government does not like the apology she posted on social media. This is a drastic step that should not be taken lightly.

As public officials, our words matter. Our actions matter. We have a choice before us today with the motions that will be debated now and later this afternoon. We can either use our words and our actions to unify Ontarians and promote harmony, or to inflame and incite further discord. We have a responsibility not to raise the political temperature here in Ontario, not to put Ontarians at greater risk. We urge this government: Do not exploit this horrific conflict for their own political gain. Now is a time to bring

people together, to acknowledge the pain and advocate for peace and an end to this bloodshed that has already taken too many lives in Israel and Palestine.

1010

Speaker, the official opposition cannot and will not support this motion.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: It's a dangerous business, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no telling where you get swept off to.

I come from a quiet place in the world, Anderdon township. I like it a lot, and it's a place where nothing unexpected ever happens.

When I was younger and I had a lot less responsibility but I did have enough money to buy my own plane tickets, I got it into my mind that I should do some travelling, so I decided to leave Anderdon township, and I got swept off to a place far away from where I grew up. I had never been there before. I didn't know if I would come back, and I knew if I did come back, I would never be the same and I would have a tale or two to tell. This tale directly relates to the motion that's before us today.

As I said, I had enough money to buy my own plane ticket, and so I took a plane halfway around the world, and I landed at Tel Aviv international airport. I got into a "sherut"—that's a taxi—and I started travelling to the city of Jerusalem.

The first thing I noticed was the traffic signs. I had anticipated that the traffic signs would be written in Hebrew, but they were written in Hebrew and Arabic and English. That's when I learned that Arabic is actually one of the official languages of the State of Israel.

Now, I knew that there had been a very difficult history between Arabs and Jews, and so that's why I was surprised to learn that Arabic is actually one of the official languages of Israel. Later, I learned that there are actually two million Arabs living in the State of Israel, and they enjoy all the rights and privileges that we enjoy. They enjoy rights and privileges, and are protected under the Israeli constitution.

The "sherut" took me to the city of Jerusalem, but not the new part of the city; the old part of the city, the historic part. I got dropped off at the Damascus Gate, which is the principal entrance to the old historic city, and I walked in. I walked in because I thought it was appropriate to walk in.

It was dark when I arrived. I was a stranger in a foreign land with a suitcase, walking around in the dark, trying to find my way. Eventually, I found the Via Dolorosa, which is the "way of sorrow." I got lost. I got turned around. I passed some soldiers. Eventually, I found the door I was looking for. It was the door to the Ecce Homo convent. "Ecce homo" is a Latin phrase. It means "behold the man," which purportedly is what Pontius Pilate uttered one day during his duties.

I stayed with the Sisters of Zion at the Ecce Homo convent on the Via Dolorosa for three months. These are a remarkable group of women, nuns who have dedicated

their lives to promoting interfaith understanding in the Holy Land. When I stayed with them, I met remarkable people. I met a strong Palestinian woman by the name—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you to the member from Essex. I'm sorry for the interruption. It is now time for members' statements.

Debate deemed adjourned.

VISITOR

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): We also want to recognize Peter Shurman, the member for Thornhill for the 39th and 40th Parliaments, who is in the Speaker's gallery.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHALLAH FOR #ISRAEL

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: This past Sunday evening, I attended the Challah for #Israel, a prayer event hosted by Jewish women from Chabad Newmarket. I was honoured to pray alongside women in my community for all the innocent lives that were lost and for those in captivity in Israel.

The tragic loss of life and the terror invoked among the men, women, families and children in Israel is beyond words. I want you all to know that I condemn Hamas's heinous acts on the people of Israel. Racism, hate and discrimination have no place in Ontario and the safety of all communities has, and always remains, of the utmost importance.

During this event, I had the privilege of kneading the challah dough, reading a memorial prayer, listening to prayers in English and in Hebrew. When we were praying, the challah dough rose and then we braided the dough. Today, I believe the braided challah has become a beacon of support, hope and prayer for the people of Israel and reflects the heartfelt sorrow we feel for those who have lost their loved ones.

I pray for a peaceable outcome for all people. For all those innocent souls lost, I pray that their souls, through the mercy of God, may rest in peace.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING WEEK

M^{me} France Gélinas: This week is Community Health and Wellbeing Week in Ontario. It is a week to celebrate the members of the Alliance for Healthier Communities—those are community health centres, Indigenous primary health care organizations, community family health teams and nurse practitioner-led clinics—and all the good work that they do in caring for us and keeping us healthy.

There are 111 members of the alliance who serve Ontarians in every corner of this province. These are not-for-profit agencies that provide comprehensive primary care to the people who often face barriers to access and

health inequities. From health promotion, disease prevention, primary care to chronic disease management, from newborn and children programs to elderly persons' centres, they do it all. They keep people healthy and out of emergency rooms, which is good for their clients, decreases demand on our acute-care system and saves money. It's a win-win.

I can assure you that my NDP colleagues and I will always stand for equitable access to health care services for everyone living in Ontario. That includes the 2.2 million Ontarians who do not have access to primary care.

The Ontario Medical Association was here two days ago asking the government to fund interdisciplinary primary care teams. We can do this, Speaker. The Ontario government needs to fund more nurse practitioner-led clinics, community family health teams, Indigenous primary health care organizations and community health centres right now.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Mike Harris: It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to say that our government is delivering on its promise to expand services along the Kitchener GO rail line.

There aren't always big announcements or ribbon cuttings for this type of work. These are the sorts of projects that you have to be a bit of a transit nerd to really appreciate. So I won't go over the whole history, like when the NDP scrapped the GO train from Guelph in 1993, but let's take a little bit of a look back.

Under the previous Liberal government, the Kitchener line schedule from 2017 listed train trips at eight trips per day. And I am proud to say, since we took office, we have doubled those trips along the Kitchener line. Since 2018, Metrolinx has completed track upgrades on the Kitchener line, so people can get to where they need to go 15 minutes faster. In 2021, engineering crews worked on tracks through the city of Guelph. Poor track conditions and multiple crossings had reduced train speeds there to just—get this, colleagues—16 kilometres per hour. Now, trains travel the same stretch at over 40 kilometres per hour.

The total travel time between Kitchener and Toronto, thanks to these types of improvements, will soon reach just 90 minutes. This would make the line even more of an attractive option instead of taking the 401. This work is critical to getting trains going faster and to getting more trains on the track. We have gotten a lot of work done, but we will not stop there. We will keep going.

1020

SAFEPOINT

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Speaker, Ontario has an opioid and overdose epidemic. The number of overdoses in my community and across the province are extremely high and very alarming. Receiving funding from the government to operate the SafePoint consumption and treatment services site in Windsor and many others across the

province is not only vital, it's life-saving. Even though all government requirements have been met months ago, provincial funding has not been made available and timelines for approval have not been provided. Funding for this site has solely been provided through the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, which is unacceptable. Further government funding delays will impact my community in Windsor. Lives are in the balance.

I wrote the Minister of Health on two separate occasions, as did the health unit, asking for an urgent reply. There has been no response.

The health unit's recent letter stated:

"Since opening its doors on April 26, 2023, as a temporary urgent public health needs site, 'SafePoint' has had hundreds of visits from people in need of care. Dozens of referrals to addiction treatment, mental health supports, and social services have occurred in addition to primary care, wound care, and foot care on-site.

"The site has experienced no safety concerns, or issues requiring emergency response and has developed strong relationships with patients, area residents, law enforcement, and the business community in the surrounding area.

"In addition, the CTS site received municipal support in the spring of 2022 to proceed with the application that was later validated under the new municipal council."

This government needs to do the right thing now. Support municipalities trying to address the opioid crisis and provide funding for safe places for people to seek help and get support—places like SafePoint.

EVENTS IN MARKHAM–THORNHILL

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Mr. Speaker, there were two special events that took place in my riding of Markham–Thornhill. Both of these organizations and their initiatives are close to my heart.

On October 6, I attended the grand opening of Gifted People Services in Markham, which provides vital support for children with special needs. A special thank you goes to founder Dianna Jiang, who started this service in Scarborough and expanded into Markham. On the same day, I also had the honour of being part of the Cherish Integrated Services Love Gala. I have known this organization for about 15 years, as they have been dedicated to helping children with intellectual needs and challenges. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to Ivy Lam, Hugo Lam, Kyoko Leung, and everyone involved in this service, who wholeheartedly serve the families in their community. Even though they are independent organizations, they collaborate to make sure people can access all the programs they need with maximum benefits.

Gifted People Services and Cherish Integrated Services can empower families in our community with knowledge, passion and advocacy skills, helping them to enjoy life to the fullest through their programs. I believe many other organizations can learn from this example to better serve our community.

WOMEN IN POLITICS

Ms. Catherine Fife: Today is Persons Day in Canada. It marks the day, in 1929, when the historic decision was made to include women in the legal definition of "persons." This gave women the right to be appointed to the Senate of Canada and paved the way for women's increased participation in public and political life.

To honour the day, I've welcomed a young female leader from my community of Waterloo, Olivia Batte, to introduce her to the world of Queen's Park. Olivia has shown tremendous leadership in our community, and I have no doubt that one day we will benefit from having her voice here at Queen's Park.

I currently serve as the Ontario representative for the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, and it is a privilege to serve, mentor and lead on the issue of democratic equality. Historically, women have fought tirelessly for their rights, breaking barriers and shattering glass ceilings.

I'd also like to thank my colleague the member from Nickel Belt for encouraging the former Speaker to create space here at Queen's Park to acknowledge female leadership. If you take a stroll down to the first floor of this very building, you will see the faces of some of the powerful women of Queen's Park, and Ontario is stronger for their leadership.

Women in politics are not just a symbol of progress but a catalyst for change. By including women in political discourse, we ensure a more inclusive and representative democracy. Let us celebrate their achievements, amplify their voices and work towards a future where gender equality is not just a dream, but a reality.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Mrs. Robin Martin: I have been extremely fortunate to have lived among, supported, represented and advocated for the Jewish community throughout my life and my time in office.

My best friend, growing up, was the daughter of Canada's former Solicitor General Robert Kaplan, who was Jewish, and that was my introduction to the community. I know members of the community to be fundamentally decent people who value life and family and have no desire to harm anyone. Representatives of the community are often the first to stand up, stand shoulder to shoulder with other community or faith groups when that group has been targeted, such as joining hands around a mosque, for example, which I saw them do. Unfortunately, some faith leaders have not been so quick to reciprocate at this difficult time for Israel, but I hold out hope that they will.

Speaker, words like "strong" and "united" cannot express the extent of the resiliency of the Jewish community in my riding and abroad in recent weeks. Within my riding, organizations are hosting vigils, community fundraising dinners and workshops on how to cope during these difficult times, and we will stand by them—this government, myself and my colleagues.

Some may recall my previous member's statement on Wednesday, before the terrorist attack on Israel. I condemned the acts of vandalism against the Jewish community, which had occurred already in my riding during the High Holy Days. With the outbreak of the war, further displays of hate and intolerance, we cannot be complacent. We must remind ourselves that mutual respect and tolerance are no small part of what makes Ontario exceptional.

RIDING OF KANATA–CARLETON

MPP Karen McCrimmon: I'm incredibly honoured to be making my first member's statement representing the constituency of Kanata–Carleton. I want to thank the constituents for putting their trust and faith in me, which I take as a solemn responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard from many how our health care system is failing, how the cost of living is beyond their means, how something as simple as school transportation is being mismanaged and underfunded. We must do better.

There are people working hard to help people in our community: The Kanata Food Cupboard, the Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre all bring invaluable services to those in need. Their selfless work is a constant inspiration that I hope to emulate here at Queen's Park.

There is so much to be thankful for: Fall colours, craft fairs, the solemn days of gratitude and remembrance in November, joyful Santa Claus parades in Kanata on November 25, Constance Bay on December 2 and Carp village on December 9. I look forward to seeing everyone there and at many other community events in the coming weeks.

I would also like to point out that Kanata is home to the Ottawa Senators and, mindful of where I'm presently standing, may I just say: Go, Sens, go.

THE GREAT PUMPKIN TRAIL

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Good morning, Speaker. I'm thrilled to share with you an enchanting event that's returning to Burlington this October: the Great Pumpkin Trail, hosted by the Royal Botanical Gardens, is back for its 10th anniversary.

The Great Pumpkin Trail runs for the last two weekends in October and boasts elaborate pumpkin carvings along one kilometre of trail through Hendrie Park. This year, the Great Pumpkin Trail has a brand new pathway leading to a mini midway exhibition at Cherry Hill Gate, featuring thrilling rides and inflatables for both the young and the young at heart. This walk through the trail goes through Hendrie Valley, illuminated by the soft, candlelit glow of hundreds of jack-o'-lanterns.

The Great Pumpkin Trail offers an evening of delight and wonder for everyone, with live entertainment, pumpkin-themed activities and delicious fall-inspired treats. Dressing up is encouraged to embrace the spirit of Halloween while exploring the trails at the botanical gardens. The Great Pumpkin Trail embraces the magic of

RBG's Hendrie Park in Burlington, and it's an event that promises fun for the whole family and supports the crucial work of the Royal Botanical Gardens in my community.

1030

GHOST WALK FOR CHARITY

Mr. Nolan Quinn: It's a privilege to rise and recognize a great initiative and a passionate team of volunteers helping their community during the Halloween season. As we all know, Halloween is a time for trick-or-treaters, jack-o'-lanterns, scary costumes and haunted houses. To prepare for Halloween, my wife and I had the pleasure of attending the Ghost Walk for Charity held in Cornwall, Speaker.

If you like to be scared and see spooky things, you do not want to miss this event. The suspense-filled charity walk definitely got my wife and I ready for Halloween. Now my kids want to be spooked.

The Ghost Walk for Charity is an initiative led by Michael Turcotte, who is a dedicated community member with a long history of supporting and volunteering his time to many local charities and organizations. For years, people would flock to Michael's home in Cornwall to walk through his haunted garage, and from that was born the initiative. This year's sixth annual Ghost Walk for Charity is being held every Thursday through Saturday evening and a non-scary option every Saturday and Sunday at the Cornwall Square.

Over the last five years, I'm proud to share that this event has donated well over \$100,000 to worthy organizations. This year's proceeds will go to benefit the children's treatment centre, the Cornwall Hospice, Ronald McDonald House Ottawa, Cornwall Canada Day, Cornwall Comfort Quilts and Centre 105. I'd like to encourage all to attend this spooky event that has provided so much support over the years to great charities and organizations.

REQUEST TO THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a request by the member for Davenport to the Honourable J. David Wake, Integrity Commissioner, for an opinion pursuant to sections 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, on whether the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville, Kaleed Rasheed, has contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask members to introduce their guests, I'll remind them that the introductions are best if they're brief and devoid of political commentary or statements. We have five minutes allocated by the standing orders to introduce our guests.

M^{me} France Gélinas: We have quite a few people from different community health centres: Sarah Hobbs, who is

from the Alliance for Healthier Communities; James Huff from Belleville and Quinte West Community Health Centre; Marc Bisson, Centre de santé communautaire de l'Estrie; Estelle Duchon, Centre francophone du Grand Toronto; Michelle Carr, Community Health Centres of Northumberland; Kim Fraser, Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre; Melissa Kwiatkowski, Guelph Community Health Centre; Jeanie Argiropoulos, Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities; Alex Hector, South East Grey Community Health Centre; Charis Romilly Turner, Stonegate Community Health Centre; Michelle Joseph, Unison Health and Community Services; Kimberley Floyd, WellFort Community Health Services; and Andy Kroeker, West Elgin Community Health Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I'd like to welcome our chair, Wayne Emmerson, from York region as well as all the mayors and regional councillors and councillors from York region. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Mr. Speaker, this week is the Small Business Week celebration, and I am happy to announce that we are having a business forum right here at Queen's Park. I'm hosting a small business forum here. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy; 67% of the private labour force in this country is employed by them. I would like to welcome speakers from Digital Main Street, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to interrupt the member because you're not introducing guests.

Introduction of visitors?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to welcome SEIU to the House today. I had the privilege of meeting with some Hamilton folks this morning. Christine Outridge is in housekeeping at Grace Villa and Mona Hussein is a PSW at Shalom Village. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to announce that we have a former member with us in the chamber as well: the member for the riding of Parkdale-High Park in the 38th to the 41st Parliaments, Cheri DiNovo. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Andrea Hazell: I would like to welcome 17 small businesses here from Scarborough-Guildwood representing Small Business Week. Please welcome them. They're all sitting here in the chamber today.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: This morning, I would like to introduce the remarkable team from IBT College. I'd like to welcome president Joe Shokour, vice-president James Rice, Andrea Kurth, Mike Hussainyar, Ken Rice and Muhammad Gaboiboev. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I would like to welcome Chris Reily, RPN, and Briar Moore, an RPN from SEIU. Welcome to your House. It will be a pleasure to meet with you later.

Mr. John Fraser: As we've heard earlier, our friends from the Service Employees International Union, SEIU, are here today. They're the people who care for the people we care for most. Welcome.

I know they have a reception here tonight at Queen's Park. Please come and join them.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: As I'm terming out from the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians after nine years, I'm really pleased to participate in an event today hosted by the Ontario Legislative Assembly where we're bringing a couple of young people in to shadow women members of provincial Parliament.

It's in that spirit that I welcome Marianne Kidd to the House. I met her at Simcoe fair. She's a dynamo and I'm thrilled that I will be sharing the day with her.

MPP Jill Andrew: I would like to congratulate Philippe Boyer, our very own page from St. Paul's, who is today's page captain. I also want to welcome his father, Sebastien Boyer, to the House, his mom, Shu Boyer, and his grandparents, and also say a warm welcome to every single SEIU member here. Thank you so much for your work. And a welcome to—

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

There are still members on both sides of the House who want to introduce guests. Does anyone object to me continuing to allow members on both sides of the House to introduce their guests? We will continue.

Mr. Rick Byers: It's my great pleasure to welcome Alex Hector, executive director of South East Grey Community Health Centre, to the House today. I had the joy of serving on the board of the CHC with Alex for three years. Thank you, Alex, for your great service. It's great to have you at Queen's Park today.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to extend a personal welcome to my friend and London West constituent Andy Kroeker, who is here today for the Alliance for Healthier Communities and has served West Elgin for years as the West Elgin Community Health Centre executive director. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Beautiful day, everyone. I have an international visitor here I'd like to introduce: awesome Alex Clements, from the Netherlands, doing great work on impact investing in the Ukraine. Welcome to our House.

Mrs. Robin Martin: It's my great pleasure to introduce my constituency assistant, John Mace, a very smart young man who is here in the Legislature with us today.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to welcome the mentorship candidate I mentioned earlier, Olivia Batte, and her mom, Fiona, from Waterloo.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to of course welcome our friends from York region with a special shout-out to the mayor of King, Steve Pellegrini. Thank you, sir, for your leadership and collaboration.

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: I too want to give a very warm welcome to my predecessor, former MPP for Parkdale-High Park, Cheri DiNovo.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the members of SEIU Healthcare who are here today, in particular E.S. Pohler, Teresa Wheeler, who I met with this morning, and Michael Spitale. Thank you for looking after us and the people that we love and care for.

1040

Mr. John Jordan: I, as well, would like to welcome all the members from the Alliance for Healthier Communities, especially executive director Sarah Hobbs.

I'd like to remind all—to welcome you to the reception that I'm proud to sponsor in room 228 at 11:45.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I'd like to recognize the parents of the page from Brampton East. Gurkaram Dhillon's parents are here: Karmjit Dhillon and Harvinder Dhillon. They're just seated in the members' gallery over there.

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: It's my honour to rise and introduce my good friend, and a young leader, Carlos Cabeneros from Scarborough. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I'd like to introduce to the House some very important colleagues from York region: Chairman Wayne Emmerson; CAO Erin Mahoney; chief of staff Lina Bigioni; regional councillor Jim Jones; York region mayors, their Worshipships, Margaret Quirk, John Taylor, Steve Pellegrini, Iain Lovatt, and my two good friends and my local mayors, their Worshipships, David West and Tom Mrakas. Welcome to the House.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Premier. For weeks, this side of the House has been trying to get answers from the Conservative government on their greenbelt corruption scandal, and they've responded by voting down motions and standing in the way of accountability. They're now under active criminal investigation by the RCMP.

Yesterday, I again urged the Premier to ask the Integrity Commissioner to get to the bottom of the boys trip his senior staff and former Conservative minister took to Las Vegas.

I'll ask the Premier again: Will the Premier ask the Integrity Commissioner to investigate the 2020 trip to Vegas?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I trust that the Integrity Commissioner will do whatever work he needs to do.

At the same time, there's no doubt—it's pretty understandable why the Leader of the Opposition is looking backwards, because she doesn't want to look forward. Because when she does look forward, she'll see what is happening in the province of Ontario.

It's actually fitting that we have a delegation here from York region, because in York region we're building schools, where they closed them; we're building roads where they couldn't; we're building transit and transportation, including a subway that the Liberals failed on for 15 long years. Our economy is booming in the area. Our farmers are doing better because of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

They want to look backwards. We'll look forwards. But, really, the entire party's premise for being is about looking backwards. It's never about looking forwards.

They're a backward party, and that is why the people of the province of Ontario look to Progressive Conservatives to move the economy forward each and every time.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Order. The member for Ottawa South will come to order. The Minister of Energy will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Perhaps the member for Ottawa South didn't hear me. He will come to order. The Minister of Energy will come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary question?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, Speaker, the Premier won't do it, but we will. That's why this morning, we tabled a complaint to ask the Integrity Commissioner to offer an opinion on the Vegas trip. The people of Ontario have questions about why two of the Premier's staff members and a former cabinet minister all seemingly lied under oath to the Integrity Commissioner about the dates of the trip.

The former minister and two members of the Premier's most senior advisers all suspiciously—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the unparliamentary comment.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Withdrawn.

The former minister and two members of the Premier's most senior advisers all told the Integrity Commissioner that their trip was in 2019 when it actually occurred months later. That's three different people giving the wrong date for the same trip.

So my question, again to the Premier, is, can the Premier explain how three different people could mistakenly give the wrong date for the same trip?

Hon. Paul Calandra: We'll let the Integrity Commissioner do his work. I'm sure that he will do that in an effective way.

But let's talk again about what we're seeing across the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. I talked yesterday about how things are challenging. Things can be challenging when you have policies like the Liberals's and the NDP's, right? We're seeing these policies in Ottawa: a carbon tax, which is costing the people of the province of Ontario on literally every single thing that they do. They hold the balance of power in Ottawa. Will they ask the federal NDP to do something about the carbon tax? No, Mr. Speaker. It is the same policies that brought the province of Ontario to its knees under the Liberal and NDP coalition.

It's fitting that we have York region here again, because since we have been in office—27,000 more jobs in York region and 4,500 tech companies in York region. It is the second-largest tech hub in Canada because of the leadership of this Premier and this minister. And Friday, the Minister of Long-Term Care will be there to open up—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The member will take his seat.

