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des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 26 May 2008

Lundi 26 mai 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 26 May 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 26 mai 2008

*The House met at 0900.
Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COSMETIC PESTICIDES BAN ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR L'INTERDICTION
DES PESTICIDES UTILISÉS
À DES FINS ESTHÉTIQUES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 15, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 64, An Act to amend the Pesticides Act to prohibit the use and sale of pesticides that may be used for cosmetic purposes / Projet de loi 64, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pesticides en vue d'interdire l'usage et la vente de pesticides pouvant être utilisés à des fins esthétiques.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mr. Phil McNeely: The ban of pesticides proposed under Bill 64 provides a unique opportunity for the province of Ontario to become a leader in North America in the efforts to reduce human exposure to chemical pesticides.

By now, all members of the House should be familiar with the risks associated with pesticide use in the province of Ontario. The links between pesticide use and devastating human diseases such as cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and increased risk to the most vulnerable members of the community—children, expectant mothers and the elderly—are well-known. I've said this before in this House: This is important legislation that seeks to protect Ontario families from unnecessary exposure to the dangers of chemical pesticides. I would be very disappointed if my colleagues across the floor voted against this legislation.

The environment has become a pivotal issue in Ontario and around the world, and this legislation is in keeping with the growing concern with the condition of our environment. This legislation is one of the many steps forward in making the environment a central issue of concern in our province. To be clear, this bill is minimally taxing on hard-working Ontarians. Its only demand is the responsible use of chemical products and a reasonable consideration for the health and safety of our neighbours and the environment. This is easily achieved. There are plenty of effective alternatives to our dependence on chemical pesticides. Simple solutions include

consulting local experts to find the best and most pest-resistant plants, shrubs and grasses to use in your yard. Elbow grease does not hurt either. People can make small changes in their cosmetic gardening to prevent weed and pest infestations. These are simple steps, such as ensuring your plants and shrubs receive adequate light and moisture and are provided with nutrient-rich soil made possible by adding compost in your plant and flower beds. Although chemical pesticides may be easy and reliable, we can no longer allow the use of these harmful and dangerous substances. If you doubt the rationale for banning pesticides, I urge you to consider who will be playing on our lawns and smelling the flowers in our gardens: our children, friends, families, our family pets and local wildlife.

The province of Ontario is not alone in its decision to ban pesticides. Some 33 Ontario municipalities, accounting for 44% of the population, have already implemented similar or stronger bans. These municipalities are supported by countless medical and health organizations, including the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario.

The city of Ottawa has made efforts to address pesticide use. While I was on council there, we worked diligently to reduce our city's reliance on, and eventually ban, chemical pesticides. Unfortunately, we did not pass a bylaw in 2002—one that I worked on very hard with Dr. Cushman, the medical officer of health—that would have banned cosmetic pesticide use, losing by a vote of 15 to 7. However, in 2002 we successfully implemented a policy banning use of cosmetic pesticides on city properties. I have my home on one of the city parks, and I find that it's a great place to take my grandchild out for a walk, and I can do it confidently, knowing there are no pesticides sprayed on that property. In addition, a policy was put in place to encourage residents to reduce the reliance and to provide increased understanding of the potential serious health risks associated with exposure to chemical pesticides. Efforts included regular workshops providing instruction and information on the use of organic pesticides, and these continue today in the city of Ottawa.

The issue of a bylaw to ban cosmetic pesticides rose again in 2005 in the city, after the city's medical officer of health presented a report to the health, recreation and social services committee. It recommended a bylaw prohibiting the non-essential use of pesticides. Unfortunately, once again, that bylaw failed, this time by a 10-to-

10 vote. I was very disappointed when my councillors in the east end did not support the ban. So I'm very pleased that we're going ahead with this provincial legislation. Despite the unwillingness of some city councillors to take strong action to address the ban on cosmetic pesticides, public opinion across Ottawa remains highly supportive of a pesticide ban. The city has already taken pains to remove pesticides from its properties, as has the federal government on Parliament Hill and all Ottawa-area school boards.

This legislation will take us further in the protection of our health and safety by ensuring that non-essential pesticide use is prohibited in our province. Although it is only one of many steps necessary to move towards a more sustainable Ontario, it is an important step. This bill will provide a comprehensive body of legislation building on the example set by many municipalities across this province that have taken the lead on banning pesticides.

Again, I ask my colleagues across the floor how they could vote against this legislation. I would like to describe city hall and council as I recall the situation back in 2002. The council chambers were full. The meeting, I think, went until 3 o'clock in the morning. This was a biggest issue I had been involved in as a new councillor. The doctors and nurses were lined up on one side, and the chemical companies, the pesticide companies, were lined up on the other. The chemical companies had come in from every part of Ontario to make sure Ottawa didn't get the ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides. This is only 2% of the pesticide market. The doctors presented their evidence. The pesticide pushers called on science-based decisions, and the councillors got the lobbying, often local, and they caved.

I spent three years visiting the cancer clinic at the children's hospital. I saw the number of children in those cancer clinics. I spoke with parents, saw kids cured, then met with the parents after the children went into remission. We talked a lot about the precautionary principle: If there is any doubt that these chemicals cause cancer, then that is sufficient reason to support the ban. Liberals believe evidence and opinions from doctors, and Conservatives still believe the industry. It may be as simple as that. Was the banning of smoking any different? The Marlboro man always denied the connection between smoking and cancer. I would like to tell you that my wife has kept our lawn pretty well clean of dandelions. It's back-breaking work, you might say, but not nearly as hard as one visit to the children's hospital cancer clinic.

0910

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Questions and comments?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I appreciate the comments. I'll be taking part in the debate myself in a few minutes on Bill 64. I've got a lot of points I'd like to raise about the bill, things that I've heard but I want the government to clarify. The number one thing I'm concerned about is some of the things that small business people are telling me about: problems and issues they're facing with this legislation, and wondering about some help that they'll

require. On top of that, I'm concerned about the timing of the bill, the exact implementation date, those sorts of things. So I'll be taking part in the debate myself in the next few minutes. I look forward to the debate and to the committee hearings on this as well.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I support the comments made by the member for Ottawa-Orléans. There's just one issue that I've been raising on this matter—I raised it last week—and that is that if a city like Ottawa wants to strengthen the bill, increase the floor, as it were, increase the ceiling, create more stringent rules, why would cities like Ottawa, Toronto and others be prohibited from doing that? That's the question I've asked government members, including the member for Eglinton-Lawrence and others who have spoken to this bill.

While it is nice to say, "We're creating rules for all of the cities across the land," and it seems good, but if a city wants to make it tougher, wants to ban all pesticide use, why would you not permit that? It would seem to me that that would be in keeping with the argument that the member for Ottawa-Orléans was making, and I wonder whether he has a comment on that.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate this morning on banning the cosmetic use of pesticides, Bill 64. I certainly think this bill is indicative of how society has changed over the past 10, 15, 20 years. We're starting to take a second look, in very general terms, at the approach we take to certain products that have been part of our life for a great many years. If we look at some of the toxins we're beginning to find now in products that we use on an everyday basis, I don't think anybody should wonder that responsible levels of government would look at some of the products that are used on public property as well.

Certainly that's what this bill does. It provides a level of protection that I think the public strongly supports. If you take a look at some of the responses that have come in to the Environmental Bill of Rights, you'll see that there was actually overwhelming public support for the bill that is being proposed here today.

Obviously there's some opposition to the bill from members of the industry, but I think the strong support from Landscape Ontario is very important. They want to see an end to the patchwork quilt we have of regulations, where you can do a certain thing in Hamilton but you can't do it in Oakville, or you can do it in Burlington but you can't do it in London. What people in Ontario want is the same strong level of support throughout the province.

In speaking to the previous speaker's question as to why we want to have the same level of protection for all Ontarians, I think that's part of the crafting of this bill. That's what Ontarians have asked us for; that's what people engaged in the industry have asked us for. They want some certainty around the use of pesticides in this province.

I would urge all members to support this bill. It's one of the reasons that have come from the speaker from Ottawa-Orléans, ones that I think touch many of our

lives. It's something we can do something about in a very substantial way by supporting this bill and moving ahead.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's great to be back this week after a week in our constituency offices, where we spent some time with our community leaders, our neighbours and people who have real concerns in the province of Ontario.

Just last week, we learned that we lost close to 1,400 jobs in the high-tech sector in the city of Ottawa. Of course, on the weekend, we heard the sad news that Nortel will be sending some more people on to the unemployment line.

I ask at this point in time; Why are we doing something that's not science-based but more political-science-based? We have to stop thinking in this chamber that we can just put forward pieces of legislation—in this case, a three-page piece of legislation—that really aren't going to dramatically alter the political landscape or the scientific landscape or the natural landscape of this province. They're doing it, I guess, because it is more about politics.

I would much prefer today to be debating the economy, because I'm going to tell you something: It's really hard to go home and see some of the folks who are going to be in the unemployment line, figuring out where they're going to get the money for that mortgage or for their kids' education.

As I mentioned, this is a three-page bill that will allow the government to do almost anything behind closed doors through regulations. We strongly object on this side to the growing Liberal tendency to offer up few or no specifics in legislation that is debated in this assembly, which is what they did in the last budget bill. Madam Speaker, you'll recall the slush fund—slushgate—their year-end spending spree with municipalities, with no strings attached to that money.

If this government is serious about the growing problem of reducing toxins in our environment, they should start offering up fact-based decisions on real science, not political science, and ensure that all changes are done in the full view of the Ontario public.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): The member for Ottawa-Orléans for a response.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I wish to thank the members for Simcoe North, Trinity-Spadina, Oakville and Nepean-Carleton for responding to my presentation this morning. The science-based evidence that I like to accept is that from the health organizations in this province and from the doctors that I heard speak at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

I am very pleased that this legislation is going forward. I can understand the reservations of the member from Trinity-Spadina. We need strong legislation in this province to protect our families and our kids, and I'm really pleased to see that we're making progress in that direction.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to be able to rise this morning and comment for a few moments on Bill 64,

an Act to amend the Pesticides Act to prohibit the use and sale of pesticides that may be used for cosmetic purposes. As the member from Nepean-Carleton mentioned, it's only a three-page bill, and the short title is the Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act.

It's great to be back in the House this week after constituency week, but I'm sure if you're a member of the government, you're not very happy to be back here. I didn't hear a lot of happy things about the government in the last seven days. I'm assuming they're going to want out of this House as quickly as possible, so please, please give us a break here and let us pass some of this legislation. We don't want to do one of those things like last year, where you abruptly ended the Legislature in the morning when one of the ministers was supposed to speak in estimates. That was an interesting time. We'll see. I think our schedule goes through to the end of June. Let's get this bill passed.

The one positive thing I heard last week was the private member's bill from the member from Brampton-Springdale, which is the sprinkler bill. I tell you, there's a lot of support out there from our fire services for that bill. The only thing they're saying with that particular bill is that they think the government is going to kill their own member's bill, so there'll be a lot of firemen in the House today. When you're back at caucus tomorrow, give the lady a break and let her pass her bill. She's had it here about three times, and we can eventually implement it. We'll be happy to do that. I can tell you that that is the one positive thing I heard about the government last week.

Now, the Pesticides Act. Has anyone seen the lawns outside? It's probably the most disgraceful-looking Parliament we have in Canada now. There's no more grass left; it's all weeds. When the member from Ottawa-Orléans mentioned consulting local experts, I'm wondering who the government has consulted to look after the lawns of our beautiful Parliament buildings. Right here in Toronto, the capital of Ontario, our lawns are a disgrace. Maybe people shouldn't be crawling on the lawns or walking on the lawns, but the appearance of them—I'd rather have AstroTurf than what we see out there now. It's pathetic. Go out to the east doors, have a look and you'll see how wonderful it really is.

0920

Do you know what? The whole thing around the science of this bill is something that I don't understand. I really hope that when we get to committee with this bill, those experts who are basing this on science will come forward and give us all of the data and the exact information we need as to why we should solve this. What I can't understand about it is why this would apply to properties like lawns on public property and individuals' lands; however, in farming, golf courses and forestry it does not. I'm wondering how you tie the science together. I know the minister says that golf courses will have an expert advisory panel and that they'll also have a plan to put in place, but we all know that if you allow golf courses to go the way the lawns are on the east side

of the building, there'll be no golf courses in business in Ontario. They simply won't be around. People will not golf at them; they'll just be nothing but weed patches. So I worry about that. I worry about how it would be unhealthy for someone to be around their own property, and have a ban that applies to their property, but not have it apply when they go golfing.

I hope someone in the House can clarify this for me—maybe the parliamentary assistant to health or health promotion, or even the environment. I'm told that money has flowed from either health promotion or the Ministry of Health to some of the school boards so that they can take kids out to golf courses. I'm wondering why the government would be hypocritical in that manner. You're funding students to go out and learn how to golf on areas where there would be pesticides allowed, but not on their own school properties or if they come to Queen's Park, or in their own homes, where they actually live. I'm concerned about that.

Farmers are concerned about this bill. There's a lot of concern about this. They think that if the government's really serious about this, they'll apply the pesticide ban to all properties across our province, and that would include agriculture. I don't know what kind of an impact that would have. Again, I'm hoping that when we get to committee we'll see the science that it's based on, as far as what the government's concerned about. I'm hoping that they'll be able to give us a lot of data and see how it will impact agriculture, for people growing potatoes, carrots, corn etc. If there are chemicals in the ground, what kind of an impact does that have by the time it reaches the grocery store? Or are we allowing crops to come into the country with a lot more serious pesticides that have been applied to those crops in other countries, and are we just defeating the purpose? We may not be able to sit outside on our lawn and have a picnic because the pesticides may have an impact on us, but we might go to a barbecue and have a salad where a lot of the vegetables have come from other countries. Maybe the pesticides are a lot stronger or have been applied in a lot heavier doses, and that may have an impact on how it affects the food we eat. So there would be something health-related to that.

Those are the kinds of questions that I think we have to be prepared to answer in this House. Certainly, before the bill is passed, I would want to know about things like chemicals coming in from other countries on our fruits and vegetables, the impact on the golf courses, and of course why it's strictly municipal public properties and houses, and not trying to do something that would encompass the whole province, maybe on a smaller basis, as far as the amount of chemical that's applied.

The other thing that I think we have to talk about here in this House—I have a number of folks who come to me who are small business people; they are in the lawn-spraying and lawn maintenance business. They've come to my office asking me about compensation. They went into the business in good faith. They bought expensive trucks and expensive equipment to apply the fertilizers and chemicals to lawns and gardens, and now, in a lot of

cases, they'll be forced right out of business. I'm wondering what the government has in mind for compensation for these small business operators.

This is a government that hates small business; we know that already. Almost every step of the way, there is a hatred shown towards small business men, with no compensation whatsoever. We see it in questions in the House. We've seen it, of course, with this bill. If the government was sincere in making this bill fair and equitable, they would make sure that all small business operators who apply chemicals and will have their businesses downsized as a result of the bill would get compensation. I'm hoping in particular, especially in those rural communities—and there are a lot of rural members in here this morning—that you would be supportive of your small business operators getting a lot of compensation for the huge investments they've put into it.

Interjections.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm hearing their hatred for small businesses coming out now, as they start to heckle me for saying that. But we've seen it over and over again.

Interjections.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm sorry if I got under someone's skin, but the reality is, this is a real problem that we have to deal with.

I heard it all last week. You talk about compensation in different areas for operators of different businesses. We've seen it with the tobacco farmers, who were basically told to go away. We see it in the apprenticeship ratios, which are unfair to small business operators. This government refuses to listen to organizations that represent those small business people, and they completely ignore their requests for fairness in a system which is fair in other parts of the country.

I listened last week, and I don't know how many people were actually in their ridings and spent a lot of time talking to business operators. Here's a government that—it's nice that they can use some of these motherhood things to deflect away from the real problems they face, as the member from Nepean–Carleton mentioned a little earlier, but we've got some real problems out there.

On the Victoria Day holiday weekend, I think tourism was probably down about 35% to 40%. Unbelievable. And our leader, John Tory—

Interjection: Where is John?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: The member from Wellington–Halton Hills and the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook made some announcements on some ideas that might help, like getting rid of the sales tax for long weekends on hotels and restaurants etc. I know that the Minister of Tourism is a rookie and probably not very skilled in his job, but the reality is that he called it a band-aid solution. With empty hotels, empty restaurants and nobody on the highways, when someone comes out with a reasonable solution that might help them, I don't call that a band-aid solution. If it's going to help a family that comes to Toronto for the weekend and it's going to save them \$100 by coming and visiting, they're going to

spend that money in other areas in the city. That's all they were trying to say.

I've seen nothing from the government saying they promote tourism. Remember, tourism mostly involves small business operators all across our province. Hundreds of thousands of jobs are at stake with this, and right now people aren't hiring yet. The Victoria Day holiday weekend was so bad that a lot of businesses didn't even open up between the May 24 holiday and last weekend, during constituency week.

I consider these to be very, very serious problems that our government is ignoring. We're here in this House today talking about a pesticides ban, and apparently some are arguing whether or not it's based on science. We're not really sure about this right now, but this is what we hope the government will bring forward when they get to committee. I'm hoping it's going to be a committee that will travel into rural Ontario. We don't usually get this government wanting to travel into rural Ontario, because they're not that popular in rural Ontario.

0930

We've got another problem with the bill. I want to know what the solution is to this, and maybe the Minister of Health will be able to answer this later on, or somebody in the House who has all the expertise. I've got some letters—I don't know how many other folks in this assembly have received letters from constituents—on allergies. They're concerned about the impact of Bill 64 on people with allergies. I would like to know what the government's thoughts are on that. So instead of heckling me in their responses, maybe the next time they can tell me what impact this bill will have on people with allergies and will there be any exemptions or will it have an impact on people who do have allergies—that sort of thing. I think we need to have those kinds of questions answered.

Again—this wasn't something I heard in constituency week. Some of my small business operators are worried about the compensation. I had a few letters on the allergies, but what I was hearing about were things like tourism. I've got to tell you, I don't know what other folks in this House are hearing, but I'm not hearing a lot of popular comments around this announcement on sex changes being funded. A lot of people think a lot of other things should be prioritized ahead of that. I was at probably 25 events last week where people came up to me and were very concerned about what the government was actually doing and why that would be something that would be so special at this time.

Last week, as you know, was our constituency week, but it was also emergency management week and emergency services week across the province. It was really interesting, when the government brags about all the things they're doing and all these motherhood statements, to find that the president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association came out last week—I've got a copy of his letter to Premier McGuinty. Mr. Walsh wrote a letter to the McGuinty government asking them when they're going to start funding police the way they should. We're

almost 500 officers short, but all they do is tend to blame the federal government; if anything comes up around policing, it's the federal government's fault. I'd like to put that on the record, because—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): I'd just remind the member to speak to the bill that's on the floor.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I was worried about the police on lawns, Madam Speaker.

The reality is, over and over again—even in any response we get in the House—the minister blames the federal government for policing shortages in Ontario. That's what you call completely not fulfilling the responsibility you have.

The reality is, we have a bill in front of us that is popular, as far as the Environmental Bill of Rights and people who have written in on that and who have made comments on it. But as we move forward with that bill and we go to committee, I hope we'll have a lot of opportunity for our small business people, the agricultural industry, golf course owners, doctors, cancer experts etc. to comment on this bill, so we in this House can understand the science behind it and why it is so important to put this bill through in its current form.

As I said earlier, I can't understand why there are these exemptions in all these other areas. If it's so important to your lawn and so important to public property, why are other areas exempt and why isn't there a better explanation of that? When the minister made his opening statement and addressed the bill in the House on the day it was introduced, he just said farmers would have a plan and golf courses would have a plan and he didn't want to talk to that anymore. But even golf course owners are now saying, "What's going to be the impact? Next year, is it going to apply to me? Should I shut down my golf course now?" Because of the tourism aspect, business is already down in a lot of these areas, and something like this would completely kill the golf industry if it was passed. I don't have a lot to add to that because obviously you won't let me go into other areas of discussion here that I'd like to attack the government on, and of course there are lots of those.

As I said, I want to welcome the pages here. I know we've got a couple of folks—I haven't met them here this morning yet—from my riding. I'll be talking to them in the next little while, but I really want to welcome them to Queen's Park and I want to welcome all the pages here. We're pretty good people, as a rule. You'll probably come here and wonder why all this heckling is going back and forth, like the way they've heckled me all morning as I've been trying to speak. In the end, I think they're all pretty good people representing the different communities they serve in this province.

So as I wind up on this debate, I want to thank in particular my good friend the member from—I keep thinking of him as the member from Caledonia, but it's Haldimand-Norfolk—because he has been such an outstanding member and he has brought some really good points forward here. He gave a one-hour lead-off here a few days ago, and there were a lot of really positive

comments in it. But I think he, like me, will look forward to the debate and having real data provided to us, real experts, not this fluffy stuff we've seen over here that is kind of a motherhood statement. We have to base this on science; we have to base this on what kind of compensation business owners will receive as a result of the fact that this will have a negative impact on them. We want to make sure that we get it right, and also we want to make sure of what the member from Ottawa-Carleton mentioned, about the health issues. Where there are serious health issues, we have to address these, but they tie into everything. They tie into other foods coming in from other parts of the country, international products coming into Ontario, and the way we apply our agriculture legislation to have impacts on bills like this as well.

I'm going to wind up now. I'm looking forward to the debate and to comments coming forward here today. Again, I apologize for saying that the government has a hatred for small business, but do you know what? I didn't want to make it seem that harsh, but the reality is, we are seeing that on a day-to-day basis in rural Ontario. This government hates small business operators. They have a fight with farmers on all the time, and quite frankly it's very disappointing to sit in this House day after day and see a complete assault on rural Ontario by this government. We can go on and on and on, and we'll look very forward to—

Interjections.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: You mention the word “hatred” of rural Ontario and they get mad. The reality is, this government hates rural Ontario. They do everything they can possibly do to make life harder and harder for the residents of rural Ontario. Just name the bill and it will have an impact one way or another. So when we start doing our complete job here and fulfilling our full responsibility to all the citizens of Ontario, then I'll be more supportive of a piece of legislation like this.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just wanted to say to the member from Simcoe North that I'm happy to see that morning debates have not diminished his ability to express his warm hostility towards Liberals.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I stand today to comment on the statements, I'm going to call them, of the member from Simcoe North. I've got to say that the comment that this government hates rural Ontario—there could not be anything that is more nonsense than that statement. I think about the previous government, how you treated rural communities. For you to stand in this House and make those comments is totally inappropriate. But what we're here today to speak about is Bill 64. I want to remind the opposition members from across the way that that is in fact what we are speaking about today.

When I think about what they did when they were in government—they brought forward nutrient management. Now, one of the things in the municipalities, in rural Ontario—that piecemeal legislation, from municipality to municipality, caused untold grief to our farmers.

How did they treat our farmers? They turned their backs. They finally, after the second term, decided that maybe they might bring forward nutrient management. For the member from Simcoe North to talk about compensation—I can tell you, when those discussions were going on, this member from Simcoe North did not stand in the House and talk about small business at that time. No, sir. When we talk about piecemeal legislation and how that affects rural Ontario, bringing forward provincial legislation that speaks to making a healthy Ontario is the direction that, when we had the conversation in October, was part of our platform and a very strong plank. Quite frankly, I think that when the member stands up and says he gets a conversation from here and there, he doesn't hear the majority of the voices that are strongly in support of this legislation and want to see more work done. I look forward to the hearings, and they should come to rural Ontario, where they will be very graciously received—the McGuinty government.

0940

Mr. Toby Barrett: I welcome the opportunity to comment on what the member for Simcoe North has explained to us. As with the zoo legislation, he has presented a very comprehensive discussion of what's going on here. It's a very complex issue, this issue of banning pesticides. It's an issue that has to be based on science, and I think the member from Simcoe North did an admirable job in explaining that. Our concern is that the premise of this legislation seems to suggest—and some of us are of a farm background—that there is something inherently wrong with these products. That is a threat to the forest industry and to the farming industry, because it undermines people's confidence in these various products. From the debate we heard this morning, the debate we have heard to date, I have a number of questions.

We hear the arguments with respect to linking certain cancers to pesticides. We do ask questions, and we do ask for scientific evidence. Which particular cancer are we talking about and which particular product was linked to that cancer? Was the cancer related to glyphosate, for example, which is banned in Toronto? This legislation, brought forward by the McGuinty Liberals, will allow the use of glyphosate, a product produced by Monsanto. It's called Roundup. I've been using it for decades. Will you allow that particular product to go forward or is that product linked to certain cancers?

Learning disabilities: What learning disabilities are we talking about? Which particular chemical are we talking about? We hear mention of birth defects. Which particular pesticide, which particular chemical product is linked to—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: It's a good opportunity to speak to Bill 64 and the comments of the member from Simcoe North. Again, I just remind our new pages and the people across Ontario that this is about banning or stopping the indiscriminate use of cosmetic pesticides, chemicals that you don't really need to use in your front lawn or in your

backyard for cosmetic purposes and for appearance purposes.

It's just beyond me why the Conservative Party disagrees with the Canadian Cancer Society and doctors, nurses and medical professionals who believe it's best to err on the side of safety for our children especially, who might be susceptible to getting some kind of residue on their feet, on their hands and then put their hands in their mouth. This could cause some harmful medical consequences. That's why not only the province of Ontario but jurisdictions all over the world are doing this and municipalities all over Ontario have already done this. So it is not doing something that the public is not asking for; they're asking for a uniform set of standards so that we can better protect our children especially from the indiscriminate use of these chemicals, primarily in an urban setting when you don't really need to use chemicals. That's what this legislation does, plain and simple. For the life of me, it's amazing that the Conservative Party is fighting the same battle that has been fought with tobacco. We all remember the same people saying that tobacco doesn't kill you, that tobacco doesn't cause cancer. This is the same argument.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Response?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I thank the members for Huron Bruce, Haldimand–Norfolk, Trinity–Spadina and Eglinton–Lawrence for their comments this morning. We, on this side of the House, don't want to stop anything that's going to have an impact on people who might get cancer, but we want to make sure it's a complete bill and that it has an impact on all the stakeholders who may be affected.

I mentioned earlier in the House that if there's something going on a lawn that would cause a child to have cancer, how are we assured that something that might be on the fruit and vegetables he eats, which might be imported from another country, might not be more powerful than that? What are we going to do about that? Plain and simple, that could have an impact as well.

I stick to what I said earlier about this government's hatred for rural Ontario. I've talked to some people lately about the source water protection committees. I understand that there will actually be farms put right out of business, because if they're within 1,500 feet of a well-head, they won't be able to farm anymore, and there will be no compensation whatsoever to those farms. They're not even talking about any form of compensation.

Maybe people want to see these who apply chemicals to lawns go out of business. But if they're going to go out of business as a result of this bill, I think there should be some kind of compensation factor; it's as plain and simple as that. These are small business operators. A lot of them have a lot of employees. They entered this business in good faith under the legislation we have today. If the government is going to change the legislation, they should compensate those people for those jobs; I don't think there's anything unfair about that. But they won't. They'll try to sweep it under the carpet. They'll try to put

a motherhood statement on everything with a bunch of fancy press releases, and nothing will happen and those people will lose their jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy to welcome the citizens of Ontario—at least those who are awake or semi-awake—to this political channel. I've got to tell you how difficult it is to make speeches in the morning. It won't prevent me from trying, of course, but it is tough. I don't know how many other professions get to debate so early in the morning and be alert and awake as they do that. When we had speeches in the afternoon, I used to say, "Welcome, citizens, to this parliamentary channel. It's 4 o'clock" or "it's 5 o'clock." Now I'm saying, "It's 9:45." I used to say, "Get your popcorn ready and get your beer." Now what do you say? "Get your coffee ready and listen to the debate"? Who's going to listen at 9 o'clock or 9:30 in the morning? It's hard for the speaker to speak; imagine how hard it is for the listener to listen at that time of the morning. Nobody is watching.

All this is courtesy of the Liberal government, courtesy of the House leader of the Liberal Party, probably courtesy of McGuinty, probably courtesy of some young whippersnapper in McGuinty's office deciding that this is what we should be doing. Maybe it's not even McGuinty. Maybe it's not even the former Attorney General. Maybe it's just some whippersnapper with an "I love the smell of napalm in the morning" attitude to political debate; it's very possible. But we owe this to the House leader of the Liberal Party. I hope the citizens of Ontario are enjoying these morning debates.

I want to say that I do not support the Conservative argument about "show us the real science on chemicals." If I had it my way, I would abolish the living hell out of all chemicals in our society, because I'm one who believes that chemicals are killing us. I'm one who believes that chemicals are deranging our physiology. To those who say, "Show me the science," I've got to tell you, I am frightened of chemicals like you wouldn't believe. There are thousands and thousands of chemicals in the air we breathe and the water we drink. They're in everything.

