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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

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Monday 16 April 2012

Lundi 16 avril 2012

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 16 April 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 16 avril 2012

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome back. It's now time to introduce guests.

Mr. Mario Sergio: From the riding of York West, we have a business group visiting our city and our province. It is from the land they call Calabria, or the California of Europe. We are honoured today to have this business group. It's led by Mr. Pietro Caracciolo—they are sitting on the east lobby side, Speaker—and Oscar Caracciolo. We have Flavio Filosa, Salvatore Tarasi, Rocco Chiappetta, Antonio Pinto and, from our wonderful city of Toronto here but originally from Calabria, none other than Mr. Angelo Vinci, who is leading the delegation here. I'd like to welcome them in the House today, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome our guests. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Rod Jackson: I hope the whole House will join with me to welcome a good friend of mine, Sylvia Herr, visiting us from Berlin, Germany, today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to welcome Ms. Hong Hueng, Mr. Roger Zhang, Mr. Jackson Zhang and Mr. Marshall Zhang. Mr. Marshall Zhang has done very fundamental research in the treatment of cystic fibrosis while he was a high school student. Today, he'll be receiving the ORION Leadership Award. Please join me in welcoming him.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'd like to welcome the parents of page Georgia Koumantaros: her mother, Sovla Katsogianopoulos, and Demos Koumantaros.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It gives me great pleasure to introduce the father of one of my staff, Mr. Tony Myrans, who is an outstanding Ontario educator who has taught at Yale University, St. Andrew's College, worked for the national archives and mentors students in his retirement. It's a great honour to have him here in the House with us today.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm glad to introduce my daughter, the eldest one, Julie, who is 35 years old today. She's here in Toronto along with my grandson Nathaniel, who was at my apartment last night. We had great fun this morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome them as our guests.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PROVINCIAL DEBT

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Your recent budget was a surprisingly weak document when it came to confronting the debt crisis or the jobs crisis in the province of Ontario.

Let me tell you about the debt crisis. Your unsustainable spending over the last eight years has in fact put us on course to doubling Ontario's debt by next year. When the Premier came to office the debt was \$140 billion, and it will be \$280 billion next year. So what all the Premiers from John Sandfield Macdonald to Ernie Eves did, you're going to double it in your time in office. Doesn't this put us, Premier, at substantial risk if interest rates rise? Aren't we heading for a significant debt trap as a result of your unsustainable spending?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I appreciate the question from my honourable colleague. I'm sure that he took the opportunity, as did I last week, to meet with Ontarians, to hear from them and, in particular, to listen to them with respect to the proposals contained inside our budget.

I must say that Ontarians, broadly speaking, are very supportive of the budget that we put forward in this House. I would ask that my honourable colleague take the time to speak to his caucus—and I will quote from them in a moment, Speaker—and that at the same time, through his caucus, he listen to their constituents.

My honourable colleague would have us believe that the only choice is between voting for this budget and moving ahead with an election. In fact, that is the choice, and I believe that Ontarians want us to move forward with this budget. They think it strikes the right balance. It protects health care, it protects education, it invests in new jobs and it reins in spending.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: To the Premier: With due respect, that was not even close to answering the question I asked about, which was the pending doubling of the provincial debt and the vulnerability that you've set us up for for interest rate increases. In fact, Premier—this is from your own budget documents—a 1% increase in interest rates would result in an additional \$500 million in borrowing costs.

We know that interest rates are at generational lows. We've not seen interest rates like this in our lifetimes. Aren't you putting our house on a significant fault line by

not understanding that interest rate rises will cripple your economic plan?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague says that he's concerned about the debt level, and yet he's not prepared to support a budget that takes significant measures to restrain spending.

In fact, we cut spending by \$17.7 billion. We ended subsidies that we can no longer afford for horse racing and the ONTC. We closed our underutilized jails. We sold off government buildings and reduce office space by one million square feet—that's the equivalent of a 42-storey building. We slow down some capital projects, and we cancel others. We freeze compensation costs. That will save us some \$6 billion over three years. All of those speak to what I believe is our shared objective to bring spending increases down. So I say again to my honourable colleague, he still has time to reconsider.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Speaker, only this Premier could believe that the solution to a debt crisis is to spend more money. Your deficit actually goes up, not down. Spending increases in 14 of your ministries, Premier.

Don Drummond, whom you commissioned to do a report, said on page 78, with respect to debt interest, "The danger here is obvious. As interest rates rise to more normal levels, so will the cost of servicing the growing debt, diverting dollars away from public programs." Despite the fact that interest rates are at record lows, Premier, you've failed to build in any kind of plan around that inevitable rise in interest rates. This single point will cost us \$500 million, sir. Isn't this a glaring fault line in your plan that you did not take into account the inevitable increase in interest rates and the cost of borrowing here in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague knows, in fact, that we've built in lots of prudence by way of contingencies and reserve funds. I think he understands that. But I think, Speaker, this is what it boils down to: You're not going to support our budget if you believe we've got to continue to protect the gains we've made in our schools and protect the gains we've made in health care and we've got to invest in jobs and we've got to rein in spending in a way that is responsible and prudent and allows us to bring a balanced approach. You're not going to support the budget if that is the bent that motivates you.

If your preference is your personal political interests as opposed to the greater public interest, Speaker, you're not going to support this budget. So again I say to my honourable colleague, there is still time for reflection on his part—reconsideration. It's a good budget, it's a sound budget and it deserves his support.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: I do find it disappointing that the Premier has not taken the time to

reflect on the expensive mess he's made of the finances in the province of Ontario. We fully expected a budget that would reduce spending, that would reduce the deficit, not increase it.