The final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I understand why they don't want to answer the questions. It's because they're under criminal investigation by the RCMP. This House knows

that the discrepancies don't end there, because those members also misled the Integrity Commissioner about interactions—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the member to withdraw her unparliamentary comment and finish her question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Withdraw.

The former minister and the Premier's senior advisers told the Integrity Commissioner different things about interactions they had with greenbelt speculator Shakir Rehmatullah while on these trips. The former minister said he and the Premier's staff only saw the greenbelt speculator in the lobby of the hotel. Now we know that they got spa services, including concurrent massages, at the same hotel, at the same time.

So I'm going to go back to the Premier, Speaker. Does the Premier agree that it's a general rule that members of provincial Parliament should provide honest testimony to the Integrity Commissioner?

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Municipal Affairs can respond.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, Mr. Speaker, we'll let the Integrity Commissioner do his work. But I think this is really about the Leader of the Opposition, isn't it? Because we're debating a motion today in front of this House to censure a member of that party. Why?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Because of actions that are disreputable to a member, that have brought this House into disrepute.

Now, curiously, the Leader of the Opposition told the member to retract and apologize. The member refused to do that. And now we're seeing that the NDP caucus is in a full-blown revolt against their own leader, refusing to follow the edict of the Leader of the Opposition.

When it comes to leadership, we'll take the leadership of this Premier, who has brought 700,000 jobs to Ontario, who has removed taxes, who has taken the lowest-income earners off the tax rolls. The economy is booming despite the policies of the Liberals and NDP to hold people back. We'll continue to get the job done.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: This is disgusting—disgusting behaviour by this member. It shouldn't be that hard. It should not be that hard.

Interjections.

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

Interjection: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There are no points of order considered during question period.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Education will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Education will come to order. The member for Kitchener—Conestoga will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. The member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke will come to order. The Minister of Education, perhaps, didn't hear me either. He must come to order.

Start the clock. The Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

1050

Ms. Marit Stiles: It shouldn't be that hard, Speaker. Members should always be telling the truth, especially to the Integrity Commissioner.

Back to the Premier: A greenbelt speculator went on a trip to Vegas at the same time, at the same hotel, as a senior member of the Premier's staff and a cabinet minister. What's worse is that no one can recall the particulars of just how they paid for that trip. The Premier's former minister paid \$4,550 in cash for three flights to Vegas. Rooms at the Wynn Las Vegas apparently go for more than \$700 a night. Yet the cabinet minister says he was paid back \$2,000 total, in cash, from the Premier's staff. That doesn't even cover the cost of the flight.

Who does the Premier think paid for the trip to Vegas?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: We'll let the Integrity Commissioner do his job. But if the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about accountability, maybe she'll rise in her place and repeat what she said when the microphone was turned off—because in this place, we are debating this morning a motion about the dignity of this House, the dignity that all members owe to this House and to this Parliament. That's what the motion this morning is about.

The Leader of the Opposition, by her comments when the mike is turned off, proves that she's never going to be ready to be Premier of the province of Ontario. It is this Premier who shows leadership each and every day—on the economy, standing up for people. It is this Premier and this caucus that will get the job done.

When they sit down and sit on their hands, we'll stand up for all of the people in the province of Ontario. You have our word on that. We'll continue to do it.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: The former cabinet minister showed the Integrity Commissioner banking receipts for a deposit of \$2,000 on December 20, 2019. That's before the trip, and that's before any of the Premier's staff had apparently repaid him. It doesn't even match what the Premier's senior adviser said they paid back. In fact, the Premier's former principal secretary, Mr. Massoudi, said that he provided cash to the cabinet minister nearly three years later, in November 2022. The dates don't match. The numbers don't add up.

What measures, if any, has the Premier taken to get to the bottom of what happened in Las Vegas?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, we'll allow the Integrity Commissioner to do his job. I have every confidence that he can.

But when it comes to moving the economy forward, it is this Premier and this caucus who are getting it done, Mr. Speaker. Do you know who has voted against every single measure to make life more affordable for the people of the province of Ontario? The NDP and the Liberals. Do you know who is responsible for bringing this province to its knees? The Liberals, supported by the NDP. Do you know who is responsible for a crisis in this country of affordability because of carbon taxes, because of out-of-control debts, which are causing high interest rates for all of the people of Canada? It is Liberals, supported by the NDP.

We see the mistakes over and over and over again, because what they love is for people to be dependent on government, and what Conservatives want is for people to have the tools to succeed. What this Premier is ensuring is that people have those tools, and 700,000 people show and have the dignity of a job that—

Interjections.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: What happened in Vegas? Rehmatullah didn't just benefit from the greenbelt scandal. A report from the Auditor General listed him as the top beneficiary of multiple MZOs. In fact, on the same day that the greenbelt grab was announced, this government was also serving up changes to the land use plans in York region to benefit him. The Integrity Commissioner concluded that the evidence suggests that someone must have tipped him off. Was it the former cabinet minister? Was it the Premier's principal secretary? Was it his director of housing policy? They were all in Vegas at the same time. Back to the Premier: Why?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, we'll allow the Integrity Commissioner to do his job. But what is shocking to me is that we are five years into our mandate, a mandate of growth and prosperity for the people of the province of Ontario, and somehow now the Leader of the Opposition has just figured out that we're in a housing crisis. Somehow she has just figured out that we're trying to do something about it.

We have brought forward four housing supply action plans. To do what? Build more homes for the people of the province of Ontario. And do you know who has voted against every single one of them? They have.

Welcome to the party. We're trying to build more homes for the people of the province of Ontario. We're

doing it across York region. We're going to do it in Toronto. We're going to do it in Peel region, despite the fact that the Liberals have a potential leadership candidate who votes against building more homes, Mr. Speaker. You know why? Because that is the legacy of Liberals and NDP: obstacles, obstacles, obstacles. We're removing those obstacles.

We will get it done. We will build 1.5 million homes. We will not be distracted despite the musings of the Leader of the Opposition supported—

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

The next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Doly Begum: My question is also to the Premier. After months of public pressure, this government has finally tabled legislation to reverse its own disastrous greenbelt grab. The Auditor General concluded that this government gave preferential treatment to a select few land speculators in their greenbelt decision. In fact, the government minister was found to have breached ethics law, while another minister was partying in Vegas with a favoured land speculator.

In total, we have seen the departure of three ministers and three senior Conservative staffers, and now a criminal investigation by the RCMP.

To the Premier: What actions will the Premier personally take if criminal charges are laid in his greenbelt scandal?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, as we have said all along, we made a public policy decision that was not supported by the people of the province of Ontario. For that, we are sorry. But the intention of that policy was to build more homes for the people of the province of Ontario. Now we have moved quickly to reverse that decision. The Premier made the decision to restore those greenbelt lands.

But let there be no doubt. If there is any doubt in the minds of the opposition, if they think that we are going to be distracted from building 1.5 million homes for the people of the province of Ontario in every corner of the province, they should think again, Mr. Speaker. That includes in the riding of the member for Scarborough Southwest. It includes in that for the member for Toronto—Danforth. It includes northern Ontario, who have asked me, "Help us build more homes in northern Ontario" to support the mining and the incredible economic development that is going on there. It includes southwestern Ontario, which is seeing more long-term-care homes and more economic activity: battery plants, auto manufacturing. They want more homes to support that economy.

So despite the fact that they're against it, we'll continue to get—

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

The supplementary question.

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, their apologies are too little, too late and only came after months of outcry and protests to this government's decision.

The Auditor General said that she can't even call their greenbelt decision a process, but rather an "exercise," an exercise that the Integrity Commissioner said was "rushed, non-transparent and almost reckless" and "marked by ... unnecessary hastiness and deception."

Speaker, back to the Premier: How can the people of Ontario trust the government's rushed, non-transparent and almost reckless decision-making processes?

Interjections.

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

To reply, the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you for the question, to the member from Scarborough. I'll tell the member from Scarborough why the people of Scarborough trust us. As we're building a subway for Scarborough that they never had, the member voted against it. When we're building a brand new hospital for Scarborough that they haven't seen in over 50 years, the member voted against it. When we're building a medical school in Scarborough to graduate more doctors to go into the new hospital in Scarborough, the member voted against it. When we're building long-term care for the residents of Scarborough, the member voted against it.

But what we voted for—when they were in power, they lost 300,000 jobs, along with the Liberals. Today, there are 700,000 more people working than there were five years ago and thousands of people in Scarborough working that never had a job before.

We're going to continue making sure we have a strong economy and we're building the 1.5 million homes that the people of Scarborough—

Interjections.

1100

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

The next question. Start the clock.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Laura Smith: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. In recent years, the Southeast Asian region has become increasingly important to the global economy, with rapid economic expansion, massive infrastructure projects and a growing middle class. There are significant economic opportunities for Ontario in this region.

I understand the minister has just returned from a trade mission in that part of the world. Can the minister please share how our government is ensuring Ontario is able to capitalize on the massive economic opportunities emerging in Southeast Asia?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Last week, we wrapped up another successful trade mission to Singapore, Vietnam and back to South Korea. We met with leading companies in the region who are excited to learn more about the endless opportunities Ontario has to offer, but we also announced the opening of a new trade and investment office in Singapore next year. This will be our province's first office in the ASEAN region.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is home to 10 countries in Southeast Asia, more than 600 million people and significant economic opportunities. With our new office, we will have a gateway to some of the world's strongest and most diversified economies, so that we can continue to secure more investments that create more good-paying jobs and add to the 700,000 workers we have already seen here in Ontario.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you to the minister for his answer and his leadership. It's great to hear that we're opening up a new trade and investment office in Singapore, which is the economic heart and innovation hub of Southeast Asia. It's crucial that we make sure companies across this world know that Ontario is there, open for business and everything to offer. With our highly skilled workforce, low business costs and world-class innovation ecosystem, there's no better place than Ontario for a business to grow.

Speaker, our trade and investment offices allow us to let the world know about the wealth of opportunities Ontario has to offer. Can the minister please elaborate on the importance of our network of international trade and investment offices?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Our global trade and investment network plays a key role in attracting job-creating investments and boosting exports of Ontario-made products. We have 14 international trade and investment offices. In the past five years, those offices have attracted nearly \$10 billion in new investments into Ontario. They've created 10,000 good-paying jobs in Ontario, and we're making sure that Ontario is top of mind for investors all across the globe.

With our new office in Singapore, we'll now have a gateway to the ASEAN region, along with access to companies looking for a Canadian foothold. We're now making sure that companies in all corners of the globe know there is no better place than Ontario to invest and grow.

SMALL BUSINESS

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: This government is shamefully under criminal investigation by the RCMP for the greenbelt grab and corruption. The information we've received from the Auditor General and the Integrity Commissioner shows that this government gives preferential treatment to developers and wealthy insiders who can afford to cozy up to them.

Does the Premier believe that small businesses who can't afford to make big political donations to his Conservative Party deserve the same say in government decisions?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Can you imagine a member of the NDP getting up to talk about small business? Can you imagine that?

They want to increase taxes for our small businesses and have voted against every single measure to put more

money back in the pockets of our small business people. This is a party that voted with the Liberals to transition our economy away from small business to just a service economy. They gave up on small businesses across the province of Ontario.

Contrast that with us, this Premier, this Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. When we talk about bringing \$27 billion worth of investments to Ontario, that is just top line. Do you know what also happens in St. Thomas, in Markham, in Stouffville? Small businesses thrive. Do you know why we want to build more homes? Because downtowns in Stouffville, in Newmarket and Aurora have signs on the door in the small businesses: help wanted. That is what is happening across the province of Ontario. We have a minister responsible for small business who has been knocking it out of the park—

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

The supplementary question.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: As a former small business owner—I've owned three businesses and I've founded one BIA in Toronto—I can tell you that a New Democratic government will support, and will always support, small businesses.

Speaker, during the pandemic over 360,000 small businesses in Ontario—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. The member for Toronto Centre rightfully has the floor. I need to be able to hear her as she asks her question.

Restart the clock. The member for Toronto Centre.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: During the pandemic, over 360,000 small businesses in Ontario took up the CEBA loan to keep their lights on. Over half of those small businesses now report that they have not returned to pre-COVID revenues. Even more cannot make their payment deadlines. They're calling on every order of government for help, including this government, which has chosen to ignore them. In fact, the Premier has shown more enthusiasm for rewarding big foreign companies like Therme with a \$650-million subsidy at Ontario Place.

How many more Ontario families have to shut their small businesses before this government will stand up and help?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, remember that the NDP voted against every single support that we put in place during the pandemic for small businesses. They voted against all of it.

But let me help the NDP understand something: In Ottawa, the NDP hold the balance of power, meaning they can tell the federal government to change the way they're collecting the CEBA from small businesses. They can literally hold the government accountable and say, "Either make a change or we will bring you down."

So call 1-613-Jagmeet Singh and say, "Listen, today at 2:30 get up in the House of Commons and say, 'We will bring you down unless you stop collecting the CEBA from people.'" It's very easy. You can get it done. Pick up the phone and call Jagmeet.

Interjections.

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

I think the member for Brantford–Brant would like to ask his question. I'm guessing he would ask his colleagues, if he could, to quieten down. The House will come to order.

Start the clock. The member for Brantford–Brant.

COLLEGES

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Colleges and Universities. Ontario colleges have been long recognized as a key economic driver in our province. They help to provide our students with a strong and respected education that contributes greatly to addressing labour market needs. My riding of Brantford–Brant is home to several post-secondary institutions, including Conestoga College's very own Brantford campus and—very near to my heart—Six Nations Polytechnic.

As the labour market continues to evolve, colleges across the province need to be willing and able to ensure that the education they provide keeps pace with ever-changing labour market needs. Ontario's colleges are willing, but it is up to our government to ensure that they are able.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is supporting Ontario's colleges to prepare students for the jobs of the future?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for that very important question. When it comes to preparing students for rewarding careers and supporting Ontario's economy, our colleges will never settle for second best. In fact, IBT College, who I introduced earlier, has just returned home after winning the digital innovation in learning award for their work in creating micro-credentials that utilize augmented reality and virtual reality at the PIEoneer Awards in London, UK. Congratulations, team.

Across the province, our colleges are working with employers to identify current and future labour market needs that will not only result in great careers but will continue to drive Ontario's economic success. Our presidents, faculty, staff and, of course, our students know that they need to keep Ontario on top, and our government is here to support them every step of the way. When schools needed shorter approval times to offer new programs so students could get the education they deserved, we reduced the wait times for a new program from three years down to six months. When students wanted more opportunities to further their education at home, we created new and affordable pathways to upskill their education.

1110

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

Mr. Will Bouma: All I can say is, "Wow." From the minister's response, it is clear that our government is dedicated to Ontario's students and to the college sector as a whole.

The reputation of Ontario's colleges as world-class educators and job creators is unquestioned. However, to

be the best, we cannot rely on our past achievements and successes. Our colleges must continually set a high standard when it comes to innovation that addresses evolving labour market needs in a rapidly changing world.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on how our government is enabling Ontario colleges to position themselves as leaders in post-secondary education?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I agree with the member when he says, “Wow,” and that’s what companies across the world are saying about Ontario’s post-secondary education when they’re looking at coming to Ontario.

I’m a strong believer in what the member has said: To be the best, you need to set the standard. Programs like Learn and Stay, micro-credentials and three-year college degrees are all examples of what our government is doing, taking leadership in new and exciting areas in post-secondary education that are being replicated across Canada and the world.

We have made investments in the research being done on our campuses that are leading to constant innovations and new ways of thinking that are shaping the future of education and work, and the world is taking notice. That’s why global businesses are lining up and setting up shop in Ontario—because they know the education and skill set of our graduates is second to none.

Speaker, if the members of this House still aren’t convinced, I suggest they join me tomorrow at the Ontario College Fair, where they can see first-hand how Ontario colleges are ready to continue to prepare students for the jobs of the future.

ONTARIO PLACE

Mr. Chris Glover: To the Premier: The Premier refuses to disclose the terms of the government’s 95-year lease with Therme, but we know the agreement forces Ontario taxpayers to pay at least \$650 million for a new parking garage and site preparation. This is a 95-year deal with an Austrian company that was facing bankruptcy just three years ago.

Normally, Infrastructure Ontario discloses who is putting up the financing for its projects, but not in this case.

So my question to the Premier is, what is the source of Therme’s financing for its Ontario Place development?

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

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you to the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to achieve here is to have good tenants on the site that will have activities for families to do all year round, and Therme does that. What we are also trying to achieve on the site is to build parking so that we can make it accessible for families across Ontario to visit the site that belongs to the people of Ontario—that’s 15 million people.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to make progress on the site and bring it back to life so that it will once again be enjoyed by families all the time. It is not today.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. Therme has made promises all over the world, pledging to spend billions on new luxury spas. Therme promised to invest \$350 million in Ontario. However, it is Ontario taxpayers who will be paying over \$650 million for a new parking garage, new water infrastructure and other site preparation work for public land that Therme will control for 95 years.

Therme was on the brink of bankruptcy only three years ago. We don’t know if Therme actually has the money—95 years is a long time for a company that barely made it through the decade.

Can the Premier prove to the public that any due diligence was done to confirm the source of Therme’s financing?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Yesterday, we clearly articulated in the House that Therme was not only the winning proponent with our government through Infrastructure Ontario in 2019 but also a leading contender through the procurement led by the Liberals before we were even in office. So, clearly, through two different evaluation criteria, they were still a top contender.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario Place has fallen into disrepair; everyone knows it. Everyone who goes there, everyone who drives by knows that the island is in need of love and care. And now we will have a wonderful tenant that will have activities for families, that will also be contributing to annual maintenance of the site so that it can be enjoyed for years and years to come.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

I have sat in this Legislature for over a year now and have yet to hear the government speak point-blank to the people of Ontario about the climate emergency we are in. Instead, they are embroiled in the colossal greenbelt land swap scandal now being investigated by the RCMP for criminal behaviour.

The government’s pitiful track record on climate action speaks for itself: attempting to sabotage the greenbelt, hiding the climate change impact assessment report, cancelling 800 renewable energy contracts, expanding gas plants, clear-cutting Ontario Place, and more. They are woefully behind the rest of the world in environmental leadership.

My question: Will the Premier please explain why Ontario has yet to declare a climate emergency?

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

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Let me tell you, Speaker, under the leadership of this Premier and this government, we’re responsible for 86% of Canada’s total emission reductions, all while working with industry. We can both balance the economy and the environment. We can work with industry instead of working against industry, instead of taxing poor consumers and raising the price of groceries and the cost at the pumps, with the very expensive carbon tax that raises the price on everything.

I ask the member opposite: Talk to your Liberal counterparts. Please plead with them that Canadians cannot afford a carbon tax. But yes, we can fight the environment—we can treat climate change seriously, we can work with industry, but we'll not pass the cost down to the consumer.

And Speaker, if that's not enough, I'll tell you how we're working with industry partners and not against them—such as our government's investment in green steel at AM Dofasco in Hamilton, for example. This will see the equivalent emissions of one million cars taken off the road. And that's not it—our transit strategy, as well, is taking billions of cars off the road.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Toronto, Burlington, Prince Edward county, Halton Hills, Sarnia, Oakville, Belleville, Kenora, Vaughan, Brampton, Mississauga, Collingwood, Barrie, Cornwall, Newmarket, Huntsville—a total of 65 municipalities in Ontario have already declared a climate emergency, communities you all represent. Our cities and towns know it to be true and are actually implementing strong climate adaptation and mitigation measures, while this government fails to lead. We need to wake up to the floods, extreme heat, forest fires and start getting serious about protecting and preparing Ontarians for the future. Anything less is a dereliction of duty and pure negligence.

My question: Yes or no, does the Premier believe we are in a climate emergency, and when will he declare one for Ontario?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Speaker, our government believes that actions speak louder than words. When her government had an opportunity—she talked about Barrie. Well, let me tell you about my community of Barrie. When the Liberals had an opportunity to help clean up Lake Simcoe, they cancelled the funds to clean up Lake Simcoe. Instead, this government is funding to help keep that lake clean.

When that government had a chance to reduce the cost of living for many Canadians who need it now while still treating climate change as a serious impact on the environment, that government did nothing about it. Instead, this government is acting with industry, reducing our greenhouse emissions.

And we set a historic record: We were the first province in all of Canada that actually put out the climate impact assessment—the very impact assessment that member spoke about in her question. We are the leaders in this, and we expect, based on the outcomes of that report—we have a lot of plans working with industry, not against it, to create jobs, to create economic opportunity, all while protecting the environment.

1120

TOURISM

Ms. Natalie Pierre: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. My community of Burlington is located between Toronto and Niagara Falls on the shores

of Lake Ontario. Many local businesses in my riding are eager to benefit from visitors enjoying our hospitality while their businesses contribute greatly to the local economy.

While we see that the tourism industry is improving, impacts of ongoing global economic uncertainty continue to present challenges. That's why our government must remain committed to ensuring tourism remains a priority for ongoing support, ensuring communities like mine continue to thrive.

Can the minister please explain what our government is doing to encourage and promote tourism across Ontario?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Speaker, you bet I can.

I'd like to thank you for your support in the Burlington community and the industry, including tourism, that is driven partially by what you do in Burlington, so thank you.

When we talk about a thriving and growing industry, tourism really touches all of us—all of us in this Legislature—and it's because of the people across Ontario: those who are in tourism, those who are in the businesses of tourism and those that are driving results. That comes from leadership, Mr. Speaker. Leadership comes from taking a situation like the pandemic, stepping back, realizing what you can do and do well, get better at it, and then when everything opens up and the sun shines, you get better and better and better, and that's what's going on in tourism.

Ontario is the most visited destination in Canada, and I can tell you, just coming back from St. John's, Newfoundland, at our federal-provincial-territorial meeting—shout-out to Minister Crocker, who did a great job hosting—we're in great shape. Things are improving and more people are starting to come in.

I'll fill you in a little bit more—

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

Supplementary question.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: The tourism industry in Burlington appreciates our government's continued support for the vital work they do for our economy. Our restaurants, hotels and attractions are looking forward to increased attendance and revenues throughout the entire year.

The growth we've seen in Ontario's tourism sector is encouraging. Just recently, we all had the privilege of meeting with representatives from the Tourism Industry Association regarding the good work they're doing for this sector.

The tourism sector contributes significantly to Ontario's economy and benefits many other industries as well. The importance of tourism cannot be understated. It's vital that our government continues to address challenges that many tourism-related businesses face.

Can the minister please elaborate on the long-term outlook for tourism in Ontario?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Thank you for the question. Look, make no mistake about it: Tourism is a huge economic driver. We're investing \$40 million in the sector, and we're not picking and choosing; we're going across the board, because the hard work of everyone

involved in tourism in this province is showing in great strides. It's never been better. Yes, it's still a little bit tough at times, but again, back to the leadership and the smart people that are in this industry driving things forward.

A great example: Monday night, I was invited to Ripley's Aquarium for their 10th anniversary, got a chance to meet the leadership group and looked around to see the people who arrived. It's hard to believe in 10 years, 17 million people have gone through that aquarium; 17 million people have paid to go through that aquarium. Then you think about what are the reasons why. Well, it's a fantastic facility. If people in this Legislature haven't gone in, go in and buy a ticket.