I don't want to wait for the science. I don't want to be a victim of a chemical killing, to be able to say, "Yeah, they're bad now." I'm not one of those. I take the precaution of saying, "Where you can, abolish as many chemicals as you possibly can," because I am firmly of the belief that they're hurting me, my children and everyone else's children. I don't want to wait for any real science on this matter. From a superficial knowledge—not being a scientist or anything—I can imagine these chemicals inside the body and what they're doing to us. Can't you simply imagine? Do you have to be a scientist to get a sense of what they're doing to us? That's me.

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I welcome this bill. It isn't the strongest bill that I have ever debated on issues of banning pesticides. It's a wel-

come bill. It bans many pesticides for aesthetic purposes, particularly on residential home use. That's okay, I say.

When the government says, "This is really revolutionary, the toughest bill in the world or in the country," I say, "Stop. Please, stop. Don't exaggerate yourselves so much." It isn't the toughest. Municipalities have been tougher than you have with your bill. So please, when you say how tough you are on this kind of issue, you're not, and you will not be unless we get some changes in this bill.

Many municipalities have been ahead of this government for quite some time. Markham, Vaughan, Peterborough and Ottawa already had a ban on the application of pesticides for aesthetic purposes and have fought the fight against the chemical companies in court. The government is late to the party on this one. It's hardly leadership. So when the member for Oakville says, "We're leading"—please; you're following. You're not a leader on this one and you're not introducing the toughest anti-pesticides campaign ever. You're not. Other cities have, including Toronto and London.

It's for that reason that Monsieur McGuinty made the error a couple of weeks ago when he said, "Of course cities can introduce their own measures that could be tougher than the ones we've introduced." It's easy for me to understand that McGuinty would have made that mistake. He knows, like I do, and like many other MPPs in this place who were city councillors, that cities have already banned, in some cases completely, all pesticide use for residential purposes. So was it wrong for McGuinty to have said, "Of course cities can introduce more stringent measures if they want"? He wasn't wrong; he just made a mistake. He didn't realize his minister said that they couldn't do that.

It is my view that because McGuinty made that error and looked a bit bad, the minister will make it up to him. If the Premier pronounced himself on this issue, saying, "Municipalities can introduce more stringent measures," the Premier has spoken. He's a bit higher on the food chain, if you know what I mean, and therefore has a little more power than the minister on this one. It seems to me that the caucus members are also somewhat practical. They too probably said, "Of course cities should be able to introduce measures that are stronger if they want."

I am convinced that the MPPs are going to support the Premier on this. Then, when it comes to second reading, there will be amendments, if not by the NDP, by Liberal backbenchers who will introduce an amendment that will say, "Cities can introduce measures that are stronger than the bill we are proposing." I guarantee it. I really do. People will say, "How can you guarantee that?" It's just a little bit of psychology, I think. You don't want to make your Premier look bad—and he did. And the minister looked bad, felt bad, when the Premier looked bad and felt bad after stating what he stated, and didn't mean to because he didn't know. Nobody wants to make the Premier look bad. So I guarantee 101% that an amendment will be made.

Any disagreement from any Liberal backbenchers? The rump or the other side? You see, they're smiling

because they know it's coming. And I say, that's okay. I say it's okay if we allow cities that have been leaders on this issue, that have taken companies to court on this issue, that have banned, in some cases completely, all residential use of pesticides—that this is an important measure to introduce by way of an amendment that will make this bill much stronger than it is.

The bill establishes a ceiling, not a floor. So when the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, the member for Oakville and others say, "We have harmonized the rules. There's one single standard. No patchwork," it sounds good intellectually. For people who don't know much about the issue, they say, "Well, if you've got one provincial law and you harmonize it across the province, it's got to be good."

The point is that it establishes a ceiling and not a floor. The point is that if cities want to do better, they can't, and as the member from Eglinton–Lawrence says, for the life of me, I just don't understand why Liberals don't see it. The member from Eglinton–Lawrence often looks at the Tories and says, "I don't understand why they don't see it," so I look at the member from Eglinton–Lawrence and say, "I don't understand why you don't see it."

I'll repeat it for the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, because he was on this side of the House. You are establishing a ceiling, not a floor. Cities, in some cases, want to go further than you have. So I want to use your language. I can't understand why Liberals can't see that if municipalities want to introduce stronger measures to ban, in many cases completely, all pesticide use, why they can't. This is what I don't understand.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Right. The member from Eglinton–Lawrence, like the member from Oakville, says, "Oh, because then you get a patchwork kind of quilt." What's wrong with that? What's wrong with a city deciding, "We want to make it better. We want to make it stronger"? What's wrong with that? If you create a harmonized rule and somebody says, "That's okay, we accept that, but we want to make it better," what's wrong with that? That I find incomprehensible.

The fact of the matter is, the city of Toronto, where my friend from Eglinton–Lawrence was—Dr. David McKeown stated in a May 13 Canadian Press story that the McGuinty government's provincial ban doesn't include a common weed killer that's already prohibited in Toronto. You understand? The city of Toronto has gone further than the Liberal government. The Liberal government said, "Well, too bad. We want to harmonize it. We think we're doing well. We think we know what's best, and if cities have already done something that goes further, it's too bad, because we don't really want to create a patchwork system across Ontario."

I'm arguing that it's not sensible, that it's nonsensical. I'm arguing that you could do better than that and you don't want to. It seems to me that in spite of the fact that you say that Tories are the core protector as it relates to pesticides, you're doing the same. It seems to me that you, wittingly or unwittingly, are doing the same. Where

cities have done better by eliminating more chemicals, or a complete ban, you're saying, "That's not good." It contradicts your argument. It makes your argument much weaker to defend. That's why I find the Liberal arguments on this incomprehensible. And even when the Tories stand up, in their mumblings, they don't offer anything by way of clarity on this issue.

I'm looking forward to rump Liberals, and/or other Liberals who have already spoken, to offer a reasonable argument against what I have said. I'm arguing that you are contradicting yourselves. When you attack the Tories, I say that you are attacking yourselves. When you say the Tories are defending pesticides and corporations, I say you're doing the same by creating a ceiling instead of a floor. By not permitting cities to offer tougher legislation, which they can, you are in effect protecting someone or something. Maybe you don't see it that way. It's clear to me that you don't see it. But that's what I propose to you by way of an argument against yourselves.

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The legislation will prescribe a list of all pesticides covered by the ban, but the Canadian Cancer Society, the one that my friend from Eglinton-Lawrence referred to, says something different. They say, "Why not prescribe a list of chemicals which can be used, instead of chemicals which cannot be?" I find that a very logical proposition. Given that you make reference to the Canadian Cancer Society, I thought I would do the same. Given that you support their arguments on the whole, I thought that if I presented yet another argument by the same society that you support, you might be tempted by the argument to say, "Hmm, that is a very good point"—and it is. If you can prescribe which chemicals cannot be used, why not prescribe chemicals which can? In my view, that would be better, because you have, by way of your legislation, no way of adding to the list except by introducing a bill in this place. You have no way of adding other chemicals that are banned except and unless by introducing another bill to ban additional chemicals. That's why I say, accept the Canadian Cancer Society's argument and do the reverse of what you have proposed: Simply prescribe the list of chemicals that can be used. I accept that as a very logical argument. If Liberals have another argument to propose to that, I would love to hear it.

Then there's the matter of golf courses. I am puzzled. Again, I find that the arguments of the Liberals have been contradictory on this one. I'm led to believe, by an article I read in the Star, that pesticide and ornamental herbicide use in residential homes represents only about 4% of pesticide use. That's not a huge number. But golf courses, which drink chemicals to the gills, where we pour an incredible amount of chemicals, by the tonne, to keep that grass so pristine—we're exempting golf courses. Why would you do that? Golf courses use pesticides on a massive scale. Compare that to residential use and there is no comparison. Those chemicals by the tonne are acceptable to you Liberals so that you can see pristine green grass on a golf course? How could you do that? How could you accept that argument as being logical? Why? Just to play golf?

Last week, I said to those of you who play golf that I'm worried about obesity, because I see a lot of golf players who are, dare I say as best as I can, obese.

Mr. Mike Colle: Tiger Woods is not.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The famous ones are not obese, of course, because they keep nice and trim, but those who go and just have fun on the golf course, I've got to tell you, are obese. I'm concerned about obesity. Minister of Health, you too are concerned about this.

Hon. George Smitherman: Careful; I'm sensitive.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: As a Minister of Health, I said. I made no reference to anyone or anything. But I've got to tell you, when those guys are playing golf, as far as I know—I don't see many people walking. Maybe it's a good thing; I don't know. But not too many walk on a golf course. They use those little carts, and the only exercise they get is to swing the golf bat.

Mr. Mike Colle: Club, club, club.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: See, they call them clubs. "Club" is such an awful word. So they get these golf clubs—that's the only exercise they get. The only other exercise they get is bending down to pick up the ball. That's the exercise they get out of golf. That's why I said that I prefer to chase a big ball—a soccer ball—rather than a golf ball, which isn't being chased but rather carted about. You get to it by a cart and you just bend over. That's the extent of your exercise, you understand. When you go for a beer, it's 200 calories in one beer. You go for two beers, it's 400 calories. All you do is pick up the ball and swing the club. That's it. It's not much of a game, I've got to tell you.

So I'm concerned for two reasons: one, the fact that golf players are a bit overweight, and in some cases obese; and on the other hand, I'm worried about the fact that when they bend over to pick up the ball, that ball has gone through that grass for thousands of miles back and forth, and it picks up a lot of chemicals as it rolls through the grass. So they pick up the ball, they put it down, and then so many of them smoke or touch their lips. Obviously, they're ingesting a whole lot of chemicals into their system.

Why not ban pesticide use in golf? Why not—

Interjection: Ban golf.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Banning golf is another matter. I would ban it myself. But that's just for fun.

Why not ban the use of pesticides on golf courses? That's what I would do in order to protect those people playing, those kids picking up balls, and to protect ourselves from the runoff of this massive use of pesticides that runs into whatever body of water it is connected to. Why wouldn't we do that? How do you Liberals defend that policy?

So when you say that this is the toughest bill that has ever been introduced on this issue—please. Residential use of pesticides only covers 4%; golf courses probably represent the biggest part. I believe we should ban the use of pesticides on golf courses, and we should do it today. Hopefully, the Liberal members will feel a tad guilty

about that as they speak to this bill. I'm looking forward to a few Liberals speaking up on this issue.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I just want to join in this particular debate on Bill 64, the Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act.

Listening to my friend from Trinity–Spadina, I think I might be able to help him a little bit as to why we're doing what we're doing and we will not allow our municipalities to have a patchwork of a higher order of legislation. If you look at what municipalities have today, they have a ban on the use; they cannot ban the sale within their jurisdiction. This particular bill actually bans the sale.

You need to have a uniform ban across the province. Therefore, this is why the bill is taking the route that it's going. Certainly his interest to see municipalities have something extra is probably worth discussion on another day, but to have the ban in the stores so you cannot buy it is really important.

Today, as an example, in the city of Toronto, where I came from, we banned the use. But I live on Steeles Avenue, and residents in my area can go into Markham and buy it, because that municipality didn't have a ban at the time we banned it in Toronto. They can bring it back and use it. It makes it very difficult for the enforcement officers in Toronto to enforce that ban of use unless they actually see somebody using it, or a neighbour complains. Tell me, how many of you have dealt with constituents who want to complain about their neighbours? Not many of them want to.

This bill would really make the ban that was started by municipalities a lot more effective, and we're doing it because it's the right thing to do. We want to protect the children of the future. Many of us here will not be around when those children are affected by pesticides. We need to do it now, and I think we're doing the right thing.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I just wanted to make a few quick comments to the presentation made by the member from Trinity–Spadina. First of all, I want to say that I don't totally agree with the premise that he started with, that the answer would be to just ban all pesticides. We have an organization called Health Canada, and they have approved all these pesticides because they say that there is no human health risk. Obviously some debate could be had on the issue as to whether all of them are or are not as effective as they should be or as clear as they should be. But I take more exception with the comments made earlier by the government side to suggest that the reason we're doing this is to have a uniform system across the province, when in fact up until now we've always been quite content to accept that municipalities could pass bylaws to protect, as they saw fit, the health and well-being of their citizens. A lot of municipalities in our province have done that. In some areas, they've done it stricter than what the province is proposing to do here.

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So if this is based on science, if it was necessary that the city of Toronto put the ban in place that they pres-

ently have, one would have to question if we don't want our children to be quite that safe; we just want them to be a little safer—why they would lower the standard for those municipalities. It would seem to me that if that was in the best interests of the city of Toronto and for their children, that they would leave it that way.

I also have a little concern: The member from the government side mentioned the fact that this bans the sale of these chemicals, and I take from the legislation that it does do that. But I wonder how that deals with the exemptions that we have on the golf courses that were mentioned by the member for Trinity–Spadina. Where are they going to purchase those chemicals? I presume that it will be from some outlet in the province of Ontario. If it's available for some, I expect—I've seen this before—it will be available to all those who wish to buy it. So I'm not sure that they're actually going to ban the sale of the chemicals.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate. From what I've heard today, and I've listened carefully to the debate, I think the member for Trinity–Spadina said he was going to support the legislation. That's what I heard. If that's not correct, perhaps he can address that when his two minutes come around. From what I've heard from the Conservative Party, they are not going to support it. If that's not true, I'd like to hear that as well.

I come from a community where golfing is a major business. Oakville is the home of the Canadian Open and has been for many years. It has been on the road for a few of the tournaments, but quite often it comes back to Glen Abbey. It's a golf course that we take some pride in. We don't consider people who are out there trying to promote their own health and trying to get exercise and socialize with their friends either for business or for pleasure—we don't consider them all obese. They are people who are out having fun, people who are out trying to do something about their own health, and it's a social activity that is very, very popular in Ontario and all over Oakville.

So from what I've heard, there is some support for the bill and there is going to be some opposition to the bill. People are asking about the science. What I'm hearing from my constituents is that they want to see more use of the precautionary principle: Do the things you can do to make your life a little better and do the things you can do to make your community a little safer. This is one of those things that we can all do. We can agree to not use pesticides on our own properties, around our own homes. It's going to make for a safer and healthier community.

You talk about the products that would be banned. What is being presented to the House is a proposed list. We've asked municipalities, the industry and lawn care operators which products should be banned and which products should not be banned. This is a suggested list. It's a starting point for a discussion. I would like to hear more about that discussion from the other parties as to what products they think should be on the list.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the comments made by the member from

Trinity–Spadina; first of all, his comments regarding golf. Obviously, the person's never been out. It's such an easy thing to—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have once.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: He's been out once, according to the member. It's very much like being on a soccer pitch. I'm sure that on a soccer pitch—they don't use chemicals there at all, or never have? I imagine that in some sort of fashion they have, and guess what? When you're down on your knees making a save and everything else, it impacts you very much the same. No matter how it takes place, it occurs in some fashion.

The current government member who just spoke—I'd have to check to find out which riding to make sure I'm in compliance—should read Hansard, because there are a number of individuals who have stated their case very clearly.

My concern regarding this is in a couple of areas. One is the enforcement aspect. Where will the enforcement come from? How will it take place? Is it going to be incumbent on the conservation officers? Will they become participants in this sort of activity too? How will it come about: through bylaw enforcement or other aspects?

Quite frankly, in my opinion, the whiz kids in the back room have probably come forward and said, "We have to give a perception that we're dealing with the environment. How are we going to achieve that? We don't want to be talking about global warming and we don't want to talk about that darn stuff that drives me crazy, that UV rating every day where I've got to get up and make sure my kids are gooped up with UV 1,000 at some time"—right now, quite frankly, it's probably a 45 or a 60—"and the impact on our society as a whole." If this plays a role in ensuring that the future for our kids is going to be much safer and much brighter, then I'm more than willing to support it. My position is that I want to see in committee some more research and some more documentation from both sides of this issue. But as I stated before, when they opened this gambit up, I want to make sure that all participants play a part in the information in the committee process, and that includes forestry, agriculture and the golfing and recreational sector, which is very concerned with it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): The member for Trinity–Spadina for a response.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I do thank all the members for their comments.

To the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, I say the following. He says, "We banned the sale of pesticides." The point is this: The extension of that argument is the following, and this is where I believe the Liberals don't seem to get it, or they do and they try to argue their own case. Guelph banned all pesticides and herbicides for ornamental use. My point is, they've gone further than you. Their bylaw is superseded by yours. The point is that if Guelph wants to ban all pesticide use, they can't. They can only follow your law, which says that only the ones you prescribe are the ones that can be banned, nothing more or less. That's the point that the Liberals

don't seem to get. That's where they contradict themselves a little bit. If a city wants to ban all use, they can't.

Then there is the argument made by the member for Oakville. He accepts the precautionary principle, which I spoke to, and then advances an argument as to why that is good and doesn't realize that when he speaks about golf courses, he says, "Oh, but golfing is a major business." So he accepts the precautionary principle for the use of pesticides on lawns but he doesn't accept the precautionary principle for golf courses because he argues that it's a major business. Do you see the contradiction in your argument, member for Oakville? You don't? Clearly. You clearly don't see it. Golf courses are a major business, so chemicals are bad, but in this case it's okay because it's a business. But in every other case, we use the precautionary principle. Do you not see how you contradict yourselves in the argument for the government? That's the point that I hope the citizens who are awake were able to see.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm delighted to rise in support of Bill 64 today. Our government feels that Ontarians should feel confident that when they go outside in their neighbourhood they are working in an environment which is clean and safe as far as possible. We don't want to damage our environment. We recognize that there are some essential uses, some required uses, of pesticides, and we are going to arrange for those to continue. But for those uses which are cosmetic, we don't feel that we need to run the risk of applying pesticides. The member for Trinity–Spadina used the word "pristine." My front lawn doesn't need to be pristine for me to enjoy it. We can go out and dig out some dandelions and cut down some of the weeds and get the lawn aerated and use some alternative products, but my front lawn doesn't have to be absolutely pristine for me to enjoy it. I can enjoy my front yard and my backyard with alternative uses.

I'd like to talk a little bit, actually, about some of the Guelph connections. As members will know, I'm very proud to have the Ontario Agricultural College at the University of Guelph in my riding. Over the years, there has been a huge amount of work done on what are effective pesticides for different crops for agricultural use and what is the safe level of use, what's the lowest level that you need to apply in order to get the desired result of making sure you have a product that hasn't been damaged by insects or weeds, whichever the agent is that you're trying to control. What happens in the agricultural industry is that in order for farmers to be able to use quite large quantities of pesticides—because agriculture and forestry, industries like that, actually are the major, major users—in order to be licensed, they have to take courses in handling the chemicals safely and then they have to get a licence. When they go to buy those large quantities of pesticides, they are doing so based on the fact that they have a licence and the licence is based on the fact that they have been trained in safe handling. I think it's very important to understand that when people like Health

Canada license these products, they are licensing them for people who have been trained in how to handle the product safely.

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When we look at our agriculture industry, they're exempted because people in that industry know how to handle the product safely. There are certain uses for many crops where we do need the pesticide to get the sort of production thresholds for those crops that make it economically viable for the farmer to continue in business.

Another industry that is exempted is the forestry industry. That's not an area where Guelph has as much expertise, but I think we've all heard of the huge damage that can be done to forests by invaders like the spruce budworm and the gypsy moth. Again, people who are managing forests must be trained in order to get a licence and then they are licensed for safe application. There are probably some other uses like that and the regulations allow for other essential licensed uses to occur. For example, I had somebody come into my constituency office and talk about whether pesticides will be able to be used in hydro corridors. If you think of hydro corridors in northern Ontario, they go through bushes and you get a windstorm, the trees come crashing down, the hydro goes out. The accessibility of the hydro corridor is extremely important, so you need to be able to get the machinery in to fix those lines when they come crashing down. That means that you want to use herbicides to control the scrub growth along the hydro corridor so that you can get people in to fix the lines. Those sorts of uses, which are essential to getting a function that we need in our society, will be exempted from the ban.

Let's look at some other uses. I also have at the University of Guelph the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, and it does research on lawn care. When it's doing research on lawn care, it looks at how to maintain a golf course. I admit that I am not a golfer, but my brother-in-law is an avid golfer, so I do get to watch enough golf on weekends when he is watching people on whatever tournament is going on over the weekend. I do get to watch it occasionally with my brother-in-law, and what I have figured out is that if you're going to have high-quality golf, you do need pristine grass because if you go to the green, you don't want dandelions and other weeds popping up in the middle and sending the ball astray.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, because then you'd get a mulligan. You'd get a mulligan then.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Exactly. I can figure this out even though I'm not a golfer. I'm sorry that the member for Trinity-Spadina hasn't watched long enough to figure this out, but as I said, I've sort of had to watch occasionally and I have figured out that if you're going to play golf properly, you actually do need a pristine golf course. So we have exempted golf courses because they do need pesticides to maintain the golf course in playable condition. The issue isn't "Does it look pretty?", although that's a side effect; the issue is, "Is it playable?" But what we have also required in the legislation is that golf

courses present a plan that will allow them to reduce their use of pesticides. So where there is an alternative product that may do just as well, where there is a change in management practice that allows that golf course to be maintained, we've asked them to put forward plans to limit the use of pesticides. But once again, the people who are doing the grounds-keeping at golf courses will have to be trained and licensed in safe pesticide handling.

What about the rest of us who just have a front lawn? How is this going to work for us? Well, we've looked at the experience in municipalities that have bans, we've looked at the experience in Quebec, which has a provincial ban, and one of the things that is very apparent is that if you only ban the use—which is what the municipalities have the power to do—and you leave those pesticides on the shelf at Canadian Tire, Home Depot, the neighbourhood nursery or wherever it is you go to get your banned products, what happens is that you end up with people with no training using the pesticides.

That's why we are implementing a retail sales ban on pesticides. What that means is that those people who are exempted and who are licensed will still be able to buy the pesticides. But for somebody like me, who doesn't have the training and doesn't have a licence, I will not be able to buy the pesticides. That makes the ban much more effective. If people like me, who need to maintain their front lawn, can't do an end-run on the ban, then you have a much more universal ban. And, quite frankly, the enforcement issues go way down, because if you can't get the chemical in the first place, then the enforcement issues aren't nearly as severe as for those people who currently have municipal bans.

What about the issue of, "But our ban is going to be the same all across the province"? Let's go back to my friends at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, who are interested in doing research for alternative lawn care programs. What my friends at the Turfgrass Institute tell me is this: "We in the lawn care industry can live with a pesticide ban, but if we're going to do research on effective alternatives, we need to deal with consistency. We can't have major research projects for every municipality that has a different set of bans. What we need is a level playing field so that we have some consistency across Ontario and we can do good research on effective alternative means. If you're going to have us do this properly and actually come up with good alternatives"—for people like me who want their front lawn to look okay; not pristine, but okay—"you need a consistent ban which allows us to do good research and find good alternatives for the everyday household consumer."

I am very pleased to be able to support this bill. I think it takes us a long way forward in doing what we need to do around pesticide use, which is to allow essential use to continue but to provide alternatives for cosmetic non-essential use.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Questions or comments?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Again, our caucus looks at this bill with the idea that perhaps a pesticide ban should

or should not be implemented for front lawns for people across Ontario. But what we want to point out is the dichotomy and the problem with the argument that the Liberals put forward, which is that pesticides are okay on farms, agricultural lands and a golf courses because they are being applied by professionals. Well, many of the pesticides and herbicides that are applied to front lawns and landscapes in urban municipalities are also applied by professionals. So we can't quite understand the argument put forward by the government that professional application is okay 100 yards away from a front lawn, on a farm, but it can't be applied by professionals on the front lawn of a particular housing area.

The other part is that this only applies to 4% of all pesticides and herbicides in Ontario. What we think the government should do is get the real scientific basis as to how harmful these particular substances are to the health of all Ontarians. If they are harmful to all Ontarians, then we should consider a total ban, if that's what the science says. But we don't have the science. What we would like is for this ban and this legislation to follow science, not follow political polls.

1030

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to thank the member for what was a riveting speech on this particular issue. I listened quite intently. There are a couple of parts to this bill that I think generally are going to get support, and we'll send it off to committee, but once it does get to committee, there are going to be people asking some pretty straight-up questions.

I think the first question people are going to be asking as they come to committee is: Why is it that this government is limiting what municipalities can do? We know, for example, that there are a number of municipalities across Ontario that have already taken a very aggressive and, some would argue, a progressive, stand on banning pesticides in their municipalities. This legislation is going to supersede that. I think there are a lot of people in municipalities who are going to be saying, "Why is the province doing that? Why are they limiting our ability and our choice to deal with pesticides within our own municipality?" People can draw their own conclusions as to why that is, but I think one of the questions that need to be answered when we get to committee is: Why is this bill structured in such a way that, at the end of the day, it limits what municipalities can do? In some cases, it takes away some of the work that's already been done by some of the municipalities.

I agree with the member that there are a lot of things that we can do naturally in order to control various types of weeds on people's lawns. A lot of the research that's been done here in Ontario is good research and it's not a bad way to go, but the question then becomes: Why is it that we're limiting pesticides in some areas and not in others?

We talked about golf courses. There are many municipal and private golf courses within municipalities across Ontario. Why is the government taking the view that they're going to limit the use of pesticides on lawns but

not limit them in the same municipalities where there are golf courses? So I think there are some questions to be answered in committee, and I look forward to that time.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I was listening carefully to the member from Guelph speaking about supporting this bill. She spoke eloquently and described why we have to put a ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides on house properties, industrial parks and many different types of parks.

I come from London. London is well known as a photo city. My riding of London-Fanshawe has beautiful parks. So many kids and families go on the weekends and on many different occasions to enjoy those parks. They go to play, to barbecue, they invite their families to birthdays and sometimes weddings. Can you imagine this park being sprayed by chemicals that can affect our youth and people, and the health hazards that would cause?

I think this is a very important step that our government is taking. I think it's important for us to protect our children and our families and to allow them to go to parks and to play in their front and back yard with no hesitation or problems. It's important. As I mentioned, many people in this province enjoy their spring and summer outings. They can go to the parks and play without even thinking about hazards or problems. That's why I'm speaking in support of this bill.

I also want to congratulate my colleague the member from Guelph for stating all the elements in support of banning these cosmetic pesticides, because they're not good for the people, the environment, the kids, the families, and not good for our health. I think this is a good step, and I wish that all the members in the House come forward and support this initiative. In the end, it's our goal and aim to create a healthy environment and to protect our environment for years to come.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to add some comments to the speech by the member from Guelph to do with Bill 64, An Act to amend the Pesticides Act to prohibit the use and sale of pesticides that may be used for cosmetic purposes.

This past week, of course, was constituency week, and I had the opportunity to meet with a couple of different agricultural organizations and people involved in farming over the course of the week. One of the groups I met with was the East Nipissing/Parry Sound Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and I was interested to learn that the number one issue for small farmers in Nipissing and Parry Sound is red tape. They gave me countless examples of how you may have the Ministry of Agriculture trying to assist them, but then you have four other ministries making life more difficult for them. So my question to do with this Bill 64 is, what new red tape is this government going to create for farmers? I note that farmers are excluded in terms of this bill. However, what new process are they going to require farmers to go through, beyond the training they already have, to be able to use pesticides in farming?

It was interesting. In the group I met with, there was an owner of a local small abattoir in Magnetawan, and he pointed out that the farmers would really like to see that

abattoir stay in business. They've already lost one local abattoir because of the new rules and red tape that have been created by this government. They really want to see this abattoir stay in business because it means that they can ship locally, close to home, and that's something we should be promoting.

Unfortunately, I only have another 10 seconds, so I can't get into other issues. But my question is, what new rules is this government going to create for farmers with this bill? I hope you'll think carefully about it so that you don't make life more difficult for the small farmer.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): The member for Guelph for a response.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'd like to thank the members from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, Timmins–James Bay, London–Fanshawe and Parry Sound–Muskoka for their comments.

I'd just like to review a few points, if I may. First of all, we know that pesticides are chemicals which, if handled improperly, cause risks to human health, to animal health and to the environment. So, when we get right down to it, the purpose of this bill is to minimize risk. The use of pesticides will be exclusively in the hands of people who have been trained and licensed in safe use. People who are in the agriculture industry, in the forest industry and in lawn care at golf courses will be exempted from the ban, because they have been trained. For the rest of us, who don't really need to have a pristine lawn, we will not be able to access pesticides which, if used inappropriately, can cause harm.