Premier, I ask you to look at page 174 of your budget papers. You say you're reducing spending. We looked through this: the health sector, up; education, up; post-secondary, up; children's and social services sectors, up; justice sector, up. They're increasing spending pretty well across the board, except in one area called "other programs," and all you find is a paltry \$1 billion in savings. That is less than 1% of spending in the province of Ontario. How can we take you seriously when you brought forward such a comatose budget that does not rein in the size and cost of government? Isn't it disappointing to the people of Ontario that you found less than 1% in savings?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, it's about choices, and I think choices have to be informed by the values that we share as Ontarians. Ontarians want us to protect the gains we've made in our schools. They want us to protect the gains we've made in our health care. They want us to move ahead with laying a new foundation for new growth and new jobs, and they want us to balance the budget. We've chosen the date of 2017-18 because we believe that is responsible.

My honourable colleague has a different perspective. He thinks that we should be making cuts to our schools. We don't support that. He thinks we should be making cuts to our health care. We don't support that. He thinks that we shouldn't find occasion to partner with the private sector to create new growth and new jobs, Speaker. We don't support that. That's a fundamental difference of opinion. I would encourage him once again to speak with his caucus, speak to his constituents and listen to what they have to say. They support our budget, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, this "other programs" spending category contains projects like amortization of infrastructure that has already been announced, cost-sharing agreements and pension liabilities. Most of these costs are in fact fixed costs.

I will point out to you, too, Premier, that the biggest area of spending increases—and there have been a lot of spending increases in the government—is not health, is not education, is not justice. It's in this "other programs" line; in fact, a spending increase of 9.6% on average each and every year. This is the area of fastest growth.

Premier, with all the fixed costs in that envelope and your penchant to ramp up spending in the "other programs" category, why should we give you any credit that you can find 1% in savings? I think you'll actually increase spending.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I'd recommend to my honourable colleague that he speak to members of the business community and economists and financial analysts to get their take on our budget. I would also—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's hard to listen, Speaker, if they're shouting. And I would recommend that they take that into account when they actually listen to their constituents and financial analysts and economists.

I would also recommend that they listen to the former Premier of Ontario and former Finance Minister Ernie Eves, who said, "I think they've taken a step in the right direction." I don't think there's any doubt about that. I'd recommend that they speak to Janet Ecker, the former Ontario finance minister and president of Toronto Financial Services Alliance, who says, "We strongly support the government's "efforts to eliminate the deficit. It's an important step for Ontario's future economic growth..."

I could go on, Speaker, with countless quotations on behalf of people who have been associated with the party or the economy of Ontario who remain strongly supportive of our budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, we have spoken with the business community. Sadly, it's a shrinking business community under Dalton McGuinty—300,000 jobs fewer. Do you know what they actually wanted to see, just like average hard-working families wanted to see? They wanted to see a jobs plan in this budget, wanted to look forward to a stronger, more prosperous province of Ontario. But, Premier, in your entire document, no jobs plan, and you seem to be skipping blithely towards this debt trap ahead of us. Interest rates are at record lows. You did not plan for that. You identify a measly \$1 billion in savings in an "other programs" category that has been your highest rate of increase.

Sir, is this the best you can do? Can you only find 1% savings in the entire budget? Surely Ontario families could expect better than this milquetoast budget you've brought forward to the people of Ontario.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I will remind my honourable colleague once again that we are reducing spending by \$17.7 billion. In fact, we are committed to what has become known as an international golden rule, and that is for every dollar, Speaker, that we—actually, they call it the 80-20 rule. I'll quote Derek Burleton, who's deputy chief economist at TD Bank. He says, "I like the 80-20 rule. They're going to be cutting spending \$4 for every \$1 of revenue increases. I think it's turning into the golden rule internationally.... It seems to be fairly successful. So a good balance on that front.... The government has very prudent revenue assumptions incorporated in terms of economic growth."

So we're reducing spending by \$17.7 billion. We're increasing revenue, Speaker, by \$4 billion without raising taxes. We, in fact, commit to 170,000 jobs in Ontario. It's a balanced, thoughtful, strong budget, which is exactly what we need.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. As the Premier knows, New Democrats have been listen-

ing to everyday Ontarians about the budget. This weekend, I heard a lot more. Overwhelmingly, people tell us that this budget is unbalanced, it's unfair and it leaves people falling behind. Is the Premier still committed to working together to make the changes that will address these concerns?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I appreciate the question on the part of the NDP. I appreciate what I believe are sincere efforts on her part and on the part of her party to lend shape to our budget.

I want to register again my disappointment with the official opposition for abdicating their responsibility to work with this government on behalf of the people of Ontario. In the end, it's not about them, it's not about us; it's about the people of Ontario and our shared responsibility to find a way to work together.

I say to my honourable colleague the leader of the NDP that we have received a number of proposals from them. We're looking at those and considering those very carefully, Speaker, and we look forward to having further conversation as we move forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is a simple one: Does the Premier think that we should be ruling out new ideas that would pay for the services that families rely on to help balance the books in tough times?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, we're open to new ideas, but my honourable colleague understands that I think we have all received some pretty direct marching orders from the people we are so privileged to represent, the good people of Ontario. One of those is that we've got to balance the budget, and the date that we have settled upon is 2017-18. I have yet to hear any disagreement on the part of the opposition with respect to that.

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The other clear marching order I believe we received from Ontarians is, we've got to rein in spending. We cannot allow spending to grow as quickly as it has in the past, and that marching order is given expression to in our budget.

So I say to my honourable colleague, we're open to new ideas but we've got to balance that budget and we've got to be very, very careful about any new spending.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, last year, while families were struggling with lost jobs and reducing wages, the 100 highest-paid CEOs whose companies are listed on the TSX made an average of \$8.38 million each. Now that's 189 times higher than the average Canadian made working full-time, and it's a 27% raise from the year before.

Would the Premier agree that people who are making more could actually do more to help Ontario in these tough times?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think we've all got to do our part. We've all got to make a contribution. I hope that most Ontarians would see themselves in this budget.