But the other part of it is, it's where they are. When you bring things together like the Rogers Centre and CN Tower and restaurants, when you bundle things, people come, and they stay longer—

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

The next question.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Joel Harden: My question is to the Premier. Last week, I asked the committee on government agencies to call Metrolinx CEO Phil Verster to answer questions about the failing Eglinton Crosstown LRT. Unfortunately, the government members voted against that motion.

The Eglinton Crosstown LRT is a billion dollars over budget and three years late. It has at least 260 deficiencies, right down to the rails. Taxpayers have spent over \$500 million as the partners building this project have been suing each other under Mr. Verster's watch, but we found out this morning, through disclosure, that his contract has been renewed for three years. Why?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We have launched the largest transit expansion plan in the history of this province—

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Historical and unprecedented.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Historical and unprecedented, absolutely: \$70 billion over the next 10 years, world-class transit systems across this entire province.

Let's look at the city of Toronto. We're building the Scarborough line, where we actually have shovels already in the ground, and the Ontario Line—just visiting that with the Premier and the Minister of Infrastructure a week ago. We've got shovels in the ground on these historic projects.

What are the facts here? The members opposite, both the opposition and the Liberals, have voted against each of those investments. They voted against getting shovels in the ground on the Ontario Line and the Scarborough subway extension—\$70 billion of transit expansion and investment that we have done, the members opposite have voted against. We will continue to build transit across this province.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: What a shame. Back to the Premier: Let's be very clear. Despite what my friend just said, the only thing expanding in transit in the province of Ontario right now are the pay packets of management jobs at Metrolinx. Mr. Verster is surrounded by an army of 59 vice-presidents and 19 C-suite executives—78 people on the sunshine list for failing us.

Wasn't this the government, Speaker, that said the party with the taxpayers' dollars is over? If that's the case, if they believe that, then why are they rewarding Metrolinx executives who are failing the province of Ontario? Why can't we ask them questions at the committee and why, for heaven's sake, are they putting up ministers to defend a failing executive? Why is Mr. Verster still employed by the province of Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Let's talk about our investments in transit and what we're doing: the Ontario Line, the Scarborough subway extension, the Yonge North subway extension—we have members here today from York region as well—the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, the Eglinton West LRT, the Finch West LRT, the Hazel McCallion LRT, the Hamilton LRT, Highway 413, the Bradford Bypass. Over \$27 billion in highway investments: This is historic for North America.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we're getting this province moving and we're building world-class transit. We will take no lessons from the NDP on how to build transit.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My question is for the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery. I hear from people in my riding that they are concerned about media reports of everyday Ontarians becoming victims of predatory business practices. People are afraid of scams that involve notices of security interest—or NOSIs, for short—that can end up costing thousands, if not tens of thousands, of dollars.

This type of fraud and exploitation is unacceptable, where vulnerable people are often targeted. No one who is renting or financing something as essential as a water heater or furnace should have to be afraid of predatory providers looking to charge exorbitant fees.

Mr. Speaker, through you: Can the minister explain what actions our government is taking to protect consumers and citizens?

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you to the member for Carleton for that excellent question and her superb work on behalf of her constituents. Mr. Speaker, every Ontarian deserves to feel safe when purchasing something as essential as a water heater. Our government will not

stand by and let bad actors leverage tools like NOSIs, in bad faith, to empty hard-working Ontarians' pockets.

That is exactly why our government has begun the necessary work to restore confidence to consumers by launching a vital round of consultations that will inform our ongoing work to put an end to the harmful misuse of notices of security interest, otherwise known as NOSIs. Let me be unequivocally clear—very clear, crystal clear: This government and this Premier will not stand idly by and let our most vulnerable consumers be taken advantage of by bad business practices. We are taking decisive action to protect consumers.

1130

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, through you, thank you to the minister for his crystal clear response. I'm very pleased to see that the minister has started consultations to address this important issue and the negative effects it has on so many Ontarians. That being said, the most important voices that our government should listen to on this subject are the people of Ontario themselves.

Speaker, through you: The people of Ontario expect that their government will protect them from fraudulent schemes. They deserve our respect and protection from harmful and illegal business practices. That's why it is vital that those most impacted by this predatory misuse must be included in the consultations.

Can the minister please elaborate on how our government is conducting consultations and what actions will follow to protect consumers? Thank you.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Mr. Speaker, through you again: The member is absolutely right. The most important stakeholder we have are the people of this great province, and we need to be speaking directly with them and to listen to them to build a solution that protects them from bad actors using NOSIs to drain their pockets.

But I want to take this opportunity and also thank our member from Markham–Unionville for bringing forward his motion to investigate this issue more deeply because of consumer concerns, as well as the great member from Kitchener–Conestoga for his work with the Waterloo Regional Police Service to raise awareness of this widespread fraud.

Speaker, this is why my ministry is consulting with consumers, businesses and experts alike to determine the best solution possible, and this is only the first of many steps to come for our fellow citizens.

FIREFIGHTERS

MPP Lise Vaugeois: To the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, through you, Speaker: There have been a record number of wildfires in the province this year—738—and none have been more affected than the forest rangers who put their lives and health on the line for us by fighting these fires. They need to be reclassified so they will be recognized, compensated, and receive the same WSIB protection as all other firefighters.

Will the minister commit to the reclassification of these wildfire workers today?

Hon. Graydon Smith: Thank you very much for the question. Again, it's an opportunity to thank our firefighters who have done an outstanding job during the 2023 fire season.

Mr. Speaker, when I was in Timmins last week, we announced \$20.5 million to further expand our ability to fight wildfires in this province, and part of that was a recognition, again, of the fantastic job that our firefighters do: recognizing that we need more strategies around recruitment and retention for firefighters; recognizing that they require mental health supports because it is a tough and demanding job.

And my door has been open to the firefighters. We have met. We have discussed their concerns. We have talked about how we can make things even better in Ontario, how we can take this great force and work together to protect Ontarians, protect communities and protect the infrastructure in our communities. Those conversations will always continue, Mr. Speaker, because I have the utmost amount of respect for wildland firefighters in Ontario.

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

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Minister, they don't want your thanks; they want the reclassification.

To the minister: The closed-door press conference the minister held last week excluded front-line forest fire workers. These workers called out the minister for his statement that he was unable to reclassify their position.

The ability to retain and, in fact, encourage new hires in forest firefighting is essential to meet the challenges of climate change. Minister, you can reclassify and deliver fair working conditions to these firefighters with a stroke of a pen. Will you do the right thing and commit to reclassification now?

Hon. Graydon Smith: Again, Mr. Speaker, my respect for our firefighters in Ontario is unlimited, and the ability to continue to have conversations about the circumstances which they work under—again, open-door policy. I'm able to have conversations at any time. That's why at the meeting we had in July, I took letters from all of the representatives from the union, read those letters personally and had conversations face to face with our firefighters. We recognize that it is a challenging position, and that's why, through supporting our forest firefighters, my ministry, alongside the ministry of labour, training and skills development, has asked WSIB to assess who should be covered under the firefighters regulation, including wildland firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, we strive to make working conditions better for our firefighters in Ontario. They are doing a great job, and we'll continue to work with them and make sure that job is something they're always proud of, because we sure are proud of them.

HOUSING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Associate Minister of Housing. For too many Ontarians, finding an affordable home they can call their own seems out of reach. At the same time, many municipalities struggle to attract new jobs and businesses due to various challenges. Our government recognizes the critical importance of both increasing housing supply and spurring economic development in communities across our province.

This Legislature recently debated Bill 134 which, if passed, will help more Ontario families realize the dream of home ownership while also empowering municipalities to boost local employment opportunities.

Can the minister please explain what actions our government is taking to make housing more affordable and to better support our municipalities in attracting new jobs and industries to their regions?

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you once again to the great member from Brantford—Brant for yet another fantastic question thrown my way.

We knew through the More Homes Built Faster Act, we would be opening up opportunities to build more affordable homes, but we also knew that high development charges, in some communities over \$100,000 per house, was making the price of affordable housing—in fact, all housing—out of reach for many Ontarians.

Speaker, we had to eliminate these development charges from affordable housing. We listened and we acted. So what did we do? We opened up new possibilities for seniors, for students, for newcomers to this country and this province and for first-time homebuyers. What are the results we're seeing? More purpose-built rentals, more multi-generational homes and starter homes for first-time homebuyers.

Every Ontarian deserves a roof over their head. Our pathway is bringing keys to thousands of Ontarians who deserve housing stability and a chance to own their own home.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: I agree with the minister that individuals and families across Ontario should be able to access housing of all types.

As we work towards building more housing, a thriving supply chain is crucial for both urban and rural communities across our province. Municipalities will play a key role in strengthening our supply chain networks at the local level. However, not all municipalities have the same capacity and resources which can create challenges when applying for provincial programs and incentives. It is vital that our government recognizes the importance of municipalities as equal partners.

Can the associate minister please explain how our government is supporting municipalities to benefit from provincial supply chain programs and provincial supply chain strategies?

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you again to the member from Brantford—Brant. Led by Supply Ontario, our government

is empowering municipalities to explore joint venture opportunities, procurement activities to achieve savings and, as the minister below me here will appreciate, cutting red tape and cutting costs. Streamlining best practices is not only good business, it's common sense, it's really good governance, and that's what we're all about. A more efficient supply chain will result in better and more housing built in this province.

As outlined in Bill 134, we're proposing changes as well to help smaller communities around the historic St. Thomas investment with Volkswagen. By the way, Speaker, I just learned today, it's the fourth-largest manufacturing site in the world—it will be when completed—and we're excited about that. What does that mean? It means economic prosperity to important parts of this province: 3,000 new jobs, 30,000 tertiary jobs.

This government has a mandate to act. We're not only going to create economic prosperity, we're going to build homes to match these jobs.

1140

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé. Last week, health ministers from across the country met in Prince Edward Island. I, like many Ontarians, am quite anxious to find out what kind of progress was made for people suffering from rare diseases. Can the minister share with us?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The Charlottetown meeting for the health ministers federally, provincially and territorially was interesting last week. We covered a lot of topics.

Most pointedly, one of the issues that we pressed aggressively to our federal counterparts was to make sure that one of the changes that is being recommended—that is, changing the two-year family health doctors to a three-year training—be reverted and not moved forward. Why? Because every single provincial health minister understands that it is important today, right now, to make sure that we have as many doctors going into the system as possible, and now is not the time to move from a two-year residency to a three-year. We had unanimity on that particular topic, as well as many others that I'm happy to cover in my supplementary.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Members from Ontario's life sciences sector are at Queen's Park today. We all know that the federal government has budgeted \$500 million for rare disease treatments. Can the minister tell us about Ontario's rare disease strategy and how much of the \$500 million in federal money will be coming to help Ontarians gain access to life-saving rare-disease treatments?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: As part of the discussion, absolutely, we talked about rare diseases. But as the member talked about Ontario specifically, I'm proud to say that Ontario leads the country. As new pharmaceuticals come online, Ontario has led Canada in making sure that they are on our drug formulary and they are provided through OHIP to our citizens.

I point to Trikafta, which was one of the first ones. Ontario led the Canadian jurisdictions for a new drug that treated children with cystic fibrosis. With RSV, we now have a vaccine that is Health Canada-approved and is available to our most vulnerable in Ontario, the first and only province in Canada that is doing this for long-term care and high-risk individuals in retirement homes.

Why? Because we see in Ontario a need to make sure that we protect our most vulnerable, and we act very quickly to make sure that as these drugs come online and get approved throughout Canada, they are available to Ontario citizens.

HOUSING

Mr. Trevor Jones: My question is to the Associate Minister of Housing. Housing affordability has become a pressing impact across Ontario's communities. Home ownership has become out of reach for many young families and newcomers in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Leamington. A significant number of renters are also facing unaffordable housing costs that limit their ability to purchase other life necessities.

Despite our government's robust measures to accelerate housing supply, Ontario needs more homes built now. Our government must continue to build on our efforts to do all we can to address the housing supply shortage.

Speaker, can the associate minister please share with the House how our government is providing housing solutions for all Ontarians?

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you to the member from Chatham-Kent-Leamington, my neighbour down in southwestern Ontario, who is doing a great job.

As Ontario fights this housing crisis, we remain committed to ensuring that all Ontarians have a safe place to call home. Every month, I'm encouraged to see that we're seeing housing projects under way in communities across this whole province. Why, Speaker? Because we've introduced four housing supply action plans. Why, Speaker? Because we've invested \$1.2 billion in the Building Faster Fund, and we've invested \$700 million in the homelessness prevention plan, up 42% or \$200 million.

The plan is working. We've got shovels in the ground. We're going to get keys in people's hands. We're on the pathway to success. The job is getting done.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our question period for this morning. This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1145 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CHANGE OF NAME AMENDMENT ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CHANGEMENT DE NOM

Ms. Scott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 138, An Act to amend the Change of Name Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act / Projet de loi 138, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le changement de nom et apportant des modifications corrélatives à une autre loi.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member like to briefly explain her bill.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Speaker, I'm proud to co-sponsor this bill with the member for Thornhill, Laura Smith.

The bill amends the Change of Name Act to provide that certain offenders are ineligible to apply to change their name. The offenders who are ineligible are those who are required to comply with Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000.

RAPATI DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION LTD. ACT, 2023.

Mr. Dave Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr30, An Act to revive Rapati Design and Construction Ltd.

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

First reading agreed to.

592605 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2023

Mr. Bresee moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr26, An Act to revive 592605 Ontario Limited.

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

First reading agreed to.

PETITIONS

RARE DISEASES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled "Ontario Needs a Rare Disease Strategy," and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario currently lacks a rare diseases strategy, which has left those who are living with rare diseases without access to the supports they need;

"Whereas in 2016, the Ministry of Health established a Rare Diseases Working Group committee to develop a provincial framework on this issue;

"Whereas the Rare Diseases Working Group Report was submitted to the government of Ontario in 2017 with important recommendations, which have never been implemented;

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

"Immediately pass the Rare Disease Strategy Act, and implement the recommendations set out in the 2017 Rare Diseases Working Group Report."

I fully support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

CHANGE OF NAME

Ms. Laura Smith: This petition is titled “Support for the Passage of the Change of Name Amendment Act, 2023.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas sexual offences are heinous crimes, and protecting the community from sexual offenders should always be a priority, especially when these offenders try to change their name or identity;

“Whereas children are the most precious and vulnerable members of our community that deserve to feel safe and protected;

“Whereas victims and survivors of sexual offences live with pain and trauma from the actions of those who have preyed upon their vulnerability and made them suffer physically and emotionally;

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

“To urge the government to ensure that our communities are safe places from sexual violence and offenders through the passage of the Change of Name Amendment Act, 2023.”

I affix my name hereto, and I will give it to page Isolde.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ford government cancelled rent control on units built after November 2018; and

“Whereas the cost to rent a home has never been higher; and

“Whereas people are being forced to leave their communities because decent, affordable homes are increasingly out of reach;

“Whereas the rent control for all units act, 2022, will ensure tenants are not gouged on rent each year;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to protect tenants from predatory rent increases and pass the NDP’s Rent Control for All Tenants Act today to ensure renters can live in safe and affordable homes.”

I will proudly sign this petition and return it to the table with page Michael.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Bring Back Rent Control,” and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ford government cancelled rent control on units built after November 2018; and

“Whereas the cost to rent a home has never been higher; and

“Whereas people are being forced to leave their communities because decent, affordable homes are increasingly out of reach; and

“Whereas the Rent Control for All Tenants Act, 2022, will ensure tenants are not gouged on rent each year;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to protect tenants from predatory rent increases and pass” the NDP’s “Rent Control for All Tenants Act today to ensure renters can live in safe and affordable homes.”

I fully support this petition, and I stand in solidarity with our Livmore High Park tenants who are experiencing predatory rent increases.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to raise social assistance rates and, once again, I would like to thank Dr. Sally Palmer for continuing to do the hard work in getting these in to us.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

1310

“Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

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

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

I couldn’t agree with this more. I’m going to affix my name to it and give it to page Gurkaram to bring to the Clerk.

ONTARIO PLACE

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas redevelopment that includes a private, profit-driven venture by an Austrian spa company, prioritizes commercial interests over the needs and desires of the people of Ontario and it is estimated that the cost to prepare the grounds for redevelopment and build a 2,000-car underground garage will cost approximately \$650 million;...

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

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

I fully support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition calls to raise social assistance rates and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens” well “below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

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

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

I fully support this petition and I want to thank Sally Palmer for sending these signatures in.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled, “For Meaningful Climate Action Withdraw Bill 23.”

“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;

“Whereas Canada has signed the Paris accord which commits us to acting to keep temperature rise under 1.5 degrees Celsius;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to withdraw Bill 23 and to create a new bill to meet our housing needs that is compatible with protecting the greenbelt, creating affordable housing in the current urban boundaries, and meeting our climate targets.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my signature to it, as well.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Pass the Stay Home If You Are Sick Act,” and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is overwhelming evidence to show that paid sick days significantly reduce the spread of infectious disease, promote preventive health care and reduce health care system costs; and

“Whereas 60% of Ontario workers do not have access to paid sick days, and cannot afford to lose their pay if they are sick; and

“Whereas low-wage and precarious workers are the most likely to be denied paid sick days; and

“Whereas enabling workers to stay home when they are sick without losing pay helps limit the spread of illness in the workplace and allows workers to recover faster; and

“Whereas during an infectious disease emergency, it is unreasonable and dangerous to public health to make workers choose between protecting their communities and providing for their families; and

“Whereas legislating paid sick days through the Employment Standards Act, with transitional financial support for struggling small businesses, will ensure that workers have seamless, uninterrupted access to their pay;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately pass Bill 4, the Stay Home If You Are Sick Act, to provide Ontario workers with 10 annual employer-paid days of personal emergency leave and 14 days of paid leave in the case of an infectious disease emergency.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Health Care: Not for Sale,” and 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 further 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 pay and 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;

—legislating 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 support this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ATTACKS ON ISRAEL

ATTAQUES EN ISRAËL

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 17, 2023, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion regarding the Hamas attacks.

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

1320

Mr. Dave Smith: When I was preparing for this debate, I looked back at a number of historical things. I thought about a lot of different things. Ultimately, what we’re talking about is the Hamas terrorist organization and the attacks that they made on Israel and the Jewish people that they killed. On October 7, it was the most Jews killed since the Holocaust. I thought about that, and I took a step back and started looking at some of the things from the Holocaust moving forward.

Last year, in January when we weren’t sitting, I had a couple of days where I took a little bit of time with my wife and actually read a couple of books. The books I read—my son joked with me that it was some light reading: *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* and *The Holocaust by Bullets* were the two books. When you read the atrocities that happened during Nazi Germany and the attacks on Jews from it, and we look at the world today, nobody holds the German people accountable for what the Nazi Party did and the atrocities that they did. I think that is one of

the key things we have to remember today with this conflict. No one is saying that Palestinian citizens, those innocent individuals who live in Gaza, are responsible for this. It is the Hamas terrorist organization that has done this.

As I look back at my life and some of the things that have gone on—and I talked to my kids about this—we all live in 2023, yes, but we live in a vastly different world here in Ontario than they do in the Middle East. It’s really difficult to take what would be our standards, our norms, and apply that in Israel.

My daughter asked me about this. She said, “Why can’t we?” I said to her, “You’re 26. Have you ever heard air-raid sirens?” Her answer was no. Air-raid sirens are something that frequently go off in different communities in Israel. On October the 7th at 6:30 in the morning in Jerusalem the air-raid sirens went off.

I’m 53. The only time I’ve heard an air-raid siren go off is when they were doing some work on a building that had an air-raid siren and they made a mistake on the electrical and it went off because they thought they were removing the electricity to that siren, but they actually activated the electricity to the siren. Everyone was confused as to what that noise was. But it’s not an unusual sound to hear in Israel.

My daughter said to me, “There’s a report of the terrorists coming into the kibbutz and going into safe rooms. What’s a safe room?” When you stop and think about that for a minute, if you live in Israel, when you build your home, you build a bomb-resistant room to protect your family from terrorist attacks. We don’t live in the same world that they do, because we don’t have to have that. We don’t have anything in our Ontario building code to define what a safe room should be, or how thick the walls should be to protect you from a rocket attack. And yet, we have people who are saying this is normal. It’s not normal for us. It’s a completely different world that they’re living in. The threat of a terrorist attack is so great in Israel that they hear air-raid sirens frequently, that they have to build a room in their home that is bomb-resistant, because that’s what they face on a daily basis.

We had a number of years of peace in Israel, and when I think back again to my own childhood—I’m 53; I was born in 1970. I was not alive during the Six-Day War and I was not alive during—sorry, I was alive, but I was only three during the conflict in 1973. But I remember, in elementary school, turning on the TV and seeing on CBC, seeing on ABC or NBC—on network television, which 30-year-olds wouldn’t know anything about today because, at the time, we only had about five or six channels. But I remember seeing terrorist attacks; it seemed like it was a daily occurrence. Beirut was under attack. Tehran was under attack. Tel Aviv was under attack. It was a different world, and we got to a point where things were moving forward, where there was some semblance of peace.

The Palestine Liberation Organization was considered a terrorist organization at one point. Yasser Arafat was an enemy of most of the world at one point, and yet Israel was

able to negotiate with them and come to a peace agreement. In 2000, there was an offer for a peace agreement that Hamas said no to and broke, and there have been multiple times where there have been negotiations for peace—to lay down arms and not fight—and Hamas has always said no to it. In their charter—it's been said multiple times—in the charter for Hamas, it is the annihilation of Israel. Their statement, “From the River to the Sea,” is all of Israel.

I think back again to some of the things that I experienced as a young adult, as a teenager. I was listening to some music last night, and I know there have been a couple of times where I've had speeches where I've quoted some lyrics from songs. I'm going to do it again because I heard this last night again and it really stuck with me.

The Pink Floyd album *The Final Cut*: There were a lot of political statements that were in that album, but one song in particular, *The Gunner's Dream*, is about Roger Waters's father, who was a gunner in the Second World War. The lyrics—normally I don't read stuff, I usually go from my memory, but I wanted to make sure I didn't make a mistake on this one. Think of it from the perspective of someone who was a gunner in an aircraft in the Second World War, and the aircraft has been shot down and he's parachuting to safety.

Floating down through the clouds
 Memories come rushing up to meet me now
 In the space between the heavens
 And in the corner of some foreign field
 I had a dream
 I had a dream
 Goodbye Max
 Goodbye Ma

After the service when you're walking slowly to the car

1330

And the silver in her hair shines in the cold November air

You hear the tolling bell
 And touch the silk in your lapel
 And as the tear drops rise to meet the comfort of the band
 You take her frail hand
 And hold on to the dream

During the Second World War, the fighting was to liberate Europe, but the fighting was also because of the genocide that was being perpetrated against Jews. And the dream was that freedom. The dream was stopping the racism, the hatred and the demonizing of a race of people. The song goes on to say:

A place to stay
 Enough to eat
 Somewhere old heroes shuffle safely down the street
 Where you can speak out loud
 About your doubts and fears
 And what's more no one ever disappears

You never hear their standard issue kicking in your door

You can relax on both sides of the tracks
 And maniacs don't blow holes in bandmen by remote control

And everyone has recourse to the law
 And no one kills the children anymore
 And no one kills the children anymore

Night after night
 Going round and round my brain
 His dream is driving me insane
 In the corner of some foreign field
 The gunner sleeps tonight
 What's done is done
 We cannot just write off his final scene
 Take heed of the dream....