There has been a lot of comment here about consistency and whether we should let the cities have bans which are tougher. First of all, I would review what I heard from my local lawn care companies, which is: "We can live with the legislation that you're putting into place, provided we have consistency across municipalities so that we can do the research and come up with good alternatives. We need consistency to do that."

I would like to refer to the mayor of Guelph, because many people have pointed out that Guelph has a stricter ban. In fact, the mayor commented that our ability to ban sales makes this a whole lot tougher, and that's something the municipality can't do.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), six and a half hours of debate on this bill having occurred, I am now required to deem this debate adjourned, unless the acting government House leader indicates otherwise.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I wish debate to proceed at least until question period.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to join this debate this morning to discuss Bill 64, An Act to amend the Pesticides Act to prohibit the use and sale of pesticides that may be used for cosmetic purposes. I'm hoping that we're going to be allowed to have the full debate on this very important issue.

I can tell you, as an MPP now and as a health professional for over 20 years, I do agree that we need to drastically reduce the amount of toxic and oftentimes cancer-causing materials that we come into contact with every day. Of course, reducing or eliminating pesticides may well prove to be a very good option, but the government has to do its due diligence and ensure it has proper scientific data to move forward. We've heard that comment many times in the Legislature this morning. We support the concept of eliminating non-essential pesticide use to protect the health and environment of this province, but our side of the House supports a science-based approach to ensuring that our health and environment are protected.

1040

When it comes to the use of chemicals on our foods, parkland and gardens, some current facts in the province of Ontario right now with respect to pesticides: Their use is already regulated federally by the federal Pest Control Products Act, which controls the sale and use of pesticides in Canada. The Food and Drug Act allows for the setting of maximum limits for pesticide residues in foods. The Environmental Protection Act includes numerous provisions to protect the environment and human health from injury from pesticides. The Fertilizers Act requires registration of fertilizer-pesticide mixtures. And the Feeds Act prevents the contamination of livestock feeds. Here in Ontario we also have the Ontario Pesticides Act, the Municipal Act, the Weeds Act and the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.

One thing that is not in the legislation is the fact that there is not a clear delineation of the difference between non-essential use of pesticides versus cosmetic use. For example, there are serious health and environmental risks that are controlled through the use of pesticides—everything from severe allergies to insect infestations to physical injuries. We must be sure there is an ability for the use of pesticides in essential situations as opposed to cosmetic, to ensure protection in cases of health and environmental risk. As it stands, the legislation is very vague on this very important aspect. We must demand that the science behind this ban is solid and clear.

Equally important, I hope the motivation for legislation such as this is based on science, not simply on an emotional aspect of anti-pesticide argument, or basically a political argument, not a scientific argument. This is one of the key reasons why I feel this should be going to committee, so a proper, full consultation can be done. We can hear from related stakeholders. We have to build—and we owe it to the people of Ontario—a very proper balance of safety and environmental care along with a sustainable piece of legislation that makes good sense.

I've spoken about agriculture in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and one of its most important economic drivers is agriculture. It's a huge employer. It's vital to the sustainability of so many other aspects of rural Ontario. I'm very proud to say that farmers in Ontario reduced their pesticide use by over 50% in the last 15 years, so they should be given proper

credit for their leadership and for being great examples of stewards of the province through their proper and informed study and use through integrated pest management, or IPM.

If we're going to start down this slippery slope, as the Premier likes to phrase it, we have to ensure that it is done properly, fairly and based on facts. Agricultural use is exempted from the pesticide ban. While we support the use of pesticides by farmers to ensure their continued ability to grow their product, I am concerned that once again the Liberal government has brought forward a double standard of sorts.

Let me read from Scotts Canada's response to the Environmental Bill of Rights—no relation to me, just to put that on the record:

"To introduce a ban on the use of Health-Canada-approved pest control products in urban centres while permitting their use in rural settings establishes two standards of health and safety for Ontario residents. Clearly where our health and the health of our environment is concerned, a double standard is neither desirable nor acceptable."

There is also a concern in the agricultural community that this ban is a slippery slope, as noted by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture ad which they put out:

"Ontario's proposed ban on lawn and garden pesticides is moving forward, and could have a significant impact on farmers. All pesticides undergo the same rigid health and safety standards. With Health Canada's review in place and by following label directions, pesticides can be used safely in agriculture, on fairways and greens, lawns and gardens, in forestry or in public health settings. Banning pesticide use in urban settings while maintaining they are safe for use in agriculture undermines the public confidence in farming, the safety of our food supply and Health Canada's regulatory safeguards."

I'm sorry that I have to end my part in the debate this morning, because question period is about to start.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It being 10:45, the debate stands adjourned.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce some guests who are joining us today.

On behalf of the member from Oak Ridges–Markham; Richmond Hill councillor Greg Beros, Heather Beros, Naim and Lubna Malik and Shaista Ali, in the east members' gallery.

On behalf of the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome a gentleman by the name of Jeff Preston. Jeff has been raising money for muscular dystrophy for over 11 years, and he's travelling from London to Ottawa in his wheelchair to raise awareness of transportation barriers.

As well, on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, I'd like to welcome students and teachers from a high school located in the riding of Leeds–Grenville. Grade 10 civics students from Thousand Islands Secondary School in Brockville will be in the gallery today, along with teachers James Cross, Conrad Walpot and Ashley Bell, and parent volunteer Rhonda McNish.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I have a question for the Premier regarding his government's priorities. Last week, the Ontario Health Quality Council reported that the lives of 8,000 Ontarians could have been saved if your government gave some priority to chronic disease management in the province. The council has reported that electronic health records would have helped save those suffering from chronic diseases. Premier, why is saving the lives of 8,000 Ontarians not a priority for your government?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm going to refer this to the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman: It was interesting to hear the honourable member quote from a report from the Ontario Health Quality Council because he and the members of his party opposed that very institution when it came forward.

We feel very strenuously that the work they do and the independence they have in making comments about the health care system in Ontario is a very important thing. It was noteworthy as well that their report commented on the fact that the number of people in Ontario who are in search of a family physician has been reduced to 400,000 as a result of our government's actions.

On the matter of chronic disease management, we've made substantial investments in enhancing the support for people with diabetes. Over the course of the next little while, as we roll out our diabetes strategy, which includes a diabetes registry—further evidence of our capacity to address the situation for 900,000 Ontarians will be very evident.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary? The member for Kitchener–Waterloo

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: It's obvious that chronic health management isn't a priority and it's obvious that e-health development isn't a priority for this government either. You wonder what might be.

We know that the health of the people around the province is being jeopardized because they don't have a family doctor. We have about 30,000 in Kitchener–Waterloo, 15,000 in Peterborough, 14,000 in Kingston and 40,000 in Hamilton. We also know that eye diseases like glaucoma, which can lead to blindness, go undetected because this government delisted eye exams

from OHIP. We also know that long-term-care residents aren't getting the hours of care they need.

Why is this government making sex-change operations a priority when hundreds of thousands are without a family doctor, when eye exams are not covered and when long-term-care residents are forced to sit in their own urine and feces?

Hon. George Smitherman: It's disappointing that the honourable member, whose leader gave me private assurances of that party's commitment to the re-listing of that procedure, can't back that up in the Legislature. And it's further disappointing that a party that continues to be in favour of a \$3-billion cut to health care stands and asks these questions, all calling for additional expenditure.

I want to say to the honourable member, with respect to the first question that was asked regarding diabetes, that the actions our government has taken to expand health care services in the form of doctors to 650,000 Ontarians is a very strong example of making up for the lost time that was created while they sat idly by. The Ontario Health Quality Council report of last week says that 400,000 Ontarians, a reduction from prior numbers of 1.2 million or 1.4 million, are focused on getting care. Through our advances with more family health teams, we're going to deliver that care to them and reduce the challenges associated with family doctor shortages that they left behind.

1050

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: First of all, I'd like to clarify the record. Our leader did not say as the minister has indicated he said. That is an outright lie—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment, please.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I withdraw that.

I would also say to the honourable member that we have a report today in the Toronto Star on Ray Griffis, a cancer patient. He wrote to your Premier to tell of his harrowing experience at a hospital here. He said he waited for hours in the emergency room, and we know that there are hundreds of thousands of people doing that throughout this province. It's shameful. Once he was admitted, he was left unattended. There was no one to help him go to the bathroom. After repeatedly soiling himself, the nurses threw some diapers at him and told him to clean himself up. I say to you, Minister: Why do you not make emergency room patients such as Mr. Griffis a priority and help them retain their health and their dignity?

Hon. George Smitherman: The first thing I want to say in response to the honourable member's assurance is that she was not part of any private conversation on the issue of the matter that the Leader of the Opposition made personal assurances to me on in a private conversation, and her ability to stand in her place is narrowed by that. But on this issue of the circumstance that the honourable member raised of the care of an individual in an emergency room at North York General Hospital, the events that are outlined in this story in the paper today are not an appropriate circumstance. We expect and de-

pend upon the hundreds of thousands of people who work in health care to provide that care in a fashion which is appropriate, respectful and compassionate at all times. I'm as disappointed as anybody else reading that story. The people at North York General will most certainly be hearing from us as we work with Dr. Alan Hudson to make an even greater focus on the reduction of wait times in Ontario's emergency rooms.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: The government opposite has had since 2003 to deal with emergency rooms, and they still haven't unclogged them.

C. DIFFICILE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Going to question 2, the Hamilton Spectator reports that at least 260 people infected with C. difficile have died in our hospitals since the middle of 2006. We only know about these deaths because they have been voluntarily disclosed by seven hospitals. Minister, can you tell us today how many people infected with C. difficile have died in all of the 155 hospitals since 2006 and how many hospitals are currently dealing with the C. difficile outbreak?

Hon. George Smitherman: I do want to thank the honourable member for this question. The matter of C. difficile is well-known to be a problem in hospitals in the developed world. The challenges associated with it are very, very strenuous. They require all of us—visitors to the hospital, patients and those who work in the hospital—to be very attentive to our responsibilities, to practise the appropriate procedures and especially to be very, very dedicated to hand washing. It's our intention to move forward on the advice that's come from others, including Dr. Michael Baker, on issuing an edict to hospitals which will provide for regular mandatory reporting of C. difficile outbreaks.

We're working at present through the Ontario Hospital Association to create a regime which over the next many months will create substantial enhanced transparency for Ontarians about outbreaks and other matters of patient safety concern. This will be a substantial advance, building on the investments that we've made and the expectations that we have.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: It's absolutely shocking that this minister can still not answer a question that he was first asked on May 8. It makes a mockery of his January 2, 2007, statement, when he said, "It is our job as a government to learn from SARS and ... respond rapidly to health emergencies ... to protect Ontarians."

You knew that there were over 2,000 deaths from C. difficile in Quebec in 2003. You know that the Canadian Medical Association in 2004 recommended that each province develop an outbreak plan—which, by the way, Quebec and Manitoba did. You also were advised in July 2007 by Michael Baker that you should start mandatory reporting.

Minister, why didn't you follow Quebec's lead and Manitoba's lead? Why did you not listen to Dr. Baker?

Can you tell the families of those who died from this disease why you still have not taken action to introduce mandatory reporting?

Hon. George Smitherman: First off, I think it's very important to acknowledge that the events which did occur in provinces like Quebec was information that all of us were aware of, those who work in government and those who have the important responsibilities of managing hospitals on the front line. Steps have been taken by all of them to introduce and enhance procedures which have at their heart the protection of the patient, but the obligation is the obligation shared by all of us who enter those environments. That's why it's important that we acknowledge the power each of us has.

In the hospital that the honourable member mentions, there are infectious control officers who have been paid for by the government of Ontario who are operating in that environment. We've created 14 networks across the province of Ontario for infectious disease. We've founded the provincial infectious disease advisory committee. We've taken important steps. In addition, we've recently had a report from the coroner based on an inquest into circumstances in Sault Ste. Marie, which, working with Dr. Baker and others, we're going to implement across the province to enhance the transparency associated with this information—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: You start to wonder what are the priorities of this government and this minister. Many families of patients who have died are outraged. They find it absolutely unbelievable that the government failed to issue public warnings, knowing what was happening, or heeded the advice of experts to introduce mandatory reporting. They wonder how many people have needlessly died since 2005. They wonder how many are going to be walking into hospitals in the future, thinking they're going there to get well, and instead, they're going to contract C. difficile.

SARS killed 43 people. There was an inquiry. On your watch, over 260 people in just seven hospitals have already died, and these are just the ones we know of. I ask you today: Will you recognize that this is a priority, and will you undertake an independent investigation into C. difficile deaths? Will you commit to do so today?

Hon. George Smitherman: The actions with respect to C. difficile and the protection for the public in circumstances where they're in hospitals is information that's known to everyone and shared by all. The responsibility for taking action includes those who run Ontario's 154 independent hospital corporations.

But we're going to add to those steps we've already taken: the infectious disease advisory committee, the infectious disease networks in each of our local health integration networks, putting additional workers who deal with infectious disease into all hospital environments, with a very forceful regime of mandatory reporting, not only on C. difficile but on a wide variety of other challenges in the hospital environment that affect patient

safety. We're working on the implementation of that, building on the advice of Dr. Baker and in partnership with the Ontario Hospital Association. We know that additional transparency is a powerful tool for patient safety, and in all these matters where there is now transparency, there was none implemented on the watch of that party when they were in government.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. More than 35,000 auto workers in Ontario have now lost their jobs. Last week, I was in Oshawa and met with some of those very workers who no longer have a job. One of them asked me to ask you this question: Why did the McGuinty government sign cheques worth close to half a billion dollars in contribution to automaker corporations without getting job guarantees for some of those workers in Oshawa who are now out of work?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to take the question. I would commend to my colleague a column—I think it's in today's paper or during the course of the weekend—put in by Buzz Hargrove, the head the Canadian Auto Workers union, who speaks in a very complimentary fashion about the approach we have taken to compete in a highly competitive global economy to land new investment in the auto sector in particular.

One of the reasons we are doing so well is because we are number one in productivity, number one in quality and number one in the level of skills and education of our workers. We will continue to compete. We will continue to work with the CAW. We will continue to work on behalf of CAW workers and other auto workers throughout the province of Ontario. I remain very optimistic about the future of the auto sector in the province of Ontario.

1100

Mr. Howard Hampton: One of those auto workers was Bill Delaney. Mr. Delaney worked in Oshawa's auto sector for a number of years. He admits it was a good job for both him and his family, but last year Bill Delaney and 300 of his colleagues were told they no longer had a job.

Mr. Delaney not only feels let down when he sees hundreds of millions of dollars going to General Motors and he's told, "You're out the door," but he also wants to know something else: Why would the McGuinty government be opposed to bills put forward by New Democrats that would ensure that, when workers are laid off, they're able to collect their full pay for work done, they're able to collect their vacation pay and they're able to collect their severance pay? Why would the McGuinty government, which says it wants to ensure that jobs and workers are treated fairly, not vote for and support legislation that would ensure that those workers get their severance pay and their vacation pay?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to speak to it. First of all, let me just say, with respect to what's been happening to the auto sector in North America, that the

competition has been intense, the restructuring has been severe and there have been job losses throughout North America for people caught up in this due to circumstances entirely beyond their control. But we have been, in perspective, doing better than the others. Between 1999 and 2005, Michigan lost 30% of its auto jobs; that's 90,000 jobs. Ohio lost 19% of their jobs. Indiana, which also has the benefit of Asian investments from Toyota and Subaru in addition to their Big Three, lost 15% of their auto jobs. Ontario lost 5% in the same time frame. We have secured \$2.5 billion through our GM Beacon project. It is true that we have lost jobs in the auto sector in Ontario, but in comparison to the rest of North America we are—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Premier. Final supplementary.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Bill Delaney isn't interested in what you may or may not know about Michigan or Ohio. What Bill Delaney wants to know is how the McGuinty government could hand out half a billion dollars to auto sector companies without getting job guarantees. He wants to know why the McGuinty government would vote against bills that would ensure workers get their severance pay, get their vacation pay and get a pay cheque for work they've already done, but he also wants to know something else: Why would the McGuinty government oppose a Buy Ontario strategy, which would ensure that 50% of the work done on transit equipment is done here in Ontario? Why would the McGuinty government be opposed to a reasonable industrial hydro rate to ensure that manufacturers can continue to operate in Ontario? Why is the McGuinty government opposed to a refundable manufacturing investment tax credit—all of which would ensure that manufacturing jobs stay in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The leader of the NDP tells us he's concerned about the plight of individuals who lose their jobs at this point in time, and he's concerned about the plight of the working individual, but he voted five times against our five separate increases for the minimum wage. He talks about 50% when it comes to made-in-Ontario policies. We've got an 82% policy in place. Eighty-two per cent of the money we put into our \$17.5-billion infrastructure program for public transit will be invested in the Ontario economy.

As a result of our most recent budget, we're putting 190 million emergency dollars into the hands of our manufacturing sector. They'll be getting those cheques at a time when they need it. That's exactly the kind of thing they've been looking for, contrary to the policy that my friend has been embracing for some time now.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question.

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier: Yes, New Democrats will vote against minimum wages which ensure that workers work and live below the poverty line.

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

Mr. Howard Hampton: I want to ask the Premier about Neskantaga First Nation. Neskantaga First Nation

sent a notice to your government and to a mining exploration company saying, "If you want to explore on our traditional territory, we ask that you give us notice and you come and talk to us." Company X complied with Neskantaga's request and came to the First Nation and said, "Yes, we'd like to talk to you." But another company, Temex Resources, completely ignored the First Nation, completely ignored the First Nation's request, and went ahead and staked claims and cleared land. The McGuinty government then went and recognized the claim of Temex Resources.

My question: Is this the McGuinty government's idea of a mineral exploration process that is fair to First Nations and fair to exploration companies that want to work with First Nations, to recognize the claim—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not familiar with the specific circumstances raised by my colleague, but I can say that we certainly believe on this side of the House that it's time for us to work together to modernize the Mining Act. The competing interests here, which we believe we've got to find a way to reconcile, include the rights of our aboriginal communities to receive notice and to respect their right to shape their own future in terms of land management. There are also the rights of northern Ontario and rural Ontario communities, which find a lot of good, high-paying jobs in the mining sector. Finally, there's another interest to be reconciled, and that is the natural environment and our responsibility to our children to make sure we pull all this together in a way that respects their right to a sustainable, healthy environment over the long term.

I'm not familiar with the specific details of this, but I can tell you that we have seized ourselves with this responsibility. This law has been in place for over 100 years—that is, the Mining Act—and we're working hard to change it.

Mr. Howard Hampton: You've been the government for five years now. For five years you've been repeating this line, and for five years, companies that do try to work with First Nations and show respect get pushed to the back of the line. Meanwhile, your government recognizes the mining claims of companies like Temex Resources and Platinex, corporations that show no respect for First Nations. I think it's time for the talk to end and the action to begin.

My question is: Why won't the McGuinty government tell First Nations today that you will not record any mining claim unless and until there is consultation and accommodation of First Nation interests?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We're talking about a law here, the Mining Act, that's been on the books I think since 1873. There are a lot of interests that have institutionalized themselves since it was first put in place, so it's not the kind of thing that we can instantly undo. We're working hard and well to ensure that we approach this intelligently.

I've just been handed a note here that tells me a bit more about the Temex situation, and I've been assured

that the company has now said that no further staking development will occur without first discussing this with the First Nation involved, which I think is the responsible thing to do in the circumstances.

Mr. Howard Hampton: What the Premier fails to recognize is that another mining exploration which wanted to show respect for First Nations and worked with First Nations from the outset has been elbowed out of the way because the McGuinty government allowed Temex Resources, which showed no respect for First Nations, to have their mining claim recognized.

Premier, all it would take is a regulation—it doesn't take a complete reworking of the Mining Act—out of the Ministry of Mines or the Ministry of Natural Resources that would simply say that the McGuinty government is not going to record any further mining exploration claims unless and until there is a record of consultation and accommodation with First Nations. It doesn't require any more talk; it doesn't require any more speeches. On the day of national reconciliation with First Nations, I ask the Premier: Is the McGuinty government prepared to pass a regulation that says you will not record further mining claims unless there is a record of—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not prepared to make that commitment, but what I can say is that we will continue to work hard and well with our aboriginal communities. I am proud of the record that we've established in less than one year in terms of putting in place our first-ever Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. We put in place a \$3-billion groundbreaking revenue-sharing agreement. Just last week, we announced our new partnership fund of some \$25 million. We have committed to reviewing the Mining Act and we will continue to do that in consultation with our aboriginal communities.

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C. DIFFICILE

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: To the Premier: Ideally, I would have asked this question of the Minister of Health, but his earlier answers were inadequate and clearly trying to shift the blame.

Unfortunately, 200 deaths from *C. difficile*, nearly four times the number of people who died from SARS, have generated little action on the part of your minister, Mr. Premier. Fern Merchant's father went into hospital in December 2007 for elective knee surgery and ended up losing his life to *C. difficile*. Mrs. Merchant told me that she wants your minister to resign. Can you tell Mrs. Merchant why it took news reports for you to notice the problem?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman: To the contrary: I don't think it would be appropriate for the honourable member to conclude that her local hospital wasn't aware of the challenges with *C. difficile*, and no Minister of Health would pretend that was the circumstance. The circum-

stances that have occurred with respect to *C. difficile* are widely known in the health care community and most particularly in the hospital community.

Aside from the honourable member's suggestion that it's about passing responsibility along, it's to acknowledge that we have a shared responsibility associated with the protection against infectious disease that occurs in the hospital environment and that starts from the spread of feces. This is why it is so important to reinforce the necessity of everyone in the hospital environment—visitors, patients and those who work there alike.

We've taken important steps. We've taken steps to have infectious disease control officers working in the very hospital that the honourable member speaks about. I'll be happy in supplementary to speak about the other initiatives we've already—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Again to the Premier: This isn't about one facility; THIS is about many facilities across our province. The inaction of your government, and specifically of your Minister of Health, has really shattered the public trust in our health care system. It is a slap in the face, Mr. Premier, to the families who have lost loved ones to *C. difficile* and to those who are still struggling with the disease.

Your minister has been withholding funds specifically from Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital and also other hospitals. The coroner's report from the Sault Ste. Marie hospital, following an outbreak up there, clearly indicated that aging hospitals are at an increased risk of hosting an outbreak. That report has been in your minister's hands for over a year.

When will you finally tell these families how many people have died on your watch, and when are you going to investigate the *C. difficile* outbreak in Ontario?

Hon. George Smitherman: First, I want to say to the honourable member that substantial steps have been taken. There are 137 infectious disease control officials that have been implemented in Ontario hospitals, including the two in the member's community. We've initiated a hand hygiene protocol that was implemented by the WHO. We have formed provincial infectious disease advisory committees to give us advice on these matters, created 14 disease control networks and more than doubled provincial public health funding in the province of Ontario, and we're moving forward on the recommendation of Dr. Baker to implement mandatory reporting.

When the honourable member wants to talk about withholding funds from her local hospital, we know that she's on precarious ground; first, because during the eight and a half years when her party was in office, they didn't rebuild that hospital, and, more to the point, because she continues to represent a party that proposes a \$3-billion cut to health care.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I think it's well acknowledged on this side of the House that the only thing the Progressive Conservative Party ever wanted to cut out of the health care system—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I say to the member that that's not a point of order and that I ruled on that issue a week and a half ago.

C. DIFFICILE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est également pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

We've heard many times this morning that since 2006 over 200 Ontarians have died from C. difficile. As well, in a recent medical journal, we learned that a significant number of hospitals are reusing medical devices. How many more shocking disease outbreaks will occur before the minister realizes that Ontarians deserve their hospitals to be transparent and accountable by agreeing to Ombudsman oversight today?

Hon. George Smitherman: We do intend to move forward with substantially enhanced transparency on a wide variety of matters, leading with C. difficile, factors occurring in hospitals which pose risks to patients. We're looking forward to using the energy and the opportunity that's been provided by the work done by the coroner's inquest into circumstances in Sault Ste. Marie and implementing that. That's why we feel it's so important to take advantage of the information that is available and to work rigorously on its implementation.

On the issue of single-use devices being reused, I will, by way of supplementary, offer information to the honourable member.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ontarians lose confidence in our health care system when almost four times as many Ontarians have died from C. difficile as from SARS, especially when preventive steps were not taken.

The minister failed to learn from the massive outbreaks in Quebec. He failed to listen to a top adviser who urged mandatory reporting of C. difficile now. Instead of claiming to take action, why won't the minister agree to truly making hospitals transparent and accountable and agree to an NDP solution, which is an ombudsman oversight of hospitals now?

Hon. George Smitherman: In the honourable member's earlier question, she asked about the reuse of single-use medical equipment devices. I can tell the honourable member that in Ontario in 2004, we implemented much more rigorous conditions around the reuse of any of these devices. It's a widely held practice, but we've made sure that methods with respect to sterilization are there to ensure the protection of the public in all of these matters.

On the issue with respect to C. difficile, it's not appropriate for the honourable member to suggest that the government was not proactive while, at the same time, seeming not to acknowledge the responsibilities that hospitals have, and the information and resources that they have to address the circumstances related to infectious disease. We have more than doubled the funding for public health in Ontario. Public health capacity around the province of Ontario has been substantially enhanced and is there as part of the resource to assist hospitals in

dealing with the challenges related to infectious disease. That's why we're moving forward with the rigorous modelling that will provide much more transparency—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister. New question.

ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. New regulations under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act will soon be coming into effect. The new regulations to ban power walls will build on our government's groundbreaking Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which bans smoking in schools, hospitals, offices, restaurants and most other indoor public places. Families in my riding are watching this closely, as are small business owners, health professionals and anti-smoking advocates.

Everyone agrees that these steps are necessary to help reduce smoking, but there's concern about how the new rules will be enforced. Convenience stores will be required to hide retail tobacco displays after May 31. This includes cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco. Customers will also be prevented from handling products themselves. This is a big change for the way tobacco is bought and sold in Ontario.

Minister, convenience stores in my riding are concerned about what will happen on May 31. What education and enforcement are being taken to prepare retailers for the ban?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I would like to thank the member from Ottawa—Orléans for his question. The member is indeed correct. On May 31, our government will implement the next step of our landmark Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which will ban the retail display of tobacco products in stores. This ban is about saving lives. It is about reducing health care costs by ensuring that our young people do not start the habit of smoking and by helping smokers to quit.

Tobacco-related illnesses cost Ontario's health care system \$1.6 billion annually. That is 500,000 hospital days. We understand the challenges that convenience store owners are facing during this transition period. That is why we're working in partnership with public health unit officials and the Ontario Convenience Stores Association—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Phil McNeely: Again to the Minister of Health Promotion: It's important that these new measures take hold in Ontario. Retailer education is key to that success. The health of our children and families is too important. I wish to thank the retailers in my area for participating in this. The damaging effects of tobacco use hardly need to be repeated in this House: 13,000 deaths every year in Ontario are linked to tobacco-related illness. It is the leading preventable cause of death in Ontario.

While some members of John Tory's PC Party may argue that the jury is still out on second-hand smoke, most credible voices agree that we should all take action to help smokers quit. Ontario's teenagers know the truth.

Perhaps the smoking skeptics in the opposition should have joined them at the youth Take!Action conference to learn the real story.

While the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship have been working with the Ontario Convenience Stores Association and others to implement the new power wall ban.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Answer.

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Hon. Margaret R. Best: We are committed to working with our partners to accomplish our goal of saving lives.

I am pleased to report in this House today that in partnership with public health unit officials, tobacco enforcement officers have visited 99% of all known tobacco vendors across Ontario. Of these businesses, public health units report that more than 95% will be ready and in compliance with the May 31 display ban. In cases where vendors are experiencing challenges, enforcement officers are working with these businesses to help them to comply. The public health units are apprised of the concerns facing some of these vendors, and while they are in the minority, we are mindful of their concerns. I have suggested to the public health units, which are responsible for enforcing the ban, that in their enforcement they apply a—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Direct funding for families is referenced in Bill 77, yet I've heard from many, many families across Ontario who have been denied Passport funding. Families have come to Queen's Park today because they are tired of waiting for action from your government. If direct funding to individuals is a priority, why have 90% of the families who have applied for Passport funding been refused?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: When this government came to power five years ago, nowhere was the need for modernization greater than in developmental services. So when we came into power, we asked Ernie Parsons, who was an MPP at the time, to review the situation with the parents, to engage the parents to tell us what they want for their loved ones. At the same time, in 2005, we initiated this wonderful Passport program. Since that time, 2,100 individuals are receiving money. We invested \$27 million in annualized funding, which has supported more than 2,100—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, your words do very little to comfort the families who have been waiting for action.