One of the things that my honourable colleague recommended time and time again—and we listened to her. She said that we should freeze any further corporate tax cuts at this point in time because we can't afford them. I think that was sensible advice, Speaker. I think it's in keeping with the values shared by Ontarians. I think it's in keeping with the values shared by the business community as well, so we have done exactly that.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Families are facing tough times. In between shrinking paycheques, concerns about jobs and growing bills, they worry that this budget is going to leave them falling behind. But as they struggle with recession, they see that some people are doing very, very well, Speaker, taking home more in a day than a lot of people make in an entire year. They think it's time for a little more fairness in our tax system. Does the Premier agree?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, again, one of the things that you will see in our budget, for example, when it comes to helping families who are up against, through no fault of their own and looking for additional support—notwithstanding the advice of Don Drummond to freeze the Ontario child benefit, we have found a way to move forward with that. We're going to take it up from \$1,100 to \$1,310. But rather than go ahead with a \$200 increase all at once, we think that what's more affordable, what's more responsible, given the times, is that we divide that increase into two \$100 increments to come this year and the year after that, so that we get to our \$1,310 support level for families. So again, that's just one example of what we're doing to better support families who find themselves in need of support at this point in time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Our proposals make the budget a little more fair, and that's what Ontarians told us that they want.

Colin from Peterborough says, "Lower-income people are being asked to take the pain, but the affluent are not being asked to suffer just a little for the common good."

It's a matter of fairness, Speaker. When you're asking everyone else to tighten their belts, what I want to know from the Premier is, why not those at the very top?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, the—

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What about Sid from Oshawa?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Perhaps at some point we'll hear from Sid from Oshawa to see what he's got to say.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You stole that from Dwight.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's a symbiotic relationship. We feed each other.

But I say to my honourable colleague that she's put forward a number of proposals; we are considering those proposals. I must say, we have one overriding concern and that is that there is a cost associated with these proposals. My colleague the leader of the NDP is asking that we spend more. My colleague the leader of the official opposition is asking that we spend less. I think we've got

it just about right. I think it strikes the right balance and I think that most Ontarians as well see it that way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, the Premier knows very well that New Democrat proposals will not add one red cent to the deficit, but what it would do is add some fairness to the budget and it would help everyday people in this province who are worried about their jobs, their health care and whether or not they can make ends meet.

So my question to the Premier: Does he stand with the 550,000 Ontarians who are looking for work or Ontarians making \$550,000 a year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, you know, one of the things that the budget deliberately does is to put a big focus on jobs. In fact, we committed to 170,000 jobs. In part, that will come from our investment in \$35 billion worth of infrastructure over the course of the next three years. That means an average of 100,000 jobs every year.

Just to break that down a little bit for you: Our work on roads represents 26,000 jobs a year; our investment in schools—expansions, renovations, new construction—is 2,000 jobs a year; colleges and universities, 3,000 jobs a year; hospitals, which remain very important for us to continue to invest in, 26,000 jobs on average a year; modernizing the OLG, some 6,000 jobs all told. Then there are the jobs associated with the northern Ontario heritage fund, and the eastern Ontario and southwestern Ontario economic development funds. Those each as well represent thousands of jobs, Speaker. So when it comes to jobs, our job speaks, I think, in a very eloquent way.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Over the weekend, Speaker, the Minister of Finance published a statement pertaining to my party's motivations in voting against his budget. My advice for that minister is to start doing his job properly for a change and let our leader, Tim Hudak, and 37 PC MPPs do ours.

My question is about the gross inaccuracy of the minister's statement, or rant, and "inaccuracy," Speaker, is the parliamentary term. The minister's view of what my party wants or doesn't want is wrong, and I think this demonstrates an extraordinary failure of leadership.

Speaker, to the minister: You're using the bully strategy, sir. I believe it's because of your complete and abject inability to offer Ontarians a budget that addresses the two main crises we face: no job strategy, no spending controls. Minister, will you admit that your own inadequacy as finance minister is what is motivating your attacks on my party?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I want to congratulate the member for Nepean–Carleton on being nominated this past weekend, Mr. Speaker. That speaks to motivation. You know what I found out after I made that public? It

turns out that there are more Tory nominations scheduled for the coming weeks. My goodness. They're coming out of the woodwork to nominate candidates. You know, instead of nominating candidates, you might want to take a page from our colleagues in the third party and sit down and negotiate reasonable changes to a budget and avoid an election that the people of Ontario do not want.

Our budget is the right plan. It's a good plan for the future. It creates jobs. It gets us back to balance, and we look forward to finding issues that we can work together on with the third party instead of nominating candidates as the Conservatives are now right across Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Minister, you say that when we met three times, all we did was revisit old ideas—not so. You say that when 35 lawyers came to our caucus room to offer a briefing on the budget, we stormed out angrily—not so. No one stormed out of any meeting, Minister. Your lawyers, who spoke only in legalese, answered questions for 30 minutes and the meeting ended.

You say my party wanted to adopt all 362 Drummond recommendations. We never said any such thing. That was your report, and you threw most of it out. Neither you nor your Premier are leaders; you are just name-callers. You don't want our ideas. You don't want theirs. You negotiate on a my-way-or-the-highway basis.

Why should any member of the Ontario public believe you know how to get Ontario out of a mess you yourselves created? In fact, it's your party that's spoiling for an election.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Finance?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Speaker, all this weekend we were negotiating with the third party to find issues that we could work to co-operatively. What were the Tories doing? They've announced a nomination in Kitchener-Conestoga for April 21, 12:30 to 2:30. They want an election, Mr. Speaker. They've announced a nomination in Cambridge for Mr. Leone, April 26. Mr. Speaker, they want an election. They announced a nomination in Mississauga South, 6 p.m. until 7 p.m., to nominate a candidate because they want an election.

We'll continue to work with the third party. We hope they'll rethink their very short-sighted plans to force Ontario back to an election. We want to work together to make this Legislature work, because that's what the people of Ontario want. I applaud the third party for being open—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

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ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy. On Friday, this government appointed Murray Elston as head of the Ontario Distribution

Sector Panel. One of the key issues the panel will look at is the privatization of Ontario's local electrical utilities. Mr. Elston is former leader of the provincial Liberals and former vice-president of Bruce nuclear power, a private energy company. Why has this government appointed a panel headed by a former vice-president of a private electricity company to review the structure of electricity in Ontario?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: We did appoint a panel on Friday to take a look at whether the distribution system could work better for families and businesses. It's a very simple mandate: Can it work more effectively and can it work at lower cost to save families and businesses money? I would have thought that the member from the third party would be interested in that.