That was written in 1983, and it was the memories of a musician—what his father went through fighting against an oppressive group who wanted to destroy an entire race of people because they saw those people as the source of all of their problems. When the rest of the world got involved in the war and the rest of the world stepped forward, and they saw the atrocities that were perpetuated on these individuals—we hear the stories of what it looked like in Auschwitz. We've seen the photos of how Jews were treated.

Germany—the Nazis—knew what they were doing was wrong, and they hid it. Hamas livestreamed what they were doing and were very proud of the fact that they went into villages and killed people, families, children. There was a peace festival going on.

Think about this. Let's put it in perspective for North America. Taylor Swift draws how many thousands of people to one of her events? And all of those Taylor Swift fans are there, cheering on, listening to the music, and armed terrorists come in and shoot and kill 260 of them. We don't live in a part of the world where that happens. Most people in Ontario cannot comprehend that because we've never had to experience that.

That's what happened on October 7. You had thousands of people who were at a peace festival around music who got up that morning thinking they were going to have a great time, thinking they were going to be celebrating something. They were going to be with their friends. They were going to have just these memories that were going to last with them forever, and yes, they have memories now that will last forever, but those are not the memories that they should have.

For anyone to stand up and say that Hamas is justified in what they did is embarrassing. For anyone to stand up and defend Hamas, it is embarrassing.

After the Second World War, the world said, “We will not forget,” but we have people today who are advocating that we forget, who are advocating that Israel should not defend itself. There are people right now on social media from our communities who are standing up and saying Israel does not have the right to defend itself.

I remind you that, at 6:30 a.m., air-raid sirens went off in Jerusalem, not because of anything that the Jewish people in Israel did, but because a terrorist organization wanted to strike fear in an entire country, an organization whose mandate says that they are going to destroy the State of Israel.

A number of people have said that if they just lay down their weapons, it would all be over. You're right. If Israel laid down their weapons, it would all be over. There would be no Israel. There would be an annihilation of Jews. That cannot happen. Anyone who professes to be anti-racist, anyone who stands up and says that we have to treat everyone equally, and then, in the next breath, defends Hamas is a word that I would be asked to withdraw, so I won't say it directly, but it starts with an animal, like a hippo, and ends with a crit—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Stretching.

Mr. Dave Smith: I didn't say the word directly.

That's what we're facing today. I cannot believe that we have people who are standing up and defending Hamas. I cannot believe that we're in a position today when we're in the House again to be talking about this, that we have to be defending people against this—

Interjections.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'll come back to it, because there's some chatter going on here in the chamber that really is bothering.

We do not have bomb shelters in our homes. We do not have a safe room in our house in Ontario. We do not have, in our building code, dimensions and directions on what it should be, and yet the people of Israel must, because they face that terrorism every single day. If we don't stand up and call out terrorism when it happens, we're complacent in it. We're accepting it, and we should never accept that.

I'll go back to the song from Pink Floyd, *The Gunner's Dream*:

You can relax on both sides of the tracks

And maniacs don't go blow holes in bandmen by remote control ...

And no one kills the children anymore....

We're in a time where we should be celebrating all of the good things that have gone on. We're in a time where we shouldn't have to be talking about terrorist activity, but unfortunately we are. We have people who are members of provincial Parliament who are defending those actions. That is indefensible.

1340

We must stand with resolve. We must condemn Hamas. We must condemn terrorism, and all of us must stand with Israel.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank my colleague from Peterborough South-Kawartha—

Mr. Dave Smith: Peterborough-Kawartha.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Peterborough-Kawartha? Well, we'll give you the whole then.

Mr. Dave Smith: God's country.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, I've heard that before too.

It's interesting, because as I was thinking about what I was going to be saying today, our theme was going to be very, very similar. As many of you know, my father was a World War II veteran. He was never there when they liberated the Jews from places like Auschwitz or Treblinka—that was the work of other soldiers—but he never lost sight or appreciation of the atrocities that the Jewish people were subjected to.

Of course, subsequent to the Second World War, the free world rightfully decided that a religion, a race, a people that had experienced more discrimination and oppression than any other group in history must have a homeland, so a decision was made to provide them with that homeland, Israel, where they had been for millennia—the Holy Land. And ever since then, there has been a conflict over that decision, so ever since then, the Jews in Israel have rightfully felt that they have been surrounded by hostiles, that they must do everything they can to defend the only homeland they have.

Jews were dispersed in many countries before that, but they were discriminated against in all of them, some not as much as others—obviously Germany, when Hitler took over and became the Führer, the ruler, in such an inhuman way that the rest of the world could not help but notice and could not help but do something about it.

So Israel was established. Unlike my colleague from Peterborough-Kawartha, I was around for the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War, and I remember—you know, my dad didn't talk about many of these things. But on the Six-Day War—I was 10 years old—he talked a little bit about how difficult life always has been for the Jews and how they've always been so unfairly treated and maligned throughout the world, yet they continued to forge forward and prosper, because they were a determined people that would not take that as a fatal setback. They just kept doing their best for their people.

As my colleague said, throughout all that time, there has always been this feeling of not if it will happen, but when it will happen. I've given my colleague here from Eglinton-Lawrence a copy of this, but in a speech that my father made in 1977 to a Pentecostal church—I happen to have a copy of it; those things weren't usually recorded then. But he talked about how fortunate we are in Canada, that we've never had war on our land—and before anybody corrects me, we weren't Canada in 1812 to 1814. We've had disagreements and we've had skirmishes, but we have been spared. And even speaking of a man who was in the theatre of war overseas—how some parts of the world had experienced war multiple times in that last century and how we are so blessed in this country that we have never experienced that.

So as my colleague said, when we go to bed at night, we go to bed at night knowing that unless the good Lord calls us some other way, we will not be rising in the morning to the sounds of sirens or a bombardment of rockets from a terrorist group. We will rise the next morning safely and go about our daily business. That is

not the case in Israel. It's never the case, because if it isn't today, it might be some other day.

On October 7, when the terrorist attack took place, thousands of rockets raining down on the people of Israel—completely innocent men, women, children and babies attacked intentionally by a terrorist group. This is not something where—we're not talking about collateral damage or anything else. They crossed that border and they went in there determined to kill Jews. That was their motivation, because that's what they believe: that the only endgame for them is the annihilation of Israel and the annihilation of the Jew. They must be destroyed. This is what they believe, and this is what they strive for every day. And when they're not involved in a terrorist attack, they're getting ready for a terrorist attack. This is what they believe. This is what keeps them going. Their only motivation is to destroy the Jew.

So on October 7, it was manifested in the most egregious, heinous attack you could possibly envision. More Jews were killed that day than in any other time since the Holocaust. Put that into perspective. In all of the things that have been happening, because there's always been unrest—since the end of the Second World War and since Israel was established, there has always been unrest in the Middle East. It goes through some periods where it simmers down and things like that, but the reality is that it has never gone away.

I believe one of the world's failures—and it's because we continuously hope that something might change—has been to allow terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah to continue to exist, because they're there for one reason. We've allowed it to happen because we're hoping against hope that if we just say, "Okay, back off now," and maybe things will get better. They never have, and we know in our heart of hearts that they never will as long as groups exist where their only reason for being is to destroy another group of people.

We've failed repeatedly to deal with these terrorist organizations. So now they were able to build up some armaments and be in a position where they thought they could level a serious blow to Israel—and they did—a massive terrorist attack that destroyed so many innocent lives.

Now we're asked, by some, to now condemn Israel for defending itself. We're now asked to condemn Israel, who—there's not another neighbour in the area that they can join up with. They're alone. That's why the Americans and other countries have said, "We will stand with Israel," because they know that otherwise they stand alone. But now we're being asked to just say, "Okay, Israel, that's enough." But Hamas is right there.

1350

I say—and I know there will be those that vehemently disagree with me, and that's fine. The blood of every Palestinian that has suffered death—and that is terrible, but the blood of every Palestinian is on the hands of Hamas, not Israel. Israel is doing what it must do to defend itself. Hamas has no morals. There are no rules. You use children and vulnerable people as human shields.

By the way, I digress for a moment, but I was very disappointed this morning when the chief whip of the opposition, who obviously just takes their information from Hamas, said the hospital was bombed by Israelis. Well, we know—and she knew at that time—that US intelligence has shown clearly that it was done by another terrorist group.

"Deadly Blast Provokes Anger in Middle East and Complicates Biden's Visit"

"The US has collected signals intelligence showing that the explosion at a Gaza hospital compound on Tuesday was caused by the militant group Palestine Islamic Jihad, US officials said, buttressing Israel's contention that it wasn't responsible for the blast. The US assessment drew in part on communications intercepts and other intelligence gathered by the US, defence officials said."

So not only do Hamas use their own citizens as human shields, they also will blame the casualties on Israel. But you see, in all of these buildings, Israel can tell where the rockets come from. Hamas masks the rockets in populated areas among the Palestinian civilians—the citizens—and I guess Israel is just supposed to say, "Well, I guess we can't defend ourselves because of this, so we'll just wait for the next rocket attacks coming from Gaza. We'll just lie down and lay down our weapons and say, 'Oh, boy, I hope we are able to intercept the next attack on us.'" No, Israel is going to act as it always has to defend itself and defend its unalienable right to do so.

So, Speaker, what is the answer, then? I mean, I may be pretty simplistic at times, and I'll accept that assessment. If Hamas really cared about its own citizens in Palestine, when Israel said, "Turn over the hostages and the rockets will stop"—no, Hamas would rather hold the hostages whether they live or die, and how many Palestinians die as a result matters nothing to them. They have no regard for life, whether it's in Israel, Palestine, Lebanon or anywhere else—they have no regard for life. But Israel is doing what it feels it must do to protect their lives.

Where do you go, then? Where do you go to stop the carnage? Well, it has to start with Hamas. Hamas initiated the terrorist attacks, beheadings, rapes—just absolutely sickening actions, inhumane actions below any level of human degradation you could ever think of. There is no apology from Hamas. In fact, they videotaped and livestreamed for the world to see the atrocities they were committing against the Jewish people. Apologize? They're proud of it; they're proud of it. For them, it's like keeping score: "Hey, I killed 25 Jews today. I beat your 23." It's so sickening it's beyond comprehension. But this is what you're dealing with, with a terrorist organization.

Of course, we have another motion on the table as well to censure the member from Hamilton Centre, but it's as much to censure—or not censure, but to chide the leader of the NDP. I can tell you this much: If a member of this caucus was told by the Premier to withdraw a statement that was as hate-filled as the one from the member from Hamilton Centre and chose to put up some insincere, fake apology but not take down the statement that caused the problem in the first place, I have absolutely no doubt that

they would not sit as a member of this caucus for one single day longer.

So I say to the leader of the NDP: This is on you, too, because you told your member to withdraw it. They thumbed their nose right at you and said, “No, I won’t do it,” and now you’re the one backing off. The shame is on you as well. We’ll have time to debate that motion in greater detail at a later hour, perhaps even later today. I’m not sure what the House leader has in store.

But, again, it is painful for someone who has, quite frankly, in this country—I’m not alone. I’m not singling myself out, but I’ve lived a charmed life: so protected, so secure, so unafraid to be who I am. Even in this country, if I had been raised a Jew, I would not feel as secure because, even in this country, we see the anti-Semitism manifested every single day. We see it on our university campuses. That is so troubling because—listen, I’m not going to be here much longer. Hell, I might not be around, period, much longer. Who knows? Who knows? But the next generation of people in our schools—when we have groups on university campuses trying to foster anti-Semitism and hate for the Jew as their daily mission in life, and calling *intifada*—is that what it’s called?

Mrs. Robin Martin: *Intifada*.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Yes, *intifada*—calling for it on our university campuses, what does that say about how safe it’s going to be in this country?

We have to do every single thing we possibly can to combat that kind of hate. It applies to Islamophobia as well, but, today, the issue is the hatred of the Jew and Israel. Hatred for anyone is absolutely unacceptable, but when we allow university student associations to perpetrate that kind of sickening desire to kill—that’s what they’re saying on those campuses. How does a Jewish student feel safe at York University today? And that’s just one of them.

And there is no moral equivalency. I’ve heard that from the other side too much. There is no moral equivalency. If you want a safer place for everyone, today you have to start with stomping down the anti-Semitism that is like a cancer right here in Canada and in this city and in the province of Ontario. We must stand firmly against hate of all kinds—all kinds. But today, we have the opportunity to unanimously stand up against hate for Israel and the Jewish people.

1400

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate? The member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for recognizing me for debate on this motion. I quickly want to read through the motion and then get into a little bit of my deliberations here. I’m just going to read the motion here:

“That this House condemn the ongoing and reprehensible attacks being carried out by the terrorist organization Hamas, including the slaughter, rape and kidnapping of innocent Israeli civilians, including babies, children and seniors, and recognize the inalienable right of the State of Israel to defend itself and its people against this horrific violence.”

Over the last couple of days, I’ve been thinking about what I wanted to talk about this afternoon. I’ve had a chance to visit Israel twice; it’s a beautiful country. It’s really neat to be able to see how the interplay between so many faiths can come together in one place—obviously, a lot of that coalescing around Jerusalem. I know there are some other colleagues here who have had a chance to visit Israel as well, and I know they probably had as much admiration for the country as I do.

It reminded me of something that happened about three or four years ago. I think it was about a year after we had taken government in 2018, pre-pandemic. I was meeting with a group of individuals from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, better known as CIJA. We were speaking in a boardroom with about four or five members, and we were just talking about some of the different challenges that Jewish people face here in Canada and some of the backstory, the history, and where CIJA thought things were moving as we went forward.

We were having a great, very open dialogue and discussion, and I asked them a very poignant question. I didn’t mean it in a derogatory way, but I thought it was something that—you know, we were in kind of a safe place to be able to ask this question, and the question that I asked, that I posed to this group was, “Do you think that sometimes CIJA and Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center and some of the different organizations that we see here in Canada are out there too much talking about anti-Semitism? Are they really being that proverbial squeaky wheel?” The response to me was, “Mike, we don’t ever, ever, ever want anybody to forget the atrocities that happened during World War II, where over six million Jews were systematically exterminated during the Holocaust.” I thought, “Okay, well, sure, that’s a valid point. I don’t see something like that ever happening again in the future.” But here we are today, talking about this very issue, where just a short couple of weeks ago, we’ve seen a terrorist group that was formed in 1988—this isn’t all that long ago—known as Hamas, that has now perpetrated the second-largest killing of Jewish people, outside of the Holocaust.

It struck me to think, “Well, you know, maybe these guys are being a little bit over the top with what they’re doing,” but, clearly, they had a little bit of foresight to think that just because things have calmed down in the region or that people are much more educated about these types of issues, that they still couldn’t happen today. I thought that would be an interesting thing to open up today’s debate with, or at least on my end of today’s debate, because I think it really hits home what a lot of these organizations are trying to do.

When we saw what happened during World War II, starting in the late 1930s and into the early 1940s of people being rounded up and sent into areas and identified—the member for Peterborough–Kawartha was talking about the book that he read about the tattoo artist who was putting those tattoos on people to say that they were Jewish and their number is what would be displayed in the ghetto so they couldn’t leave and come back and forth freely like other citizens were able to do. It’s a bit sad.

We talk about the indiscriminate killing and rape and slaughter of innocent people in Israel. And these aren't just Jewish people; these are people of Palestinian and Arab origin. These are Christians. They're people who have left these other areas of strife where they're often being held down by oppressive regimes and have moved to Israel because they want to have an opportunity at a better life for their family, their kids, their grandchildren.

I haven't really heard that brought up in the conversation yet, and I think it's really important to note that Israel is not just made up of people from Judaic origin. This is an area where, for thousands and thousands of years, you've had people of different ethnic groups, different races, different faiths coming together and being able to celebrate one another in that space.

When I had toured through Israel back in the early 2000s, I had a really great opportunity to go there with my father, obviously former Premier Harris, as an Ontario company was actually building the Cross Israel Highway, which was pretty neat. So we got to tour the country; we got to look around. It's not a very big country, so it is fairly easy to navigate. But it was really neat to go through Jerusalem. I know the member for Essex hopefully will get a little bit of a chance to speak about some of the things that he saw while he spent three months in Israel. I was there for about a week, and it was really neat to be able to go through Jerusalem and see all the different quarters and how everybody interacted together and how there wasn't animosity toward each other. Everybody truly was able to get along.

But when you mix in organizations like Hamas, and I'll quote from their founding document, who are there to "obliterate Israel"—that is their sole mission. I thought the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke was quite eloquent when he spoke about that, because that is their sole mission. Their sole mission is to destroy the lives of Israelis, but I think that's, again, what's lost in this conversation. It's not just the Jewish people who are being persecuted by Hamas, it's anybody that lives within Israel.

I'm very hopeful that members of the opposition are listening to this and are hearing what we have to say on this side of the House. I'm sure many of them feel the same way, that they want to see peace, that they want to see everybody being able to raise their families, work on their farms, be able to enjoy music festivals, for example—we've heard about that today, Madam Speaker—without having to look over their shoulder any time they wake up in the morning or any time they go out of the house.

As Canadians, as someone who maybe doesn't really understand what war in perpetuity could mean, I think it's important that we educate ourselves and that we understand what is currently happening in the Middle East and the interplay, not only between the Hamas regime and Israel but some of the other actors that surround them, and how the Canadian government can play a role, how the US government can play a role and of course other governments around the world. I just want to quickly touch on a few pieces here.

The leaders of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States have reiterated their sup-

port for Israel. I believe actually President Biden is heading to Israel; I think it's today or tomorrow—

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Harris: Oh, he's there right now—to try and promote talks and peace and try to get a positive dialogue going as to how we can end this conflict. It's unfortunate that the Canadian government—we're not going to get into maybe why—was not invited to these discussions, but I think that's what makes it even more important for us here in Ontario.

1410

I like to talk about, when we're doing trade missions or overseas or taking part in conferences, how Toronto and our government here in our provincial capital is the fifth most powerful seat of government in North America. I think we have a true opportunity to lead when it comes to how we view what's happening and the statements that we put out as parliamentarians, and to make sure that we are truly putting our best foot forward. If the Canadian government is going to be slow to act, we need to make sure and it's incumbent on us here in Ontario that we are the ones who can lead, we're the ones who can rally Canadians, we're the ones who can hold Hamas to account.

As I wrap up my remarks, I just want to thank everybody for the opportunity to have this debate. I think it's very important. When we have these special motions that come before the Legislature, I know often they can be very impassioned and sometimes they can choke you up.

I just want to leave everyone with this: We all know I have five kids—that's no secret. One of the reasons that I got involved in politics is because I want to leave Ontario and Canada a better place for my kids to be able to raise their children, my grandchildren, and I know that the people of Israel want the same. That's why Israel was created back in the 1950s, to allow people in the Middle East, in that region—to afford them the same kind of ability that we have here in Canada, where we have a peaceful democracy that wants the best for the people of their country.

So I hope everyone will support this motion. I hope everyone will condemn the terrorist organization known as Hamas. And I hope that in another four years we're not up here having this same debate again.

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: To stand in this chamber today, to speak to the horrific acts of terrorism that occurred only 11 days ago in Israel, is truly something I never thought I would be doing.

I like to think the best of mankind. I like to believe that we learn from the past, to ensure the atrocities of the past are never repeated, yet here I stand with my colleagues who have stood before me yesterday and today to speak to the inhumane actions of a terrorist group.

Eleven days ago, it was our Canadian Thanksgiving. We were all likely thinking about our meal preparations for the holiday, thinking about all the fixings and looking forward to the time we were going to spend with our

families and friends, when we saw the breaking news headlines on all the news media outlets: Israeli civilians under attack by Hamas terrorists.

For our Jewish community members, I can only imagine what emotions overwhelmed them, especially the thought of loved ones in Israel, and then to think of their own safety right here in our country. Why? Why would they have to think like that? The footage that started coming across our TV screens, unceasing displays of horrors. Some of it came from Hamas body cameras and videos posted by Hamas militants to social media, and later verified by Israel. Some was taken by civilians as they tried to escape, some by first responders. It showed bodies of people who had been bound; a room with at least seven bodies reduced to ash; civilians shot in bedrooms, bathrooms, front yards. The bloodshed is just overwhelming. I had to look away. To think of the intent with this act—the militants were well prepared. In the videos, it showed some dressed in army fatigues to look like Israeli soldiers. Others were dressed like police officers. Who commits such premediated horrific acts of terrorism?

On October 15, a group of over 100 international law experts issued a statement assessing that the Hamas terror group committed multiple war crimes in a massive assault on Israel and that its actions in slaughtering 1,300 people likely amounted to genocide. “These acts constitute gross violation of international law, and, in particular, of international criminal law,” declared the document, signed by academic figures and legal authorities in Israel and abroad. “Videos, released mostly by Hamas, posted on social media, document acts of torture, sexual violence, violence towards children and molestation of bodies,” the document specified. Among those who signed the document was Professor Irwin Cotler, a former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

On October 7, Thanksgiving weekend, we bore witness to a bloody assault, which came alongside a widespread barrage of 5,000 rockets fired indiscriminately at towns and cities across Israel. As noted, it resulted in the death of more than 1,300 people, the vast majority of them civilians, including six Canadians. Thousands more were injured, hundreds of them seriously.

As my colleague from Thornhill noted yesterday afternoon, Israel is not that far away, and it is not. On October 9, the strong and brave Jewish Canadian community in the GTA, organized by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, managed to bring people together for a rally for Israel. And bring people together they certainly did, with a reported 15,000 people in attendance.

I stood on the Mel Lastman stage in North York alongside Premier Ford and 15 of my colleagues at the rally for Israel. I was personally overwhelmed by the thousands of people who were there to support the Jewish community in the face of the terrorist attacks that took place. We watched a video of the people in Israel and heard directly from them as to what was happening. It was surreal, and yet the reality of this massacre become ever so overwhelming.

I go back to my days of learning about the Holocaust at school and of my visit to the Anne Frank House in

Amsterdam. I’m receiving a real history lesson of what took place in the world—how Jewish people had to hide from Nazi persecution. And here we are again.

1420

I also think about the time I was in Pearl Harbor, visiting the museum there. It was so overwhelmingly sad. My mom and I were there together. My dad couldn’t come, because he remembers those days. He said no, he can’t go to a place where there was that much death. But my mom and I went. I remember crying.

I also think about how I felt that morning of September 11, 2001, when the planes hit the World Trade Center twin towers in New York—the hate of a terrorist group.