In Durham region, only five families receive support; 40 applications were put in. In Hamilton, 174 families

applied; six were successful. In London, 262 applied; 11 were successful. And so it goes across Ontario. Without assistance, young adults over the age of 21 with developmental disabilities are sitting on their couches instead of being involved and engaged in their communities. If direct funding truly is a choice for families, why have you not made Passports a priority for your government?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: This is an excellent question. I will say to the member of the opposite party that there are 2,100 fewer people sitting on the couch—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just remind our guests that you're certainly welcome to visit Queen's Park and to observe, but not participate in, the debate. Thank you very much.

Minister.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me say thank you to those who are taking care of these individuals. Let me say thank you to the parents who are looking while keeping their sons and daughters at home.

I will say to you that there are 2,100 fewer people who are sitting on the couch at home than when that government was in power. They cut social services and ODSP by 21%. This person who asked the question was working for the then leader of their party, so shame on you.

This government will continue to work to help you to get money. Every time we moved forward in proposing more money, they voted—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, energy marketers all over Ontario are knocking on people's doors, telling them that unless they sign long-term contracts, they're going to deal with skyrocketing energy prices, pressuring them to sign contracts and not telling them what they're going to have to pay. When are you going to use the laws that you have in place to protect people in this province?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I appreciate the question from the member. I would say to the public that you do need to be cautious in dealing with retailers. I've said to the member before, and to the public, that we have an organization called the Ontario Energy Board, an arm's-length, quasi-judicial body that has the responsibility of making sure that retailers operate ethically, legally and morally in the best interests of the consumer. They have that responsibility.

I will say to the member that I've met recently with them and they reviewed with me their processes. So I would say to the public, be very careful when you are dealing with a retailer. Make sure you understand the facts. If you have any problems, get in touch with the Ontario Energy Board. The member will know, and in the supplementary I'll have a chance to respond more

fully, that the Ontario Energy Board has some very strict rules in place for these retailers, and they must—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The simple reality is that the system is not working. Poor people, elderly people, people for whom English is not their first language are getting hammered. You have a responsibility. The buck stops with you. When are you going to hold the OEB to account and tell them that this government wants the public protected? When are you going to take responsibility?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I do want the public protected, and the Ontario Energy Board has the responsibility for making that happen.

I would just say to all of us to remember a few things. You sign a contract, then the Ontario Energy Board insists that another body, another organization, call you. You are required to confirm to another body, another organization, that you've signed that contract, that you understood what you were signing, and the contract cannot go ahead until that other verification takes place.

We've also introduced the elimination of negative option billing, which some members of the Legislature have heard about. But they are not allowed to automatically renew a contract. I would say to the member that that has proven to be quite beneficial to consumers because, after five years or after the end of your contract, the organization has to come back to you and get you to re-sign it.

So there are in place some very good protections. I agree with the member that the Ontario Energy Board—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister. New question.

SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Education. Our government has made huge investments in publicly funded education. Our investment is critical to ensuring that Ontario prospers in the future. In these economic times, it is imperative that education dollars are focused on students. Since February there have been report after report about the spending habits of the Toronto Catholic District School Board trustees. My constituents, indeed constituents throughout Ontario, have been appalled by the actions of the Toronto Catholic school trustees. This seriously undermines public confidence in our school system. It is a distraction from our main goal of increasing student achievement.

I'm glad that our minister is taking actions to address this situation. But my question for the minister is: Why did you take the action now, and can you assure Ontarians that this situation will be cleared up quickly?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've been very clear and our government has been clear—in fact, trustees around the province are clear that they won't tolerate anything that undermines public confidence in publicly funded education. While I have reason to believe that the vast

majority of school trustees around the province exercise wise and prudent decision-making, I still have some concerns about the Toronto Catholic board's practices. I remain concerned that, after the May 7 report of Mr. Hartmann was released, there was not action taken immediately. Given the seriousness of the board's practices and my concerns, I have asked for an investigator to go into the board. Significant change is needed now. I've therefore directed that investigators go into the Toronto Catholic board and report within a week to validate or to deny the concerns that I have, and then they will recommend whether to supervise or not.

1130

Mr. David Zimmer: There were media reports over the weekend that trustees have asked for a special board meeting where they will be looking at reopening their budget and developing a strategy to address a trustee code of conduct. I see that that they want the Minister of Education to wait until after this board meeting before making her decision. At the same time, we see reports that some trustees have requested immediate supervision. We have some trustees commenting in the media about who should shoulder the blame, trustees who are writing letters to the chief of police and trustees who are continuing to submit expenses despite having received the Hartmann report on May 7.

This is clearly a board in complete disarray. Why isn't the minister moving more quickly to take over this board? Why don't you just appoint a supervisor today?

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's interesting that members opposite make light of this. I do not take this lightly. I cannot legally appoint a supervisor without a formal investigation. Under the Education Act, I am required to send an investigator into the Toronto Catholic District School Board to look at the situation and make recommendations to me.

I repeat: I don't do this lightly. I have, and this government has, a deep respect for public school trustees, for Catholic school trustees, for trustees across the province. We believe in the institution of school boards, and we want this board to get on track. The chair of the school board has done a very good job in trying to pull together this board. It hasn't worked. There is still a fractious culture at the board. And the fact is that public dollars were being used for private advantage. That can't continue. That's why the investigator is there, and we're moving as quickly as we can to get this cleaned up.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Bill 77, Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, purports to provide individualized funding for people with special needs to allow them to live in our communities. We've heard already this morning that there's no new

money to allow those Passports and other programs to proceed.

But my question relates to how you expect these families to be able to develop these programs. Many of them are quite complex. They require specialized knowledge of these plans. The act provides that the application centres will simply provide families with information about direct funding, yet virtually all of the individualized plans to date that have been developed have required facilitation. My question is, how can you possibly expect families to develop these plans without assistance?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: That's an excellent question. That's why this new bill will make sure that all these services are in place. Right now, we don't know what the waiting list is because people have to go to different places to put their name on the waiting list, so there is a lot of anomaly in the present system. That's why we have introduced a new bill which will help parents navigate what is right now a complex process. This new process that we'll move forward with will help parents and those who have the care of these individuals with developmental disabilities to get the service they need according to their needs.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: There's absolutely no provision in the act for that kind of planning—none whatsoever. You've spoken about the need for individualized funding and the fact that these three regional centres are going to be closing. Minister, can you tell us how much money is going to be saved by these closures, first of all, and for the benefit of all the members of the Legislature too and all the families who've come to hear from you today whether you're prepared, or the government is prepared, to put all of the money that will be saved through the closure of those centres into the individualized programs for special needs people?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Since this government came into power, we have invested more than \$200 million of new money to help this sector. We know that this sector needs more money, and we continue every year to listen to those who are working with individuals who have developmental disabilities, and the parents, to help them. This new bill will answer most of the concerns of these families and individuals. This government has always invested and will continue to invest in that sector.

It's a concern of mine that this question is being asked by the party where the only thing they did was to cut ODSP by 21% and then freeze ODSP afterwards. Every time we moved forward to add money to that sector, that party voted against it. We are going to continue—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

FIRE IN HAMILTON

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Minister of the Environment. The fire marshal's report of the toxic fire at the Biedermann packaging plant in Hamilton says that firefighters were not aware that they were being exposed to cancer-causing pesticides and that the

Ministry of the Environment water-quality testing results are suspect because testing was not prompt enough. An inferno of toxic pesticides and a troubling fire marshal's report—Minister, what more does this government need to be brought to light to bring the inquiry into this fire to Hamilton today?

Hon. John Gerretsen: As I've indicated to this member on a number of occasions in the past, after the fire happened last year, the Ministry of the Environment immediately went into action, and took samples along the river bed there for the next two or three weeks. We found out after that two- or three-week period of time that the situation was back to the way it was before. We will continue to work with the city of Hamilton, we will continue to work with the fire department there and we will continue to work with the Office of the Fire Marshal to make sure that the situation is dealt with, but we, at this point in time, see absolutely no need for the kind of inquiry that this member is asking for. We feel that the situation is well in hand.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I disagree wholeheartedly with the minister's characterization of whether or not a public inquiry into this affair is necessary. Ten months after the toxic blaze took place, my freedom-of-information request finally forced the fire marshal's report into the light of day. It confirms that firefighters did not know about pesticide contamination in the run-off that polluted the waterways, put people and pets at risk and killed thousands of fish. Hamilton is asking—and, I think justifiably so: When will there be a public inquiry, since it is very, very obvious to most of us that it is necessary?

Hon. John Gerretsen: This party is committed to bringing in a right-to-know piece of legislation as part of our toxic reduction law. We are absolutely committed to that. We will bring that forward soon. After that's been passed, in those cases, people will get a much better right to know immediately, which perhaps in this case they didn't get. We still feel that the situation was dealt with in a proper manner, and we want to make sure that this kind of situation does not occur again in the future.

RENT BANK PROGRAM

Mr. David Oraziotti: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. More than a week ago, the member for Hamilton Mountain raised the issue of rent bank funding. I believe all of us in this House have heard from service managers across the province who are concerned about having adequate financial resources to support families with their housing needs. From Toronto to Sault Ste. Marie, they are telling us that this valuable service that many Ontarians rely on has been struggling.

Minister, I know that you've made a commitment here in the Legislature and to service managers across Ontario, but they are not the only ones who need to know what is happening to ensure that the rent bank program continues. Most importantly, it's the families in need who want to know just how the Premier's announcement

of \$5 million in new funding will help them. Can you explain how this funding will help low-income tenants in my riding and across Ontario?

Hon. Jim Watson: I thank the honourable member for the question. We were very pleased when Premier McGuinty, just about two weeks ago in Ottawa, announced an increase in the rent bank from \$4.8 million to \$5 million, because we recognize that since the rent bank program came into effect a few years ago, it has prevented 13,200 evictions from taking place and \$7.7 million in shelter costs. In Sault Ste. Marie, the honourable member's riding, they will be receiving \$42,000. That's a total of \$242,000 since 2004.

In conclusion, let me quote from the Ottawa Sun when the Premier made the announcement. It said, "Brent Matthews didn't know what too to do.

He was out of work, behind on his rent, with a two-year-old son and a pregnant wife and his landlord was threatening eviction.

"Matthews got out of the bind with cash from the provincial government's rent bank program, which offers families in need two months' rent every two years....

"It was like angels came down to help us."

That's why the rent bank program is in existence and why we support it.

1140

Mr. David Oraziatti: I want to thank the minister for his work with the program. It's great to know that our government is continuing with this program. The numbers you've referenced certainly show how beneficial it is to families across the province.

Concerned community members in my riding and across Ontario have had many of their concerns addressed by the announcement that the rent bank program will be continuing. However, we need a long-term vision for the program to operate it sustainably, and it needs annualized funding. Minister, can you tell us why the program has not been annualized, as requested by case managers and advocates? We need to know whether or not we will be able to continue to fund the rent bank program on an annual basis.

Hon. Jim Watson: That's a very good question. One of the issues that I am dealing with as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is to live up to a commitment that we made in our election platform to develop an affordable long-term housing strategy for the province. The rent bank is going to play a key role in that particular strategy.

We want to go out and consult members of the public—housing providers, tenants, landlords, the development industry, municipalities—and ask them for their input on how we can better the rent bank. We think the rent bank program is working extremely well. As I said, it's saved millions of dollars, and it's also saved the lives of people who have not been evicted as a result of having a difficult time, perhaps after losing a job.

The rent bank program is very much a cornerstone of our affordable housing strategy. We look forward to

hearing how we can improve the rent bank in the years ahead.

TOURISM

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Premier. Today in Ontario, thousands of families are losing hope in the future. Coinciding with your government's lack of leadership, the cost of living is going up, taxes are going up and jobs are going away. The leader of the Ontario PC party, John Tory, has offered a plan to help our struggling tourism sector and boost our moribund economy.

Premier, do you agree that hard-working families deserve a break this summer, and will you eliminate the retail sales tax on accommodations and attractions for the summer months?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I thank the member for the question. The Premier and this government are committed to a strong, sustainable and viable tourism industry. That's why we're working in lockstep with the sector to be able to address the complex challenges that are before it, like the high dollar, the high price of oil, passport requirements and the slumping US economy.

We have measures to address it in a plan. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition and the Conservative Party have decided to be simplistic about this and, on the back of a napkin, have put together what does not address the sector in terms of the challenges that are before it. That's why the member and his party voted against the budget bill, which put \$92 million more into the—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I can't believe that the Premier was unwilling to answer a simple question like that. Certainly, we've had overwhelming support from the tourism sector for our proposal. Removing the retail sales tax for our struggling tourism sector would go a long way to restoring confidence in our province. It would certainly do more than the kind of feel-good ad campaign that your government ran last year just before the election. Our plan would save the average family visiting Ontario more than \$100. For many of our residents, it means the difference between having a holiday at all or staying at home.

Why will the government not take this meaningful but affordable step to provide relief to Ontario's economy over the summer? When will Ontario families and the Ontario tourism industry become a priority for this government?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: To address that supplementary, I want to say that our plan is working. It's unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition is so simplistic about this.

I wish that Mr. Tory had listened to his grade 8 teacher and done his homework, because when it comes to overnight stays from US visitors, while BC has seen a 7% decline and Quebec has seen a 5.8% decline, Ontario

has actually seen an increase in overnight visitors from the US.

In regard to our marketing and promotion campaign, *There's No Place Like This*, it has been widely acclaimed. We have taken that campaign into the US, into New York, Boston, Buffalo and Detroit—and it's having great benefit for our tourism sector.

DOCTORS' SERVICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Health: Minister, you'll know that the community of Hearst is devastated by the news that they're going to be losing three of their physicians, one of them to retirement and two leaving the community. My question to you is simply this: What is your ministry prepared to do and what steps are you taking to make sure that that community and area are going to continue to be serviced by doctors?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to thank my honourable friend for his question. In the last four and a half years, 650,000 additional Ontarians have gained access to family physicians. We want to continue that progress and not see the setbacks to that in the community of Hearst. We'll be working with and expecting Dr. Joshua Tepper, assistant deputy minister, health human resources, to lend whatever assistance is possible to the community of Hearst.

We have 1,700 more doctors practising since 2002 and we have tremendous progress on enhancing the size of our medical school and more IMG training, and we need to make sure that that aggregate effect works well for the people of Hearst who are in uncertain times. I want to lend my assurance to the honourable member that I'll work alongside him and the leadership in the community with the leadership of my ministry to do what we can to address these pressing circumstances.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, all that is fine and good and will lead in the long term to some solutions. The problem that Hearst now has is that we don't have physicians in place to replace those who are going to be leaving, and the community wants to know, along with l'Hôpital Notre-Dame and the patients who are served by these doctors, what you are prepared to do when it comes to having incentives in place in order to attract physicians to take the place of those physicians who will be leaving.

Hon. George Smitherman: Most certainly associated with physician practice in northern Ontario is a range of incentives designed to attract physicians to communities exactly like Hearst. I want to make very, very clear to the honourable member that the attraction of physicians to any community is a shared responsibility. We have obligations to produce a sufficient supply and we're working very vigorously to enhance Ontario's supply. We've made good progress—650,000 more Ontarians are enjoying access to care—and we'll do all that we can to apply all the resources and pressure that we have to assist the good people of Hearst in the circumstances that they face now, which are obviously undermining confidence

in their health care services. We'll work alongside the honourable member and the community.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like all members to join me in welcoming a former member from the 30th through the 36th Parliaments: Bud Wildman, representative from Algoma. Welcome, Bud.

PETITIONS

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This petition is on behalf of my colleague from Whitby–Oshawa, who's done an awful lot of work for this. I promised her that I'd read it into the record.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many young people with developmental special needs have no meaningful social, recreational or vocational opportunities after high school;

“Whereas many of these young people have no real options for living independently in the community;

“Whereas current supports in place are insufficient to meet the needs of these young people;

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

“That the McGuinty government allocate an appropriate level of funding to advance a transformation agenda of individualized funding for adults with developmental special needs in the province of Ontario to allow them to live with dignity and to reach their full potential as members of our communities.”

I'd be remiss not to point out that the member from Dufferin–Caledon has been a very strong advocate in this chamber as well, so I join with her and the member from Whitby–Oshawa to sign this petition.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

Mr. Howard Hampton: A point of order, Mr. Speaker:

On March 17, I presented a petition in this House, numbered P-49, regarding Hydro One Inc. and Schmidt Flowers Ltd. We have had no response from the government to date and it is now more than 36 sessional days since the petition was tabled. Because the standing orders state that the government is required to respond within 24 sessional days, I am seeking your assistance to have the government respond to petitions within the time limit that they are supposed to respond.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is a point of order. I have been informed that the response was due on 28 April. I just send the message to the government

House leader to speak to the appropriate minister and see that that petition is duly responded to.

1150

PROTECTION FOR MINERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition from the people of Cartier.

“Whereas the current legislation contained in the Ontario health and safety act ... does not protect the lives of miners, we request revisions to the act;

“Lyle Everett Defoe and the scoop tram he was operating fell 150 feet down an open stope (July 23, 2007). Lyle was 25 years and 15 days old when he was killed at Xstrata Kidd Creek mine site, Timmins....

“The stope where Lyle was killed was protected by a length of orange plastic snow fence and a rope with a warning sign. These barriers would not have been visible if the bucket of the scoop tram was raised. Lyle’s body was recovered from behind the scoop tram.”

They ask the Legislative Assembly:

“Concrete berms must be mandatory to protect all open stopes and raises;

“All miners and contractors working underground must have working communication devices and personal locators;

“All equipment involved in injuries and fatalities must be recovered and examined unless such recovery would endanger the lives of others; and

“The entire act must be reviewed and amended to better protect underground workers.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it with Kelvin.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Kim Craitor: I’m pleased to introduce this petition on behalf of my riding of Niagara Falls. It reads as follows:

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents as requested in Bill 33....

“Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant’s willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.”

I’m pleased to sign my signature in support of this and give it to page Radhika to take down to the Speaker.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank St. Peter’s Anglican Church in Minesing for sending this petition to me.

“Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord’s Prayer from its daily proceedings; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord’s Prayer as part of its daily proceedings.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

CAR CULTURE

Mr. Rosario Marchese: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas car culture has destroyed and alienated our communities and dominated our public space;

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

“We demand that not one more dollar go to promote, support or perpetuate car culture in Ontario.”

I submit this on behalf of thousands of people in Ontario.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Bill Mauro: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas the government is formulating the basis for provincial land tax reform; and

“Whereas the residents in unincorporated areas throughout the province have access to widely varied and usually very limited services at their properties; and

“Whereas many of the affected property owners are seasonal users of their properties; and

“Whereas many of these property owners already pay property taxes in an organized municipality; and

“Whereas many of these property owners already pay a roads board tax and/or education tax;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to hold public consultations in Thunder Bay at the earliest opportunity to ensure that provincial land tax reforms are applied fairly to the assessed properties.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

WYE MARSH WILDLIFE CENTRE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I have another petition here from about 1,000 people on the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre, located in the township of Tay, manages approximately 3,000 acres of environmentally sensitive land which is owned by the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas over 50,000 people visit the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre each year; and

“Whereas over 20,000 students from across Ontario visit the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre each year, receiving curriculum-based environmental education not available in schools; and

“Whereas the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre receives no stable funding from any level of government;

“We, the undersigned, petition the province of Ontario to establish a reasonable and stable long-term funding formula so that the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre can continue to operate and exist into the future.”

I'm pleased to sign this and give it to Dina to send to the table.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Rosario Marchese: “Whereas part-time college workers in Ontario have been waiting for 30 years for bargaining rights; and

“Whereas thousands of part-time college workers have signed OPSEU cards, and the Ontario Labour Relations Board failed to order a timely representation vote; and

“Whereas the Ontario government must immediately make good on its promise to extend bargaining rights to college part-timers;

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

“The McGuinty government must immediately pass legislation legalizing the rights of college part-timers to organize, and direct the colleges to immediately recognize OPSEU as the bargaining agent for part-time college workers.”

I am signing this petition in support of all of it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Charles Sousa: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Central East local health integration network ... board of directors has approved the Rouge Valley Health System's deficit elimination plan, subject to public meetings; and

“Whereas, despite the significant expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital ... this plan now calls for the ill-advised transfer of 20 mental health unit beds from Ajax-Pickering hospital to the Centenary health centre in Scarborough; and

“Whereas one of the factors for the successful treatment of patients in the mental health unit is support from family and friends, and the distance to Centenary health centre would negatively impact on the quality care for residents of Ajax and Pickering; and

“Whereas it is also imperative for Rouge Valley Health System to balance its budget, eliminate its deficit and debt and realize the benefits of additional Ontario government funding;

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

“That the Rouge Valley Health System continue to provide the current level of service to our Ajax-Pickering hospital, which now serves the fastest-growing communities of west Durham; and

“That the Ajax-Pickering hospital retain the badly needed 20-bed mental health unit.”

I'll sign this and give it to Radhika.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas many young people with developmental special needs have no meaningful social, recreational or vocational opportunities after high school; and

“Whereas many of these young people have no real options for living independently in the community; and

“Whereas current supports in place are insufficient to meet the needs of these young people;

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

“That the McGuinty government allocate an appropriate level of funding to advance the transformation agenda of individualized funding for adults with developmental special needs in the province of Ontario to allow them to live with dignity and to reach their full potential as members of our community.”

I fully support this petition and will be giving it to page Dina.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and I'd like to thank Dr. Thomas

Short for having sent this to me. It's signed by a number of patients from his office and it reads as follows:

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and ask page Chris to carry it for me.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord's Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

"Whereas the recitation of the Lord's Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer's message is one of forgiveness, of providing for those in need of their 'daily bread' and of preserving us from the evils that we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena for conflict; and

"Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord's Prayer;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature."

I'm pleased to sign this and present it to Dina again to give to the table.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Central East local health integration network (CE-LHIN) board of directors has approved the Rouge Valley Health System's deficit elimination plan, subject to public meetings; and

"Whereas, despite the significant expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital, the largest in its 53-year history, a project that could reach \$100 million, of which 90% is funded by the Ontario government, this plan now calls for the ill-advised transfer of 20 mental health unit beds from Ajax-Pickering hospital to the Centenary health centre in Scarborough; and

"Whereas one of the factors for the successful treatment of patients in the mental health unit is support from family and friends, and the distance to Centenary health centre would negatively impact on the quality care for residents of Ajax and Pickering; and

"Whereas it is also imperative for Rouge Valley Health System to balance its budget, eliminate its deficit and debt and realize the benefits of additional Ontario government funding;

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

"That the Rouge Valley Health System continue to provide the current level of service to our Ajax-Pickering hospital, which now serves the fastest-growing communities of west Durham; and

"That the Ajax-Pickering hospital retain the badly needed 20-bed mental health unit."

I will affix my signature and ask—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord's Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

"Whereas the recitation of the Lord's Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer's message is one of forgiveness, of providing for those in need of their 'daily bread' and of preserving us from the evils that we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena for conflict; and

"Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord's Prayer;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature."

I'm pleased to sign that and give it to Dina once again to provide to the table.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mike Colle: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the growing number of unlawful firearms in motor vehicles is threatening innocent citizens and our police officers;

“Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and being found in motor vehicles; and

“Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver’s licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities.”

I fully support this petition, which comes from the members of the Glen Long bocce club in the riding of Eglinton–Lawrence. I support the petition and affix my name to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The time for petitions has expired. This House stands recessed until 1 o’clock.

The House recessed from 1204 to 1300.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

D. AUBREY MOODIE

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: D. Aubrey Moodie was a cherished son of Carleton county who would later become the father of Nepean. As a young farmer, Aubrey brought Nepean back from near-extinction in the 1950s after annexation with Ottawa, which decreased our population from 24,000 to roughly 2,000 people.

Aubrey’s hard work, vision and strong conservative principles revived our community, and Nepean flourished under his watch. By the time he ended his tenure as Nepean reeve, Aubrey had steadily grown our community from 2,000 to 6,000 people. There is little wonder why the voters elected Aubrey an unprecedented three times. He was the only reeve in Carleton county’s 127-year history to serve that long.

Aubrey built a community whose fire, police, sewer and other township services were the envy of Carlton county and of Ottawa. He built the foundation for our two greatest community assets, the Queensway Carleton Hospital and Algonquin College. As one of my mentors, Bill Tupper, our former MP, pointed out when he eulogized his mentor last week, Aubrey was “one of the greatest municipal success stories of our time.”

Personally, I am deeply saddened, as are all of the residents of Nepean. He was someone who, along with Dr. Tupper, provided me with a lot of advice and encouragement throughout my career. The residents of Nepean–Carleton are grateful for Aubrey’s century of service to our community. He died two months short of his 100th birthday.

He lived by the example my father taught me, which was reflected upon by Dr. Tupper: “He left his com-

munity better and stronger than he found it. What more could we have asked for or expected from him?”

SENTENCING

Mr. Peter Kormos: Folks in St. Catharines are rallying at the provincial courthouse on Wednesday, May 28, starting at 11:30 a.m. through to 1:30 in the afternoon. What they’re doing there is expressing their outrage, their indignation and their sadness at the fact that the killer of Stephine Beck—why, it was just a year and a few months ago that Wayne Ryczak killed Stephine Beck and left her half-naked body on a rural road. When he pleaded guilty earlier this month to manslaughter, he was sentenced to one day in jail.

You see, Stephine Beck was a sex-trade worker, a prostitute, a whore, but she was also a young woman with a family, with friends, whose life has as much value as anyone else’s. The one-day sentence for manslaughter was two years less—because the defence counsel himself proposed a sentence of two years less a day for the accused. The judge reduced the defence counsel’s request to one day in jail.

I have written to the Attorney General calling upon him to examine this file with a view to appealing it. I think it’s imperative that the Court of Appeal be handed this scenario to determine whether or not it’s a fit sentence, because, I tell you, the folks in St. Catharines sure as heck don’t think so.

LIONS CLUB OF RICHMOND HILL

Mr. Reza Moridi: Several weeks ago, I had the pleasure of attending the 70th anniversary of the charter of the Lions Club of Richmond Hill. Volunteer members of this club have been serving Richmond Hill for well over 70 years. In 1963, the Lions of Richmond Hill raised a large sum of money to start the York Central Hospital.

So it’s truly an honour for me to present to the House today the following Lions: Ted Mansbridge, founding charter member with over 70 years of service—Ted is 104 years young and is unable to join us today, but his daughter, Elinor Mansbridge, is here on his behalf; George Chassie, a 50-year member; Doug Graham, 45 years; Grant Marshall, 44 years; Marion Tait, six years, Jean Green, six years; Carol Anne Betts, three years; and Bertha Hurdman, six months. I also wish to acknowledge the current president, Allan Betts, who is not here today.

The province of Ontario is a better place for the efforts of volunteers such as the Lions of Richmond Hill.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome to those guests.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES APPRECIATION BARBECUE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: On Sunday, May 25, I was honoured to co-host, along with my federal counterpart,

Simcoe North MP Bruce Stanton, our first annual protective services appreciation barbecue. Approximately 250 of our constituents, along with their families, who are employed or volunteer in police and fire services, as paramedics or in the military joined Bruce and me and our families for an afternoon of appreciation and fun.

At the same time, approximately 25 other ridings across Canada held similar protective services appreciation barbecues and events. I understand that Simcoe North was the only Ontario riding involved in this event this year. We in Simcoe North plan on making this an annual event, to be held on the last Sunday in May each year. We also hope to inspire other Ontario ridings to join in next year as well.

I'd also like to thank all the municipalities that allowed their emergency services vehicles to be used for display purposes at the event. In particular, I want to thank OPP Commissioner Julian Fantino, who joined us for this event. It was great that he could come up. He took three or four hours out of a very busy schedule to be with a lot of his OPP officers, his colleagues and a lot of our fire service workers, paramedics and some people from the military.

I just want to say that it's great to take part in an event like this, but I really want to thank all those people who work in emergency services, who make our lives in Ontario safer and our province a better place to live in.

POLICE OFFICERS

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: On Friday, May 16, I had the opportunity to participate in a ride, along with Hamilton police division 30. The police officers on Hamilton Mountain are true heroes. They are extremely professional and diligent, and team players.

I was able to see what a day in the life of a Hamilton police officer was really like. I rode in a car with the officers from about 7 p.m. until 5 in the morning, and I can tell you their work is never-ending. We were constantly on the go, moving from one scene to another. The whole time, the officers were calm and collected. They were efficient and, no matter the situation, they were always in control.

I'd like to personally thank Officers Hamilton and Gallant for allowing me to ride with them, and also Superintendent Ken Bond, Senior Sergeant Dominic Palmieri and, of course, our police chief, Brian Mullen, for all their hard work and dedication to keeping Hamilton safe. These men and women are keeping our streets safe. As a Hamilton Mountain resident, I feel safe and confident in the outstanding work our officers do.