And yes, we did ask Murray Elston to be part of it. We also asked a couple of other people to be part of it—somebody by the name of Floyd Laughren, who my friend might be aware of, and David McFadden, who has former connections with Her Majesty's opposition—a balanced approach to a question that's very important to families and businesses: Can we do the same for less money? Let's get the answer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, there is no question. Privatization will not save money; it will drive up hydro rates. The deregulation and partial privatization of the hydro system in this province has been a disaster from day one. Within five months of the market opening, it had to be shut down because the market couldn't regulate prices. This minister is on that collision course with privatization. I ask again, why is he going back to this whole question of privatizing local utilities and why did he put a privatizer at the head of the whole commission?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: No, we're not going to follow the failed Tory experiment where they privatized, undid that, went back again. We know what that did to power costs. But I would have thought that my friend from the NDP would have been interested in the answer, that he would have been interested in any suggestion that could make rates affordable for families and businesses—any suggestion to reduce costs.

What he forgot to mention, maybe, about Mr. Elston is that he was also on the board of one of our public entities, Hydro One; maybe he forgot that.

But you know, at the end of the day, families and businesses want us to look everywhere and take every strategy to make sure we have an effective system at the most cost-efficient means possible.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. Ontarians are acutely aware that the current global economic climate continues to be unstable. Right now is a critical time for Ontario to remain on track and globally competitive. We must strive hard to compete and grow in these turbulent times. At home, this growth means that Ontarians can

have the jobs and economic conditions to build a good life for themselves and their families. But we cannot lose sight that Ontario is in a stiff global competition. We are competing for investments; we are competing for new companies, new skills and, yes, new jobs.

Mr. Speaker, through you, could the minister please inform members of how our government is taking strong action to grow and strengthen our economy by fostering innovation and fostering key partnerships?

Hon. Brad Duguid: There's no doubt that Ontario is on the right track when it comes to attracting investment and innovation in this province. Just last week, this government announced that we'll be partnering with IBM, the government of Canada and seven Ontario universities to establish the IBM research and development centre.

This will be the first time IBM has set up a virtual research collaboration centre anywhere in the world, and it's not by accident that they chose Ontario. IBM could have picked any location in the world for this \$210-million project, but they chose Ontario because of our competitive business environment and because IBM recognizes that this Premier's innovation agenda is making Ontario a research and innovation hotbed across the globe.

There's no question our economic plan is working. Our hard work is paying off. Ontario is emerging as a global innovation leader.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: The IBM announcement that the minister is referring to highlights that Ontario is taking the right steps to innovate and be sharply competitive in this challenging global economy. I'm proud to see companies like IBM working with us on important investments and partnerships, along with our universities and other levels of government, all with an eye on growing and strengthening Ontario's economy. This investment speaks volumes about how desirable Ontario is as a destination for growth and innovation.

It is great to talk about innovation, but people of my riding will want to know how creating a culture of innovation will bring tangible benefits such as good-paying jobs, especially to a technology hub like Ottawa. Speaker, through you, can the minister tell us how investments like this one create jobs in Ontario communities, especially in Ottawa?

Hon. Brad Duguid: This project will create 145 new highly skilled jobs and support cutting-edge research into critical challenges that face Ontario in the coming years. Along with expanding IBM software development labs in Markham and Ottawa and establishing the next-generation data centre in Barrie, this investment will continue to support job creation through collaborative research ventures focusing on data management and treatments in health care, water conservation and management to help reduce pollution, energy efficiency, and using technology to reduce gridlock.

The opposition do not support these kinds of investments. They just don't get the importance of investing in

innovation to build a strong economy and create jobs. IBM chose this location because they want to be where the action is when it comes to global innovation, and that's right here in the province of Ontario.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Minister of Health. The Auditor General pointed out that Ornge had logged some 60 public complaints and more than 500 staff concerns about patient care, delays in response times and communication problems. The result: Patients were put at risk, and we have yet to find out how many deaths will be attributed to those decisions at Ornge. Rather than seeing improvements, the front lines are telling us now that things are going from bad to worse. Ornge continues to ignore staffing requirements for paramedics and pilots and continues to employ unqualified staff in their communications area.

Would the minister tell us why, after a scathing auditor's report where he points out these issues, and after three months of her new management team, we continue to get these reports about the lack of staffing and under-qualified people at Ornge?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member opposite. There are big changes under way at Ornge. I'm very proud of the work of our new leadership team.

When issues came to my attention, I took speedy action. The member opposite agrees that I have taken aggressive action when it comes to getting Ornge back where it needs to be for the patients of this province. We've brought in new legislation. We have a new performance agreement. We have strong new leadership at Ornge. I ask the member opposite, will you support our legislation to increase transparency and oversight at Ornge?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Well, Speaker, here's the fact: We've looked at the new performance agreement, and nothing has changed when it comes to the actual performance requirements. Those same requirements were in the old agreement. It was the previous management at Ornge that intentionally lowered the staffing requirements to save money. Now we know that it was because they wanted to pay themselves some hefty salaries and some bonuses. The minister should know that those standards regarding the critical-care, advanced-care and primary care paramedics were there for a reason, so that they could respond appropriately to emergency calls. Those standards have not been restored.

I'd like to know from the minister: What has her new management team been doing for three months, if not to restore the qualifications of the paramedics who should be attending to those emergency calls? What have they been doing?

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Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, this is an issue that I know the new management at Ornge is very much focused on.

The member opposite claims to have read the new performance agreement—a lot has changed. Let me give you some examples. We will have a new patient advocate. We will have a complaint process that is publicly posted. We will have annual public surveys on performance. We will have improved reporting of emergency dispatch information by including cancelled and declined air and land ambulance calls. We will have a quality improvement committee, just like our hospitals do, that post an annual quality improvement plan. The new performance agreement gives the ministry the authority to conduct surprise audits and unannounced inspections. It leaves executive compensation to public performance improvement targets. It ties Ornge's funding to key performance indicators. It gives the government control over Ornge's corporate structure and sale of assets.