There is a common denominator here: hate. Hate is the devil’s breeding ground, and we have no use for hate towards anybody, especially in Canada. Racism, hate and discrimination have no place in this great province of Ontario. The safety of all communities has and remains of the utmost importance.

I condemn—and our government condemns—Hamas’s heinous acts on the people of Israel. Israel must defend itself against such acts of terror. The tragic loss of life and the terror invoked among the men, women, families and children in Israel is beyond words. We can only imagine the emotional trauma and pain that thread itself through Israel over these past 11 days. Now more than ever, Ontario stands firm in its support of Israel and in solidarity with the Jewish communities across the province who are heartbroken and horrified by this senseless act of terror. Our government will continue to work with the Israeli Canadian community to create a stronger, safer and more inclusive province, where people from all walks of life can call it home and feel safe and respected.

After attending the rally for Israel, when I was in my community last week, I had a few local Jewish constituents tell me that they watched the rally on TV, on the news. They saw me, and they so appreciated the support of our government and thanked me for being there with Premier Ford. They also said to me that they did not want to go to the rally because they were afraid. No one in this province should be afraid to go out and support one another in such a time of crisis.

This past Sunday evening, when I took part in the challah for Israel women’s prayer vigil. After all the women arrived, it was a purposeful move to lock the doors of the centre for safety purposes. That brought to light how the Jewish people feel—that fear, security, the potential for someone to come in to hurt these women. It made me think of what happened on October 7, when Hamas went into homes and slaughtered women and children. This reiterated to me that as politicians, we have the responsibility to ensure our community members feel safe, to feel that they can count on us to take a stand when we see acts of terror and to stand against terrorists and such brutal, savage, inhumane acts. They count on us to stand up against anti-Semitism. They count on us to stand up against hatred acts.

This is why I support motion 38: “That this House condemn the ongoing and reprehensible attacks being

carried out by the terrorist organization Hamas, including the slaughter, rape and kidnapping of innocent Israeli civilians, including babies, children and seniors, and recognize the inalienable right of the State of Israel to defend itself and its people against this horrific violence.”

Madam Speaker, I'd like to just correct what I said there. It's actually motion 18. I believe I said 38—my apologies.

I go back to my member's statement earlier today. I think about being there with the local Jewish women, kneading the challah. As we were doing that, we were saying prayers. I was very honoured to be able to say a prayer with the ladies. I was honoured to hear them pray in Hebrew. I thought it was phenomenal when the dough actually rose. It was my first time making bread.

But there was all kinds of symbolism with what we were doing and the braiding of the challah: The symbolism of hope, the symbolism that they can be strong and that we can be strong together.

After we were finished with our prayers and had our bread braided, I had a few ladies come up to me, and they spoke to me about some of their concerns. I listened to them. One of the concerns was related to the schools, how silence was deafening. I spoke to them about how our government supports our Jewish community: We support them in schools; we support them in the community. We stand with the Israeli people. We stand with our Jewish communities.

Madam Speaker, I pray for a peaceable outcome for all people. As I noted earlier today, and I will reiterate, for all those innocent souls lost during this senseless attack, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

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

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Our government stands united to address a grave and deeply distressing issue that has been causing immense suffering and fear. Not only suffering and fear around the world but suffering and fear in our very own communities. I rise in this House today to condemn the ongoing and reprehensible attacks carried out by the terrorist organization Hamas, which has resulted in the slaughter, rape and kidnapping of innocent civilians.

1430

It's crucial that we recognize the indisputable right of the State of Israel to defend itself and its people against this horrific violence. Israel was assaulted with a heinous surprise attack on a sacred holy day; in this case, Simchat Torah and Shabbat. A day of peace and rejoicing was turned into a day of war and grief. As I heard my other colleagues mention today, this day became the deadliest day for Jewish people since the Holocaust.

These heinous acts target not only men and women, but babies, children and seniors. Since the attacks began last week, Hamas has murdered over 1,400, mostly civilians, including 23-year-old Tiferet Lapidot, 21-year-old Netta Epstein, 22-year-old Shir Georgy, 22-year-old Ben Mizrachi, 33-year-old Alexandre Look and 33-year-old Adi Vital-Kaploun. Tiferet, Netta, Shir, Ben, Alexandre and Adi are Canadians—or should I say, were Canadians.

Hamas has injured close to 4,000 people and kidnapped over 200 people, including babies as young as nine months old. They have fired over 6,700 rockets. In the past week, I've spoken to many individuals who live in a continuous state of fear, their lives disrupted by the threat of violence. This fear felt by the Jewish community is one that spans generations and crosses continents, a fear rooted in prejudice, in persecution and a fight for survival.

There are no words to express the pain that is felt around the world right now. We, as a government, are committed to keeping Ontario safe, and I want to assure you all that we stand by your side during these challenging times.

Let me make it clear: Hamas is a terrorist group, and there is no world in which their actions are justifiable. In situations like these, there is no grey area. This is not a two-sided conflict. Free speech does not mean it is free of consequences, and no one should try to find rationalizations for the beheading and burning of innocent children.

Hate is hate, and there can be no defending the actions of Hamas. Their actions are unjustifiable, and there is no room for hate in our society. Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people. Instead, they are a hate organization founded with the goal of destroying Israel and the Jewish people. Hamas is a terrorist organization that kills people in the most brutal ways, and we need to be united in condemning that. No one wants to see innocent people die. There is no place for hate, for violence or for terrorism—not here, not in this House, not in Ontario, not in Canada and not in the world.

We need to speak in a unified voice against this discriminatory violence and terrorism. The Jewish community continues to be the most targeted religious group in Canada, while making up only 1.4% of our population. Our Jewish community needs our support, as they fear for their safety. They need to know they don't stand alone. We need to speak up and condemn statements that condone terrorism and hate against innocent people. Saying nothing and doing nothing is not an option.

As a government, we will continue to support the Jewish people and Israelis in their right to defend themselves today, tomorrow and always. No one should live in fear of leaving their home or expressing their beliefs. Ontario, one of the most diverse places in the world, is home to people of many faiths and heritages, and everyone should be safe to express their beliefs. That's why earlier this year the Ontario government invested funds to ensure that places of worship remain safe and secure from hate-motivated incidents. Our government remains committed to combatting anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred through initiatives such as mandatory Holocaust education in the grade 6 curriculum.

The fear felt by the Jewish community is not just confined to the pages of the history books. The fear that they feel is not just an abstract concept but a daily reality for many around the world and in our own communities. As my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora was talking about feeling safe here last evening, I was shocked and

surprised and a little frightened by the presence of demonstrations in the downtown area: the sirens, the crowds, the chanting that I could hear from where I was staying, the people on the streets, the trucks, the noise. And this is where we live, a place where I never, ever thought I would feel unsafe. I'm thankful to live here and to have the protection of our police services, but for a very small moment I felt unsafe. Then I thought, "How do you live in Israel, feeling unsafe all of the time?"

I heard one of my other colleagues talk about how you build your home and things that we never have to think about, living here—things we never have to think about, like putting a bomb shelter in our home to be safe. I'm reminded of the things that we take for granted. It's another reason why we have to say something.

I'd also like to mention that the Jewish story is not just one of fear. It's also a story of triumph, of resiliency, of creativity, of unyielding hope in the face of adversity. As Matisyahu said:

Sometimes in my tears I drown
But I never let it get me down.
So when negativity surrounds
I know someday it'll all turn around....

We all need to do our part to speak up, to promote tolerance, understanding and respect for all our neighbours, no matter their race or religion. There is a common saying, "Am Yisrael Chai," which translates to, "The people of Israel live." It is commonly used to express Jewish identity and solidarity.

1440

Today is October 18. The number 18 is the symbolic representation of life. And today, we continue to say that the people of Israel live.

We all need to do our part to promote tolerance, understanding and respect for all our neighbours, no matter their race or religion.

I'd like to express my gratitude to my colleagues here today, and to the Premier for his continuous support for the Jewish community here in Ontario and around the world. Together, we stand against hate. We support the right to self-preservation and work towards a safer, more peaceful future for all.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll next recognize the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I rise this afternoon in support of government motion number 18, moved by my friend the government House leader, to condemn the terrorist actions of Hamas against innocent Israeli citizens, and to recognize the right of the State of Israel to defend itself and its people.

Speaker, 78 years ago, Canadian soldiers helped to liberate the Nazi concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen. When the crimes of the Holocaust became clear, the United Nations approved the convention against genocide, and the civilized world pledged "never again" to allow the atrocities of World War II.

The massacre in Israel last Saturday, on the Jewish holiday of Shabbat and Simchas Torah, was the greatest loss of Jewish life in any single day since 1945. Over 1,400 people—babies, children and seniors—including Holocaust survivors, were murdered, including at least six Canadians. This included 21-year-old Netta Epstein, who jumped on a grenade to save his girlfriend. Can you imagine someone jumping on a grenade to save someone's life? And 33-year-old Adi Vital-Kaploun from Ottawa was shot in her home, in front of her two young sons. At least four other young Canadians were murdered when Hamas terrorists attacked a music festival. And 200 people were taken hostage, including a 74-year-old grandmother, Vivian Silver, a peace activist from Winnipeg.

Speaker, we should call this what it is. As Matt Gurney said, this was a pogrom, livestreamed for the first time, showing us what used to happen to Jewish villages in Russia and Eastern Europe.

One of the first victims was another 74-year-old grandmother, Bracha Levinson. Hamas terrorists shot her, took her phone, filmed her dying moments, and then posted the video to her Facebook page for her family to watch—including her grandson right here in Canada. And there are more horrific stories like this.

As the Solicitor General said, there is no world in which the actions of Hamas can be justified among civilized people. Their victims include people from 30 countries, including at least 21 agricultural workers from Thailand, at least 10 students from Nepal, and at least three caregivers from the Philippines. The victims also include many Muslims—including a 23-year old paramedic who was treating the injured at the music festival and refused to abandon them.

Hamas is an enemy, not just of Israel, but of civilization—including the Palestinians. Hamas has no desire for a peaceful, two-state solution. Their attacks were clearly intended to divide Israelis and Palestinians, fuelling the conflict and derailing the peace process at a time when there has been real progress toward a historic arrangement with Saudi Arabia. But Hamas has no interest in the rights of peaceful Palestinians or the safety of the people of Gaza, who they use as human shields.

As we see pictures of innocent Palestinians injured or killed, I hope that my friends on the other side will recognize that they're being killed not because of Israel but because of Hamas. As they fire thousands of rockets at Israel, up to a third misfire and land in Gaza, killing innocent Palestinians. This happened again at a hospital just yesterday. There are not two sides to this conflict. There is no comparison between a nation that follows the laws of war and the terrorist group that targets seniors and children and then hides behind them.

Speaker, that is why it is so disappointing that some have tried to justify and even celebrate the terrorism of Hamas as an act of resistance. As the Premier said, we've seen hate rallies in Mississauga with the flags of terrorist groups including Hamas, Islamic Jihad and even the Taliban. And we've seen this action across the country. I was in Montreal for Thanksgiving, and there were hate

rallies there as well. I spoke to the federal Liberal MP for Mount Royal, Anthony Housefather. I offered my support for their local Jewish community.

On Monday, I joined the Premier at a rally for Israel at Mel Lastman Square with over 15,000 people including the consul general, Idit Shamir. I want to offer my condolences to her again; her cousin was murdered by Hamas along with another member of her family, a 90-year-old Holocaust survivor.

Unfortunately, some labour union leaders, like Fred Hahn at CUPE Ontario, have made statements that glorified this violence against innocent Israelis and promoted anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories. I want to thank both our Minister of Labour and the federal Liberal Minister of Labour and, most of all, the labour leaders like my friend Joe Mancinelli at LIUNA for making clear that Fred Hahn does not represent Ontario's labour movement and does not represent the workers at CUPE.

Several student clubs and student unions have also celebrated the terrorism of Hamas, including the UTM Students' Union in Mississauga. One UTM student posted a hateful message and threats against Jewish students. He has been arrested and banned from the University of Toronto campuses, and I want to thank my good friend Chief Nish and the Peel Regional Police and Alexandra Gillespie from UTM for taking action immediately. I also want to thank the Minister of Colleges and Universities for her important remarks yesterday.

There is no place for anti-Semitism anywhere in Ontario and especially not in our colleges and universities, just as there is no place for Islamophobia or discrimination of any kind against Jews or Muslims. Ontario is a better place because of the incredible contributions of both communities, so it is heartbreaking for me to hear that some students in Ontario are now staying home or hiding their identity out of fear.

Speaker, that is the reason why, in this House, we all have a responsibility to do everything we can to stamp out anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all forms of hatred across Ontario. Instead, as the Minister of the Environment said yesterday, the member from Hamilton Centre attended a rally organized by Holocaust deniers to celebrate the "heroism" of the Hamas terrorists at a time when the bodies of murdered Israeli children were still being removed.

As the Premier said, this member has a long, well-documented history of anti-Semitism. Her hateful views have no place in this building or any—they have no place in this province of Ontario or in Canada.

1450

Speaker, you don't have to take my word for this. Twenty years ago, Ontario's one NDP Premier, Bob Rae, left that party. He said that their views on Israel are "not a vision of social democracy worthy of support." Speaking of New Democrats like Svend Robinson, Rae asked, "Where is his solidarity with the families of the victims of the Passover massacre? Where is his humanitarian outrage over the children killed while dancing in a disco, or eating in a pizzeria?" We could ask those same questions today

to the member from Hamilton Centre about the victims of this massacre at the music festival.

I will support government motion 18, but I also want to join the Premier in calling on the member from Hamilton Centre to resign from this House. All members must stand united in condemning Hamas and to support the right of the State of Israel to defend itself and its people.

"Am Yisrael Chai"—the people of Israel will live on. I just want to thank everyone today for being here and listening to this debate.

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

Mr. Nolan Quinn: Before I get into my official comments, I just want to touch upon some of the comments that my colleagues have stated. The member from Peterborough-Kawartha mentioned the no safe rooms. That really hit home with me. My oldest daughter, Nora, just moved into a new basement bedroom. She stole my office, unfortunately, but she has huge fears of being farther from her parents now. It really, really hit home that the parents in Israel don't have that comfort and don't have that safety net that we live with in North America.

The other thing I want to mention from the member from Peterborough-Kawartha—I don't know if it's because Cornwall is a little further behind the times, but I do remember hearing the air-raid sirens—I think they were testing them at the time—when I was younger. We used to live by the train station. But they're definitely not around anymore. I remember once or twice from my childhood them being tested and it was an interesting conversation with my parents. Hearing that loud siren, you weren't sure what it was because we don't live with it, whereas the Israelites do. They live with it on a daily basis, as we mentioned. I just wanted to touch upon that because that's a conversation I haven't had to have with my children. They haven't lost that innocence yet. They don't know what an air-raid siren would be, whereas they do in Israel. They hear them quite frequently and regularly.

The member from Burlington mentioned the police presence yesterday. It really hit me. I looked out my office window and saw five police horses and about 50 or 60 police officers in our back parking lot. I came back in the House and I was a little rattled. So the member from Burlington is definitely not far off of my viewpoints on that one as well. I went outside afterwards and I asked the police officers why they were here. There was a protest going on at the U of T and all of downtown, all over the place. They were there just in case it escalated to a certain extent. So I thanked them. I thanked them for keeping us safe during these challenging times. They were appreciative of that.

To go to work every day not sure what's going to erupt when there's a protest going on and the unrest going on in the world—I can only imagine what they take home with them every day, our law enforcement. So I want to thank them here, as well, for standing out there, day in and day out, making sure that nothing gets out of hand when it comes to peaceful protests.

Mr. Speaker, I will apologize ahead of time, because I am going to get emotional with this. Most of my speech is

around the people that have died. They were brothers, sisters, mothers. I am a young father. It really hits home with me, being a young father and watching the news every night, watching CBC's The National—I can't go to bed without watching it. To see the footage that happens on a daily basis in the last 11 days is nothing short of horrible.

My oldest brother Cam just came back from Israel. About six weeks ago, he went with his family. This summer, we were at Emo, and I was thinking about my brother there, because you never know when something can break out. My fears and my worries were not unfounded. Obviously now the fear that I had for my brother's family when he was going over there hit home. I spoke to my brother last night, because as much as I'm up to date on the daily goings-on and the news with Gaza and with the West Bank in Israel, I'm a bit sheltered from it in my community. So I spoke to my brother, whose wife is Jewish, and his two children, Noa and Eli, are being raised in a Jewish family.

He had some interesting comments that I would like to share. He got really close with their tour guide because they were there for almost two weeks. They actually have a WhatsApp chat with the tour guide. He was speaking with the tour guide quite frequently and then, all of a sudden, the tour guide is offline; he is defending Israel. To go from being a tour guide—tourism—and having to pivot very quickly to defending his country, that's impactful. It's affecting my brother; it's affecting his family.

They had armed bodyguards with them the whole time they were in Israel. My brother said, "Why do we need this?" He really just didn't understand why they needed to pay to have multiple armed bodyguards. The response from the bodyguards was pretty simple: "You don't need us until you need us, and at that time, it's too late." That really hits home because that's something that we take for granted here. Walking down the streets to our apartments in Toronto, we have the safety of our law enforcement. To know that they had to go tour the beautiful country of Israel and have tour guides with them 24 hours a day really stands out. And at the time, my brother understood the risk and the severity of it all, but they're just a regular Canadian family going over to Israel to tour and to see where my sister-in-law's relatives lived.

Their daughter, Noa, my niece, she's 11. She's on the Internet, like my kids are. The day it happened it was Thanksgiving weekend, as my colleague mentioned, and online it was very clear that one of children that was kidnapped was named Noa. It hit home with my niece. She's also seen photos of children being pulled away from their parents. To understand what my niece is going through, even though we're in the very safe country of Canada, it really hits home that we're all affected by this. I just needed to share that a little bit before I get into my official statements, but my children are extremely lucky to live where they are.

Since this has started, I've been extremely emotional, and again I will apologize ahead of time. I don't know if it's the—

Interjection.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: See, I'm getting chirped by the opposition. You can stand up and speak next if you'd really like to, member from Hamilton Mountain. I haven't seen you speak yet—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the House to come to order and remind the members to make their comments through the Chair—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry has the floor.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: I don't even know where I was—she has me a bit rattled. I apologize.

We are very safe in this country. It's something that we take for granted, but ultimately—I've been very emotional, and as I was implying before I got rudely cut off, I don't know if it's my 10 or 12 concussions that make me emotional at these times or if it's me being a young parent that wants the best for my children. As the member from Kitchener–Conestoga mentioned, we get into this to leave a better world for our children, for our grandchildren, and ultimately that is my hope. But I'm unsure sometimes when we see all the unravelling of society and the rhetoric that's online and some of these angry comments that you see online with regard to the terrorism that happened in Israel to the innocent people that were sleeping, the ones that were at the music concert—I've been to music concerts.

As my colleague mentioned, Taylor Swift is touring all over North America right now, filling stadiums. The concert was named after peace, ultimately. Of all times for the terrorism to hit, it really—that is what they wanted to do. They had the most impact and the most fear for Israelites by doing that. It's scary. It's hard to walk around and think everything is okay here in Canada and Ontario when it's not in the Middle East. It's consuming me, to be brutally honest.

1500

I'll start on my prepared comments so that I don't get too off-topic.

Many around the world, including Israel's leaders, have compared the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas terrorists to the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001. I remember 2001; I'm sure we all do—where we were when that happened. I was in grade 13. My mother woke me up, because I was on a spare, sleeping in, and she brought me down to the TV and showed me the World Trade Center and the first couple of planes that went in. I didn't know what to do with myself. I ran to the school. We were all in the library, watching the horror of September 11 take place, as students at the time. I will never forget that. It's something that really is impactful. Me and my mother speak about that to this day—not only due to the scale and savage nature of the attacks, but also because the terrorists sought to destroy the tranquility of daily life. They killed the young and the old, the strong and the weak, civilians and soldiers; they took hostages,

including children, and raped women—all to send the message that no Israeli was safe.

Saturday, October 7 is an extremely important day for the Jewish community—a day that was supposed to be a happy and joyous occasion. Instead, Jewish Israelis were forced to run and hide or risk being kidnapped, tortured or killed by Hamas terrorists. Some of the victims of the Hamas terrorists were actually survivors of the Holocaust. October 7 has become one of the darkest days for the Jewish community since the days of the Holocaust.

The attacks perpetrated by the Hamas terrorists are atrocious, barbaric and heinous acts of violence that have no place in our world. Over 1,400 people were killed by the Hamas terrorists, and about 200 people were taken hostage, that we know of today. To make matters worse, these terrorists targeted civilians, including women and children. They targeted innocent civilians—women, babies and the elderly. Innocent people were kidnapped, tortured, raped and murdered, some were even set on fire and dismembered. Parents and children, as well as other friends and family, were forced to watch each other be beaten and killed. These terrorists found enjoyment in torturing and killing innocent people, and as other members have already stated, they livestreamed it—sick and heinous. They took videos of themselves committing these acts of violence, all while cheering and laughing as if it were a game. They even used children as human shields. It's very despicable. The hostages consist of soldiers and civilians—but also people with disabilities, young children, elderly, and even a nine-month-old baby. This horrific behaviour brings forth memories of the barbaric attacks perpetrated by Islamic extremist groups such as ISIS and al Qaeda. What the Hamas terrorists are doing to the people in Israel is pure evil.

We recognize that Israel has a right to defend itself and its citizens. The Israeli army acknowledges their obligation to not target civilians for military purposes and to avoid any action that could inflict disproportionate harm on civilians.

I'd like to speak about the six Canadians who have been killed as a result of the war between Israel and the Hamas terrorists.

The latest Canadian killed was Tiferet Lapidot. Even though she was not a Canadian citizen—her parents are, and she would have been eligible for Canadian citizenship. She was 22 years old and was set to turn 23 last week. Her family celebrated her birthday by baking cakes and lighting candles in her memory. She was one of many people who were believed to be taken hostage after the Hamas attack on the Supernova music festival. Her mother was the last of her family to hear her daughter's voice, when she spoke with her over the phone. During this phone call, she informed her mother that the Hamas terrorists were shooting at people, and she sought advice from her mother regarding whether or not she should stay and hide with the larger group or if she should separate. That is honestly a parent's worst nightmare. To be on the phone with your children and to not know whether they're going to survive or live—I couldn't imagine. Her family

did not hear anything else after this until they were informed of her death.

Twenty-one-year-old Netta Epstein was the fifth Canadian who was killed due to the Hamas attacks. Epstein was killed by Hamas terrorists during the October 7 attacks after he bravely jumped on a live hand grenade in order to save his girlfriend's life. Both he and his girlfriend, Irene Shavit, were seeking refuge in a safe room in their apartment in Kfar Aza kibbutz when a grenade was thrown into the room. Due to Epstein's heroic actions, Shavit was later rescued.