SEXUAL REASSIGNMENT SURGERY

Mr. Peter Shurman: Just prior to the Legislature's break for constituency week, Health Minister George Smitherman made a surprise announcement—surprising, apparently, even to his own Liberal caucus colleagues. The announcement was that the Liberal government

would begin using taxpayer money to fund sex change surgery. This is also surprising, given that this is the same Liberal government that stopped funding for eye exams, physiotherapy and chiropractic care, and the same Premier who in 2004 said that funding for sex change surgery was not a priority.

There's no doubt that for transgendered individuals this is positive. We in the PC Party understand and respect that view. However, given the economic challenges facing this province and my constituency of Thornhill, it is more than legitimate to question this Liberal government's priorities for the use of increasingly scarce health care dollars, given the range of pressures in health care. Here are just a few: With over 207,000 manufacturing jobs lost since 2004, hard-pressed families and single moms are forced to pay out of pocket for eye exams, chiropractic care and physiotherapy; long-term-care residents are sitting in their own waste for hours without care; try to get a PET scan in Ontario; approximately a million Ontarians are still without a family doctor; waiting lists for an initial consultation with an orthopaedic surgeon can be up to two years—and on and on.

The people of this province deserve an explanation of exactly how sex change surgery rose to the top of the health care priority list. Who made this decision and why?

1310

GUELPH-WELLINGTON WOMEN IN CRISIS

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to rise today to speak about Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis. Women in Crisis works towards ending violence against women and children by providing counselling to victims of all forms of abuse, as well as providing transitional shelter for those who have fled their homes.

Currently, all counselling services and the crisis hotline are run out of their very crowded office on Norwich Street in Guelph. Earlier this month, Executive Director Sly Castaldi and I had the pleasure of welcoming the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, to tour the current Women in Crisis site. Minister Meilleur and I were thrilled to announce that Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis will soon be moving to a new home. The province is giving them \$802,000, which will enable them to move to a larger, more accessible building. The new building will allow the agency to serve more women, especially women with disabilities or women whose children have a disability. Not only will this new funding make the building more accessible, but a new, larger building will provide more space for staff, better group meeting and counselling rooms and a bigger warehouse area for donated furniture and supplies.

Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis has a long record of providing exemplary service. I am pleased that this capital grant will enable Women in Crisis to expand their

support services to women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Last week, the travelling leader of the PC Party made an appearance here at Queen's Park and announced his party's summer tourism strategy.

Ontarians were very confused by his words. He's the leader of a party that has repeatedly stood up in the Legislature to vote against this government's initiatives that ensure that our tourism industry remains strong. Just two weeks ago, his own caucus voted against the budget bill, which included initiatives and tax measures totalling \$92 million for the tourism industry.

Our government doesn't believe in a band-aid strategy like the one proposed by the leader of the Conservative Party. We know that when the economy is facing challenges, with a high dollar and the high price of gas, it's important to invest in more tourism initiatives, such as \$10 million for festivals and events, so that not only can Ontarians enjoy events across the province, they can enjoy even more events right here in their hometown.

This government knows that the people who know best about tourism are the tourism sector itself. We will take our advice from them in order to ensure long-term success of the tourism sector in Ontario. We're listening to our tourism partners. They asked for a competitive study for the industry, and we're delivering on that.

I'm very proud of the initiatives taken by this government in regard to tourism. I can't say that for the other side.

ONTARIO CHILD BENEFIT

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I rise in the House today to speak to the Ontario child benefit. The \$2.1-billion investment is going to reach 1.3 million Ontario children and 600,000 low-income families.

I know that many families in my riding of Huron-Bruce welcome the Ontario child benefit, and I'm very pleased that this government can provide assistance to those hard-working families and make things a little bit easier for them.

In July of this year, eligible parents will begin to receive the Ontario child benefit, with up to \$600 per year per child this year and increasing to \$1,100 per year per child when fully implemented. The great thing about this is that eligible families simply need to ensure that they have filed their taxes and registered for the Canada child tax benefit.

I'd like to emphasize a couple of things for my colleagues across the floor. In addition to receiving the Ontario child benefit, Ontario families will also receive the full national child benefit supplement.

We're going much further than just ending the clawback. We're also extending support to low-income working families. Not only that; a single parent on social

assistance with two kids will be 27% better off this year since we took office and 34% better off once the OCB is fully implemented.

That is an investment in Ontario families and, in particular, it's an investment in Ontario's children—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

ANNUAL REPORT, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that on May 21, 2008, the 2007 annual report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner was tabled.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ALGOMA UNIVERSITY ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR L'UNIVERSITÉ ALGOMA

Mr. Milloy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 80, An Act to establish Algoma University and to dissolve Algoma University College / Projet de loi 80, Loi portant création de l'Université Algoma et dissolution de l'Algoma University College.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Hon. John Milloy: During ministerial statements, Mr. Speaker.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ALGOMA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Hon. John Milloy: In the coming weeks, thousands of students across Ontario will celebrate one of the greatest achievements of their lives. At a ceremony in front of proud family and friends, they will receive their post-secondary degree, certificate or diploma. That special moment will cap off years of hard work and dedication. But it does not bring an end to their journey; rather, it marks an exciting new beginning.

These smart and talented graduates hold the promise of Ontario's future. They are the entrepreneurs who will build tomorrow's knowledge economy, they are the dreamers who will tackle the world's toughest problems, and they are the innovators who will turn exciting new ideas into things that have the power to change our lives.

Our government is committed to making sure that every young person in our province is able to reach their full potential so that we can harness their skills and knowledge to strengthen our province and improve the

lives of all Ontario families. So today we're taking an important step forward in our efforts to help more young people pursue their dreams. We're introducing legislation that, if passed, would establish a new university in northern Ontario.

For more than 40 years, Algoma University College in Sault Ste. Marie has operated as an affiliate college of Laurentian University in Sudbury. Algoma gives students in the north a wonderful opportunity to pursue higher education and stay close to home. Students can choose from over 30 undergraduate programs in areas ranging from finance and economics to fine arts and information technology.

Algoma also has very strong ties to First Nations people in the north. More than 20% of Algoma's students are aboriginal, and the school offers a BA in Ojibway, the only one of its kind.

Algoma's high-quality programs and commitment to the community have produced great results. Over the past 10 years, Algoma's enrolment has grown by 73%.

Before going any further, I'd like to acknowledge Algoma's president, Dr. Celia Ross, and the chair of their board of governors, Bud Wildman. Both, along with a large delegation from Algoma, have joined us here today in the Legislature to mark what must be a very fulfilling moment for them. I congratulate them and all their colleagues on the outstanding work that they have done for students in the north.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and leadership of my colleague David Oraziotti, MPP for Sault Ste. Marie. He has been a strong advocate for both his community and this institution and deserves a tremendous amount of credit for the introduction of this legislation. In fact, he was reminding me that he was actually a member of the board of governors of Algoma and served on one of the subcommittees that were working toward independence. His association goes back many years.

1320

We want to help Algoma welcome even more students through its doors. That is why we are introducing this important legislation today. If passed, this legislation would enable Algoma to become an independent university with the ability to grant its own degrees. This means it will not only be able to attract more students, but it will also be able to attract more jobs and investment to the community. Investing in people in the north and across Ontario is one of the core pillars of our government's economic plan. After all, our people are our greatest asset, and by investing in their knowledge and skills, we can continue to attract the kinds of jobs and investment that will keep our province and our people moving forward. We know that it is only when our people are at their best that Ontario can be at its best.

That's why we are making an unprecedented investment in post-secondary education and training through our \$6.2-billion Reaching Higher plan. We've been getting results. Today, 100,000 more students are attending colleges and universities compared to five years ago. About 60% of Ontarians aged 25 to 64 have completed a

post-secondary certificate, diploma or university degree program. That is one of the highest rates of post-secondary education in any country in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. About 110,000 apprentices are learning a trade today, nearly 50,000 more than five years ago.

But we know that there's more to do. Our government remains committed to developing Ontario's post-secondary education system into truly the envy of the world. Accomplishing this will ensure Ontario's place in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm very pleased on this historic occasion to rise and congratulate Algoma University College, which will soon become Algoma University. It is an historic day. I met with Mr. Bud Wildman, alongside of whom I had the pleasure of serving in this House for about five years, beginning in 1990. He's chair of the board of governors. I also met with Dr. Celia Ross, the current president of the university, and who I know will be the future and the first president of Algoma University. I met with them a couple of weeks ago and assured them that the PC Party and John Tory would give full support to this bill. I'm happy about that.

I served on the board of governors at U of T, and one of my first elected positions was president of the student council at U of T. I think of how difficult it must be under the current arrangement—which is almost a condominium arrangement with Laurentian University, although they get along very well—for the current university to have loyal alumni. The certificate that you get to put on the wall when you graduate, even though you might have gone to Algoma for three or four years, actually says Laurentian right now. But that will change in the future. They'll be able to build up more alumni and good people like Mr. Wildman, who has been chair for about eight or nine years. He has a very good reputation and has done an excellent job. Congratulations to you, the faculty and the board of governors.

I want to say, because the minister bragged again about funding of universities, that we do have a chronic funding shortfall at universities, which I've mentioned many times. You got 311 million in new dollars from the federal government this year. If this were questions and answers, I would ask, "What did you do with it?" On that: In 1999, then-opposition leader McGuinty not only said he would bring university funding in Ontario on per capita basis to the average of Canada, but we're now dead last on per capita funding. We're 10 out of 10 behind the entire pack. Mr. McGuinty at that time not only verbally promised that; he signed a great, big pledge card. I held up here a few weeks ago the newspaper photo of him saying that he would do that during his first term in office. Well, your first term is over with.

Secondly, the Ontario council of faculty associations—I've raised this several times in the House—mentions that we're short 5,500 faculty right now. That's a real shame. There's no use bragging, as the minister does from time to time, about the high enrolments we have. We have people sitting in classrooms across the

street, at Convocation Hall, with 1,100 students in a political science class. That's unacceptable.

So congratulations for bringing this forward. We'll give you our full support. It's an historic day. But all this bragging about \$6.2 billion—I heard Mr. Sorbara say that when he was finance minister, and he always said it in the past tense: “We've spent \$6.2 billion.” You're only halfway through that program. There's no guarantee that you'll actually spend all that money. Again, you have \$311 million extra this year, and the universities didn't see that.

For all those who are watching in Sault Ste. Marie, as a former Minister of Northern Development, I know this will be good for the north, and the minister mentioned that. It'll be great in terms of the aboriginal programs and the special programs that they do have, and it'll be great for education and culture right across northern Ontario, Ontario itself and Canada. Congratulations, Algoma U.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I too want to congratulate the chair of the board of governors, Bud, who is a former colleague and someone we respect a great deal, and respected a great deal, in terms of the work that he has done. I want to congratulate the president, Dr. Ross, as well, but in particular, the entire administration for all of the work that they have done in the process of transforming themselves from Algoma University College to a university of distinction—

Interjection: What about David?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You've already congratulated your own.

I want to focus on the process and what the administration has done over the years with the faculty and with the support of the students, in terms of the outreach they have done in the community, because that is an important part of the work that they have done. This work of establishing partnerships has been evidenced as it relates to forestry, to northern medical schools and the First Nations communities.

Speaking of First Nations, this is where I want to take the time to be able to say congratulations to the administration for the work you have done with First Nations, for the work you have done in collaboration with and in consultation with First Nations. That is an example of how you, the government, should work with First Nations. This is an example of something that has happened that I wanted to praise. Part of this has to do with governance. There are First Nation programs at many universities and colleges, but this is one of the first where governance of programming relates and connects to First Nations as a people. For that, I congratulate and praise them for that particular work.

They now have the job of recruiting students from all over Ontario, Canada and beyond. That, I'm sure, will be a challenge for the university, but because of the uniqueness of the program, I am convinced that they will attract students from all over Canada.

This is not the time today to debate what the government has not done in the university sector. I will take the opportunity to do that another time, which I love to do, as

you know. But the administration doesn't need to hear this today; they will at another time.

We haven't had a chance to read the bill. We will discuss it tomorrow as a caucus. But in principle, I am very supportive of the bill. We will give speedy passage to this bill this week, if the government is prepared and others are prepared. We want to look at the bill, and perhaps even a short 10 or 15 minutes to acknowledge people and to allow other members from the north to be able to speak to this bill would do it. But beyond that, we're quite happy to give speedy passage to the bill.

1330

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LES SERVICES AUX PERSONNES AYANT UNE DÉFICIENCE INTELLECTUELLE

Mrs. Meilleur moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 77, An Act to provide services to persons with developmental disabilities, to repeal the Developmental Services Act and to amend certain other statutes / *Projet de loi 77, Loi visant à prévoir des services pour les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle, à abroger la Loi sur les services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle et à modifier d'autres lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Please note that I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the MPP from London—Fanshawe.

I rise in the House today in support of our government's new legislation that would improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities in Ontario. I was extremely proud to introduce this proposed legislation recently. It is the combination of a great deal of work, and I would not be here today without the unprecedented degree of co-operation we have received from our developmental services partners and their valuable input and insight. Individuals, families, agencies and government—we have all come together. Working hand in hand, we have begun the groundwork needed to transform how we deliver services and supports.

The proposed Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008, is legislation for a modern system of supports and services for people with developmental disabilities. We need to update our developmental services legislation. The previous legislation was created at a time when we placed many individuals with developmental disabilities in provincially run institutions.

Nous devons actualiser notre Loi sur les services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle. La loi actuelle a été créée à une époque où on plaçait plusieurs

personnes atteintes d'une déficience intellectuelle dans les établissements gouvernementaux.

When our government came to office in 2003, we knew we had to change many things. The closure of the three remaining facilities was something that was started by the Peterson government in the 1980s. It was the McGuinty government's job to ensure that the last of the residents living there moved into the community with as little disruption as possible. It was a monumental task. We worked with our developmental services partners to hear their thoughts on how we could best accomplish this, and we worked with the staff at the facilities, not only to place the residents in community jobs where possible, but also to ease their transition to community life. I am happy to say that many families who were initially concerned about the change are often the first to tell us that it was the right thing to do.

Je suis heureuse de pouvoir dire que les familles qui étaient réfractaires de prime abord à ce changement ont été nombreuses à reconnaître d'emblée que c'était la chose à faire.

I wouldn't want to go any further without first telling you how far we have come. I recently attended an exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum that documented life in the institutions and how people with developmental disabilities were supported there. It is important for us to remember that people believed at that time that putting a family member with a disability into an institution was the best thing for them, and that they would flourish in a secluded rural environment, away from the stress and commotion of everyday life. But what we must also remember is that sometimes the commotion of everyday life is just as healthy as the tranquility of a remote hideaway, that everyone is different and that we need to offer a client the lifestyle that best suits him or her, because we know now that each and every one of us contributes to the life and the character of our communities, and together we are stronger. Each of us, no matter our strengths or abilities, has a role to play. Each of us deserves respect and deserves to be treated according to our abilities, not our disabilities.

This past fall, I had the pleasure of hearing Lieutenant Governor David Onley speak at the Canadian Club of Toronto, where he said: "What is needed is a change of attitude to people with disabilities. What is needed is the realization that disability does not mean inability ... that living with a disability does not mean an individual cannot also enjoy a productive and satisfying career." This legislation recognizes that people with disabilities can enjoy a productive career, a fuller life, and can contribute to their community. Our job is to support them and encourage them every step of the way.

Today, we have many success stories of individuals who have moved into the community. There is a woman who had lived at the Huronia Regional Centre since she was seven years old. Now, 43 years later, she lives in a condominium in downtown Toronto with a roommate and shares in community life. There is a man who had lived at the South West Regional Centre his entire life,

and he now has a part-time job in Essex. There is a man who used to live at the Rideau Regional Centre for 30 years. He's enjoying life in the community, spending time with his new housemates, going to his local coffee shop and doing his banking and grocery shopping.

I even had the pleasure of meeting a woman just last week who was deaf-blind and had lived at the Rideau Regional Centre most of her life. When she left the facility in 1999, she only knew a few hand signs and had difficulty communicating with others. Today, not only does she live with friends in her community and cook for herself, but she is fluent in American Sign Language and has a job with Canada Post. She lives independently, with support, but most importantly with dignity and a sense of purpose.

Ces expériences ne pouvaient simplement pas être vécues dans un établissement.

We are in a new era of community inclusion that embraces people with a developmental disability. Thousands of people with a developmental disability are leading remarkably full lives. They go shopping, to the theatre and to restaurants. They go out with their friends, take courses at community colleges, complete job placements and get jobs. Like other citizens, they are giving back to their community and enjoying a greater sense of belonging. We are all richer for their contributions.

We need new legislation that is in tune with the times, legislation that helps people to reach their goals and their dreams, that gives them more choice and flexibility in the supports they receive and encourages independence.

Nous avons besoin d'une nouvelle loi qui soit en harmonie avec son temps, une loi qui aide les gens à atteindre leurs buts et à réaliser leurs rêves, qui leur donne plus de choix et plus de latitude pour obtenir du soutien et qui encourage l'autonomie.

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Our proposed legislation takes the next big step in building on the groundwork we have begun for our long-term plan for developmental services. This proposed bill demonstrates that we are a government of action, not just words—the kind of action that's going to make a real difference in the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Our proposed legislation, if passed, would replace the existing Developmental Services Act. That act is now outdated. It speaks to a time when we supported people in institutions, not in communities. We need legislation that recognizes that people with developmental disabilities can live much more independently in their communities with the right supports. We need legislation that recognizes that people want more choice in the services and supports they receive. Our proposed legislation acknowledges those needs.

Nowhere is the need for modernization greater than in developmental services. Community agencies are the backbone of our developmental services system and they will continue to play a central role. But we heard loud and clear from people with developmental disabilities, their families and community agencies that the system of

support needs to be easier to navigate. People need services and supports closer to their home. They need more choice and flexibility in the supports they receive.

We committed to address these issues. We launched a major review to make the system more fair, accessible and sustainable. We announced the closure of the province's three remaining facilities for people with developmental disabilities by the end of March 2009. We committed to developing a comprehensive plan for the future, one that would lead us through the next 25 years and beyond.

Our proposed legislation would put into motion the framework for that plan. It would reinforce our commitment to transforming the system into one that is based on citizenship, fairness, accessibility, accountability and sustainability.

Notre projet de loi renforcerait notre engagement à transformer les services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle pour en faire un système basé sur la citoyenneté, l'équité, l'accessibilité, la responsabilisation et la durabilité.

It would give us a solid foundation on which to modernize our system of developmental services over the coming years.

This is a bill with families in mind. It responds directly to what families and people with developmental disabilities have told us through our province-wide consultations and builds on that advice. If passed, it will help us improve service, because people would only have to go to one place to apply for service; improve choice, because people could receive funding directly to tailor supports to their needs; and improve fairness, because everyone would use the same application and assessment package. People who need support the most would have priority.

These are things that people with developmental disabilities and their families want. But we cannot do it without putting the right legislative framework in place first. That's what this bill is all about. It is the critical next step in the evolution of services for people with developmental disabilities in this province.

C'est la prochaine étape cruciale de l'évolution des services pour les citoyens de notre province qui ont une déficience intellectuelle.

This province has come so far since 1974, when the current Developmental Services Act became law, but we have so much further to go and we are committed to the journey.

As Catherine Frazee, co-director of the Ryerson-RBC institute for disability studies, once said, "We remember that what we have built here, we have built together across great difference. We remember that there is more to build tomorrow."

With the passage of this bill, we can really move forward and begin to build an even brighter future for Ontarians with a developmental disability. I call upon members of this House to join me to pass this proposed legislation, because it will make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities, their families and our com-

munity partners, who provide such a high level of care and compassion.

If this bill is passed, we will be able to look back and say, "We took a giant step forward in building stronger, more inclusive communities for all Ontarians."

Si ce projet de loi est adopté, nous pourrions dire en rétrospective que nous avons fait un pas de géant pour rendre nos collectivités plus fortes et plus inclusives pour tous les Ontariens et toutes les Ontariennes.

That's what this is really all about: creating legislation that will give us the framework to move forward in a way that would improve the lives of thousands of people with developmental disabilities in Ontario.

I encourage all members of this House to support this important legislation.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I am honoured to rise in this House today on behalf of our government for second reading of Bill 77, the Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act.

I want to pick up on something the minister said just now. As legislators, we have to view legislation in the context of when it was passed. Our previous developmental services legislation spoke to a time when we supported people with a developmental disability primarily in a provincial institution, but much has changed since then. Our previous legislation simply does not address anything about who we are today. The legislation before us aims to change that.

As a responsible government, we have to change our legislation if we ever hope to stay in step with the times and with new ways of thinking. Today, we support people with developmental disabilities in communities across Ontario. Today, we support people with developmental disabilities in homes, not institutions. These individuals have as much right to live and contribute to the fabric of our communities as everybody else. In fact, our communities are stronger when we include people of all abilities.

Aujourd'hui, nous aidons les personnes atteintes d'une déficience intellectuelle à vivre en société, dans toutes les collectivités de l'Ontario. Aujourd'hui, nous ne plaçons plus les personnes atteintes d'une déficience intellectuelle dans des établissements; nous les aidons à vivre dans des foyers.

Ces personnes ont tout autant le droit que les autres citoyens de participer et de contribuer à la vie de leur collectivité. En fait, nos collectivités sont d'autant plus fortes si elles font appel à tous leurs citoyens, quelles que soient leurs habiletés.

Our journey to where we are today in developmental services has been a gradual evolution.

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We have worked closely with our community partners that provide the dedicated services and forward-thinking programs for people with developmental disabilities. These partners know how important it is that people with developmental disabilities have the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest that they are able, and with the passing of our proposed legislation, we could really move

forward into the 21st century and show others exactly what we are made of.

This legislation is about accountability and sustainability, certainly, but it's also about compassion for the individuals, their families and friends and for the community agencies that support them. Our proposed legislation is all about the future of developmental services, and this is what Bill 77 is all about.

Let me set the stage for you. Today we have a \$1.57-billion developmental services system supporting more than 40,000 individuals. That list continues to grow. We knew we needed to make some pretty dramatic changes, and we knew that the best way to do that was to speak to the people who would be most directly affected. Families are telling us they need an easier time getting help through the system. It's just too complicated. They need services and supports closer to their homes, not in segregated communities spread disproportionately across the province. Families are telling us they need more choice and flexibility in the supports they receive. Our proposed legislation would respond to all of those needs.

Les familles nous disent qu'elles veulent obtenir plus facilement de l'aide. Le système actuel est trop compliqué. Elles ont besoin de services et de soutien près de chez elles, pas dans des collectivités isolées et mal réparties sur le territoire ontarien.

Les familles nous disent aussi qu'elles souhaitent plus de choix et de latitude pour obtenir du soutien. Notre projet de loi permettrait de répondre à tous ces besoins.

If passed, this legislation would lay the foundation for Ontario to build a new and more modern system of developmental services over the coming years, and it would make the system sustainable for future generations.

Let me talk about some of the key features of the proposed legislation. First, we want to get rid of archaic terms such as "facility" and "institution." The three remaining facilities are set to close by March 2009, and we won't need to use this kind of language for much longer. Second, we want to create application centres for access to developmental services across the province. Staff at these centres would be trained consistently across the province and have the tools they need to help families through the application and assessment process.

Setting up application centres would mean that families and individuals would only need to go to one place to apply for supports instead of having to tell their stories over and over at several individual agencies.

We also want people to have more choice and flexibility in purchasing supports that are tailored to their needs. So we want to provide funding either through community agencies or to application centres for direct funding. We want to get a better handle on service planning.

That's why we would start collecting information from individuals and application centres to improve service planning throughout the province. Without careful planning, forecasting future service needs and changes is difficult.

And because we are in a time when families and individuals have more say in where they will live and how they will live, we want to give them greater peace of mind. We can do this by introducing accountability requirements for agencies, individuals and families that receive direct funding, which would include provisions to allow us to take corrective action against agencies or application centres if there are serious issues; for example, concerns about health and safety or financial administration. Taken together, the elements of this proposed legislation will serve us well into the future. This legislation would allow this and future governments the latitude needed to build and maintain a modern system of developmental services.

We have come a long way, but there is much more to be done. We can do more; we can do better. I believe it's time for us, as provincial legislators, to come together and take our developmental services system to the next level. We have worked hard to make sure our bill will give us the legislative framework we need to support what we started in 2004, when we first announced plans to transform the developmental services system. We have worked hard as a government and as a partner with families, individuals and agencies to develop this proposed legislation.

Il est temps pour nous, les législateurs de cette province, d'unir nos forces pour faire entrer notre système de services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle dans une ère nouvelle.

Nous avons travaillé fort à ce projet de loi afin de nous doter du cadre législatif nécessaire pour poursuivre ce que nous avons entrepris en 2004, lorsque nous avons annoncé notre plan de réorganisation des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle.

Nous avons travaillé fort en tant que gouvernement et en tant que partenaires des familles, des bénéficiaires et des organismes pour élaborer ce projet de loi.

I encourage all members of this House to support this legislation, because it is important for all of us to keep working together in order to improve this sector.

As everybody in this House knows, in my past capacity, I worked for many years as a counsellor with Community Living London. I also worked with the Ministry of Community and Social Services as a counsellor at the facility in Woodstock, before they closed it because we moved the people to the community. As the minister mentioned many times, she visited many different group homes and saw the people who had been transferred from a facility to a group home, how they functioned, how they loved it, how well-behaved they were. It's important for all of us to look at this sector very well, because people with developmental disabilities have a right to live in a place they choose, and also to be a part of the community. I know 100% that they have a lot of ability and good work to offer us, and they have a lot to offer the community at large. Also, they have the ability to contribute to our province.

Our duty and obligation as legislators in this place is that we've been given permission by the people of Ontario to look after many different issues. This issue is

very important for all of us because, in the end, we have to make sure all the elements of our society are working together in order to enhance our ability and maintain our prosperity in this province.

I had a good experience with people with developmental disabilities. I noticed and felt very much that when they moved from big facilities, where they were just a number, to the community and were living in a house, had a job they went to on a daily basis and were treated with respect, their behaviour totally changed and they became very well-behaved individuals. They have the ability to offer us something we don't know. But when we gave them the chance, they treated us with respect, as a response to us treating them with respect.

1400

I think it's a very important initiative. I'm honoured and privileged to be part of a government and part of a ministry that feels passionately about this issue and brings it to our attention as a Legislature to reform it and give the ability to many people who are waiting for us to permit them to participate in our daily lives. Thank you for allowing me to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: As an MPP who represented Rideau Regional Centre, I have long been concerned about many of the residents who are being forced out of the residence at Rideau Regional Centre by this government—the previous government wasn't forcing them out—after they had lived there for 40 or 50 years, often in the same residence, as they called it, with a friend for 30 or 40 years. This government is forcing these low-functioning adults into the community, separated from their long-term friends. They call this a social advance.

I agree, and my party agrees, that high-functioning adults who can succeed in society should in fact get out there. But I have two questions for the minister: Will she guarantee equal or better living standards, and will she guarantee equal or better health standards for everyone she forces out of these centres?

These centres, while the government would like to portray them as an institution, are the homes of these individuals. They have lived in them for 40 or 45 years. Their relatives and the people who care about them are very concerned with the lack of regard that this government has shown for the wishes of the parents of these individuals, for the wishes of the relatives of these individuals. Therefore, I believe that the general thrust of the legislation is right, but the way they are treating people and the parents of these people is despicable.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to start by saying that the NDP strongly believes that people with developmental disabilities are part of our communities. We want them to be our friends, our neighbours and an active part of our communities. When you live, interact with and have the privilege to know somebody with a developmental disability—they have a way to make us all better, a way to tug at our roots of empathy and a way of making

each and every one of us a better individual. We need them in our communities, but they also have needs that have not been well met in the past. Although the aim of the bill is to improve the lives of people with disabilities, I have serious doubts that it will actually achieve that. We will go into more detail as to how this bill could be changed to make it more relevant to the aim that we seem to be sharing: to make the lives of people with developmental disabilities better and to integrate them into our communities.

Le parti néo-démocratique est d'accord que nous voulons intégrer les personnes avec une déficience intellectuelle dans nos communautés. On veut que ces personnes-là soient nos voisins, nos amis, et qu'elles soient pleinement intégrées dans la vie des Ontariens de tous les jours.

Avoir la chance de côtoyer une personne avec une déficience intellectuelle est vraiment un privilège qui nous permet de développer notre empathie et ce qu'il y a de mieux dans notre communauté, et ces personnes-là sont très bonnes à faire ça. Ce sont des professeurs pour chacun de nous. On va appuyer l'idée du projet de loi, mais on veut certainement l'améliorer.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I am pleased to add my comments on this particular bill. In western Mississauga, where I live, we are served by both Community Living Mississauga and by Erinoak, which deal with both developmentally challenged children and adults.