Speaker, I could go on, but I think the member opposite, if he actually read the new performance agreement, would understand we're making aggressive change.

POWER PLANT

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy. Last week, news leaked out that the proponent of the cancelled Mississauga Greenfield South gas plant had been exploring a new location for a plant in Brampton in an already polluted area, next to a conservation area, and less than a kilometre away from schools and homes. Why is the minister allowing Eastern Power to probe new locations for a massive gas plant behind closed doors without consultations with local residents and all local councillors?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I thank the member for the question. We're not. It's not going there, and that's the answer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: This Liberal government's energy plan seems to change day to day, with flip-flops on gas plant locations based on electoral considerations, which cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. Instead of putting in place guidelines and consultation processes for gas plants to protect Ontarians, the McGuinty government continues to let power companies blindside the public and develop more gas plants in residential neighbourhoods.

We have confirmation that in the first week of April, Eastern Power consulted with a single councillor in Brampton on this power plant.

When will the government start making energy decisions based on the interests of Ontarians rather than the interests of private power companies and political gain?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Just to repeat, we're not supporting a gas plant going into Brampton, and we do appreciate the support of the NDP in our decision not to allow the Mississauga gas plant to proceed. We do appreciate their support, their continuing support. The Ontario Power Authority is having continuing discussions with

the project's proponents, and we have conducted a review of where gas plants should be sited to make sure—take a look all around North America—that any future siting of a gas plant will have very broad-based and long-lasting municipal and local support.

But just to repeat, and just to make sure that my colleague opposite is able to clearly appreciate the result: There is not a gas plant going into Brampton, and the Mississauga gas plant is not proceeding.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, last week a Suzuki Foundation report gave top marks to Ontario for its revolutionary Green Energy Act. The report noted that while some provinces are investing heavily in dirty forms of electricity like coal-fired generation, Ontario is leading the way by replacing dirty coal-fired generation with cleaner sources of power like wind, hydro and solar power. The report also notes that provinces like Alberta and Saskatchewan are going backwards in the fight against climate change, and Ontario is moving forward to a cleaner, brighter energy future, ensuring that our children and grandchildren have cleaner air to breathe.

Minister, in light of this report—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Phil McNeely: —can you please share with this House the health—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You're supposed to look at the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And you're also supposed to listen to the Speaker when he asks for order.

Minister of Energy.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'd like to thank my colleague from Ottawa–Orléans for his long-standing commitment to cleaning up the air in the province of Ontario.

He's absolutely right. We made a choice. We made a choice to get out of coal because coal makes the air dirty and dirty air makes people sick. It's as simple as that. Just speak to Simone, a young woman suffering from asthma, who knows the benefit and value of clean air.

By getting out of coal, we're avoiding almost 700 premature deaths every year—that's important—we're avoiding 300,000 related illnesses every year. The Tories may not care about that, but Ontarians want to stay healthy. And we're avoiding taxpayers, families, businesses paying \$4 billion out of their tax pockets for the health care costs of dirty air.

Healthier people, more people live, reduced costs—that's the benefit of clean air.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Phil McNeely: This is great news for Ontario. A vibrant economy and a clean environment go hand in hand. That is why our government is addressing climate change in a way that benefits our environment and protects our economy. The Conservatives have no plan to deal with climate change, federally or provincially.

In the last few years, we've worked hard and worked together to make Ontario an environmental leader. I understand that the federal government recently came out with their inventory report on our national greenhouse gas emission levels. Could the minister provide this House with the results of that report and, in particular, how Ontario ranked with respect to our greenhouse gas emission levels?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: To the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Well, I want them to know that I just happen to have a note. Ontario is making significant progress toward achieving greenhouse gas emission reductions. The federal government's National Inventory Report, which was released last Wednesday, showed that from 2005 to 2010, emissions in Ontario were reduced by 34 megatonnes, significantly more than any other province in the country. The report also highlighted that Ontario has reduced emissions in the electricity sector by 15 megatonnes—that's 43% since 2005.

Our government continues to make significant progress in several key areas. Our commitment to phase out Ontario's heavily polluting coal-fired electricity by the end of 2014 is on schedule. Since 2003, we've invested more than \$13.4 billion in public transit in Ontario, including over \$6 billion in GO Transit. And in April 2011, we released our Climate Ready report which outlines 37 actions over the next four years to help the province adapt to our changing climate.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board manages over \$1 billion in assets, yet some members of the board are compromising those assets by skirting school board rules or throwing them out entirely by ignoring accommodation reviews and disregarding staff reports.

On the weekend, desperate parents in Kanata requested you intervene after the school board ignored a late-fee accommodation review in their community. This review will impact two schools in one of the fastest-growing communities, Mr. MacLaren's riding, and that community is now in turmoil.

Minister, will you respond to their request in Kanata today to send a ministry official in to investigate the actions of some board trustees who've rejected due process?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to say that these are local decisions that need to be made. We respect our local trustees, we respect the role that they play, and we take their advice very seriously. There are local processes in place that allow us to examine these issues.

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I do want to say how proud I am of the investments that our government has made since 2003 in public education in the Ottawa area. Just listen to this: Since 2003, the two English school boards in Ottawa have received

over \$400 million in capital funding. Nineteen new schools have opened or are under construction. Speaker, I think that demonstrates the commitment that we have to public education in Ottawa and right across this province, and it's something that we're really proud of. We'll continue to move forward in that way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm quite disappointed with the answer, and let me say why. Kanata's not the only community in turmoil based on the hijinks at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. You can ask trustee Mark Fisher, whom your friend in front of you knows quite well. Every other Ottawa MPP has a vested interest in the investigation of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board by ministry officials.