Twenty-two-year-old Shir Georgy was the fourth Canadian killed due to the Hamas terrorist attacks. Georgy was another victim of the Hamas terrorist attack on the Supernova music festival. Georgy went missing after the Hamas attack, but she was found safe in a safe room with security and police protection. Soon after, a video emerged on social media where she could be found sitting on the floor with numerous others, some of them visibly injured and bleeding. Soon after, it was announced that she had died.

Twenty-two-year-old Ben Mizrachi was also at the Supernova music festival when it was attacked by Hamas terrorists. Mizrachi will be remembered as a "bright, joyful and compassionate young person whose life tragically ended far too soon." Soon after the Hamas terrorists descended on the music festival, panic and chaos ensued. However, instead of fleeing, Mizrachi decided to use his training as a medic in the Israeli Defense Forces to provide medical aid to those who were wounded before becoming a victim himself, which reminds me of, I believe it was a children's show and I can't think of it right now, but whenever there is conflict or there is something going on that's serious—I think it was Mister Rogers or Mr. Dressup—look for the emergency personnel, the ones who are running into the situation, and that was his message to children because it's hard for children to understand when something of a serious nature happens. I wish I knew which one it was, but he stated, "Look for the helpers." The helpers are always there, like Mr. Mizrachi, who stayed and saved others for his own life.

Thirty-three-year-old Alexandre Look: Alex was also killed during the Hamas terrorist attack on the Supernova music festival. According to his family and survivors of the attack, Alex died a hero. Alex and 30 others took shelter in a bunker; however, the bunker had no door. When Hamas terrorists arrived at the bunker, Alex used his own body to barricade the door, forming a human shield that protected the others in the bunker. How brave of Alex to be able to do that. Alex was on the phone with his mother—again another parent's worst nightmare—Raquel Look, during this attack. She instructed her son to listen to the Israeli authorities and to hide. She recalls hearing her son say, "They're coming back." Shortly after, she heard gunshots and people chanting in Arabic. "I knew," Raquel Look recalled. "I said, 'They're killing my son as we speak.'"

Think of the horror that parents have to endure to hear your child being killed as you're speaking with them. It's a travesty, Speaker, and it's terrorism.

Thirty-three-year-old Adi Vital-Kaploun was yet another Canadian who died a hero after the Hamas terrorist attacks. Vital-Kaploun was killed near the Israeli-Gaza border. She has dual citizenship and a large extended family that live in the Ottawa area. That's my area of the province.

Her cousin-in-law Aaron Smith stated, "Adi was a beautiful woman that brought love and lightness to the people around her, but also she was very focused and determined to make a beautiful life for her family"—a life cut short, Speaker, which can clearly be seen in her actions prior to her death. After warning her husband and father to stay hidden, she was able to convince the Hamas terrorists to spare her two young children before being shot in front of them. The terrorists then took her children to their neighbour and used them as human shields in order to convince other friends and family to come out of hiding. The neighbour and children were soon released and later rescued, but those children have to live with what they've seen for the rest of their lives. I pray for all the innocents—the stolen, the injured and the dead—and their families who have to remain and deal with the aftermath.

1510

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I stand before everyone in this Legislature today hurting deeply since Hamas terrorists invaded southern Israel 10 days ago, slaughtering more than 1,400 people in the darkest, most tragic day in Jewish history since the Holocaust. Sadly, six Canadians are among those dead, with another two still missing in the aftermath of this heinous attack.

I stand here shaken by the human suffering inflicted by Hamas in their quest to destroy innocents. It should be clear to any fair-minded person that there is no equivalence between the two actions. In sharp contrast to the actions taken by Israel, Hamas has triggered the current war, proudly targeting innocents, hiding behind civilians and dehumanizing an entire people, and has an official charter that calls for the annihilation of Israel and the murder of Jews everywhere.

That's without mentioning Hamas's long-standing oppression of Palestinians in Gaza. As British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said just days after the terrorist attack, Hamas "are not militants. They are not freedom fighters. They are terrorists.... There are not two sides to these events. There is no question of balance."

In Israel, a society that remains collectively traumatized by the Holocaust, the nightmare from the Hamas massacre continues to worsen. As we speak, crews are still sifting through the wreckage, recovering bodies, including the charred remains of those burned in their homes. Horrifying details of victims of all ages, from newborns to the elderly, having been tortured and their bodies desecrated are still coming to light, to say nothing of the 200 children, men and women, including elderly Holocaust survivors, now being held hostage by Hamas after being kidnapped at gunpoint.

I have no pretense of being a Middle East expert, but in the face of the unspeakable pogrom against helpless Jewish civilians, no expertise is required to distinguish between right and wrong and good and evil. No expertise is required to recognize the inhumanity and to know that certain situations demand that we show moral decency and we speak with moral courage.

In this light, we must also consider the undeniable hardship and the suffering of the Palestinian people. They have been victims of Hamas and they too deserve human dignity. In essence, colleagues, humanity must prevail for all. Palestinians are very much in my heart and prayers. We strongly welcome the humanitarian corridor being established by the international community. Because fundamentally we stand with all victims of Hamas by making clear our condemnation too of the regime in Tehran. The Iranian regime is a state sponsor of terrorism. They too must be responsible. For the export of this terror around the world we must hold them too to account.

However, today I feel compelled to address this continuing fallout from Israel and Gaza that reaches us here in our fair land. What I have to say now has little to do with the geopolitical reality of the region but a lot to do with something far more fundamental to us as Canadians, and it's tied to what our country stands for: the precious if fragile values of freedom, of democracy, of tolerance and justice that we hold dear in this Legislature.

Like most Canadians who have at least a modicum of humanity, I'm aghast at the Nazi-like atrocities of Hamas. The level of hate behind such pure, unadulterated butchery against babies, children, women, men in their homes is difficult to comprehend. Adding to this horror is the failure and refusal of some people, including right here in this province, to recognize and to denounce this savage blood lust that some even openly celebrate and glorify in our streets. This includes the illiberal, so-called progressive left who undermine those democratic values and norms by normalizing and validating terror in this country—and for lacking the moral courage to denounce international war crimes happening before our eyes.

It's the radical student unions—to those student trustees or school trustees and public servants, the professors and the enablers of vile hate, I say, you are and will remain on the wrong side of human history, and that will be remembered.

I'm overwhelmed by a depressing sense of déjà vu when I see the shocking moral degeneracy and indifference many have shown to Jewish victimization. Which-ever differences Canadians have in their views about the Middle East, and which I respect fully, surely, we as legislators, all of us, can accept that there is no justification for the type of barbarism that this genocidal death cult has carried out against innocent people—but unfortunately not. That is not a declaration we can make today. We have seen in our streets, in this very city, Madam Speaker—welcoming with cheers the mass murder of Jews and other atrocities. And what about those Canadians who spread the noxious lies on social media claiming these abominations never took place in the first place, or minimizing their severity?

Too bad they can't be made to spend a day accompanying Yossi Landau and his team, with their heart-wrenching work in Israel. Yossi is a volunteer with ZAKA, the civilian emergency response group which has recovered the corpses, the remains, of people killed in various disasters. He has spent 33 years giving dignity to the dead and ensuring they get a proper Jewish burial. He and his fellow ZAKA volunteers consider what they do—it often includes collecting body parts of those blown to pieces in bombing attacks, which is a sacred duty. Having worked amid the carnage of countless attacks in Israel, Yossi thought he had seen the worst in human depravity. This changed after he was assigned the gruesome task of attending to the aftermath of Hamas's blood-curdling rampage on October 7. A few nights ago, on Israeli television, Yossi described what he and his fellow ZAKA volunteers have encountered—and this is just a brief quote, to contextualize the horror:

“The 20 children we saw in” the kibbutz “was beyond terrible. [The terrorists] had bound their hands behind them. Abused them terribly. And simply put them one on top of the other and burned them. How can you do such a thing?”

“I didn't believe anyone could behave like this....”

“We tell the bodies that we are sorry that we have not been able to honour them as we should—because of the sheer number of dead and the ongoing threat” from Hamas.

Upon entering another home in the same community, finding a woman killed, Yossi was confronted with a scene of unbridled evil. “Her stomach was ripped open, and a baby was there. The baby was still connected with the umbilical cord and stabbed. I felt that I'm falling apart—not only for me, but for my whole crew. I told some of them to go home. They were broken.”

Reflecting on the traumatic impact of these unspeakable scenes, Yossi added, “Say a prayer, please, that we and the security forces emerge sane from all this.” And surprisingly, there was no malice or sense of vengeance in his words.

In recent days, the news out of Israel has made me think a lot about our history, reminding me yet again of the importance of education and learning from humanity's worst chapters if we seek to avoid a reoccurrence. It has also made me think of the Holocaust survivors I have had the incredible opportunity and privilege of getting to know in Toronto and in the constituency of King–Vaughan—amazing people like Pinchas Gutter; Rose Lipszyc; the late, great Max Eisen; and Nate Leipciger. Nate was here just yesterday, honoured by our Premier. All four have inspired me and so many others in this House to believe in the power of humanity, to believe the light will overwhelm the darkness. All of them have played a critical role in helping to explain to young people in this country and around the world the importance of “never again” as our moral imperative.

And to think that in 2023, such a heinous act of mass murder and terror as we just witnessed can once again afflict the Jewish people, because they are Jews—trig-

gered haunting echoes of the Nazi genocide of European Jews. And to see Jews targeted today in such a calculated way brings back a chill that no Holocaust survivor, no son, no daughter, no grandchild should ever have to endure. And I looked at those survivors in the eye and made an unshakable commitment to them: That I, a non-Jew, a Catholic Italian son of immigrants, would not be a bystander, that I would use my platform and power for good.

1520

And so, one year ago, we in this government in this Legislature made history. We made a difference by announcing that Ontario will be the first province in this country to introduce mandatory Holocaust education in elementary schools starting this year, so that young people could learn from history and they're not doomed to repeat it and to be on guard against the vile manifestations of hate and be allied in combatting it and all forms of hate—to stand up to it in our schools and academia and businesses and in our civil society at large. And because our country has a tradition of standing with those who oppose injustice, tyranny and oppression, and our country has always stood for that, regardless of if it is convenient or popular. But I must acknowledge our country, too, has failed upon occasion, and I think of the refusal of Canada's government in the 1930s to ease the plight of Jewish refugees upon the denial on the St. Louis. One senior government official said at the time, “One too many,” in reference to the Jewish families seeking asylum from persecution.

Now, we must not forget our past, Madam Speaker, and this is why we must do more to ensure “never again” is our collective legacy to the generations to come. It is why, over the summer, joining the member from Ajax, the parliamentary assistant, I wrote to the provincial counterparts across this country urging them to follow Ontario's lead to adopt a Holocaust curriculum that was co-developed in partnership with the good people of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center and help ensure we eradicate the hate against the Jewish people once and for all. Because every province and every Canadian must know that this hate afflicts the Jews, but it never ends with the Jews. This is the historical truth that is not a matter of debate.

Rose Lipszyc, a Holocaust survivor, said of this attack going back 10 days, “It's like the nightmares of my childhood are back. The horror that I went through is becoming so real to me now.” It pains me to have to say this, but in light of what we've seen in statements and protests in recent days endorsing targeted, bloody attacks on civilians, it is unequivocally wrong, even independent of its criminality. Based on reported attacks at schools and campuses and universities over the past week, I'm saddened that many young people have clearly not been students of history.

My friends, it is clear that now, more than ever, Holocaust education and civic education are essential ingredients to protecting and safeguarding our nation's democracy, our pluralism and our freedom. We must recognize, too, that a new form of anti-Semitism is rising,

targeting the Jewish people by attacking the legitimacy of the State of Israel, advancing the same old bigotry and hatred from years and generations past. The profound irony is not lost on me, Madam Speaker, as the UN continues to condemn Israel, while staying silent on the genocides, the state-sponsored terrorism, religious persecution in Syria, in North Korea and Iran. Colleagues, this makes the case, yet again, that we need more education to liberalize those values that I believe unite us as Canadians—the values that my immigrant parents chose when they left their native land in the pursuit of something better: for freedom, for democracy, for human rights and the rule of law; a nation of infinite opportunity for waves of immigrants who came to this land and for those that are already here.

But for those values and for those that perished, in partnership with the Solicitor General, the now-Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the members from Eglinton–Lawrence, Thornhill, Brantford–Brant, Ajax and so many others, including Willowdale, I was proud to stand with them when Ontario made history being the first, but not the last, province in this country to ensure every single child is a student of history and that the requirement to graduate is that they must learn Holocaust education. It was a personal priority for me, but it was a priority for all that care about and will stand with the concept of human dignity and human rights.

In truth, the Jewish community has shared that this mandatory Holocaust education actually wasn't for them: It was for all the Ontarians and all of those who suffered state-sponsored oppression and persecution. It was done in the defence of democracy and to start at home, and part of that, of course, starts at home. But through public education, we can literally emancipate those values in every home and every community and every school, especially in those communities that need it most, and stress the concept of human dignity, of civility, of compassion and respect that define this remarkable nation.

What happened in Israel on October 7 and the events since made me think of my visit some years ago to Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem. What I found most powerful there was learning about what is known as the “righteous among the nations.” These were the too few men and women in Europe who possessed the moral courage to do what is right in the face of evil in literal mortal danger—non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews from the Nazis in defence of humanity. Amid the infinite darkness of the Holocaust, this was a source of light that gives me a sense of hope.

So I ask us all, to all of us with the privilege to serve, do we—do you—possess that moral courage? Will you do what is right even if it is not easy? That is the test of this Legislature, of our people and our nation: Do we possess the intrinsic moral courage to stand up to evil? For me, Yad Vashem was the ultimate realization that even in moments that are so difficult emotionally and spiritually and psychologically, people can, and they will, move forward despite the treacherous undercurrents of our history.

Given what has just happened in Israel, I know it feels nearly impossible—almost intellectually dishonest—to say that we should be hopeful at this moment in time, or that we should be united. But we can't allow ourselves as Canadians to lose sight of the importance of hope and how it can motivate us to aspire for a better future, to elevate our consciousness as a nation, to elevate those fundamental Canadian values that transcend party and politics and experience—the values of, as I said, our heritage, our freedom, throughout the generations. We must preserve our faith in humanity, in the promise of the next generation, and for education to enshrine essential values and for the development of human dignity to always triumph over hate.

If we are to achieve a better future, we need people now to speak up and do what is right. This is a binary choice between good and evil, and we must pick the right side of human history. We and our fellow public figures at all levels must have the moral courage to do what is right. That means being resolved to demand that the hostages from Israel and around the world are immediately returned safely to their homes, resolved to denounce terror—yes, resolved to defend civilian lives. Under the current circumstances, especially at a time right here in Ontario when our Jewish community is in pain with the growing threat of anti-Semitism, Canadians, most especially in this House, need to speak out daily against those acts of hate. All of us need to show the moral imperative to denounce this terror and demand a sense of humanity in both our actions and our words.

I don't apologize for this fidelity to the democratic principles of our country. They actually inform my spirited defence today, including those who swore a mission against those who swore a mission in their charter to destroy the Jewish people. I'm proud to defend and to uphold those norms of humanity, and I want to believe that in this country, regardless of our political or ethnic differences or views on the world, we are united around the common values, most especially the celebration of life over death and good over evil.

It is in moments like this that our conscience and our very humanity are tested. I want every member in this House to feel morally obliged to stand up for our values. That is the essence of leadership, of principled leadership. It is the vehicle for which we protect our democracy and our freedom. Choosing right over wrong is not a political calculus. It should not be choosing good over evil as electoral math. It is the sworn obligation we took as Canadians, as legislators, to ensure the triumph of one's conscience and one's values as Canadians over our politics.

Today, I'm joined by some amazing leaders of our province—faith leaders, business leaders, Holocaust education leaders, municipal politicians—who have come with a shared hope for our safety and our peace. I want to express a special thanks to the amazing Michael Levitt and Fred Waks from the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center. I want to express gratitude to Marilyn and Steven Sinclair from Liberation75. I want to thank Councillor Chris

Ainsworth for his presence and leadership. I want to thank the rabbis—Rabbi Darren, Rabbi Bakshi, Rabbi Shlomo Vorovich and, of course, Rabbi Bernstein for your moral imperative of doing what’s right. I’m grateful for your work.

1530

I am honoured to serve in this Parliament. And I will always do what is right in the defence of human dignity.

Madam Speaker, it is a difficult time, but I am so incredibly honoured to be a legislator and to be proud of our country. This is the best country on earth. It is worth fighting for. It is worth defending. It is worth safeguarding.

Every one of us has the ability to do what is right, even if it may be difficult—it is the essence of our government, it is the essence of the privilege of service, it is the essence of being a Canadian.

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

Hon. David Piccini: I want to thank my colleague for those important words and thank everybody who has risen today to have the moral courage to speak out against hate.

It’s with a heavy heart that I rise today in this place.

As people from every walk of life were gathering to sit down with friends and family on Thanksgiving weekend, as I sat down with my wife and my family, we learned of the brutal attacks against Israel by the terrorist organization Hamas. The acts we witnessed are truly evil. Not in recent memory have we seen barbarism of this magnitude. As many have pointed out, we are witnessing the largest and most weaponized example of anti-Semitism since the Holocaust and the Second World War, when Hitler sought to eliminate the Jewish people from the European continent and the face of this earth. We saw attacks on people in their homes, cars, at a music festival; children brutally, savagely murdered—all in places where they should feel safe. We saw not only the murder of men, women and children, but the assault, torture and abduction of countless innocent people. More than 1,000 Israelis have been killed, including six Canadian citizens.

In the wise words of Elie Wiesel, “For the dead and the living, we must bear witness,” and as many others have said today, in doing so, we must have the moral courage, the strength to speak out against this hate, and we must stand by Israel’s right to defend its citizens against the brutal Hamas regime—a regime that brutally suppresses the people, the children who live under the boot of this vile and disgusting group.

Let us also recognize that supporting Hamas is not supporting Palestinians. While the focus is rightly on its crimes against Israel and Jews, let us not forget what Hamas does to the Palestinians. Hamas builds its headquarters in hospitals, shelters its fighters under apartment buildings and builds its offices in schools. It uses the people of Gaza, suffering from Hamas’s misrule and oppression, as human shields. When anyone calls for the protection of civilians in Gaza, what they must mean, first and foremost, is liberating those people from the dictatorial regime of Hamas.

It is my hope that the brave men and women of the IDF will rid this world of Hamas once and for all.

While this conflict may seem a world away for some, our Jewish community here in Canada is not okay, and it is not a world away to them. I think to the countless men and women who have boarded planes, many of them chartered, to go to Israel to fight this evil; I think today—and I pray for them and their families—they should not have to live in fear, wondering if their loved ones, friends and colleagues will be found alive and returned home safely. Speaker, what’s worse is, they should not have to worry for their safety on the streets of cities like Toronto.

When we hear the words on the streets of our city, “From the River to the Sea,” we should and must call it out for what it is. Speaker, what that is is, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean—these people speak to wipe out Israel, to destroy the Jewish state and to drive the very people who live there from the river to the sea to their graves and off the face of this earth—no right to self-determination, no right to live.

I want to thank the brave men and women of Israel who are doing whatever they can to defend their country. I pray for their safety, and I wish for the well-being of the hostages who are now being held in Gaza. While our government and governments from around the world have condemned these attacks in the strongest terms, we have a responsibility to recognize the rise in anti-Semitism on our own shores, including right here in Canada and even in Ontario. As I said, I watched with many in horror at some of the rallies and some of the things and flags that we have subsequently seen on our own streets.

I wonder whether the people who stand shoulder to shoulder in those marches recall that it wasn’t too long ago, too many generations past, that brave men boarded boats and went over to fight against the evils of Nazism in Nazi Germany. Many women on the home front went into the factories and contributed ammunition to fight against the scourge that was Nazi Germany. I wonder if they remember that it was Canadians who liberated many areas of Holland.

I was recently in Holland and stood with goosebumps as I looked out to over 2,000 graves of Canadians. What struck me when I went tombstone to tombstone was the ages: 29, 18, 19, 30, 27. It was those Canadians that gave up everything to fight against a dictatorial regime, the Nazis, who sought to exterminate Jewish people and who sought a final solution that would wipe the face of the earth, the European continent from Jews.

It saddens me that the language used in these hate-filled marches in our own country includes language that would seek the same solution for those very people today. I was proud to condemn—in one of my first letters as minister, sadly—the dangerous words and imagery used by CUPE president Fred Hahn. It’s unacceptable for anyone, especially the head of a major labour union in Ontario, to support glorifying the persecution and murder of innocent Jewish people.

I’m so incredibly grateful that he does not speak for the labour movement in this great province. I’m grateful for the labour leaders and members from unions across Ontario who stood up and condemned his words, who made

clear his statements do not reflect the values of the labour movement or the workers he is supposed to represent. They certainly do not reflect the values of the people of this province.

It's more than just him. As I mentioned, groups that we've seen march on the streets of Toronto, supporting this sort of vile hatred and terror—it's shocking to see anywhere, but especially, as I said, here in Canada, across the country in cities like Vancouver, Calgary and here in Toronto, organized by groups—and I will say Toronto for Palestine—organized by groups like that. Everybody watching and everybody in Ontario see them for who they are: anti-Semites, people who question the Holocaust. Make no mistake who they are. They are seeking to attempt to wash away the stains of Nazism and the very existence of the State of Israel. My message to them and to anyone who seeks to justify and normalize the brutality we saw a few weeks ago: You are on the wrong side of history, and you are not welcome in this province of Ontario.

Politicians have a responsibility to do more against such outrageous demonstrations, which is why it pains me to acknowledge that some members of this very Legislature stood shoulder to shoulder with those Holocaust deniers in the wake of these atrocities we saw. Speaker, as we stood in sombre silence that was the silence the IDF members saw when they went into the kibbutzes and saw brutally murdered men, women and children, mere hours after that, the member from Hamilton Centre stood shoulder to shoulder with Holocaust deniers, marching shoulder to shoulder to stand in support of vile groups like Hamas. Speaker, that must be condemned by everybody in this place, and I'm glad I have not seen that member in the House since.

1540

Israel must have our unconditional support to respond to these terrorists who are seeking to eliminate them as a nation. If it did not, there would be no Israel. To the Jewish community here in Ontario, in Canada and around the world: I stand with you today and every day. Our government stands with you today and every day.

To the people of Israel: We acknowledge and support your right to defend yourselves from these evil attacks.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Just a reminder: You cannot refer to a member who's not present. Please withdraw.

Hon. David Piccini: Thanks, Speaker. I withdraw.

To the people of Israel: We acknowledge and support your right to defend yourselves from these evil attacks. In this House and around the world, we must come together to denounce Hamas and others who have nothing but hatred for the Jewish people. We must do what is right and support Israel however we can.

We witness these atrocities and witness the brutality of the murder of men, women and children, and my heart goes out to everybody in the region who lives under the brutality of Hamas, who is threatened by the brutality of Hamas, sponsored and supported by the Iranian dictatorship.

I yearn for a day when innocent Palestinians, men, women and children, where Jews, men, women and children, will hopefully walk together, shoulder to shoulder. Sadly, that day is not today, but I hope that it will come.