It's been my pleasure to sit down not merely with the people who run both organizations but also with the many people who are served by them. What this bill reflects is an awful lot of the comments made by the people who work in the system. They say that when the systems were set up, three decades or so ago, a lot of the evolution of the supports that Ontario has offered both organizations and individuals was well intended at the time and came together piecemeal.

What the minister has introduced is a single portal of access for services and programs for people who are served and for organizations that serve them. This is not a small enterprise. It is, in aggregate, more than \$1.5 billion a year, and it serves some 40,000 people. So this would be like describing the services for a medium-sized city in Ontario.

What this bill does is recognize that times have changed, that there are better ways of doing this, and that the state of the art of organizing the resources and the services that Ontario brings to the organizations that provide the services and the people who benefit from them does itself need an overhaul. That's what this bill does, and it does so extremely well. This bill takes a system of supports that has come together in bits and pieces over three and a half decades and modernizes it and brings it into the 21st century.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to add some comments to the debate on Bill 77, the Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008, after the minister's speech and the speech from the member from London-Fanshawe.

I've had the opportunity of meeting with parents and families in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, specifically on the issue to do with individualized funding, particularly with Debbie Vernon, who is a strong advocate for her sister, who was one of the few people in the province receiving individualized funding and living life at home with her mother. I was advocating on her behalf to try to get her more significant funding, an increase in her funding. Unfortunately, Debbie's sister is now in a long-term-care home, which is not the appropriate place for her, but unfortunately I was unsuccessful in getting an increase in individualized funding.

This government has its Passport program, but I learned from organizations like Family Alliance Ontario and the Muskoka Family Network, which Debbie is involved with, that overwhelmingly the new applicants to this program are turned down. In the Hamilton area, 174 people applied for the Passport program, which would provide individualized funding; only six people actually received the funding. The same is true in Toronto, where, of 400 applications, 33 people were actually funded. Of the \$200 million in increase in budget for developmental services, only \$6 million has gone to the Passport program, so we're not seeing this funding reach the families and the people who really need it.

I happen to believe that individualized funding can be a very significant benefit to these people who need the assistance, and I would like to see the government not necessarily create a bureaucracy and more red tape, but see them get the money to these families in the simplest way possible.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Response?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'd like to thank the members from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Mississauga–Streetsville, Nickel Belt and Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

I would like to reply specifically to the comment of the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills. I don't know when he last put his foot into one of these institutions, but I can assure him that nobody is being forced out. Everybody has been working with someone from the institution to place this person out in the community. This member may be back 50 and 60 years ago—that's not the way to take care of these individuals. He asked me to guarantee him that they will have at least the same service or better. I can guarantee that to him.

1410

I've been visiting these institutions, the three of them. I've been visiting the group homes where these individuals are placed now. I can tell you that a lot of the parents—and I don't blame the parents, because they are encouraged by the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, who is trying to scare them out of the institution. I can tell you that for these individuals, there is someone working with them to place them at the best place.

We look first at the individuals—not the family, not the parents, not the politicians, but the person who is at the centre. All of the services are being wrapped around this individual. I can guarantee you that they will have

the best services, as good as, and most of the time better than—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I will be sharing my time with the member for Whitby–Oshawa, who's been an incredible advocate for individuals with disabilities.

It's a pleasure to rise today, as the Progressive Conservative critic for community and social services, to debate the second reading of Bill 77, the Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act.

The developmental disabilities act needs to be updated, and it is important that the option of establishing direct funding as a choice for individuals and their families is entrenched in legislation. Families have been asking for individualized funding so that options are available to them as they continue to care for their adult children.

I was somewhat surprised that the government decided to call the legislation for second reading so quickly. In just over a week, all the interested stakeholders have had to digest and analyze legislation that completely revamps and replaces the developmental disabilities act.

I would like to thank representatives of Community Living Ontario and OASIS for taking the time to come to my riding in Dufferin–Caledon to brief me on their initial reaction to Bill 77. I also have received valuable information from Families for a Secure Future and individual families dealing with caring for their sons or daughters in the community.

I believe members of the Legislature must reach out to these experts so that we can develop laws that truly meet the needs of persons with developmental disabilities. We need to listen and give everyone a chance to provide input on how the legislation can be improved.

In the form of an example, I'd like to read just an excerpt from an e-mail that I received on Friday:

“Current situation:

“The Liberal government claims that they set out three years ago to deal with the severe inequity in the system between the haves and have not's. Nothing has happened to change this dynamic. Agencies still receive 80% of the dollars in the sector and support only 20% of the individuals in the province who have a developmental disability while families who provide support to 80% of individuals ... receive 20% of the overall budget. This funding formula is incomprehensible to families who care for their loved ones on a day-to-day basis with no support....

“Families believed that a transformed system would address this gross imbalance. It has not. In fact, the situation has only worsened.” Last year, the only money the government invested was \$200 million for “pay equity that essentially ‘broke the bank’ and left nothing for families. In the midst of talk of large-scale policy changes within the Ministry of Community and Social Services”—most notably, the transformation agenda—“the family agenda has been completely stalled. Families have been asking for individualized funding options for

over two decades. They have been asking the government to expand programs like SSAH, which has proven to be a powerful tool for individuals to get the support they need to participate more fully in their communities, and this funding has been put on hold. What kind of a message does that send to families? Families have proven that they can be accountable through the SSAH program....

“Over the past two years, thousands of individuals and their families across Ontario have been put on waiting lists for SSAH and the two new initiatives: Passports and the innovative residential model. These families have been put into limbo and been asked to wait indefinitely.

“What are they to believe? Is the government serious about giving families individualized funding options or is it just empty rhetoric? Families will not stand by as promises are made and then carelessly broken.” We saw that today with a number of families coming to the Legislature because they felt their voices weren't being heard in the consultation process.

“Families who choose not to access agency options must be treated fairly and given equitable alternatives. Passport, one of the new individualized funding programs that is given directly to the individual and their family, has ridiculously low ceiling caps on the funding amounts. Individuals are assessed to be at a particular level and are then given only that amount. They must give up any other forms of support that they currently have in order to partake in direct funding options and yet the amounts do not provide for enough support. In the name of fairness and equity, they are not given nearly enough funding to hire their own support workers and build a meaningful support system for their sons/daughters.”

That's just one excerpt from an e-mail I received on Friday, which underlines for me the importance of the consultation part of Bill 77. I trust that after we have finished debating second reading, it will have a full and comprehensive public hearing process.

Bill 77 is not legislation that should be rushed. It is the first rewriting of the act since 1974. We need to make sure that the final law truly represents the needs of persons with developmental disabilities and their families. In view of this, the bill should go to committee for public hearings.

I would like to now touch on a few specific areas of the legislation in the hopes that ultimately the decision-makers will take the time to listen to the debate and hear some of the feedback we have been receiving both in the Progressive Conservative caucus and as members representing families.

Regulations: As with other Liberal legislation, Bill 77 seems to leave all the details to regulation and policy directives. Important elements will be decided by cabinet without the benefit of full public scrutiny.

Sections 36 and 37—two full pages—are dedicated to regulatory powers. Almost every section of the bill is subject to regulation. This means that after the bill is debated and then passes third reading, its true content will be shaped by a much smaller Liberal cabinet. Per-

sons with developmental disabilities and their families will have to wait to see how the new act will affect them.

So what are the regulatory powers that the Liberals want?

“(b) defining ‘significant limitations’ for the purposes of 3(1).” That's the section that defines developmental disability and therefore determines funding eligibility, something that I am sure the vast majority of stakeholders would want to know up front before they go into regulations.

“(c) prescribing additional services”: What does that mean? What is the detail there?

“(e) ... prescribing the powers and duties of application centres”: We'll get into that further along in the debate.

“(f) governing funding agreements....”

“(g) governing direct funding and direct funding agreements....”

“(h) governing applications for services....”

“(k) governing service agencies....”

I have listed some but certainly not all of the regulatory powers so that all members of the Legislature are in tune to the fact that the application for direct funding, how the application centres operate and make decisions, the funding agreements and the types of services offered are all subject to regulation. In other words, stay tuned; details to follow. The most disturbing part of that, of course, is that regulations don't have the same public scrutiny and option for input.

Waiting lists: When the minister tabled the legislation on May 15, she said: “This is a bill with families in mind. It responds to what families and people with developmental disabilities have told us through ... consultations.”

I must say that for 100 individuals to come and demonstrate at Queen's Park today, less than 10 days after this bill was tabled, is more than passing strange. If they felt they had been consulted and listened to by the minister, I don't think they would have been out there. I do question the consultation that has occurred. I hope that more commitment is made on the minister's behalf to meet with these families and listen to, quite frankly, the success stories that have come up with the Passport program as it stands, and more importantly, how they see improvements and changes to it as we move forward.

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The waiting lists that are unfortunately part of the life of individuals and families dealing with developmental disabilities have not ended with Bill 77. In fact, applicants will be assessed, prioritized, and then many will be placed on a waiting list or, as I heard it described today, a no-service list.

Families have been asking for direct funding support for several years. The Liberals purport to be meeting this need, yet the budget dollars do not support the demand. As a result, persons with developmental disabilities and their families are being asked to wait once again for services that they have been determined to be eligible for. The result is that so many young people who have reached the age of 21 are at home sitting on a couch

instead of actively participating in their communities across the province. Parents are so distressed about this situation that, as I mentioned, they had to come to Queen's Park today to bring a reality check to this government.

There is a glaring difference between the rhetoric of the minister when she tabled the legislation and the reality of the amount of direct support for families who are caring for their adult children at home. We made reference in question period today that 90% of the applications that were put in for Passport were refused or turned down. The bill seems to set out options for direct funding, yet few are actually receiving the support. Over the past two years, thousands of individuals and their families across Ontario have been put on wait lists for special services at home and the two new initiatives: Passport and the innovative residential model.

I don't think we should bypass that application process without talking about just how cumbersome the process is. This isn't a two-page application. Families who are trying to access Passport and the innovative residential program basically have to have done their entire contract, set up their entire scenario, before they can start the application process. So a great commitment has gone into it before they've even done the application.

Passport funding: Since becoming the PC critic for the Minister of Community and Social Services, I've heard from many families who have expressed concerns about the Passport program. There are several issues which I'd like to highlight in my debate of Bill 77 today. Some families applied for the program, a complex application process, as I said, and did not receive additional support—90%, from the numbers we've been able to poll. I'm told that only \$6 million was allocated for Passport in 2007.

I spoke to a family as recently as Friday who went through the process of filling out the Passport application. As they were completing the last page, they were told by a ministry staffer, "Rumour has it that there's no more money," so if your daughter, in this case, was aging out, there's nothing there. Quite frankly, it's a terrible time to be graduating from high school in Ontario, I'm afraid. Some families have decided in fact not to apply, because they must give up all other forms of support that they currently have in order to partake in this direct funding option. Some families fear that the program has been capped.

Families whose children turn 21 this year, often referred to as school leavers, have expressed concern that their children will not even be considered for the direct funding model as there are no new dollars for Passport. What an unfortunate way to begin debate on Bill 77. When you think of the people who have had the benefits of their children in the school system, they've loved that connectedness to the community, to their peers, and they are literally going from seven hours to nothing.

The Family Alliance of Ontario has conducted a survey on the number of applicants versus the number of families who actually received Passport funding. The

numbers are rather alarming. As I raised in question period today, in the Hamilton area, 173 have applied for Passport and six people with developmental disabilities have been funded. In the Toronto area, over 400 have applied and 33 people were funded. In the London area, with 262 applicants, 11 people were funded. In the Durham area, with 40 applicants, 5 people were funded. And so it goes across the province. The numbers seem to be the same throughout the province.

The Liberal government has consciously decided not to allocate more for the direct funding option. In other words, they've made a choice about their priorities.

In May 2007, the Minister of Community and Social Services announced a \$200-million budget increase for developmental services. Where's the money? Last year, the government's only investment was to pay equity, essentially breaking the bank, leaving nothing for families.

Direct or individualized funding is another area I'd like to talk more about. Bill 77 introduces two streams of funding for persons with developmental disabilities: direct funding to the person and indirect funding to the person through transfer payment agencies. There is, without a doubt, a role for both types of funding. I believe that the transitional sections of the bill will allow community living agencies and residential homes to continue providing the valuable service that they have been providing. What is new in Bill 77 is the direct funding option. We're not breaking new ground in Ontario by legislating direct funding; British Columbia and Alberta have the direct funding option currently. Direct, or what they call "individualized," funding is also available in Great Britain.

That said, we need to look at what direct funding is and why it is an important change. When I met with Orville Endicott, the legal counsel for Community Living Ontario, he referred me to the work of John Lord, of Kitchener-Waterloo. His research concludes that individuals with direct funding have a good quality of life and are integrated into the community. Isn't it wonderful that we have people studying and actually proving what the rest of us think makes sense? I would like to cite some of John Lord's research. His paper, *Moving Toward Citizenship: A Study of Individualized Funding in Ontario*, examined the direct funding model in Ontario from 2001 to 2005. He selected four regions of the province—two metropolitan areas, one rural and one mid-sized city. He found a number of things, and for any of the members who would like to learn more about it, it really is a well-researched and set-out explanation of the individualized funding and how it relates in Ontario.

John Lord concludes that daily lives for individuals receiving direct funding improved. He discovered that participants were "gaining partial entry to employment," both volunteer work and some paid employment, were "more confident" and independent, "went more places in the community," participated in recreational activities and had a large number of personal relationships, all of which families who have been advocating for

individualized funding and for assistance to ensure that their sons and daughters can integrate into the community have been asking for.

Based on this, Mr. Lord believes that the province should move forward with the direct funding model, as there are very positive quality-of-life outcomes.

The need for a facilitator: Before I conclude my comments based on John Lord's research, I would like to make members aware of another one of his findings, that "planning is an integral part of the process...."

"Facilitators worked with the people being supported and their families to develop goals and a support plan based on the dreams and interests of the person."

Families interviewed by Mr. Lord's team had very positive relationships with their facilitators. They described three roles:

"First, facilitators helped individuals and families plan.... Second, facilitators assisted people to develop and expand their support networks.... Third, facilitators played an ongoing support role for implementation.... Some families called the facilitator their 'guide,' while others noted that feedback from facilitators often addressed things the family had not yet considered."

British Columbia recently implemented legislation that gives individuals and families an opportunity to choose direct funding and facilitators who are independent of the service system. So why has the Liberal government not provided for facilitation and independent planning in the legislation? I was at a meeting with the minister recently when her staff indicated the government is currently conducting a pilot on independent planning and facilitation models.

The need for facilitation is also emphasized by Families for a Secure Future. They believe that independent planning supports need to be included in Bill 77 to make the most out of direct funding options. It will help direct funding to be utilized effectively. Families want help to implement plans once they get direct funding and set individual goals for community participation. It is an essential ingredient for any direct funding model. Families for a Secure Future contend that it is not a role for the application centres. Application centres who are assigned responsibility for determining eligibility and assigning priority are not able to provide independent planning and facilitation. They also see a conflict of interest as they are responsible for funding.

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The other thing I'd like to highlight when we talk about facilitators in comparison to the application centres: If the rumour that I am hearing is accurate, which is that there will be eight to 10 application centres across Ontario, the distribution will be too far afield to have any kind of substantive facilitation occur. It will all be about coming in, processing the application, doing your hour interview and moving on. They will not have the same appreciation or understanding of what the family is currently going through and where the family is headed in terms of their individual needs.

Various pots of money: The Ministry of Community and Social Services has a number of pots of money to support persons with developmental disabilities, all with different parameters and rules. As well, some families receive disability support from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care through community care access centres.

Multiple funding envelopes are frustrating for families. They need to spend their time filling out time-consuming applications for each individualized program and, I might add here, in many cases on an annual basis. So even for someone whose physical diagnosis is not going to change, we are asking them every year to fill out the same cumbersome application in detail. Both shared services at home and Passports have long and different applications, and yet much of the information is already known.

Section 3.1 of Bill 77 defines "disabilities" as "likely to be lifelong in nature," yet every few years a new, complex application is needed. If the disability is lifelong in nature, once the determination is made, should families constantly need to be assessed for eligibility? Although an individual's program may need to change, do we really need all the paperwork that goes with an annual application? After all, someone needs to review and approve all that paperwork, and therefore there is a significant administrative cost and burden to the ministry.

At this point, we do not know whether the new direct funding will continue to be offered in separate pots, with separate applications. As all this will be determined by regulation and policy directives, I would encourage the Liberal government to proactively streamline the process and make it work better for families. What families need is a coordinated approach to direct funding.

Finally, application centres: The centres will be responsible for determining eligibility, carrying out assessments and prioritizing. This is central to the new direct funding model, yet there are no details on the structure or oversight of these new centres—and I underline "new," because they're not going to operate under the community living structure at this point and they are not operating under the CCAC, as I understand it. But this comes back to how quickly we've been asked to debate and discuss Bill 77, because for every person you ask, there seems to be a different answer as to what the application centres will look like.

So the questions I have are—and it's unfortunate that we can't get some answers in the response: How many regional centres will there be? How soon will the application centres be operational? Will there be satellite centres to assist with the large geography of our province? Will there be regional waiting lists or one central list? Will the application centres be like community care access centres, or does the ministry have another governance model they are reviewing? Will existing regional offices and staff take on this role, or are we looking at a whole new hiring process for that expertise?

Page 7 of the bill refers to "classes." What kinds of classes of application centres does the government

envision? It is unfortunate we don't have some of these details now, while we're debating them.

All of the above are subject to regulation or policy directive. However, as we debate this bill, I feel that the government should provide answers by outlining their plan for the introduction of application centres. If the Liberal government shares the framework, then they will receive valuable advice from policy experts in this sector. It's a little disconcerting, actually, to hold that kind of detail in their pocket, so to speak. It makes you question why they aren't being more open about how the process will spin out. Unfortunately, at this point there are too many unknowns. I believe that individuals and their families deserve more clarity from this government.

Finally, I'd like to touch on transfer payment agencies. When I met last week with OASIS, which is Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs, they emphasized that they will continue to need financial support for their day-to-day and residential programs. The legislation provides that before the day the legislation comes into force, persons with developmental disabilities "shall continue to receive ... those same services until such time as the application centre for the geographic area in which the person resides conducts a reassessment...."

Although the transition clause will provide stability for the transfer payment agencies in the short term, it is not clear what impact the reassessments will have on individuals or their service providers. It is also not clear when the reassessments will occur or how often the reassessments will be done.

I understand the new assessment tool has been piloted by a group of service providers across the province. I think this is another area where there should be transparency and open dialogue about the new assessment tool, in order that it meets the needs of all persons with developmental disabilities, both those receiving direct funding and those receiving indirect funding.

I hope to have an opportunity to meet with service providers over the next few weeks or months so that we can learn more about their reaction to this legislation. I think it is incumbent on us, as legislators, to ensure substantive consultation with all stakeholders and families who have chosen to play an important role in their children's lives, and I'll speak briefly from personal experience.

When I had my first job, I had to get a car. So I went to the local credit union. Of course, you appear before a board and they ask for a co-signer, and my father co-signed. I remember very, very clearly to this day, his appearing before this group of 10 board members who said to him, "Why are you prepared to co-sign your daughter's loan?" Dad said, "Because she's my daughter, and if I don't do it, who will?"

I would hate to think that we, as a government, are standing in the way of individuals and families who want to assist and want to play a critical role in their daughters' and sons' lives because of their developmental disabilities. I would hate to think that we, as legislators,

frankly can't get out of the way and enable them to participate as fully as they can in their children's lives.

In my remarks today, I have only highlighted some of the many issues that need to be debated as we consider Bill 77. As I said at the outset, I believe that the bill, which repeals an existing law and replaces it with a new one, should be considered carefully by all members of the Legislature. This bill should be sent to committee so that the members can hear from a broad range of interested parties. At committee, the ministry should provide further details on how the direct funding model will unfold, particularly related to the application centres.

I hope, and I believe, that all members should be open to the possibility of amendments to improve this bill. The legislation has not changed since 1974. In contrast, many people with developmental disabilities have moved forward and are leading enriched and meaningful lives in their communities. As we move to have our laws catch up with the experience of individual Ontarians, we must take the time to review the new Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act carefully. I look forward to further debate and discussions on Bill 77. I'd like to turn it over to my colleague from Whitby-Oshawa.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'd like to start by thanking my colleague the member from Dufferin-Caledon, for sharing with me her time for debate today on Bill 77, the Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act. This is a very important piece of legislation, and I'm very pleased to be able to participate in this debate.

1440

Let me say at the outset that there are many good aspects to Bill 77. I do commend the minister for bringing forward the concept of individualized funding and allowing families the choice of whether to continue with transfer payment agencies or whether to develop their own individual supports for their family members. In doing so, we of course recognize that everyone is different, everyone has a unique personality and unique set of needs, and that one size doesn't fit all. So I think that when we talk about people with developmental disabilities wanting to live their lives in the community, we're recognizing that fact, that everyone is different.

The concept of direct funding under Bill 77, I would concur with the minister, is long overdue and very much needed. There's no question that people living with developmental disabilities in our community—and I'm quoting the words of a family member here—"need to get off the couch and into the community," because that's the reality for many people when they finish high school.

It's been alluded to by my colleague the member from Dufferin-Caledon that once these young people graduate from high school there are no real programs out there for them in the community, that there are no meaningful life skills—day programs are very few and far between, depending on where you live. There are very few social and vocational opportunities. We've heard this time and time again. I've heard it since I became a member of this Legislature just over two years ago. I've heard this from families coming in to see me to say, "You need to have

something out there for our children to do. They're sitting in our basements watching television." The reality is that that's all there is for them to do.

I've also had the good fortune to be associated as a volunteer director for a number of years with an organization in my riding of Whitby–Oshawa called the Abilities Centre. We're trying to build a multi-purpose social, recreational and performing arts facility for all people with special needs. In the process of developing the programs and the needs of this Abilities Centre, we've consulted with about a hundred different focus groups, with people with all varieties of needs. I can tell you that the needs for young adults with developmental disabilities came up as the number one priority. That's how bad it is out there. There are virtually no supports out there for these families and young people in these situations.

I think we need to look at the needs not only of the young people, the adults with developmental special needs, but also their parents. I think we have to sit and look at the situation from their viewpoint. We've heard from families that this is the greatest concern in their lives: "What's going to happen to my son or daughter when I'm no longer able to meet their needs?"

The reality is that this is coming to a crisis. As more and more families who've been there for their children year after year, who've been the volunteers in Community Living and all of the other agencies out there, always expecting that there were going to be supports and services for their children when they were no longer able to provide for them—all of a sudden, that day is coming and they're finding that the supports are not there. I can't imagine as a parent how that must feel. We need to be there for their children but also for their families, to make sure that they are reassured that there are going to be supports out there for them.

That's what we need to do with this bill. There's no question that change is needed, that families need this kind of support. But what we're seeing, apart from some empty rhetoric in this sort of bare-bones framework of Bill 77, is that the reality is that there's not adequate funding. For this to work, we need to make sure that we can put the funds into those programs to help those people get out into the community—off the couch and into the community.

There have been numerous statistics that have been quoted. In my home region of Durham last year, for example, there were 40 families who made applications for Passport funding. Only five of them were accepted. The Passport funding, of course, is the funding that allows people to get some support workers to go with their children into the community for social, recreational and work opportunities, whatever it happens to be.

The practical result that this is having is that these families by and large are very close together—they've formed a close-knit community—but when there's sort of an arbitrary picking and choosing of one family getting Passports and another family not getting Passports—you're happy for them of course, the families tell me. But

it's starting to—not pit families against families, but it's creating divisions in a community that wants to remain cohesive. They simply can't understand on what basis the Passport funding is being allocated. Is it just a question of first-come, first-served, and it gets paid until there's no money left? Are they allocating on the basis of physical special needs in addition to developmental special needs? No one seems to really know.

The only thing people do know is that there is not nearly enough funding. It is, in fact, ridiculously underfunded.

We have heard from the minister and from some of the other government speakers on this subject that there was a lot of money allocated in the last year: \$200 million for this sector. That's quite true, but as I understand it, most of this money was allocated for pay equity, to bring the people working in the developmental services sector up to par with some of the other workers in other sectors.

There's no question that that money is long overdue, and certainly no one would begrudge any of the wonderful people who work with people with developmental special needs. They do unbelievable service. They're incredibly kind. They're almost family members. There's no question, no one would say they shouldn't be paid more. But what happened as a result is that less than \$10 million was allocated last year to fund the Passport program. We need much more than that.

The other issue is, if individualized services are going to be offered to families, how are they going to be able to deliver these services? The act—I believe it's section 12—indicates there is going to be a series of application centres set up across the province that will function as central portals for people wanting to obtain these services. When they do that, we're not sure whom they're going to be delivered by, whether it's going to be community living agencies or separate agencies, or whether there's going to be another level of bureaucracy that will be built up. I hope not, because we need the money to go into direct service.

The reality is that when families go to the application centres and make application, they are told that there is the option of direct funding, but there is no provision in the legislation—this is a good area for an amendment, in my view—no indication as to how families go about setting up these plans for their children, so that if they get an allocation of money, they're going to know which agencies or individuals they can approach to create these plans for their children and make sure they are facilitated in a way that is going to get the best value for the money.

We've heard about several of these wonderful groups that have been working with families. In most cases where specialized individual plans have been put in place, they have been facilitated by such groups as Families for a Secure Future, which is a wonderful organization. The goal for all these plans is to build circles of support around these individuals and their families so that at the time when the families are no longer able to fulfill all their children's needs, they will have other services in place, both paid and unpaid. It's like creating

family circles and some paid circles around people so that they have supports to carry on in their lives and the family members know that their children are going to be cared for in the future.

It's not an easy thing to put this kind of plan in place. There are many other factors that have to come to bear, including legal and estate planning considerations. It's not simply a matter of saying, "Here's a cheque for \$10,000," or whatever it's going to be. "Go out and buy those services." You have to know what services you need and where to find them, and then how to set them up. I think that's something that really hasn't been addressed, and not much time has apparently been spent dealing with that.

In speaking with some of the family members who gathered with us on the lawn after question period today, we certainly heard that there is a need for these facilitators to make sure, from the government's perspective, that value for money is being obtained. Family members have told us they believe that in most cases—not all—they would be able to deliver or put in place supports for their children at about half what it's presently costing the government to maintain their children, with whatever resources they have available for them to date.

They know what the family needs. They are listening to their own family members, who are telling them what they want. I think that's another whole piece that's missing from all of this too. What does the individual want? How do they tell facilitators, and how do they tell the government, what they want? We need to involve family members with them so they can help to share their vision for the life they want to lead in our community.

We certainly have heard how many families are struggling. We heard many really unbelievable examples of how families are coping out there, with very few supports. There was one young lady out there today with a family member who is in a wheelchair. She's also developmentally disabled. She needs more than one person to lift her out of her chair. It's very, very heavy work for her family members. When her parents need respite, they have had an arrangement with a long-term-care facility to put their daughter into the long-term-care facility for a few days. But they've recently been told that the long-term-care facility is no longer going to be able to accept their daughter for respite, so they have absolutely nothing left to turn to. That means that their daughter simply cannot get out of bed at all to do anything, and that's not right. In a society like this, we need to give those young people the supports to be able to go out and live in the community to the fullest extent possible.

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I would like to just close by saying how important and wonderful it is that our new Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Onley, has called on all of us to do whatever we can to promote inclusion in our societies and to start looking at people's abilities, not their disabilities. That requires a fundamental shift in the way we look at people, in the way we look at their lives. It's a paradigm shift.

It's not going to be something that's easily done. There are a lot of voices that need to be heard here, so we need to take the time to give the consideration to this bill that we need to, to make sure that it's not just going to be empty rhetoric, that it is going to deliver the programs and services that we need for these young people and their families.

Many of those voices feel that they have not been heard, so I would certainly urge the minister and the government to take the time that they need to in order to have committee hearings on this. We need to have a lot of time devoted to these committee hearings for everyone to be able to come to Queen's Park to have a say, and they need to be travelling hearings. I would submit to the government that this is really imperative because, particularly for this group of people, it's very hard for them to either get here on their own—because they can't leave their family members behind; they're directly responsible for their care—or it's very difficult to get their family members to come with them, to travel that sort of distance. Added to that is the fact that that one parent in many situations has had to leave paid employment to care for their family member, so they're financially disadvantaged. We really need to think about that in terms of allocating the time for committee hearings.