Last week, some trustees ignored other accommodation reviews, turned a blind eye to their facility utilization index, and flat out rejected staff recommendations in an eleventh-hour power play by the chair. This has wide-ranging implications. Let me tell you why.

In Dalton McGuinty's riding is the first school that needs to be rebuilt, at Elizabeth Park; it's now been bumped. In Mr. Chiarelli's riding, Severn elementary school has now been bumped.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: In McNeely's riding, Avalon school has now been bumped. In Meilleur's riding, the Viscount Alexander—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —has now been bumped. This minister needs to respond—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just a reminder for everyone that when I say thank you, that's usually the end. The second thing is, I remind all members again that we use members' riding names when we refer to them in this House, please.

Minister of Education for the answer.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to say from the outset how we know that these are very important local conversations, and they have an identified process that is available for communities involved if they want to raise issues of concern. It's appropriate that that process be followed, Speaker.

But I do want to say that I think there's a history lesson that we're getting from the other side of the House right now, and that is that the Progressive Conservative approach, when they had the opportunity to be responsible for education in this province, was to pit one community against another, to pit parents against teachers and to pit community against community.

I think it's very important upon us, Speaker, to take the politics out of this, to not pit communities one against another. That's the process we have put in place when it comes to accommodation review, and we respect the local role and responsibility. We respect the local voice. That's the process that we have, and it's the one that should be followed.

FIRE SAFETY

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. Speaker, I have introduced automatic sprinkler system legislation to protect vulnerable seniors living in all retirement homes. For years, unfortunately, this government has refused to act despite tragic and unnecessary deaths.

Last week, Ontario's fire chiefs released a report on fire safety and found that Ontario seniors' homes had the worst fire fatality record in North America, with 45 deaths since 1980. Speaker, Ontario fire chiefs are imploring the government to act before another death occurs. When will the safety of all seniors finally be put first?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'm pleased to take the question. I'm really pleased at the progress we've made. In fact, our government has done more for seniors than any other.

Through our Retirement Homes Act, the care that we provide to retirement home residents will now be regulated under the first-time provincial legislation in Ontario's history. Seniors in our retirement homes need to feel safe and secure. They need to know that there are safeguards in place to protect them. That's why the act is going to provide stronger protections for seniors living in retirement homes, including fire safety measures.

The act, when it's fully proclaimed, will require retirement homes to have specific emergency plans; conduct planned evacuations at least every two years; train all their staff in fire protection and safety, emergency plans and evacuation; and post in the home an explanation of the measures that are taken in case of fire. We want to provide information to residents about the staffing levels and whether the home has sprinklers in each room.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, today the fourth inquest into retirement home fire deaths begins. The issue is crystal clear. Automatic sprinklers save lives. There is no disputing this fact. The experts all agree. They don't want any more stalling by this government. The government is refusing to act, despite all the evidence that these are preventable deaths; it's simply shameful. Retirement homes are currently in the process of beginning to be inspected and regulated. This is the right time to act, not a year from now, Minister. No more studies; they've already proven that it should be done now.

Speaker, will this minister finally commit to taking action today, not a year from now? We don't want any more deaths in this province.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I thank the MPP for his question. It's a very, very important question. As the member knows, we have done preliminary consultation, which proved to be very successful by identifying key areas for improvement, such as inspections; training of owners, operators and staff; and installation of automatic sprinklers and other fire safety retrofits.

We have reviewed this report, and now we're moving forward. The Office of the Fire Marshal will now initiate

a technical consultation focusing on three main topics: annual inspection, staff training and additional retrofit requirements, including sprinklers. The association of fire chiefs is with us and very happy that we're moving forward in that direction.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, I think we can all agree that families across this province want their loved ones to come home safe and sound after a hard day's work. We are all greatly saddened when we hear of an injury or a death in the workplace.

Part of your ministry's role is to investigate such incidents after they happen. But incidents that lead to these workplace tragedies are frequently preventable and/or avoidable. In light of that, when it comes to workplace safety, I feel that prevention is often one of the best policies.

Minister, what does your ministry do to help reduce and stop injuries and deaths before they occur? What are you doing to improve workplace safety awareness and reduce injuries and deaths?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge River for the question. We at the ministry agree that prevention is a very important tool in building better awareness of workplace hazards, and that's why our health and safety strategy takes a proactive approach to safety inspections.

As part of that strategy, my ministry conducts regular enforcement blitzes. The blitzes help workers and employers identify and correct workplace hazards before they occur. Last year, we conducted 11 blitzes. Our approach is working. In fact, Ontario is one of the safest places in Canada to work. The lost-time injury rate in this province was decreased by more than 30% since 2003.

But we're always striving to do better. That's why our government appointed a panel of industry experts to conduct a comprehensive review of Ontario's occupational health and safety system, and we're moving to implement the panel's recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Again, my question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, I'm encouraged to hear that the ministry has taken safety and prevention to heart and that you continue to be actively engaged in protecting workers in Ontario. These blitzes sounds like they're having an effect. I hope you intend to continue the inspection blitzes this year, and I'm curious how Ontarians can find out. I'm sure that businesses and employers would want to know ahead of time what kind of blitzes are scheduled to happen, and workers would want to know what inspectors found after they're over.

Minister, how do people in Ontario stay informed about these initiatives at their industries and workplaces? Does your ministry share this information with the public? If so, how and where?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Again, thank you to the honourable member for the question. To keep businesses and

employers informed, our ministry actually posts a schedule on our website and makes announcements prior to every blitz. Each announcement details what kind of workplaces inspectors will be looking at and what kind of hazards they'll be looking for. We also often provide basic fact sheets and posters that can be shared and displayed in the workplace for employees.

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Once the blitzes are completed, the results are regularly posted on our website. These results include the number of field visits made, the workplaces visited and the orders that we issue. We also offer a monthly e-newsletter that collects all the latest developments and news at the Ministry of Labour. These include blitz results and when they're published.