To members of the Jewish community here in Canada: We see you, we hear you and we value your presence. We value how you enrich the culture, morals and conscience of this nation.

I'm thankful to live in a democracy that is free. I'm thankful for the men and women who gave of their life to fight the brutal Nazi regime. We said never again then; we said never again then, and I never thought I would live at a time when I would see the sort of anti-Semitism and hatred towards Jews that we saw back then. So it is with the same courage of those brave Canadians who gave of their life to liberate Holland, those brave Canadians who walked into concentration camps, the brave allies who walked into concentration camps, who saw the skeletal bodies and the atrocities—and when we saw first-hand the very real atrocities of the Nazi regime, the final solution. It is my hope and my distinct hope that we will never see these sorts of atrocities again.

We saw the greatest hatred, the greatest persecution of Jews since those days just a few weeks ago, and it is my hope that everybody in this place will have the moral courage and the fortitude to exhibit the same moral courage and fortitude of those brave allied soldiers to denounce and fight this sort of evil wherever we may see it.

I value the Jewish community who have been shaken here in Canada and who continue to shake in the waves of the drums and of the language from the river to the sea in our own community today. You are loved, you are respected and you have a place in this great country that is Canada.

Speaker, we must stand with our friends in Israel, today and every day, as they have a right to self-determination, a right to exist—Jews have a right to exist on planet earth, Speaker.

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

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: October 7 was a tragic day for Israel, the Jewish community and the entire world. The shocking events of that day saw children, the elderly and other Jewish people subject to abduction, violence and brutality at the hands of Hamas.

Hamas's global objectives of violence are clearly stated in its charter. Its top leaders recently declared a global day of jihad on Friday, encouraging Hamas supporters worldwide to threaten Jews where they reside, including in Canada. Jewish communities in Canada received this message, leading to the cautious absence of many children from schools and community events on that day. It's a loss for these children, missing out on significant moments due to concerns about their safety and hatred based on their identity, which is unacceptable in a nation that values religious diversity.

These terror attacks are not isolated conflicts happening in a distant part of the world; their impact is even felt in places like Ontario. The Vital-Kaploun family in Ottawa,

for instance, is mourning the senseless murder of Adi Vital-Kaploun, a 33-year-old Israeli Canadian. She was targeted simply because she was Jewish. Adi was a beautiful soul and extraordinary mother to two young boys who now have to grow up without her because terrorists took her life. She had a promising future ahead of her, making her loss even more tragic.

Tragically, other Canadians have also suffered in these attacks, with six confirmed dead and two still missing due to the Hamas assault in Israel. There are no words adequate to convey the sheer scale and brutality of the largest attack on Jewish people since the Holocaust.

During the assault on Israeli border communities, terrorists killed over 1,300 people, with the majority being civilians. There is no justification for Hamas's actions among civilized people. Mr. Speaker, silence is deafening, and we cannot afford to remain silent at this moment. Israel and Jews worldwide understand the power of words. Families are left anxiously awaiting news of their loved ones in Gaza. It's imperative to condemn Hamas and their heinous acts of terror, which have brought immense turmoil to the region. These acts involve using innocent Palestinians as human shields to launch attacks on Israel, an inhuman tactic. There's no excuse, no justification for the horrors witnessed.

Israel was established as a sanctuary for the Jewish people, offering safety and hope after the Holocaust. Despite facing persistent threats and attacks, Israel has maintained its commitment to the rule of law and demonstrated humility. Israel represents a beacon of hope and a safe haven for Jews worldwide. The recent terrorist attacks by Hamas have brought tragedy and a reminder of historical atrocities like the Holocaust. Israel's continuous existence is crucial because Jews have historically faced insecurity and persecution in various regions. Israel is not only a place of safety, but also a multicultural nation exemplifying ethnic and cultural diversity.

The IDF is unified in their mission to defend their nation, including the safe return of Canadian hostages. The international community's support for Israel has been heartening, with many voices condemning Hamas's actions. However, it is disheartening that some members of the opposition have failed to address anti-Semitism within their ranks.

1550

Madam Speaker, we must remain strong in our support for Israel and the Jewish people both at home and abroad. In Ontario and throughout Canada, our Jewish friends and neighbours face an ongoing threat of violence, reminding us of the need to eradicate anti-Semitism. The government has committed over \$25 million through the Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant to address rising hate against religious and minority groups, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Additionally, it is investing \$150,000 to support the new Toronto Holocaust Museum and has mandated Holocaust education in schools.

A better future cannot be achieved if we forget the past or lose sight of our identity and aspirations. No one in Ontario should ever face targeting due to their faith and no

one should ever be afraid to practise their religion. Now more than ever, Ontario's Jewish community needs our support. We must uphold the values that unite us and reject brutal acts of terror from Hamas and other terrorist groups around the world. As we stand strong in our support for Israel, we pray for the safety of all innocent people. Hamas's actions and unwavering dedication to terror show no regard for human life, whether Israeli or Palestinian.

Now more than ever, we hope for lasting peace and freedom for all in the region, which can only be achieved by defeating the terrorist group Hamas for the benefit of Israel, the Palestinian people and all of humanity.

May God bless the memory of those we've lost, bring home those who were taken and bless the people of Israel.

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

Hon. Greg Rickford: Normally when we rise for debate, we say we're pleased to be able to participate in this discussion. It can't be said today, Madam Speaker. Rather, given the prevailing circumstances as they are, we rise with heavy hearts to speak to this important matter.

I want to recognize from the outset Amanda Pape. She is my director of policy, and she's a proud Jewish woman who helped and shared the pen in writing these words for me today. Thank you, Amanda.

Right now, as we sit relatively safe in the Ontario provincial Legislature, more than 200 people are being held hostage in Gaza, over 200 people with loved ones praying that they will come home safely, over 200 people who were captured from their homes, from their communities, places of worship and places of celebration, leaving Jewish communities, both in Israel and globally, terrified and anxiously awaiting their return.

A vicious, hate-driven attack was carried out on Israel on the anniversary of the Yom Kippur War by terrorists whose only wish was to see the destruction and annihilation of Israel and its people. Colleagues, it has never been more important for this House to speak on such a matter, as more Jewish people were killed in a single day on October 7 than any other day since the Holocaust. Imagine that, Madam Speaker. This uncomfortable truth has dredged up generations of visceral trauma for Jewish communities around the world, and parliamentarians in the House must speak in unanimity and in full and unfettered defence of Israel and in the defence of Jewish people everywhere.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, as represented in this place, will not stand for anything else but a resolute stand against terrorism, and the terrorism that was rained down on the nation of Israel. As elected representatives, it's our responsibility to call out despicable acts of terrorism and the people who carry out these brutal attacks.

Hamas, curs in no uncertain terms, brought down brutal attacks that involved the murder and rape of women, children and the elderly—defenceless people in their own homes targeted by these terrorists. Babies were mutilated, bodies charred and entire families murdered at point-blank range in their homes, human remains that have left

coroners unable to identify them. Since October 7, thousands of people have been wounded and killed over the war as a result of these acts of terrorism by Hamas.

There is no time to reason; there is no reason to reason with these deplorable acts of Hamas and the people who carried them out, as their only wish has been the annihilation of Israel, the Jewish faith and the Jewish people. In its own words, Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine from the river to the sea.

As Hamas terrorists declared last Friday a “day of rage against the worldwide Jewish population,” many Jewish parents made the difficult decision to keep children at home in fear for their safety. Canadians were shocked as police presence ramped up to provide security for schools, for stores and malls of Jewish communities across the country, in this province, in this city, Madam Speaker, and around the world. Despite additional security, Jewish people here in Ontario have faced direct harassment.

As I said, it is in our schools. Teenaged students walking from schools were harassed, with subsequent arrests. In some instances, Jewish university students were directly targeted.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): My apologies, Minister. Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been six and a half hours of debate on this motion. This debate will, therefore, be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

I recognize the deputy government House leader.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you, Speaker. We'll continue. Please proceed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Back to the minister.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Teenaged students walking from schools were harassed, with subsequent arrests, in some instances.

It bears repeating, Madam Speaker, because this is not confined to the Middle East. It is here in our country. As was pointed out, a generation fought against the kind of terrorism that still exists against the Jews today. That's why we must be unequivocal in our support for Israel, their right to defend their people and their country. Our support must be unwavering in the face of such evil. Canada and the province of Ontario must be a place where Jewish people can feel safe, can be free from harassment. As parliamentarians, as legislators, we all have an obligation to ensure this, first and foremost.

I want to acknowledge and remember the six Canadians who have lost their lives since the onset of the attacks in Israel. Let their names form a part of this record if they haven't already: Netta Epstein, 21 years old, died jumping on a grenade, saving his girlfriend's life; Shir Georgy, 22 years old, killed during the music festival attack; Adi Vital-Kaploun, 33 years old, murdered in her home; Ben Mizrahi, 22 years old, killed during the music festival; Alexandre Look, 33 years old, killed at the music festival attack; Tiferet Lapidot, 23 years old, killed at the music festival.

1600

Madam Speaker, they just wanted to hang out with their friends and listen to music. May their memory be a blessing, but a stark reminder of the need for us, as Canadians and as parliamentarians, to speak with a unified voice, first and foremost, against this horrific act of terrorism.

Two Canadians are still missing, Judith Weinstein Haggai and Vivian Silver. Vivian is from Winnipeg, not far from where I live. She's involved in organizations dedicated to ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and bringing peace. Yet, on October 7, when Hamas savagely ravaged through kibbutzim, they did not spare those who cried out and called and fought and lived for peace. Madam Speaker, this senseless loss of life is a tragedy, with the blame resting squarely on the Hamas.

The attacks in Israel come less than a month after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Speaker Anthony Rota, in the Legislature, congratulated Yaroslav Hunka of the Waffen-SS Galicia division of the voluntary Nazi unit fighting the Soviet Union. It's no wonder, Madam Speaker, in light of all of these events—they must be read together as a trajectory when it comes to imagining why Jewish people in Canada and around the world must remain vigilant, and we must stand with them. This is an exercise in discipline. It's no wonder that they don't feel safe. While Israelis are fighting on the front lines, risking their lives to protect their country, Jewish people and Canadians more broadly deserve strong leadership, good decision-making, attention to detail and process, and in these places, notwithstanding a need for humanitarian dialogue after the fact, reject this act of terrorism in the first instance.

Now, I've had the luxury and the benefit of serving in two important places of democracy in Canada: in the House of Commons and here in the Ontario Legislature. I'm proud to be serving under two leaders who have taken an unequivocal stance and condemned the Hamas, their acts of terrorism and the need to protect and defend and stand in solidarity with Israel.

I think of my grandfather, who was alive when I stood in the House of Commons with Prime Minister Harper—and I'll talk about that later—who turned 19 in 1939. In five theatres of war, he was never confused why he was there, nearly until the end, and that was to fight Nazi Germany: to displace, to dismantle and to take down acts of terrorism that evolved into what has been called “the final solution”—the eradication of the Jewish people, let alone the evolution of the state. It was Premier Ford, days ago, who condemned the hate rallies taking place in Ontario that celebrate the kidnapping and slaughtering of innocent Israeli people by terrorists. They have no place in this province.

Premier Ford called this attack “terrorism in its darkest form,” and reminded us that Jewish communities need our continued vigilance and support, and that under his leadership we will remain steadfast in our commitment to the Jewish people here, in Israel and the world over.

Unfortunately, the member for Hamilton Centre has chosen to use social media as a platform for anti-Semitism

and discrimination that questions the very legitimacy of Israel. The member's statements on the plight of Palestinians failed to include mention of the terrorist attack. The member only chose to condemn Hamas and the senseless attack on Israelis in a subsequent apology when there was overwhelming public pressure to do so. Perhaps, it was a reflection born out of a desire to keep her job, but Canada and Ontario and especially the Jewish community expected better. They were left reeling. Given the initial statement's continued presence on the World Wide Web, her apology rings hollow—and it remains persistently pinned to the top of her social media platforms. Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies called for the member to be removed from the opposition's caucus and drew clear attention to the member's previous anti-Semitic comments. The fact that the member has not been removed from the Legislature is a reflection on the leader of the official opposition. She must explain to the people of Ontario why the member continues to remain in her party, while also explaining the very real documented instances of anti-Semitism that exist in her party.

The vast majority of Canadians in our society—including elected politicians from different parties; Christian, Hindu and other religious leaders; business and community leaders; the Prime Minister of Canada; the Premier of Ontario; the mayor of Toronto—have all come together to condemn Hamas and support Israel's right to defend itself, as I stand here now. But the resolve is fragile. We learned that yesterday, when news of a bombing of a hospital broke and people were only too quick to pin the blame on Israel—the emerging facts are to the contrary. The President of the United States, who may be the one person in this world who has access to intelligence that most other countries don't have, has identified the source of this bombing. It reminds us here in Ontario and here in Toronto today to remain disciplined and vigilant, to stand first and foremost with the Jewish people, regardless of where they are in this world, and condemn these acts of terrorism.

According to the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, this year, despite making up only 1% of Canada's population, Jews were targeted in 67% of religiously motivated hate. This is increasing even more as a result of the war in Israel.

Amanda told me of her first instance of anti-Semitism. She was just six years old, in her classroom at school, when—I don't think I can handle saying this—another student stood up and made a gun with his hand and said he was going to kill all Jews. Children are not born hateful—they learn it, they become this way. He was an innocent six-year-old kid—Amanda attests to that—but he was taught to hate, right here in our city.

The only way to end the cycle of vicious anti-Semitism is to confront it in every instance, in every form. It is unacceptable.

Parliamentarians have a moral obligation to be against anti-Semitism in all of its forms—and sometimes it's not so obvious.

I mentioned Prime Minister Harper; I want to touch on his leadership. As eerily similar events were taking place

early on in my federal political career, the Prime Minister ensured Canada was steadfast in its support of Israel. In a speech at the Israeli Knesset in 2014, he highlighted the special relationship between our two countries. He stated:

“It is right to support Israel because, after generations of persecution, the Jewish people deserve their own homeland and deserve to live safely and peacefully in that homeland....

“Canada finds it deplorable that some in the international community still question the legitimacy of the existence of the State of Israel....

“Our view on Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state is absolute and non-negotiable....

“Most disgracefully of all, some openly call Israel an apartheid state....

“It is nothing short of sickening.”

He continued by saying, “the face of the new anti-Semitism,” which “targets the Jewish people by targeting Israel to make the old bigotry acceptable for a new generation.”

1610

Madam Speaker, we must put an end to this. It was the right position then; it is the right position now. Today, we have an extraordinary opportunity to reaffirm our unwavering support for Israel and its strong, resilient people.

Throughout my academic and professional career, I've worked alongside Jewish colleagues that I have grown to know and love as friends. These are people I have worked with over the years who now express fear, shock and hurt over what we've seen in the past couple of weeks: the helplessness and the despair that they're experiencing. Many of them are at a complete loss; words cannot describe the pain they feel. They are distraught as they watch TV. They see the news, the tragedy after tragedy on TV; newsfeeds and social media filled with core-shattering images of people being dragged across pavement, taken hostage and being raped and killed with terrorists parading their bodies, celebrating and cheering the mass murder of Jewish people; the fear of endless comments claiming Jews deserved it and praising the so-called uprising; footage of rallies around the world that chant about death to Jews and cheer on Hamas.

They are angry and they are afraid. They're unable to sleep, they're unable to eat or breathe without worrying that their homeland will become a massive casualty in this war, but somehow when they wake up, they put on a brave face and go to work. While their minds and hearts may be in other places, they should take comfort in the fact that the members of this Legislature, the people of this province and this country stand in solidarity with them.

As I watched the events unfold in Israel, I'm in awe of the bravery in its full display. In the face of this evil, thousands of men and women are stepping up to fight for what is right: their homeland, their people and their right for a safe community and their loved ones.

I think of people like Ottawa's Nir Koren, a lawyer and father of five who's made the journey back to Israel. People like Nir recognize the danger that they are stepping into. They don't run from it; they step into it, Madam

Speaker, and we honour them. In the face of such wicked evil, we have to support our Israeli allies, our friends, our family and stand with them during this dark time.

Madam Speaker, I want to close here by just saying that as Israeli soldiers prepare—

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

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you to the member for Kenora–Rainy River and Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development for that speech, and thank you, Amanda, for helping prepare that.

I want to thank everybody who spoke to this motion. This is such a difficult subject to speak about, and while we, as elected officials here in Ontario, speak what feels like worlds away from where these terrible atrocities are occurring, we have to really be thankful how privileged we all really are to various degrees.

I think about my upbringing and the challenges that I saw day-to-day in my life. So many of us experience challenges, but the types of challenges that we've faced can't compare to what Jewish people around the world are going through, especially those in the Middle East right now.

Every time I rise in this House to speak to a matter, any matter, I've often asked myself, what is it that I'm going to be speaking to? I try to think of a few questions: Who am I speaking for? Why am I speaking to this? And what is it that I hope to achieve?

I've listened over the course of the day, and what we know has been occurring in the Middle East is unimaginable. When I think of the challenges that I grew up facing and the challenges that I currently face and I think of the darkest days I've experienced, the biggest, most mind-numbing problems that I wanted to solve, I can't imagine what some of these families—mothers, fathers, children, grandparents—must be thinking about. It's hard to imagine a hatred that can run so deep. I have a hard time even saying the words, personally, even standing here to utter the words that other people out there are uttering towards an entire nation of people, towards a group of people, all because of where they're from or their religion. I have a really hard time even repeating the words. And it makes me realize how privileged I really am and how privileged we all really are.

But I ask myself those questions again, Madam Speaker: Why am I doing this? Why am I standing up to speak to this? Why are we as a government speaking to this? Why are some people not speaking to it?

Ultimately, Madam Speaker, we are only in this chamber—I stand before you here today as the member for Sault Ste. Marie. It was my community that elected me to be here, and my community expects me to carry their voice. And I know that my community, notwithstanding that we have a very, very small population of Jewish people, in the tens of people, still expects me to stand here and condemn this behaviour, these atrocities, because it's the right thing for us to do as elected officials. Not because of politics—because we carry a voice and it's our job to carry a voice.

Well, why? I ask myself why. Why does it matter that I stand here and I talk about what's happening a million miles away being bad? Because we all know it's bad. So why is it important for me to stand here as the member for Sault Ste. Marie to say it's bad? Why is it important for all of the members—the member for Kenora–Rainy River and the members all throughout here—to be able to say the words that they stood up here today and spoke?

I'm reminded of a very important day that we've come to honour in this country, just past: September 30. I'm reminded on September 30 of the speech that the member for Kiiwetinoong gave. It was a very moving speech. We speak about truth and reconciliation and the atrocities that happened in this country to Indigenous people because we want to make sure that it's known and that it never happens again. So why do we stand up and speak to something happening far away? Because we want to make sure it doesn't happen. We want to make sure that everybody here is aware and knows what's happening. The more we speak about it, then hopefully we can prevent it ever happening here.

1620

Almost 100 years ago now our country was called into a war. Many sons were lost. Not long thereafter, we saw atrocities happening to Jews. We saw terrible, despicable acts occurring, and ultimately it did spill over to us, didn't it? We have to speak about these things.

As elected officials, perhaps the most important thing that we do is be the voice of our community, be the voice of the people we represent. Sometimes it's for advocacy purposes, but the majority of the time, it's just to be that voice of what the people in our community are thinking, are feeling. It's not an easy task to consider what the majority would say. But in my community, I know that my community would want me to stand here and speak of the disgust, the awfulness of what is happening and to stand together in this Legislature as colleagues, all of us. You would think that if there was ever a time that we could stand together united, this would be it, because nobody wants this to happen to their children. Nobody wants this to happen to their families. Nobody wants this to spill onto our soil. Nobody here does. I know every member in this House feels that way. I know it; we all know it. But this is our opportunity to stand on behalf of our communities and say that this cannot happen here and this cannot happen anywhere, because if it can happen anywhere, it can happen here.

I've really struggled with what I've read, seen in the news and heard. I'm personally afraid, not for myself, but I'm scared for what could be. There is far too much hatred going on in this world. There's far too much violence going on in this world, and we are not invincible. That shouldn't be a good enough thing to say. Simply not wanting it in our own homes or in our own households or on our own soil, that shouldn't be enough. I don't want to repeat things that have been said, but it's worth repeating: The most amount of Jews were murdered on October 7, 2023, than any time since the Holocaust. As I've heard people say, I've been—unfortunately it's like we've be-

come desensitized to these types of terrible terrorist attacks that have been occurring in the world for far too long, especially in the Middle East.

I really am afraid. I'm afraid for my kids. I'm afraid for everybody in this House's kids. But I'm afraid for everyone. I'm afraid for humankind, quite frankly. That might sound a little bit broad, but there have been way too many acts of hatred that are going on in the world today, and I come back to my question: Why am I doing this? Who am I doing it for? What do I hope to achieve?

Well, there is not a lot I can do other than to stand up and have a voice, and as an elected official, I think it's my duty to do that. I believe in my heart that if we all do stand up and speak, we are speaking in this House on behalf of almost 15 million people, and if we all rally and speak, maybe they will hear us all over the world; maybe they'll hear us. I believe that they will, and if they hear us, maybe that little six-year-old who's being brought up to hate will hear us too; maybe he'll think a little bit differently. Maybe a lot of people will hear us and maybe we'll prevent some atrocities from happening. That's what we hope to achieve, isn't it?

We don't stand up in here and speak on a matter like this just because we want to say, "Hey, this is bad." We know it's bad. It's worse than that. I don't think there's a word to describe it, quite frankly. I can't think of an adjective that properly encapsulates what is going on right now, but I do believe that the most powerful weapon we have here is our voice, and if we don't use it, what are we telling our families? What are we telling our communities? What are we telling everyone?

So I suppose I'm proud of the opportunity to stand up and speak to this, not for the reasons that I usually am when I stand up in this House, but I'm proud that we are all being proud enough to stand up and speak, to wield the only sword we have, to carry our voice and the voices of our communities that hatred towards any people is wrong; the terrible, unimaginable atrocities that are happening to people simply because they are Israeli, because they are Jews, is wrong; that no person should live in fear of persecution—and this extends in so many broad ways. If we don't condemn this, if we don't condemn these atrocities, how do we stand up and condemn any others? How do we stand up and say that it is wrong to persecute a person because of the colour of their skin, their age, their sex or their religion?

1630

We, in this country, have dealt with some atrocities, and we recognize the importance as a group collectively to stand up and speak to them, to speak of those atrocities, to tell the stories so that we can prevent these things from ever occurring again. That is why we use our voice, and it's making a difference in our communities. I'm seeing it make a difference here. I'm seeing how we are changing our perspectives. I'm seeing how it lends itself to me being more privileged, to all of us being more privileged than so many people around the world.

So, why am I doing this? Because it's making a difference. Who am I doing this for? I'm hoping—I'm

really hopeful, Madam Speaker, that it can prevent some pain and atrocity. And we'll never know if it did, but I'm hopeful that it will and I have some confidence. What do I hope to achieve? Well, I really hope, as naive as it may sound, that all this violence will stop, but it is naive.