I think that if the government wants to make this bill meaningful, if they want to make this kind of change in our society, if they want to be able to give everyone in our community a chance to live a life with dignity and to meet their full potential in our society, we need to take the time that we need to spend on this bill to make sure that it's not just empty words and hollow rhetoric.

I thank you for the opportunity today to speak to Bill 77.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I have comments. I listened in- tently to my colleagues from Dufferin-Caledon and from Whitby-Oshawa and what they had to say. What they had to say were very compassionate statements, very knowledgeable statements, talking about what needs to be done.

I'd just like to zero in on two of the things they were talking about. The first one was the range of topics that is going to be subject to regulations. It is a very huge range, as the member from Dufferin-Caledon listed out. We in opposition of course—and I think even most of the government backbenchers—have no way of knowing what those regulations are going to be and how they are going to shape the very body of the bill. When I make my speech in just a little bit, we will be asking for public hearings not only on the bill itself but on many of the aspects related to the regulations. We want the public to have input so that when the government and the minister decide what is going to be contained within the four walls of the regulations, there has been considerable public dialogue, and they're not done in a vacuum.

The second thing that was brought up—and both speakers talked about this—was the demonstration that took place outside of Queen's Park today, the hundred or

so people who came to demonstrate about this bill. Although I would suggest that most people would generally be in favour of the provisions of the bill, there has been to date a woefully inadequate public consultation period. When you have 100 people demanding to be heard, when they do not feel that their views have been expressed within the body of the bill, when people seem, at this point, to be unhappy, I am simply calling upon the government, in view of the fact that that many people showed up on the first day of the debate, to ensure that there is adequate public consultation during the committee stage. I trust that members of the government are listening, and I trust that they will accommodate that.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I was listening carefully to the two members, from Dufferin–Caledon and from Whitby–Oshawa, commenting on this bill. I think it's a very important and legitimate concern and question to be sent to the government side. Of course, this bill is going to committee, and we're going to hear from a lot of people. I want to tell you that as part of the government and specifically part of this ministry that was introducing this bill, I went to many different briefings. I am very happy and honoured to be a part of this government and part of this ministry, because this issue means a lot to me.

As I mentioned many different times, I worked for the Ministry of Community and Social Services as a counsellor for people with developmental disabilities and also with Community Living London for many years. I know the difference and the impact it will have if we move the people from facilities to group homes. Why not treat them as independent people, as individuals who have the ability and capacity to deal with their own issues, with support from the agencies, group homes, government or families? It's important. I know that it's not going to be just openly handing cheques to people left and right, as the member from Whitby–Oshawa mentioned a few minutes ago; no, there's going to be responsible accountability of the people who are receiving those cheques. The government has the right to interfere and stop any activities, or stop the funding, if they see any financial, health or other risk that those people would face from any actions.

I want to assure the House and all the people listening to us that it's going to be an incredible achievement if this bill passes, in order to reform this act in a fashion that will help and support many people with disabilities across the province, and also their families, because it's important to us.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to add some comments to the speech from the member from Dufferin–Caledon and the member from Whitby–Oshawa, both relatively new members of the PC caucus and both doing an excellent job, particularly on the developmental disabilities file.

I've seen at first hand how individualized funding—in the rare cases where it has been approved in the past—has really made a difference. As I mentioned the last time I had a chance to speak, I met with Debbie Vernon, her sister and her mother, and I saw how the individualized

funding they received was able to provide for a great quality of life for Debbie's sister. It allowed her to stay at home with her mother, and they were able to hire a couple of people to assist her, and she was able to get out and participate in community activities.

Unfortunately, now her sister is in a long-term-care home, in an environment that doesn't provide the same quality of life because the government wasn't responsive to increasing funding to allow them to be able to maintain that independent lifestyle. But I have seen how individualized funding can really make a difference in the lives of those people who need it, and I believe also that it can make economic sense, where it's more reasonable in terms of the cost than the cost of providing some of the alternatives, like a long-term-care home.

This government hasn't, in the past, been particularly receptive. In fact, I made many requests for the Muskoka Family Network to meet with the past minister, and the minister would not even meet with the network, so I'm pleased to see this legislation coming forward, but I'm a little concerned that it might be creating more bureaucracy. I'd want to see the money actually get to those who need it. I look forward to this going to committee, I assume this summer, where there will be lots of opportunity for public input.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I too enjoyed the comments made by the MPP from Dufferin–Caledon and Whitby–Oshawa, certainly a well-researched position as to how they see this bill unfolding in the lives of people living with a developmental disability. I agree with part of what they said, that it certainly needs improvement in the way that it differs between the aims that the bill is trying to do versus what it's going to end up doing. I also want to lend my support to the fact that they have taken the time to listen to the people with developmental disabilities, because they and their families are the people who know best what is needed for their loved ones.

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Quand on pense au travail qui a été fait par les deux députées qui ont présenté leurs positions, on s'aperçoit qu'elles ont pris le temps d'écouter les gens et leurs familles qui vivent avec une personne qui a une déficience intellectuelle, et c'est un aspect important de ce que les néo-démocrates veulent voir.

Certainement on s'attend à ce que ce projet de loi aille en comité et qu'on lui donne suffisamment de temps pour prendre le temps d'écouter les gens. Elles ont mentionné qu'aujourd'hui sur la pelouse, bien qu'il ne fasse pas si beau que ça—non, en fait c'était pas si pire, la température—il y a quand même au-dessus de 100 personnes qui sont venues, qui veulent être entendues, qui veulent qu'on les écoute, qui ont quelque chose à dire par rapport à comment les services pour les personnes qui ont une déficience intellectuelle devraient être offerts en Ontario.

On est d'accord que ça fait longtemps que ça devrait être amélioré et changé. On a une opportunité; profitons-en pour faire quelque chose de bien, quelque chose qui comptera pour maintenant et dans l'avenir. On entend y participer.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Response? The member for Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I would like to acknowledge the comments from the members for Beaches–East York, London–Fanshawe, Parry Sound–Muskoka and Nickel Belt. If there is a thought that I could leave the members with as I wrap up my discussions on Bill 77 in this House, it is that more detail needs to be set out in the legislation so that we have the opportunity to debate it and discuss it. While the words sound positive and proactive, it's important for us in opposition and, quite frankly, families and caregivers to know that the words actually have some substantive action behind them.

One of the things that were raised with me at the demonstration this morning was the need for the minister to listen. They have been requesting a meeting. Very similar to the issue raised by the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, they've been asking to have the minister listen to them, to hear their concerns, to hear their success stories.

I guess I've been one of the lucky ones. I have heard the lucky 10%, we'll call it, who have had access to the individualized funding or Passport. There are some good stories that need to be heard by the minister and by us as legislators, because it has been working. So let's take that pilot project, for lack of a better word, that Passport is and expand it so that more people and more families have access to it. Then we can continue to improve the lives of all of our communities by having Passport available and open to others. So more detail needs to be there, and more consultation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I will be rising today to give the lead-off speech for the New Democratic Party and to welcome people in the gallery today: families with people with disabilities, community living and others who are so vitally interested in this bill and what is going to happen to this bill.

There are about 120,000 people in this province who live with disabilities. There are about 12 million Ontarians, so that's about 1% of everybody in the province of Ontario living with a disability. Those people are part of our communities. We are them and they are us. They live with us; they shop with us; they go to school with us. We need to be inclusive at all times to everyone who lives in our community. We need to be inclusive with the 120,000 Ontarians who live with those disabilities and to understand their needs and do what we can as a society to make sure that those needs are met and that those people are able to fully contribute to a rich and diverse society like Ontario's.

We need to understand that disabilities will continue throughout people's lives. We need to ensure that we look very carefully at the varying degrees of support that people need throughout their lives, that those needs change from time to time and that the abilities in fact of many people change from time to time as a result of education, training, experience and work experience, and

that something that was thought impossible 20 or 30 years ago is now becoming quite the norm today. People who thought that the disabled, especially those with an intellectual disability, would be unable to work now see them holding down full-time, meaningful work. When I go into the supermarket, I see people with intellectual disabilities stocking the shelves, and doing it very well. When I go into the pet store, I see them there helping to groom cats and dogs, sweeping up and doing all kinds of meaningful work, and doing it very well. In some cases they do it without a job shadow and in some cases they need a job shadow in order to make sure it gets done.

We also know that 40% of people with developmental disabilities have multiple disabilities that may require supports in complex care, sometimes for 24 hours a day. We know that theirs are very special needs. They need society to understand those needs, to accommodate those needs, to care for those needs and, dare I say, fund those needs.

Mr. Speaker—people in the audience may wonder, but the Speaker has changed—I have had the privilege over my life of meeting many such wonderful individuals. I'd just like to highlight a couple of them and the impact they have had upon me.

The first one was a gentleman who I got reacquainted with on the day this bill was brought before the House last week. His name is Brian. Brian is one of the Three Guys. That's the name I first got to know him by, the Three Guys. They occupied an apartment in the St. Clair-O'Connor community which was run by the Mennonite group in Toronto. The families decided that they needed to make sure their sons were able to cope for themselves, as the families were getting older, and they wanted an opportunity for these three guys to experience living on their own. Now, they didn't live entirely on their own; they usually lived with one of the family members present, especially during the evenings.

Brian, who I got reacquainted with, was able to hold down a job and traveled extensively around the city by TTC. This was an opportunity for three guys to live together and experience life on their own, and their families made sure it happened. I was very pleased to see Brian all the time. He was a bit of a neighbourhood character. He always had a pipe, although he never put any tobacco in it and never lit it, but that was his sort of claim to fame. People would see him with his pipe going down the street, talking to neighbours. I was very pleased to see him here, because he had moved away. He had moved to Scarborough, but he told me that he's moving back into another place in Beaches–East York called Project Amik, and he will be moving in very soon. There was just an example of a family that saw that something could be done and set out to do it.

There's another person I want to talk about today. He's part of what was called the Dream Team. I think many people in the Legislature would have met the Dream Team. This is a team that advocates for supportive housing for people with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities. The Dream Team is often a thorn in the side

of government. I know they write many letters to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and to the Premier advocating for more social housing and better access to people who need it.

One of the people I met through this was a gentleman named Martin Levine. Martin Levine calls me up at least once a week. He is not my constituent, but I met him—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes, he's the constituent of Michael Colle—excuse me, the member from Eglinton–Lawrence—and Michael Colle, I'm sure, would know him very well. I don't know whether he calls the member from Eglinton–Lawrence as often as he calls me, but Mr. Levine called me today. He wanted to talk of many things, mostly about supportive housing, and wanted to make sure that the message is out there.

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Mr. Levine's story was a very sad one. When he was about five or six years old, his family, recognizing that he had an intellectual disability—what Mr. Levine describes as being a “slow learner”—decided he was better off institutionalized. They put him in an institution where he lived most of his life until he was well grown up. He had many problems living in that institution. One day he was freed and was able to go out. He works sometimes, and he has ODSP. He got married, and he lives in his own apartment and enjoys life to the full.

When you see, in contrast, his institutionalization at the age of five and the way he was able to adapt once he was allowed freedom, when you can see how he has put himself into society, then you have to understand that what has happened has been a good thing. This all happened in the last 20 or so years, when society's attitude toward people with intellectual disabilities changed remarkably.

The third person I'd like to talk about is Ron Bowman, a Peterborough resident living with cerebral palsy. Again, he was put into the Huronia Regional Centre, and was treated with all kinds of drugs and barbiturates. He claims, and I believe, he was often heavily sedated during that period. Today, with the support of Community Living Peterborough, Ron lives in his own apartment. He visits his family regularly, and uses a scooter to run errands. He does his own banking and shopping. He's really integrated into the community. He shovels the snow in the building's parking lot. He lives an active life. He has freedom to make choices, and he is not at all static.

When we see these success stories, I have to say that we know we need to get as many people as possible out of institutionalized settings and fully integrate them within our community. I just wanted to leave those three stories before I began the body of my speech.

We know, Madam Speaker—for the TV audience, the Speaker has resumed—that there is a great need, and we know that the need today is not being met. We know, according to the Provincial Network on Developmental Services, that approximately 13,400 people with developmental disabilities are waiting for residential services,

day supports and other supports and services, and that many families are waiting five years or more for 24-hour residential services.

We know that Ontario has not been able to accommodate them, largely due to the fact that money has not been spent in this particular area. We know that the money needs to be spent and we know it has to be spent. I'm going to deal with this in a little bit, because I'm not sure that within the body of this bill, or within what the minister or the parliamentary assistant have said, that there are going to be any financial inducements that go along with this bill, which causes me some great concern.

We know that some \$325 million is going to have to be spent by this government over the course of its mandate in order to get that waiting list of 13,400 reduced to zero. I have not heard any statements from the government side on whether that is going to be done with this system or with the old system; they're both pretty much the same.

We also need to know that a single person on ODSP receives a maximum benefit of \$999 a month, or approximately \$12,000 a year, on which to subsist. I say “subsist” because I don't think it's much of an existence. Twelve thousand dollars a year is some \$7,000 below the poverty line for a single person living in a city in Ontario. Twelve thousand dollars is not enough for a person on ODSP to fully function in the life of the people of Ontario. It simply is not enough.

I have been an advocate for a long time, and have posed questions in this House to the minister and to the minister before about people on ODSP, particularly those with developmental disabilities, getting to keep some of the money when they are able to obtain a job. It seems to me to make only common sense that if people are able to go out and get a part-time job and are able to use some of the skills and abilities that we now laud them for having, if they're able to make even minimum wage and to go out and to do things like working at PetSmart or at McDonald's or stocking shelves in a grocery store, we ought not to take that money away from them. I have been an advocate and I will continue to be an advocate that if people on ODSP—particularly those with a developmental disability, but certainly everyone—are able to get part-time, meaningful employment, they ought to be allowed to keep that money. They ought to be allowed to keep it up to and including \$7,000 a year, which will take them to the poverty line, which will take them to \$19,000 a year, so that having an intellectual disability is not a life sentence to live in poverty.

Applause.

Mr. Michael Prue: I don't know whether there is anything in this bill—I didn't hear the minister talk about it—but this should be part of the bill as well. It's not going to cost the government any money. Right now, they claw it back, which to me is wrong, because surely, these people have every bit as much right in our society to live at or above the poverty line as any of the rest of us. I am asking the members opposite, and I see at least one minister who applauded what I had to say, to look

very carefully and seriously at setting a figure which is not what it is today. I think \$100 a month is all they're allowed to keep, and after that the rest is clawed back. They should look to making that—

Hon. Ted McMeekin: It's \$316.

Mr. Michael Prue: It's \$316—look at making that around \$650 or \$700 a month, which would allow not only for the person to be able to afford bus fare, meals and things and maybe some clothes to go to work, so that they can raise themselves up and live in dignity above the poverty line. I would hope that that's one of the things that is done.

I also want to talk about something else which has disturbed me for a long time for people with disabilities. Again, I'd like to go back to Martin Levine, whom I talked about earlier. One of the reasons that he contacted me in the first place and one of the things that still bothers him is that he was, of course, put into an institution by his family at a very young age and got out when he was a grown man. You can imagine the traumatic experience that was to him. I know his family must have cared for him or thought they were doing the right thing because when his parents died, they left him an inheritance. And do you know what this government did with that inheritance? They clawed it back. Although the inheritance was only a small amount of money, because he was on ODSP, when he got the inheritance, he lost his ODSP until the money was gone.

There was a man who virtually got nothing from his family all the time that he was growing up. Finally, before his parents died, they recognized that they needed to do something for their son; they needed to leave him with a small inheritance. They were not wealthy people, so it was not millions of dollars; it was in the thousands—I believe it was under \$10,000. The government clawed it back. The government said, "You're on ODSP so you can't keep it." So the government cut the ODSP off until the money was gone and then put him back on it. I think that was wrong.

I'm hoping that an ODSP bill will look at this, will look at the government's practice of clawback, will look at a person like Martin and what he suffered in his life and understand that getting something from your parents, however small it is, was important to him. It was important because that was the only benefit he ever got from them. I certainly know that if any members of the Legislature have ever been lucky enough to be left money in a will, we didn't see it clawed back from us. We didn't see it taken away, not even in taxation. It's not until it gets up into the hundreds of thousands of dollars that you are subject to any kind of tax at all. Here it is, a person on ODSP doesn't have that benefit, and a person with an intellectual disability suffers in this way.

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We believe that there needs to be—as well as allowing people to keep the monies that they earn if they're lucky enough to get a part-time job—a substantial increase in income support through ODSP. It has not been raised

nearly enough. It was allowed to stagnate for so many years from 1995 until this government came into office.

I'm sad to say that, although the government continues to talk about increasing the rates, the rates have not even kept up with inflation: 3% one year, zero the next, 2% the third year, and I guess 2% later on this year, when it comes around time towards the end of the year again. That is not even to the level of inflation that has taken place over the last five and a half years, so that people on ODSP, people with a developmental disability, are actually worse off today than they were under the Harris years. I think this government has to recognize that as well.

When I've asked questions in the House, the minister answers: "Well, of course we're doing things for families, we're doing things for people with children." But the sad reality is that most people on ODSP, 90% of them, have no children, or no children for whom they are responsible because some of them are older adults. They have no children for whom they are responsible, so the money that goes into education, which is laudable, the money that goes into children's food programs, which is laudable, the money that goes into children's clothing and other things, which is laudable, does not affect them. So what we have done as a government is to put them and keep them in poverty.

We believe that those rates need to be increased, and need to be increased rapidly. The budget committee, as we traveled around Ontario, listened to something like 15 deputations, and the lowest that anyone asked for in those deputations was 10%. Sadly, we see 2% for half a year in the government's response. So I would ask the minister, in bringing forward this bill, to look very carefully at whether the rates are sufficient.

I'd like to talk about, again, the importance of looking after the workers in this sector. We have two sets of workers. We have the unionized workers, who primarily belong to OPSEU and CUPE, and we have those who are unorganized, who work for many of the agencies. The sad reality is that the wages are not adequate. Even in the unionized workforces the wages are less than the comparable wages in hospitals, less than comparable wages in municipalities, and less than comparable wages in other public sector areas that do pretty much the same kind of work. For those who are unfortunate and do not have a union on which to fall back, you will find that their wages are even worse. OPSEU and CUPE run in the \$17, \$18, \$19 range per hour, and those who work for many of the institutions who are not unionized can earn as little as \$10 an hour, some of them making \$12 or \$13 and some making more, but certainly not to the unionized level.

We need to, first of all, narrow the gap between the two. But, secondly, we need to recognize that even the unionized wage is not a strong wage for people with whom we trust our most vulnerable and precious citizens.

I'd like to talk again about the adequacy of the public hearings, because in my conversations—and I heard what the members of the Progressive Conservative Party had to say today—there are many out there who do not

believe there have been adequate public consultations to date. I know that the minister held consultations, but they were not public consultations. They were for invited groups and I'm not sure how many times groups were invited. I'm definitely sure that those who did attend tell me that they do not see the statements that they made reflected within the body of this bill.

We are asking that the public consultations be broad and meaningful and that they be held across this province to ensure that the 120,000 people who live with developmental disabilities are heard, either directly from themselves—and many of them are capable of doing that—or indirectly through their families and caregivers if they are not able to do so, to make sure that we get everything right. As has been said, the last bill was brought forward and passed in this House 35 years ago, and what we pass in this House is probably going to have to last for 20 or 25 years when we're finished. We had better make sure that we get it right. That's part of the public consultation.

I'd like to go on about how the bill says that it aims to lead to a more flexible, fair and accessible system that is "sustainable in the long term"—that's an actual quote—and that it seeks to achieve this end by modernizing and transforming the system. I have some questions to ask. I looked at this bill—and not all bills have them, but many bills have a preamble. Certainly the Constitution of Canada has a preamble. Certainly the American Constitution has a preamble. In the American case—because it's probably even better known than our own—it says, "We the people ... in order to form a more perfect union," and then it goes on and on talking about that. Everything within the Constitution of the United States, and certainly everything within the Constitution of Canada, flows from that. So when you read a constitution, or when you read a bill or a piece of law, you know that it has to meet those criteria. Certainly our own Bill of Rights in Canada and our own Constitution set up individual and human rights within the body so that you know that any law or any regulation that flows from it must meet those.

I think we need to have a preamble to this bill. I believe there should be a preamble that sets out very clearly where this Legislature sees the rights of people with disabilities. It needs to be settled very clearly in law so that when the minister makes regulations or when civil servants or the courts interpret the act—as they surely will have to do starting from day one, because it's about four inches thick—they're going to be looking at it and they're going to make sure what it means. They should be able to have a preamble at the beginning which sets out exactly what this Legislature expects people with disabilities to have and exactly what this government expects to be able to deliver to people with disabilities, so that the interpretations of a very complex act can be made reasonably secure to anyone reading it, so that it cannot be misinterpreted and so it will be given the broadest, most readable and understandable interpretation possible by those who must enforce it.

I have to ask as well: Will the modernization that the minister has set out in the bill actually improve

accessibility? Will it improve fairness? Will it improve sustainability? I don't know. But I know that if it has a preamble, you can rest assured that people will be able to read that and make sure that those other promises are met, because everything that flows from the preamble will have to be geared towards that end.

The bill does take positive steps. It provides for flexibility for financial supports to family members and it may promote a more individualized and responsive support. For family members capable of providing care directly, the legislation can be a step ahead, a step forward. The bill creates single-point-of-entry access centres to assess individuals and create a service profile. This makes real sense in terms of waiting list efficiencies and in terms of standardizing assessment. It proposes multi-disciplinary case management based on a single point of entry, and it's increasingly seen as a best practice in the provision of integrated care.

However, we do have some problems and we do want to seek some assurance from the minister. I hope, during the committee stage with people's interventions and discussion, that the single-point-of-access application centres, when combined with individualized budgeting, as proposed in the bill, have the potential—I'm not saying it's going to happen, but have the potential—in the future, without some very clear guidelines and perhaps without a preamble, to destabilize the current community-based supports and services. We know that they're doing a great job. We know that they don't have enough money. We know that some people have difficulty accessing them and prefer to have a family-controlled system, but we also know that they do a good job and we do not want to see them destabilized—all of those community groups that seek government funding and that have done yeoman service over the past 50 years to make sure that people with intellectual disabilities and with disabilities are treated fairly in our society. I want to make sure that they continue to exist and continue to be nurtured, and I don't want anything in this bill to eventually destabilize them.

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We look at what is happening in the CCACs, the community care access centres. We look at the single-point-of-access approach, which can result in the rationing of services, with some actually being cut back. We look further to see what has happened with the disastrous competitive bidding process. We have that for home care. I'm worried that we are potentially setting up the same kind of service for people with disabilities that we've set up for home care. We know what's happened in Hamilton. The minister was forced to reverse. We know what happened before that, when Elinor Caplan was called in to try to remedy the system because it didn't work. We know that it's continuing not to work, with the repeated calls from community after community to get away from this kind of competitive bidding process. I'm just afraid that that same provision may also be within the body of this bill.

I'm asking the minister to carefully look at this and to make sure that this does not occur in a bill which is

intended to help. If it ends up coming down to a competitive bidding process—who can sell it for the cheapest rate—we know what happens. We know that whole communities of workers get destabilized. We know that people who have looked after families in home care have suddenly found themselves on the street and have to go back and ask for a job from the winning agencies, usually at less money. We know that when that happens many of them get frustrated and leave and that people who have come to rely on their services can no longer do so. I don't want to see that happening here. So I ask the minister to look very carefully at that.

We know, as well, the things that are happening in other areas: the low wages and the high turnover and the low-paid staff. We know that in some cases there have actually been higher costs as a result of the competitive bidding process. We understand that centralized needs assessments and waiting lists can be useful tools, but they can also become problematic if they are also providing direct funding to individuals, as I will discuss in just a little bit.

There are some serious problems with the act. They are so serious that it is unlikely that the act will actually improve accessibility, fairness and quality of service unless a number of things are done. The most important weakness in the bill is that it forces a direct funding system on people, even as we are uncertain what percentage of the affected population actually favours it or how many will benefit from it.

I do know that there are some families who want it. I see Bill and his family up there in the Speaker's gallery, who came to my office. We had quite a discussion about how well that system works for Bill and for his family. We know that. We know that the system can, in some cases, work very well and that there are those who advocate for it and often prefer it. But we also know that there are many people satisfied with the current regimen, satisfied with the care workers and the support groups that are out there and are doing, as I said before, yeoman service.

I am not sure at this stage whether the government has any statistics or records or anything other than anecdotal evidence of how many in the affected population actually favour going to a voucher or direct funding model.

There's also the problem that without increased funding to service agencies, an expansion of direct funding will reduce options and support for individuals and their families. The reason why this may happen is that people might take their loved ones out of one of the agencies and of course, then, the agency which is funded to look after those individuals will have the money dry up. It will either go to a different agency or it will go to individualized funding. You will find that many of the agencies may find themselves destabilized in the short term. Even in the long term, as people move from service to service, as needs change, as people change, you may find this happening as well.

I have three real concerns, just to get right down to them. I've got less than half my time left. I'd better hurry up.

First, the bill allows that the province can either provide funding for services through a community agency or through application centres for direct funding to an individual or family. We are concerned that this shift to direct funding to individuals will harm individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The responsibility for securing, hiring, training, supervising and evaluating care providers will be offloaded onto families. I know there are capable families out there who can do all of that, who will be proud to do all of it and will do it brilliantly, but there are also many families who will not be capable of doing those things, will not be able to secure, hire, train, supervise and evaluate in the way that it will need to be done. We know that without adequate supports, the families will be unable to know what services and supports they need to realize the vision of a better life for family members with disabilities.

We are concerned about third party brokers who help families find appropriate services. I'm not sure exactly what the broker's role in all of this is. If the broker's role is to sit down and develop a life plan and to help the family accommodate and find the right mixture of workers and programs to help, then that may not be a bad thing. But if the broker's role is to simply say, "There's so much money available. This is what you might only get. You have options (a), (b) or (c), or maybe no options at all. We'll help you find a person to work for minimum wage to help your son or daughter. That's your option," I'm not sure the broker is going to be doing the service that we expect. So I need to hear more. I think that many people are a little wary about the role of the broker.

We're also wary about whether the broker will be an independent person or a government person, and how much money the broker will make out of this service. I don't deny people a decent living, but if they're taking money off the top that we are expecting to be spent for our people with disabilities, we need to know how much that is going to cost.

The bill outlines the responsibility of service agencies to employees to maintain certain standards of accountability and allows corrective action in the case of non-compliance. Ordinarily, we'd say that that's pretty good. However, there are no accountability mechanisms for third-party private service providers. These brokers will have an automatic cut off the top, as I suggested. What will stop them from simply funding the lowest bidder to provide services? What will stop them from doing that? I don't know. I hope that doesn't happen, but what will stop them from doing that?

Nor is there accountability for individuals receiving direct funding. Those receiving direct funding must submit receipts and reports on the care provided, but there is nothing in the bill to enforce accountability or ensure appropriate qualifications of caregivers. So it's okay for a family to turn around and say, "I gave Mary Smith \$15,000 or \$20,000 last year to look after my son." There is nothing in the bill that says Mary Smith had any of the qualifications necessary to do it. If the brokers are going to have a life plan, then the brokers should also be re-

quired to list those people who have the necessary qualifications, either through experience or education or a combination of both. I would like to see this included in the bill or in the regulations, something which is silent to date.

We worry too about direct funding causing or potentially causing the entire sector to become vulnerable to privatization and the lowest-common-denominator service provision. We've seen this before in the competitive bidding process in home care, and we're afraid that it may happen here. I don't know whether this is the intent, but I certainly hope not. We are very wary about a bill that does not actually speak to this issue. We hope that through the entire process, the minister and the staff can explain this to committee members and to the general public to assuage these fears.

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We know that wages in the developmental services sector are already 25% to 30% less than for comparable work in the health, education and municipal sectors. I've already talked about that, but I just want to reiterate it. They are having difficulty and are challenged to attract, train and retrain qualified staff.

Secondly, we are concerned that individualized budgeting will undermine agencies' abilities to plan and effectively deliver quality services and undermine the continuity of care. The agencies will be unable to rationally plan for service provision, and under this bill a needs assessment of each person with a developmental disability will be conducted and then a dollar value will be attached based on the service needs of that person. We think that may be the wrong way around, and we'd like to hear what comments, if any, the minister has on this.

The service agencies will then receive the funding that comes with that person for their service need. There is no provision, that we can see, for administrative or overhead costs. There is a potential serious erosion of infrastructure because it's not being funded. There is a piecemeal approach where there is no ability for long-term planning or growth. There is no measure similar to a minimum standard of care or mandated services. Individualized budgeting moves; agencies become vulnerable as clients move and take their funds with them. This is an unpredictability motion being set up. As people leave, go to different jurisdictions, have different needs or go to new agencies, you're going to see the agencies that have had the care, the control and the dollars that go with them lose out.