I invite members of the public and members of the House to visit the website, sign up for the newsletter and see the good work that my ministry does. Together with employers and workers, we're going to work to develop strong and healthy safety cultures across Ontario.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Rob Leone: This question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, there's an idea out there for an employment program to plant Jesuit pear trees. Do you know, Minister, what a Jesuit pear tree looks like, whether it's different than another tree, and how much you would pay someone to plant a Jesuit pear tree on your property?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I went to a Jesuit college. I have not heard of a Jesuit pear tree, but I am sure the member opposite will inform me in his follow-up question.

I have to say that my friend from Cambridge deserves high praise for one of the most original questions I have had or seen in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rob Leone: Let me just inform you, then, Minister: There's a plan to spend half a million dollars to train some students how to plant Jesuit pear trees—half a million dollars to teach students how to plant a tree. That's \$22,000 per student, roughly. We could spend that half a million dollars paying the college and university tuition for 100 students over the course of the year. I know this comes from the minister who—the Canadian Taxpayers Federation actually gave him a Teddy Waste Award for purchasing a million-dollar toilet.

So Minister, will you flush this wasteful idea down that million-dollar toilet?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I hope my friend from Cambridge will send me the details on that. I'll be glad to follow up and get back to him.

I'm actually waiting, one day, for a question about our 30% off tuition, which is the biggest investment I think in the modern history of Ontario in higher education and affordability. I look forward to working with my friend opposite. I would hope he would avoid an unbelievably

ridiculous election by working with us. Students need this money, and I think they understand that.

I think the member opposite would also appreciate, in the vein of his question, the extraordinary investments we're making in education in rural Ontario: agriculture, the great work that Brock and Guelph are doing on climate change adaptation with farmers, the number of jobs in the food and nutraceutical industries that have come out of our universities, some of them within walking distance of the member opposite's home—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Jonah Schein: My question is to the Premier. Last week, city council in Toronto voted 40-2 to urge the Premier to ensure that the Union-Pearson air-rail link is clean, accessible and affordable for Toronto residents. Council asked the Premier to direct Metrolinx to add more stops to the line and to integrate it with light-rail transit in our city. Council has also reiterated their support for electrification and for affordable fares.

Will the Premier respect the near-unanimous request of Toronto city council?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question. The ARL is certainly very important transit infrastructure for the city of Toronto. We're committed to having the air-rail link between Union Station and Pearson airport up and running by 2015, and we're on track to meeting that goal. In particular, by adding those number of stations—if we could afford it or if the city could afford it, because somebody has got to pay for it, and it hasn't been costed out, and the cost will be very, very significant—we would not be able to provide timely service, and we would not be ready for the Pan Am Games.

In terms of the electrification of that system, an issue which has been raised from time to time by the local member and by the federal member of Parliament, we had the opportunity, in Burlington, several days ago, to actually explain in detail to your federal member why this project is evolving the way it is and what a tremendous future it has. Particularly it will be eliminating millions of cars from our roads, and there will be an economic and environmental—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Jonah Schein: Speaker, the minister should not lecture us on start-and-stop transit plans.

The Premier and the Minister of Transportation have repeatedly stated that the will of Toronto council is supreme; it must be respected when it comes to local transit decisions. So it's very disappointing that they continue to ignore a strong and unified message from residents across the city about the air-rail link. The McGuinty government seems set on making the air-rail

link an exclusive service for business elites, excluding local families who are left only with diesel pollution to breathe. Why won't the Premier direct Metrolinx to build a link that is clean, that is affordable and accessible, and that meets the needs of both travellers and commuters?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: As the president and CEO of Metrolinx pointed out at that very important meeting that we attended, there is a long-term plan for the ARL which includes going, eventually, to four tracks.

But he consistently asked questions about the ARL, and he doesn't put it into any context, Mr. Speaker. The context is that in the city of Toronto, transit under construction at the present time is a Toronto-York-Spadina subway extension; the Eglinton crosstown; Union Station GO and subway stations; Pearson-Union air-rail link; GO Transit Georgetown rail corridor; York region Viva bus rapid transit; Brampton Züm bus system; Mississauga Transitway; and the rollout of Presto.

We are investing heavily in transit for the people of Toronto. We're proud of it. It's a good record, and we're going to do a lot more.

AMATEUR SPORT

Mr. Mike Colle: I have question to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. This weekend, I was at the Ontario Women's Hockey Association provincial championships. There are some amazing athletes playing in Mississauga and Halton, and my niece was on the Ontario championship team. She was with the Etobicoke Dolphins AA peewee provincial championship team. There are so many incredible athletes in Ontario. I want to know what you're doing for athletes in Ontario, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member for his passion in sport.

Speaker, I'm pleased to share with the House that this week our government, through the Ontario Sport Awards, is recognizing 33 of Ontario's top amateur athletes and coaches. The awards will honour outstanding achievements in the province's amateur sports, in categories such as equestrian, canoe, figure skating, badminton, water skiing, boxing, cycling and swimming.

In addition, I recently had the privilege of attending the 2012 Ontario Coaching Excellence Awards here in Toronto. I witnessed first-hand how this program, through the Ontario coaches' association, celebrates the dedication and commitment of exemplary individuals who inspire, innovate and share knowledge of sports with others.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Newmarket–Aurora on a point of order.

Mr. Frank Klees: I would like to extend a special invitation to the Legislature to two students, both from Aurora: Victoria Spiterie, who is from the École secondaire catholique Renaissance, and Kevin Quach. Many of us will remember Kevin. He's a former page. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is not a point of order, but we do welcome our guests, as always.

This House has no deferred votes. It stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would very much like to introduce some members of the co-op housing federation of Ontario who are with us today: Dale Reagan, Harvey Cooper, Diane Miles, Judy Shaw and Simone Swail. They're here out of interest in the piece of legislation that's going to be introduced momentarily. Thanks for joining us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome our guests.

The member for Don Valley West.

Mr. Michael Coteau: East.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome to the Ontario Legislative Assembly Gord Flanagan and his two daughters, Diane and Anne-Marie.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. We welcome them.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

OXFORD BUSINESSES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to report the results of my recent Oxford business survey. I want to thank all the businesses who responded to share their concerns and experiences with me.