And one voice is just one voice but, collectively, our voices matter. Collectively, our voices can carry a lot of swords. Collectively, our voices may be able to prevent some of this persecution. Collectively, our voices may prevent further violence. Collectively, our voices may prevent any of these atrocities from happening here in our beloved province. Collectively, our voices can make a difference.

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

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: Je vais m'adresser à la Chambre en français aujourd'hui, la raison étant que, quand ça vient du coeur, c'est toujours plus facile de parler dans sa langue maternelle et puis, aussi, c'est une question de peut-être dégourdir nos traducteurs, qui ont passé la journée à traduire de l'anglais au français.

Je parle, évidemment, de la défense d'Israël. Comme tous mes collègues députés, je condamne les atrocités de l'acte terroriste auquel les gens d'Israël ont été confrontés. Je dois dire que je trouvais ça très intéressant. Aujourd'hui en Chambre, j'ai entendu des témoignages de mes collègues. Certains d'entre eux ont été dans ces pays—en Israël. Je pense au député de Kitchener—Conestoga, qui était là il y a un petit bout de temps. Je pense aussi au député de Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, qui avait de la famille là, son frère avec ses enfants. Je pense aussi au député de Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, qui nous a parlé de son père, qui était un vétéran de la guerre. C'était très touchant, tous ces témoignages-là. Quelque chose que j'ai trouvé, par contre, triste, c'était le témoignage du député d'Essex, qui n'a pas eu le temps de finir son histoire ce matin. Ça avait l'air très intéressant.

Je dois dire que, moi-même, je suis loin d'être un expert quand ça vient à l'histoire et les situations du Moyen-Orient. Comme tout le monde, j'écoute les nouvelles, puis j'essaye de ne pas m'attarder à y passer plusieurs heures parce que je trouve ça très négatif.

Mais je pense que, en tant que député, comme plusieurs de mes collègues, j'ai été impliqué dans ma communauté. C'est souvent le cas, justement, de plusieurs députés. La façon que ça commence souvent c'est qu'on est impliqué dans nos communautés. On veut tous la même chose : avoir la sécurité pour nos citoyens et vivre dans un pays où est-ce qu'on n'a pas besoin de s'inquiéter au sujet de la sécurité.

En étant impliqué dans ma communauté, ça m'a amené en politique. Donc, j'ai été maire, à l'époque, d'une municipalité de 10 000 habitants, et j'ai été président des comtés unis de Prescott et Russell. Finalement, en 2022, ça m'a amené à être élu comme député pour représenter Glengarry—Prescott—Russell ici même, aujourd'hui.

Je dois dire que ma région n'est pas très multiculturelle. On n'a pas beaucoup de communautés de différentes—disons, on n'a pas de communauté juive. On n'a pas de

différentes communautés. Ce sont des petits villages, donc pour nous, on est un peu moins informés de ce qui se passe à travers le monde. C'est sûr que moi, je suis ici pour représenter les gens de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Puis je dois dire, aussi, que quelque chose que j'ai eu la chance de faire en tant que député, c'est de participer à beaucoup d'événements, que ça soit avec n'importe quelle organisation. Souvent, c'est de ça qu'on parle; on parle de la paix et comment on est bien ici dans notre province.

Récemment, j'étais à un événement, et ça m'a vraiment marqué. On avait un invité spécial—je ne me rappelle pas de l'événement en particulier. Je pense que c'était un banquet, soit pour l'association des francophones de l'Ontario—je ne me rappelle pas quel événement c'était. Mais on avait comme invité le directeur ou président de Kyiv Post, un journal en Ukraine, qui est un M. Luc Chénier, qui est natif d'Alexandria, un petit village, justement, dans North Glengarry, dans ma municipalité. Je dois vous dire qu'il nous a fait tout un témoignage à propos de ce qu'il se passait en Ukraine à ce moment. Une chose qui m'a tellement touché c'est quand M. Chénier nous a fait écouter un enregistrement de ce qui se passait, justement, à Kyiv, quand les sirènes, en plein milieu de la nuit, se sont mises à sonner et que les gens se sont mis à paniquer. On pouvait entendre l'atrocité de la guerre. Je dois dire que, depuis ce temps-là, je pense souvent à ce moment, et je dois dire que je me sens tellement chanceux de vivre au Canada, où on n'a pas à vivre ces situations-là.

Pour renchérir sur ce sujet-là de la sécurité : souvent, mon côté curieux en tant que député, quand je rencontre des immigrants—ça peut être des gens de ma circonscription qui ont émigré d'autres pays—je leur pose souvent des questions à propos de pourquoi ils ont immigré au Canada, en Ontario. À plusieurs moments, ce que j'ai réalisé—j'ai souvent demandé aux immigrants : « C'est quoi que vous avez noté qui vous a le plus marqué à propos de notre province et notre pays? » J'ai souvent la même réponse. Les gens nous disent : « C'est le sens de la sécurité et le sens d'autorité qu'on voit ici. » Les gens ont du respect pour l'autorité ici au Canada, quelque chose qu'on ne trouve pas dans d'autres pays. Je pense qu'on est chanceux.

1640

C'est quand on entend des événements comme celui du 7 octobre—la tragédie qu'on a vu en Israël, que les gens ont été confrontés à une guerre. Beaucoup de personnes sont décédées. C'est gens-là, j'imagine, pour eux c'est—ça fait longtemps qu'ils ont un conflit dans ces pays-là. Probablement, ils ne dorment pas aussi solide que nous ici au Canada. On n'est jamais sûr de ce qui va se passer. Je pense que ça, ça nous fait réaliser beaucoup de choses.

Je pense qu'il n'y a aucun acte; on ne peut pas justifier qu'on tombe en guerre et qu'on attaque un peuple sans avoir—surtout des enfants. Je veux juste dire qu'il y avait des hommes et des femmes massacrés qui étaient des Canadiens. Je dis ça parce que c'est important de se rappeler que nous sommes loin d'Israël géographiquement, mais qu'aujourd'hui on a des gens ici qui passent beaucoup de temps dans d'autres pays, et on se doit de faire sûr qu'ils sont bien protégés.

Quand on voit des situations comme ça dans d'autres pays, on se dit que, nous, nos enfants partent le matin pour aller à l'école, nos conjoints partent pour aller travailler—on n'a pas à s'inquiéter. On sait qu'ils vont revenir le soir. Mais pour ces gens-là, j'imagine qu'ils se disent le matin : « Mes enfants vont à l'école. Est-ce qu'il va avoir un bombardement aujourd'hui? Est-ce qu'ils vont revenir ce soir? » J'essaie de penser comment les gens peuvent vivre avec ces inquiétudes-là de jour en jour. Moi, je vous dis, je serais tellement malheureux de penser à ça tous les jours, que mes enfants peuvent être dans des situations critiques par rapport à la guerre.

Je vais vous conter une petite anecdote. J'étais électricien de métier. Je me rappelle dans un cours d'électricien, on parlait justement de ces grosses sirènes qu'on entend dans des pays quand c'est une situation d'urgence. Le professeur nous disait que ça marche par un moteur électrique et que tous les moteurs électriques doivent être protégés contre des surcharges d'électricité. À l'époque, on parlait de ça et on se disait, vraiment, est-ce que—je n'ai jamais entendu ça ici au Canada, moi, une grosse sirène, une alerte pour les gens. Le professeur nous demandait : « Est-ce qu'on doit protéger ce moteur-là si jamais il y a des surcharges électriques? » Nous, on se pensait bien intelligent. On a dit : « Oui, peut-être qu'on pourrait utiliser »—toutes sortes d'affaires. Mais qu'est-ce que le professeur a dit? Il a dit : « En réalité, quand il y a une guerre, on peut laisser sonner la sirène jusqu'à tant que le moteur brûle. » Il n'y a rien de plus important. Quand ça vient à la sécurité de l'équipement, c'est là qu'on voit l'importance de pouvoir protéger les gens. Je pense que ça m'a beaucoup marqué, ces choses-là.

On a entendu des membres de la communauté juive se plaindre de la montée de sentiments, de rhétorique et de crimes antisémites avant même que cette tragédie se passe, mais que depuis le 7 octobre, ils se sentent encore plus attaqués. Je dois dire qu'ici en Ontario, on est fier d'héberger quasiment 60 % de la communauté juive au Canada. C'est inacceptable qu'ils ne se sentent pas en sécurité chez eux.

Écoute, j'aurais aimé ça entendre les membres de l'opposition, vraiment, à savoir ce qu'ils en pensent de ce conflit-là. Je n'ai entendu rien de l'autre côté du plancher. Tout ce qu'on a entendu c'est les commentaires de la membre de Hamilton-Centre qui n'ont aucune place dans cette Chambre ici. Je pense que, en tant que députée—ça n'a pas sa place, en tant que représentante du peuple de l'Ontario. Je peux comprendre, là, qu'elle a probablement de la famille palestinienne. Je ne peux pas commencer à comprendre ce qu'elle doit vivre et ressentir en ce moment.

Par contre, je pense que l'Israël doit se défendre contre ces horreurs qui ont eu lieu le 7 octobre. Il n'y a rien d'autre qu'on peut faire—je veux dire, ce sont des actes qui ont été commis contre eux, puis la nature humaine, c'est de se protéger pour faire sûr que ça ne se continue pas, ces actes de violence-là.

Je pense qu'en tant que députés, on doit faire mieux. Si on veut justement supporter la communauté juive, comme province, comme pays, nous devons rester unis. C'est très

important. À propos de notre motion d'aujourd'hui, je pense que ça nous fait réaliser beaucoup de choses. Tout ce qu'on veut c'est qu'on souhaite la paix dans ces pays-là, mais on souhaite aussi pouvoir les supporter du mieux qu'on peut. On sait que le Canada a un rôle important quand ça vient à la protection de nos gens dans d'autres pays. Je pense qu'on fait du mieux qu'on peut.

Écoutez, c'est sûr que je ne connais pas beaucoup l'histoire, mais ce que je peux comprendre c'est que ce conflit existe depuis plusieurs générations, depuis plusieurs années. J'espère qu'un jour ces gens-là pourront s'asseoir à une table ou en venir à un genre d'entente pour, justement, pouvoir régler ces problèmes. Comme je vous le dis, tous les membres ici ne peuvent aucunement penser à ce que ce serait de vivre dans un pays où—je dit un pays comme celui-là; aussi un pays comme l'Ukraine. Le sens de ne jamais être en sécurité, je pense, est quelque chose de très difficile pour les gens. Je ne peux pas m'imaginer être un représentant ou politicien dans ces pays-là.

Écoutez, quand j'ai été élu ici en tant que député, je dis toujours—je compare ça à avoir des enfants : autant que je pensais que j'étais prêt, autant qu'il y a des petites surprises qui nous sont présentées, autant qu'on ne réalise pas quel est exactement notre rôle en tant que représentant de la province. J'ai la chance de siéger à l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie et de, justement, parler avec des gens de plusieurs pays et de voir exactement qu'ici au Canada, on est bien, qu'on n'a pas beaucoup de conflits, puis ça nous fait réaliser beaucoup de choses.

Donc, je suis reconnaissant de ça, et je suis reconnaissant de ces gens-là d'avoir partagé leurs inquiétudes avec nous. Souvent ils nous viennent pour qu'on les protège en tant que Canadiens—de passer des genres de résolutions pour que le Canada interfère dans d'autres pays. Je pense que c'est important de ne pas juste s'asseoir ici et de ne rien faire quand il y a des conflits. C'est important de se lever puis, exactement, de dire—on doit mettre notre mot et on doit supporter ces gens-là qui sont, justement, victimes d'atrocités. C'est notre rôle en tant que membres du Parlement provincial.

Écoutez, je dois dire que des conflits comme celui-là sont durs à comprendre pour nous, et probablement que je ne comprendrai jamais comment on peut en venir à des actes atroces comme ceux-là, de dire qu'on prend des gens en otage pour justement—de voir qu'on ne laisse pas les gens sortir du pays. On voit que, récemment, il y a un corridor humanitaire qui se forme pour sortir les gens du pays, et souvent ces terroristes-là essaient de garder les gens avec eux pour que, justement, tous les gens ne sortent pas du pays pour se protéger. Je pense que ce sont des actes qui sont inacceptables. On doit faire sûr que ces gens-là paient pour ce qu'ils font. De détenir de jeunes enfants, des femmes et plusieurs citoyens d'un autre pays en otage pour se protéger, je pense que c'est un acte, je dirais, de très, très—le terme ne me vient pas là : « cowardness », en anglais. Je dois user des termes en anglais. Ça, c'est depuis que je suis ici à Toronto.

1650

Je pense qu'on doit se lever, nous, les membres, et justement dire : « Écoute, ce n'est pas quelque chose

qu'on va accepter en tant que membres du gouvernement. » C'est notre voix, comme le disait le membre de Sault Ste. Marie : si nos voix ici sont ensemble, les gens voient que c'est sérieux et qu'on est ici pour supporter ces communautés-là.

Je pense que ces atrocités doivent cesser le plus rapidement possible. Je pense que notre gouvernement du Canada—espérons qu'ils vont s'ingérer dans la crise.

C'est plus ou moins ça que j'avais à dire au sujet de la défense d'Israël. Je pense que, encore une fois, on peut se compter très chanceux, à chaque soir quand on rentre à la maison, de vivre en paix ici au Canada. Ceci conclut, pour moi aujourd'hui. Merci.

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

Hon. Stan Cho: You know, normally I stand in this Legislature knowing exactly or somewhat close to what I'm going to say, but today I'm not sure, because I stand with mixed emotions: sadness and anger—a lot of anger, listening to the debate of my colleagues in this Legislature. I run that array of emotions again and again and again.

I think maybe what I'll do is I'll start by talking about my neighbourhood that I grew up in and how it relates to the tragedy happening overseas.

I grew up in North York, Speaker. I've said that in this House before. In North York, one of the proudest emotions I have about my neighbourhood is, every time I walk down the streets, I see everyone from every corner of the globe, living happily next to each other. It is very much a microcosm of our global society, and I'm so proud of that—because you know that I come from South Korean roots. My parents immigrated here 50 years ago, and they have the story of so many Canadians: You come here with a dream and, with hard work, you can go from very little to giving your kids a better life than you would have had. That's what my parents did. That is their legacy for me.

I can't help but notice throughout my neighbourhood—and I visit every cultural group, every religion, with great pride, as I said—that our Jewish friends have it a little different. Their schools are fenced in. Their synagogues have to have police patrols, extra security measures—things that we don't understand or that we don't have to go through. And it makes me mad. One per cent of Canada's population are Jewish community—two thirds of hate crime in our country. That doesn't sound like a fair deal to me.

Speaker, I can go on at length about October 7, like my colleagues have described on the tragedies—but I don't think I can, because when I see it on the news, when I see it on social media, when I hear about it, I get very emotional. I just don't think I can read the remarks in front of me this afternoon. I just don't think I can do it.

But Speaker, I do want to quote Martin Luther King, who once said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." "There comes a time when silence is betrayal."

It was the previous Speaker in the 41st Parliament who once reminded the members of this Legislature—it was on my orientation day in 2018; I will never forget it. The

outgoing Speaker, Speaker Levac, said, “Take a look. It says 1867 there,” the year of our Confederation, of course—right above your head there, Speaker. On the outside of the building, though, it says 1792 because this is the oldest Parliament in our country, when it was, of course, Upper Canada, before Canada was formed. This Legislature has sat since 1792. Speaker, do you know what that means? In the history of our country, in the history of this Legislature, just about 3,500 people have had the privilege of calling themselves MPPs. That’s not a big company that we have the privilege of joining here, when we stand in our place, and we say what is in our mind and we have the right to stand as parliamentarians, duly elected in this great province, the best place to live in the entire world.

Now, I don’t take that lightly. I don’t think any of us do. But I am so angry. I am so angry and disappointed, Speaker, that today, we have members from the opposition who are silent on the tragedies happening in Gaza—silent. And, Speaker, I’ve got to tell you: That silence is deafening. It is louder than their loudest screams, and I have heard them scream loud, at the top of their lungs, in this Legislature, and today I hear nothing. And I think that’s shameful.

Leon Brown once said, “History repeats itself endlessly for those who are unwilling to learn from the past.” And here we are. Here we are today with an opposition who is clearly demonstrating that they are unwilling to learn from the past.

In fact, members are smiling as I’m speaking, and I don’t understand how. I do not understand how. There is nothing funny. There is nothing happy about what is happening today with the situation in Gaza—nothing.

Your silence is also deafening when it comes to the treatment of your member from Hamilton Centre. I’m floored that we haven’t heard a single member from the NDP stand in their place and condemn the words of the member from Hamilton Centre—not a single member. Now, let me get this straight. The Leader of the Opposition will stand in her place, stand in front of the media, and say that what the Hamilton member said was wrong. That’s what the Leader of the Opposition will say on the one hand, yet that member still has a spot in this Legislature. Explain to me how that is possible.

So how do we reconcile that? How do we square that, Speaker? Was the apology from the Leader of the Opposition real? Were her words saying that the member from Hamilton Centre’s words were wrong? Were they real? Does she believe that the government is simply playing a political game here? Does it sound like we’re playing a game here, Speaker? This is not a game. October 7 was a tragic day for the world and now you have people condoning those acts of terrorists beheading babies, taking hostages, 1,300 civilians murdered—slaughtered in their homes.

If you are not going to be vocal on this, then what will you be vocal of in this Legislature? No talk of the six Canadians; no talk at all from the opposition. Not one member decided to stand today, given the opportunity to

stand—no one. There is absolutely no justification to support the violence that took place on October 7. There is no justification to say that Hamas did anything noble at all. Those terrorists need to be held to account and we need to recognize those horrific acts here, in this Legislature, and your silence says exactly where you stand—on that side of it.

You can hear them speaking now, Speaker, and I guarantee you, what they’re not speaking of is this situation. What they’re not speaking of is how to condemn the member from Hamilton Centre for her words.

1700

You know, it’s crazy to me. This is—it’s crazy to me. I go home sometimes and my wife wants to talk about current events, and this is the one topic where I ask her, respectfully, “Please, can we not?” But you know what? Last night we did, because she wanted to know a little bit more about what the member for Hamilton Centre had said.

Now, Speaker, I made a decision, for a variety of reasons, several years ago to give up social media and going actively on to it. It’s turned toxic; it has at many times. There have been members of this Legislature who have named my family, without evidence, in this Legislature, and that social media has turned into a place of hate against people in my family who were named here, without evidence of corruption, and then given racist behaviour at their place of business. I decided to give up social media for personal reasons. But I went back on.

Do you know what astonished me when I went back on to social media yesterday, Speaker? I just about fell out of my chair. The member from Hamilton’s hateful post had been pinned for the world to see. You know what else was shocking to me, Speaker? That there wasn’t some public apology pinned on top of that hateful post. I had to look for the apology, buried in the comments underneath that very hateful post. And it was a half-baked apology. You would be stretched to call it an apology. And you know what, Speaker? The other part that just jumped out at me from my phone—it makes me so angry to say this—is that that Hamilton Centre member’s post had been viewed over three million times. I’ll repeat it: History repeats itself endlessly for those who are unwilling to learn from their past.

I have family who remember World War II; we all do. We all know someone who remembers back to those times, to the Holocaust. I’ve met Holocaust survivors, and no way you can ever imagine what they’ve gone through. My wife’s grandfather John Horbaczuk was in Auschwitz, and he’s the only one in his family who made it out. John Horbaczuk passed away at the age of 93, 10 years ago, and it’s the one thing he never talked about with my wife. But his scars, his tattoos: They said all that we needed to know. History repeats itself endlessly for those who are unwilling to learn from their past.

Speaker, this isn’t just a terrorist attack, as horrific as it is. This is a sign to the world that we have to wake up, that history, indeed, repeats itself, and it is today. And I’m

terrified for what that means for our next generation and the generation beyond.

We have a responsibility in this House, we have a duty in this House, being one of only a few thousand people to have that privilege to stand in this House, despite our disagreements, to stand up for what is right, to condemn what is wrong. And with the strength you stand in your place and you defend what you believe is right, so too must you stand in your place and condemn what you believe is wrong.

Today we see an opposition silent. And that silence is deafening, Speaker. It speaks volumes about what they believe is right and wrong. “There comes a time when silence is betrayal”—Martin Luther King, Speaker—and we’re seeing that time right now. The NDP have betrayed the people of this province. They have betrayed the Jewish community. They have betrayed those who stand against terrorism. They have betrayed their constituents.

Interjection.

Hon. Stan Cho: I hear the member from Waterloo now say, “Absolutely not.” So stand in your place and say it.

Interjection.

Hon. Stan Cho: There goes the member saying, “Through the Chair.” That is the quote; that is what the member decides to say right now. To paraphrase standing orders—that is what is more important. Through you, Speaker, I say, that is not what is important today. What is important today is that that member stand in her place and speak to the atrocities happening in Gaza.

So I challenge the members across the way: Instead of whispering and heckling and chirping here in this Legislature now during such a crucial time for the world, well then, stand, have your microphone be lit and let the world hear you.

Speaker, I stand with my colleagues here today to condemn Hamas. I stand with my colleagues here today to say we stand with those affected by this tragedy. I stand with the Jewish community, who is suffering greatly through this. I want to remind this Legislature that at Mel Lastman Square, in the heart of North York, on Thanks-

giving Monday, we saw thousands gathered to condemn that very terrorism—15,000 people from all backgrounds. Elected officials were there from all levels and from almost all parties. Noticeably absent, Speaker: the New Democrats—noticeably absent. I looked. I didn’t see a single NDP member standing at that vigil.

So Speaker, I have hope that the day is not over. We have a little under an hour to go in debate. My hope, my sincere hope, is that one member on the opposition benches will stand; maybe stand to condemn the terrorism, maybe to stand and be the one to take a stand—because the official Leader of the Opposition will not—against the member from Hamilton Centre’s statements, her hateful statements, which are still pinned on X right now. No apology, no retraction. In other words, the NDP stands by the Hamilton Centre member’s statement now. Shame on them, Speaker.

I have a message to my friends in the Jewish community, and I will conclude with this quote from John F. Kennedy: “Israel was not created in order to disappear—Israel will endure and flourish. It is a child of hope and the home of the brave. It can neither be broken by adversity nor demoralized by success. It carries the shield of democracy and it honours the sword of freedom.”

We stand with the Jewish community. We condemn the hateful acts by Hamas. We think the NDP should as well.

Speaker, I have never stood in this Legislature more passionate, more angry. I have never stood in this Legislature unsure of what I was going to say. Buts Speaker, in my time now, a little over five years, this is the most unbelievable thing I have seen from the opposition. I call on the Leader of the Opposition to take a stand against the member from Hamilton Centre, to clarify her party’s position on what they actually believe, because I’ll say it, and I’ll conclude with this, once again: Martin Luther King, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” And Speaker, this matters. To quote again, “There comes a time when silence is betrayal.”

They have betrayed the people of this province.

Report continues in volume B.

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kemaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (IND)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Vaugois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Vacant	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	