There are no economies of scale that we can see by doing this. We know that agencies, as they get larger, can sometimes do things and include more people for the same dollar amount, but we're not sure that this can happen with individualized funding, and we need to look at that.

Thirdly—and again I go back to the preamble—we need something in the bill, and I would suggest that it's the preamble, to convince us that accessibility to services will actually be improved. The bill talks about fairness, but fairness has to be a right to a decent level of care.

We need to do more than just make sure—start out assessing people and then determining what level of care they need. We need to make an assessment and determine the care and the provision of that care that will lift them to the highest level of which they are capable, so that the monies have to be spent not just to make sure they have an adequate level of care, which is sort of one-size-fits-all, but to take an individual and see that person as an individual and to determine what care provisions can be given, what training, what opportunities and what education can be given to lift them to the position that they can have the highest quality of life possible within Ontario.

That's the system that we need to make sure happens, not just saying, "You're going to get X number of dollars because of this particular disability." We have seen that in terms of budgeting for special meal allowances. We have seen people on ODSP who require a special meals allowance. Their disability, their disease or their condition has to be listed on a formulary and then they're given \$20 for this particular disease or \$15 for this disease or no dollars for this disease. Quite frankly, it simply doesn't work. I know that the government did it to try to save some money, but it doesn't work. What we should be looking at is what amount of money that a person with disabilities who needs a special meal allowance—how much money they need on a rational basis based on medical evidence to bring themselves to a level where they can be able to look after themselves. And we need to do the same thing here. It may not be a meal allowance, but we need to do the same thing here. What is the amount of money necessary to bring them to the appropriate level, not some kind of thing like, "You have this intellectual disability or you have this particular problem and therefore we're going to add an extra \$10, \$15 or \$20 to the formulary that you're going to get, or your care provider is going to get, at the end of the week."

There is a serious danger that some already in the system will lose services they are receiving. We think that because everyone with a developmental disability will be assessed, including those already receiving services, and since there is a goal of equalizing services for everyone with developmental disabilities, people may lose services they've already got.

It isn't clear whether any additional dollars are available for this program—I'm going to get to the money in a minute. I know that's a function at budget time, but I don't think there was anything I saw in the budget this year that leads me to expect there are going to be many dollars available. We know that we need some \$325 million just to get the 13,000 people off the waiting list, and that does not even include taking the people from the remaining three homes, if we are going to make sure that their quality of life does not deteriorate.

This is a huge amount of money, and we need to know it is actually there. We know that what may happen is that people may be forced to move out of their area and leave their loved ones and family behind in order to get services.

We're worried about the way that waiting lists are being enshrined in the legislation. There are actually provisions in there talking about a waiting list. I've never seen that before in a government bill. Maybe there are in some other bills; I don't ever remember seeing them. But this bill talks about waiting lists and what to do with waiting lists. You're actually enshrining in the four walls of this bill the fact that there will be a waiting list.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: We're reducing the waiting list.

Mr. Michael Prue: I hear the parliamentary assistant say they're going to reduce it, but the bill itself talks about waiting lists. I would envisage an Ontario where there is no waiting list, where people with developmental disabilities—people with disabilities—have an adequate opportunity for care, so that when they come forward and say, "This is the care that I require," then the care is provided.

Why should families have to wait three to five years—10 years, in some cases—to get care for loved ones? If there aren't sufficient monies for a direct payment system, why should they have to wait? This bill sets out that there are waiting lists and what to do with the waiting lists. I'm encouraged that you want to reduce them, but this is the first time I've ever seen a government bill that actually talks about a waiting list and enshrines it in legislation.

In summary, we have grave concerns that the bill will not actually deliver the support that people with developmental disabilities have a right to. It may create a system that is more flexible, but flexibility does not necessarily translate into fairness, accessibility and quality of care for all Ontarians. Indeed, some call for flexibility of health care to allow some individuals to jump the queue and buy private health care. That's also being set out there.

That would be a more flexible system, but most Ontarians and most Canadians oppose that because they see that it is not fair and that it would undermine the quality of care in the publicly funded health care system and reduce accessibility for those remaining in that system. The same would be true here. So I want us to very carefully look at the system that is being proposed, to make sure that the quality continues, that people are not allowed to jump the queue, that families have to go and get decent and trained providers and that families are given all the options.

I would just like to conclude, if I could—I've rambled on a little, but I want to be very succinct at the end about what we expect to see in this bill in order to support it. First, we support funding to close family members who provide care. Where members fall under categories defined—you can use whatever criteria you want, but I think the best one is the family medical leave act, where, if you are looking after a person who is disabled and are that person's spouse, parent, step-parent or foster parent, or you are the child, step-child or foster child, then you would have a right to family funding, so that if the family makes the conscious decision to care for the loved one at home, there should be some financial remuneration—not

a wage—made available to allow families to look after loved ones at home.

What the families would perhaps not have in terms of education or expertise, in terms of looking after an individual, they would certainly make up with love and certainly, if they want to be a whole family and to make sure that the children, the adults, the sibling or the spouse are looked after in a meaningful way, it could be done through an accommodation of giving some type of family allowance to allow a person to remain at home and look after that loved one. That is done in many jurisdictions around the world and certainly should be looked at here.

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I would also have the proviso that if a person perhaps is alone and does not have a spouse, a parent or child, if there is a close family member, they would be entitled as well. I don't want to open it too broadly because I see it open to abuse in the long term if it's open to just literally anyone. But certainly, a spouse, a parent or a child looking after a loved one should be allowed to do so with some remuneration.

Secondly, the NDP does not support direct funding, at least not as set out in this bill. We are against parents or family members taking on the responsibility of recruiting, hiring, training, monitoring and evaluating care providers or related duties. We feel that direct funding will not, in many of the cases, work.

Third, the NDP supports an increase of \$325 million over the current government's mandate to end waiting lists for developmental services. This is what the developmental services industry says is necessary and what we believe is necessary if this bill, in the fullness of fruition, is to work. The monies have to be made available to do it as well. It's no good passing a bill for which there is no more money, trying to do the same with less, just trying to do a little bit more by robbing Peter to pay Paul, having workers who are unionized and making \$17 an hour and then farming out that work at minimum wage through the provisions of this bill. We are looking for the government to be committed, along with the provisions of the bill, to spending some \$325 million over the current government's mandate. We've got three and a half years in which to spend it, which makes about \$100 million a year we expect to see in the next three budgets. What is paramount is the development of a sustainable, long-term funding framework to ensure that all Ontarians with developmental disabilities have continuous access to the supports and services they need.

Fourthly, the NDP supports improving wages and working conditions for all workers in the developmental service sector to be able to provide the best quality of care. This will involve closing the wage gap for developmental service sector workers and other social service sector counterparts. We need to support the development of measures to ensure fairness for independent developmental service workers, many of whom are among the lowest-paid care workers in this province. Certainly their job is vital and necessary, and ought to be compensated far more than it is being today.

Fifth, the NDP is opposed to merely attaching dollar amounts to individuals with a developmental disability through the assessment and individualized planning process, which would occur at the application centre. Instead, we want to see an assessment model focused on the equity of outcomes and the benefit to the individual in terms of quality of life and community involvement. Those are the keystones. That is what is important. If we are going to assist—I'm going to say it again—we want to see an assessment model focused on the equity of outcomes, the benefit to the individual in terms of quality of life and community involvement. If you don't have those, I don't know why we're adopting a bill and changing things, because that surely should be the goal.

Finally, we want to emphasize that there have to be broad-based public hearings on this bill. The hearings should address the bill itself but should also address the regulations. I heard from one of my Conservative colleagues earlier about all of the regulations that are subject only to ministerial prerogative. This is a huge bill. It was four inches thick when it was handed to me the other day. I know that the compendium made up a good portion of that, but that's all the other bills and acts on which this bill is going to impact. We need to make absolutely sure that there is broad public consultation on all aspects of this bill. There should also be discussion on a preamble, and I've talked about that at least four or five times. I just want to say one last time how important I believe that this is to this bill. A preamble will set out a goal by which everything else is judged. It will set out this government's and future governments' commitment to the people of this province who live with intellectual and other disabilities, so that people will know that everything that is contained within the body of the act has to be interpreted so that it is consistent with that goal, so that no bureaucrat, no judge, no parliamentarian and no one else can look at the bill and say that it says something other than what it is intended to do. A preamble would be essential.

I would ask the minister—it wouldn't take government lawyers very long to cobble together five or six or 10 sentences setting out that preamble at the beginning to ensure, for all time, that when people read the bill they can go back to the preamble and give it the broadest, most comprehensive and best interpretation. If that is done, that is going to help a lot.

We need much more than the consultations from the transformation strategy generated more than two years ago. We know that those were undertaken, but we're not sure that they are sufficient. The face of developmental services has changed rapidly in the last 50 years and, certainly, even more rapidly in the last 10.

Rigorous public hearings must be had to gauge the response, the feedback, and to strengthen the legislation that we hope will be progressive and responsive for at least the next 20 years. We agree that changes must be made to address the serious gaps in the provision of developmental services in this province. We fear, however, that this legislation will not do that.

I am asking the minister to assuage my fears and those of all of the families who are here today, to assuage the fears of the unions and the people who work in the sector, and to assuage the fears of families and people with developmental services who are afraid of what may happen. If we are to march forward into that brave new world that the minister talks about, into that place where we are going to do what we are capable of doing, where everyone will have a part, where every community person will have a say, where every community person will live amongst us and be respected, we need to make sure that we all start marching to the same drummer. We need to make sure that we are all happy to take that first step and to go there.

I am asking the minister, the parliamentary assistant and the government opposite to take the time. This is a big bill. It's a bill that cries out for public debate and public comment. I am asking you to take the time to set up the hearings across this province. They can be this summer. It could even be over the fall. I'm not sure what the government timetable is, but take the time to do that, to make sure that we have it right and to make sure that people with disabilities in this province—120,000 strong—in the end, are the big winners, the only winners and the real winners.

To Brian, whom I talked about in the beginning, who is coming back to our community and is very much a part of it; to Martin Levine, who has lived his very tough life and who has some very real questions about why his ODSP was clawed back when he got a very small inheritance when his parents died; to all of the hundreds and thousands of people who subsist on \$999 a month; to Bill, who was up there in the audience, who came to see me—and his family—about care and support and individualized funding: I ask that the government take the time to consider all of this. When the final decision is made, make sure it works for every one of those involved.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: I've really appreciated hearing the comments from the member from Beaches–East York and other colleagues, because this bill is very personal to me.

In February 1959, my younger brother was born. After two very healthy children, my younger brother, Ted, was born with Down's syndrome. So I appreciate all the challenges—the good days and the challenging days—that families go through with a sibling who has Down's syndrome.

We've gone through a period of time—I remember that when I was six or seven, people would refer to my younger brother as mentally retarded, a term that was always very difficult for me to comprehend. Then we went through a period of time when we referred to them as individuals with developmental handicaps, and today, of course, we use “individuals with intellectual disabilities.” In post-war Ontario, we actually took people with intellectual disabilities and sent them to Oak Ridges, the facility at Penetanguishene, to house them with

individuals who were deemed to be criminally insane. We have moved forward over the last number of years, and I'm certainly delighted that this legislation is coming forward.

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Within a block of where I was raised in Peterborough, we had five families who all had either a son or a daughter with an intellectual disability. I remember around the kitchen table a discussion with my parents and my older brother about whether my younger brother, Ted, would perhaps go to Smiths Falls, D'Arcy Place in Cobourg or one of those other institutions. I always took great pride in my family's making the right decision to keep my brother in Peterborough, and went through a number of programs with community living. He experienced in those days the system of segregated education. But I'll get a chance to provide some more reflections as we work through this debate.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I've listened very carefully to the comments that were made by the member from Beaches–East York and the member from Peterborough. Although we don't agree on all of the points with respect to this bill, I do think we all agree that we need to bring some compassion and humanity to this debate, and both of those members have done just that.

I would just like to comment on a few of the points that were made by the member from Beaches–East York indicating his concerns both with respect to the ODSP funding and the issues around inheritances being lost as a result of the clawbacks and so on, and also with respect to the issue of direct funding, and how family members will be able to deal with it and be able to put life into the hopes and dreams of their family members and make sure that they have a life full of dignity, living in the community.

I would say that this just points to the fact that this is not an easy issue. There are several significant issues that have to be dealt with here, both from the structural issues, the legal and estate planning issues that have to be dealt with to put a life plan in place for their family member, and also the social and human aspects about it. How do you build those circles of support around your loved one to make sure they are going to receive the support they need in the community and be cared for when perhaps you're not there anymore? They need to have people there who love them and care for them every bit as much.

I think what we have heard from family members, though—those family members who are able to step up and be involved in the individual life plans for their family members—is that they've already had significant success with special services at home. I have no doubt that if we're able to put things in place with this bill, they would be able to put those supports in place quite readily for their family members.

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to rise in this House and speak about Bill 77, the developmental services legislation. As I understand it, the current act, the Developmental Services Act, is 35 years old. I think it's time for us to look into this act, overhaul it quite sig-

nificantly and make it more updated to conform with the needs of Ontarians in the 21st century. I commend the minister for bringing the bill before this House.

As I heard speakers before me in this House and learned from their presentations, the current bill before us addresses three major points. One is improving the service, where it allows people to apply directly to the service and get the services they need. The bill also addresses choice. It increases choices for applicants, where applicants can receive funding which is tailored to their needs. It also addresses fairness, where the application form assessment is equal for everyone. And there's also priority for people who really need these services from the government.

Since our government took office in 2003, we have committed half a billion dollars to this service. This is a huge service. About 40,000 Ontarians every year receive services under this act, which costs the government \$1.57 billion a year. I think that what we are doing in this House is laying the foundation for the provision of this very-much-needed service to Ontarians for years to come. I commend the minister again for bringing this bill to the Legislature.

M. Shafiq Qadri: Nous nous sommes engagés à répondre à ces besoins. Nous avons élaboré un plan de réorganisation global visant à rendre le système plus équitable, plus accessible et plus durable. Nous avons annoncé la fermeture des trois derniers foyers gouvernementaux pour les personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle dès la fin de mars 2009 et nous nous sommes engagés à développer un plan d'action pour l'avenir—un plan réaliste, novateur et évolutif.

Si ce projet de loi est adopté, il nous permettra d'améliorer les services, car les personnes n'auront à s'inscrire qu'à un seul endroit pour obtenir des services, et d'offrir plus de choix, car les personnes pourraient recevoir des fonds directement et à la mesure de leurs besoins. Ce serait plus équitable car les personnes concernées utiliseraient la même trousse d'évaluation des besoins, et la priorité serait accordée aux personnes dont les besoins sont les plus grands.

I'm honoured to rise in the House today and comment on Bill 77 in reply to the member from Beaches–East York. I always appreciate his very sincere and, I would say, relatively non-partisan commentary today. I think that when it comes to the needs of the disabled, of those who are particularly special among us, we need to act with one voice in a show of unanimity for the support of Ontarians with special needs. I would encourage each of us to support Bill 77.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Response?

Mr. Michael Prue: I'd like to thank the members from Peterborough, Whitby–Oshawa, Richmond Hill and Etobicoke North for their comments today.

The member from Peterborough spoke. I'm not sure how much it related to what I had to say, but I did enjoy the comments, because again, they brought it down to family. We all have family or friends; we all know

people with intellectual disabilities. They live with us, they live amongst us and they are part of us. Your statement brought that all home, and I thank you for those comments.

The member from Whitby–Oshawa talked a little bit about the clawback, and it remains one of my passions to talk about that, in terms of people earning money and being allowed to keep it. Particularly, those with intellectual disabilities should be allowed to keep at least the amount of money they earn on top of their ODSP, up to the poverty line. Having an intellectual disability should never, in our society, be tantamount to living your entire life in poverty. We need to start looking at that. We need to start looking at making that accommodation without clawing that money back.

The member from Richmond Hill, I think—I'm not sure—read from a government-prepared text. I don't really think it had anything to do with what I had to say, so I'm going to skip that. But I thank him for his comments all the same.

I thank the member from Etobicoke North for his comments as well. I attempted, in this, to be as non-partisan as possible. We need to talk about this reasonably, rationally and realistically. There are concerns that have been voiced to me and, I'm sure, to all members of this House, about some provisions of the bill that people are not comfortable with or need further explanation of. I'm hoping that the minister takes this to heart, and that there are meaningful, long-term, comprehensive public discussions at the committee stage.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Further debate?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I think, as many of my colleagues stated earlier, that it falls to each generation to upgrade pieces of legislation in order to serve Ontarians. As we've said earlier, the special Ontarians who are served by these particular pieces of legislation, programs and initiatives deserve our attention and care. I would commend the minister for bringing to bear her considerable expertise, wisdom and humanity to pieces of legislation that really have not seen full integration—bringing the light of day in terms of scrutiny and overhaul—in what seems something on the order of about 35 years. That's why I'm honoured to rise in this House on behalf of the government for our reading of Bill 77, the Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act.

As legislators, we have to view the legislation in context. Our previous developmental services legislation spoke to a time when we supported people with a developmental disability primarily in provincial institutions. That, I think, deeply speaks to the heart of this legislation. Of course, as generationism unfolds, as medical, social and biological thinking evolves, a great deal has changed. Therefore, to keep in lockstep with the future, with our evolving thinking, the legislation itself must change. Clearly, our previous legislation does not address the realities of today. That's perhaps at the heart of what

Bill 77 is all about. As a responsive and responsible government, we have to change our legislation if we hope to stay in step with the times and with the new ways of thinking.

I can say, for example, that as the MPP, the member of provincial Parliament, not only for the great riding of Etobicoke North, but also as a physician in various contexts, having dealt with a number of special Ontarians, you can see the challenges that they experience, but on top of that, the care, love and humanity, day to day, that is administered to them by their families.

I think it's very apropos that the McGuinty government, as an institution, helps to bring that same level of care, humanity and trust to this particular sector. That's why we should all support this reading of Bill 77, because we support people with a developmental disability in communities, and not institutional care across Ontario.

Today we support people with developmental disabilities in homes. These individuals have as much right to live and contribute to the fabric of our communities as anyone else. In fact, if truth be told, our communities are stronger when we include all individuals, in particular those with special needs.

Aujourd'hui, nous aidons les personnes atteintes d'une déficience intellectuelle à vivre en société, dans toutes les collectivités de l'Ontario. Aujourd'hui, nous ne plaçons plus les personnes atteintes d'une déficience intellectuelle dans des établissements; nous les aidons à vivre dans les foyers.

Ces personnes ont tout autant le droit que les autres citoyens de participer et de contribuer à la vie de leur collectivité. En fait, nos collectivités sont d'autant plus fortes si elles font appel à tous leurs citoyens, quelles que soient leurs habiletés.

Our journey to where we are today in developmental services has been a gradual evolution, full of challenge, full of fury, full of intense debates on all sides. We have worked closely with our community partners who provide dedicated service and forward-thinking programs for people with a developmental disability. These partners know how important it is that people with a developmental disability have the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest that they are able.

As Premier McGuinty often shares with us in caucus meetings, part of the thread of the McGuinty vision since day one of our mandate, continuing into our many mandates to follow, is the idea of potentiating Ontarians, the idea of helping each and every one of us, in particular those of modest backgrounds, modest circumstances or with special needs, to reach their full potential in the many, many different spheres of life that we measure. It's with the passing of this particular proposed legislation, Bill 77, that we hopefully will move fully into the 21st century and show the communities that are affected, their families and of course our fellow Legislatures across Canada what it means to be accountable and sustainable.

But this piece of legislation is also about compassion for the individual, their families and friends, and for the community agencies that support them. Our proposed legislation is all about the future of developmental ser-

vices. Let me set the stage. We have, as you'll know, something on the order of about \$1.6 billion worth of developmental services in this system currently. This supports something in the order of about 40,000 individuals, as we've seen, many of whom we had the honour of hosting and welcoming today here at Queen's Park. Of course, that list continues to grow. We knew that we needed to make some very dramatic changes, and the best way was to consult deeply, widely and broadly. Families are telling us that they need an easier time getting help from the system and that they need assistance to negotiate some of the complexities involved. They need services and supports closer to their homes, not in segregated communities, not in institutionalized care that is spread disproportionately across the province.

Families are telling us that they need more choice, as well as flexibility, in the supports that they receive. As a physician in particular, I can tell you that needs vary according to the individual, tailored experience of each person and each family. For example, while a particular deficiency might be the same on paper, and the label may be the same and the society or group that they may belong to may be the same, each of these special Ontarians is exactly that: not only special in terms of their needs, but also special or unique and non-duplicable, and that's why we need to bring services to mind that are completely cognizant of these facts. That's why Bill 77, our proposed legislation, will hopefully respond to a number of these challenges and needs.

Les familles nous disent qu'elles veulent obtenir plus facilement de l'aide. Le système actuel est trop compliqué. Elles ont besoin de services et de soutien près de chez elles, pas dans des collectivités isolées et mal réparties sur le territoire ontarien.

Les familles nous disent aussi qu'elles souhaitent plus de choix et de latitude pour obtenir du soutien. Notre projet de loi permettrait de répondre à tous ces besoins.

If passed, this legislation, Bill 77, would lay the foundation for Ontario to build a new, more modern system of developmental services over the coming years and it would make the system sustainable for future generations, a real showcase or legacy of the McGuinty vision for Ontario.

There are a number of key features of the legislation. I'll address a number of them. First, we would—this is perhaps more cosmetic, but I think it has some deep, echoing implications on the ground—get rid of archaic terms such as “facility” and “institution.” The three remaining facilities in Ontario in fact are set to close, as you'll know, by March 2009, and therefore that language, like the thinking that went into the creation of that language, will be obsolete, as will those particular former “institutions.” Second, we want to create application centres for access to developmental services across the province. Staff at these centres would be trained consistently across the province and have the tools they need to help families through the application and assessment process. As you can imagine, dealing with the government on such personal, emotional and urgent needs can

be a challenge and a daunting process at the best of times. Therefore, I would once again commend the minister for bringing expertise to this area to help facilitate these opportunities for accessing care and on-going monitoring.

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For example, setting up application centres would mean that families and individuals would only need to go to one place to apply for supports, instead of having to tell their stories over and over at several individual agencies. Of course, this is part of the streamlining and integration of services, perhaps another thread that is running through the McGuinty vision from top to bottom.

We also want people to have more choice and flexibility in purchasing supports that are tailored to their specific and individualized needs. We want to provide funding through community agencies or through application centres for direct funding. We also want to get a better handle on service planning. That's why we should actually start collecting information from individuals in application centres to improve service planning throughout the province. Without careful planning, forecasting future service needs and changes is challenging and difficult. And because we're in a time when families and individuals have more say in where they will live and how they will live, we want to give them greater peace of mind. We can do this by introducing accountability requirements for agencies, individuals and families who would receive direct funding. Requirements that would include provisions to allow us to take corrective action against agencies or application centres will of course also be included, because that is the opportunity or the mechanism of accountability, how we can actually redress any other areas of concern that may arise.

For example, there are from time to time, through families and other agencies and well-wishers, concerns about health and safety or financial administration. If taken together, the elements of this proposed legislation will serve us well into the future. This legislation would allow this government and future governments the latitude needed to build and maintain a modern system of developmental services.

As has been stated repeatedly in this House, we have come a long way, but it falls to each generation to take up the torch and to move legislation forward. I think Bill 77 is incorporating the best thinking and the best practices in this area. There is an extraordinary need out there, as I mentioned earlier, registering something in the order of about \$1.6 billion in program funding and something in the order of 40,000 individuals currently being served, and of course, the list—with the services, finances and resources—continues to grow. That's why I think it is time for us as provincial legislators here in the province of Ontario, showing leadership across to other Legislatures in Canada, to come together and take our developmental services system to the next level.

We've worked hard to make sure our bill would give us the legislative framework we need to support all the

various initiatives and programs that we pledged in 2004 when we first announced plans to transform the developmental services system. We have worked hard as a government, under a McGuinty vision, and we have worked hard as a partner with families and agencies and individuals who work and provide care, love and humanity to these special Ontarians.

Il est temps pour nous, les législateurs de cette province, d'unir nos forces pour faire entrer notre système de services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle dans l'ère nouvelle. Nous avons travaillé fort à ce projet de loi afin de nous doter du cadre législatif nécessaire pour poursuivre ce que nous avons entrepris en 2004, lorsque nous avons annoncé notre plan de réorganisation des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle. Nous avons travaillé fort, en tant que gouvernement et en tant que partenaires des familles, des bénéficiaires et des organismes, pour élaborer ce projet de loi.

I encourage all members of this House and the people of Ontario to support this legislation. Let's move forward and pass this bill, which will hopefully help the many special Ontarians who deserve our care, regard and humanity.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Questions and comments?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I was listening to my colleague from Etobicoke North speak, eloquently describing the essence of the bill. It was an incredible speech, and I was listening to him carefully.

It is important to keep reminding the people of this province about this issue and how we are going to tackle this issue. I think the member from Etobicoke North spoke in detail about how the government has opened the act after 35 years and is trying to modernize the act in order to serve people with intellectual disabilities. As I have mentioned many different times, this issue is dear to my heart because I work closely with people with intellectual disabilities in both settings—group homes, and also a facility.

I think it's important for us and it's important for the government to open it up and give choices to the people, to the families and to the individuals who want to choose a funding method or a service, if they wish to do so. It is important to give flexibility to the people, because they have a right to have choices, and also to give a right to the family to be close to their loved ones. As you know, in the past, they were shipped to different facilities across the province of Ontario, far away from their parents, from their loved ones. This bill will allow them to live closely and also to purchase a service the family thinks is important to the members of their family and which also can benefit them well.

It's important, and I want to commend the member from Etobicoke North for detailing the vision of this bill. I hope all the members of this House will support it, because it's important for us. I also hope this bill will go to committee, and we'll listen to many different people from across the province of Ontario, because always,

when you listen to people, you enlighten yourself and create more incentive for us to keep proceeding forward.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It is my pleasure to rise today in support of Bill 77.

The key word in this debate is "communities." Whereas in the past most of our support went towards institutions, which in many ways isolated those with disabilities, Bill 77 will provide Ontarians with disabilities more choice and control over the support they receive, which will ultimately allow them to live independently throughout communities across all Ontario.

I would like to recognize everyone at Community Living Mississauga for all of the tremendous work they do in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South. This is a group made up of so many dedicated people, including president Mike Pawelchuk, past president Bonnie Yagar and an army of devoted volunteers. Ms. Yagar, I should point out, was recently presented with the Gordon S. Shipp Memorial Award, recognizing her as Mississauga's Citizen of the Year.

I am proud to be a part of a government that recognizes the tremendous value that every Ontarian can make to their community. Bill 77 will allow for people with disabilities to live in and, at the same time, contribute to their communities across the province. That, we will all benefit from. I am proud to rise today to support Bill 77.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): The member for Etobicoke North for a response.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I'd like to acknowledge my honourable colleague from London–Fanshawe of the class of 2003—the honourable Dr. Khalil Ramal—as well as the MPP for Mississauga–Brampton South, from the class of 2007. I think they've also lent their support and their very strong remarks on what Bill 77, regarding developmental services, is seeking to do.

Ultimately, I think we are here as part of the McGuinty government—the McGuinty vision—as I said earlier, to help all Ontarians and, in particular, special Ontarians to reach their potential, to not offer excessive obstacles and obstructions to their seeking care and programs and initiatives. As you know, when you have such a diverse group of programming—something on the order of about \$1.6 billion serving some 40,000 individuals and counting, the number rising as we speak—across the province, it can become unwieldy and a challenge to navigate such a massive matrix of programming. So the minister's efforts to actually consolidate this—to allow one-stop shopping, to allow a more easy access to all the various programs, particularly for individuals who themselves may have difficulty navigating at the best of times—is something that should be commended.

As well, we talked a little bit about some of the perhaps symbolic removal of the naming of institutions and facilities in turning them into homes. I think that's also part of a larger humanity that this bill speaks to: that these are individuals who deserve our care, our love and our trust. That's why, with other members of the Legislature, I strongly support Bill 77.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Further debate?

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Madam Speaker, I understand there was agreement that the House would adjourn at 4:30, so I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Is it the pleasure of the members that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members; there will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1632 to 1638.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Mr. Sterling has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 28; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): I declare the motion carried.

The House will now stand adjourned until tomorrow morning, Tuesday, May 27.

The House adjourned at 1638.

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Mr. Ted Arnott	2032
Hon. Peter Fonseca	2032

Doctors' services

Mr. Gilles Bisson	2033
Hon. George Smitherman	2033

Visitor

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters)	2033
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