I want to start by commending the many Oxford businesses who make an effort to shop locally. On average, respondents made 63% of their purchases locally.

Our business people work hard to make their companies succeed, but the message in the responses was that this government is holding them back. Seventy-one per cent of the businesses said that there was more red tape today than there was four years ago. On average, they spend 215 hours a year filling out government forms and paperwork. That's time they could be spending on increasing productivity and with their customers.

Ninety-five per cent of respondents are very concerned about the deficit. But it's clear from their responses that postponing tax cuts will only increase our fiscal problems. When asked what they would do with money saved from tax reductions, 78% of respondents said that they would use it to expand and hire more people or invest in equipment and infrastructure. This is over three quarters of the businesses that said that they would put the money back into our economy.

Over 600,000 people are out of work in this province. I think the government needs to listen to these results and realize that reducing business taxes, as planned, will create jobs.

Again, I want to thank all the business people in Oxford who took the time to respond, and I hope the government will take the time to listen and act on their advice.

HELEN FLANAGAN

Mr. Michael Coteau: I rise today to pay tribute to Helen Flanagan, a local leader, community builder and a great friend of the Don Valley East community, who passed away on March 21, 2012. Helen was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. We're joined here today by Gord Flanagan, her husband, and daughters Diane and Anne-Marie.

Sadly, cancer took her from her family and from us too early. Helen fought cancer with courage and determination, qualities she demonstrated throughout her life and as a spirited community leader.

Born in India to missionary parents, Helen and her family planted their roots in the Don Mills community of Don Valley East, and for decades she dedicated her life to serving her community. Helen started her career as a nurse and eventually worked for members of both provincial and federal Parliament.

Helen contributed much to Don Valley East. A towering achievement of Helen's was her work as a driving force behind Willowdale Community Legal Services, an organization that provides legal assistance to low-income residents in the community. She was a past president of the Henry Farm Community Interest Association, an organization that advocates in the interests of tenants and homeowners in the Don Mills community. She was also a board member of the North York YMCA. Helen also spent countless years volunteering in grassroots organizations at the municipal, provincial and federal levels.

A cause near and dear to Helen and her beloved husband, Gord, was their work for fundraising for two hospitals in India.

Her home became a place where people in the community could feel welcome, and over the past years, she was known to take underprivileged young people into their home for extended stays. She was a mommy to many, as needed.

Mr. Speaker, we in Don Valley East will dearly miss our friend Helen Flanagan. I had the privilege of knowing her, and I know that she inspired many to become involved in building their communities.

It is my hope that her caring spirit will live on in the riding. She was an example to all Ontarians, and we will ever cherish her memory and the contributions she made to improve the lives of others, many of them in our community.

HOCKEY

Mr. Bill Walker: It is my pleasure to congratulate today a novice rep team from my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

It came down to game 5 to decide the winners, and the Shouldice Designer Stone Shallow Lake novice rep team conquered the Ontario Minor Hockey Association Hodges division championship at the Walkerton Arena on Monday, March 26. The team played hard to the last second. Determination: They came back from behind three times before they finally took the lead in an exciting game that saw the Lakers' Aidan Christie seal the deal with an open-net goal with only three seconds left in the game. It was just exciting; it was unbelievable.

I would like to thank the dedicated fans and parents on the bench for keeping the kids in the game and focused on victory. The smiles on faces throughout the crowd on both teams were great to see.

I would also like to give special thanks to team sponsor Steve Shouldice and family, head coach Steve Gibson, manager Cathy Davidson, trainer Colleen Ouwendyk and assistant coach Dave Gibbons. The most important: I would like to recognize the young players on their well-deserved win: Josh Devries, Jessica Davidson, Ben Shouldice, Kalum McKinnon, Aidan Christie, Cole Deiter, Kirk Gibson, Jesse Cunningham, Kurt Indoe, Gavin Gibbons and Matthew Boulter.

Teamwork, hard work and dedication resulted in a successful and, most importantly, fun season. Congratulations to all. We look forward to many more in the future.

HANNY HASSAN

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am honoured to stand here today and share with everyone my thoughts on a fellow Londoner who has dedicated his life to serving our country.

This past weekend, I was invited to attend an Order of Canada ceremony recognizing the lifetime of incredible work accomplished by Mr. Hanny Hassan. Mr. Hassan is a man who has selflessly devoted himself to volunteerism and promoting understanding between cultures and religions over the past 40 years. Many of us know Mr. Hassan for his work in promoting cross-cultural and interfaith understanding, specifically within the Arab and Muslim communities.

Mr. Hassan's achievements are too numerous to note in this short statement; however, I do want to share a few of these accomplishments today.

Presently, Mr. Hassan serves on Western's board of governors and senate and is a member of the national executive and vice-chair of the Ontario panel of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. He is the past co-chair of the National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee and was president of the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship from 1991 to 1995. From 1977 to 1988, Mr. Hassan was camp director of Camp Al-Mumineen, which continues to promote Islamic lifestyle experiences within the Canadian context for more than 125 Muslim youth.

I am so pleased that Mr. Hassan's lifetime activism and community engagement have been recognized by the

Order of Canada. On behalf of all Londoners, I want to congratulate Mr. Hassan and personally thank him for his outstanding efforts in London and for being a role model for all of us.

PUNJABI FILMS

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I rise in the House today to talk about two wonderful events that have taken place in the last two weeks in Mississauga—one in my own riding—that have put Toronto on the international film map.

The first one was the Punjabi International Film Festival kickoff that took place at the Living Arts Centre in my riding. That was last Tuesday. That film festival is going to take place from May 18 to 21. It's going to attract Punjabi movies from across the world, made in different parts of the world, from Pakistan, from India and other parts, and it's going to showcase them right here in Toronto.

What's really amazing about this is the fact that I've just discovered that for a Punjabi movie to be successful, the success is determined by its box office launch not in India but right here in Toronto, because 50% of the revenues of Punjabi movies today come from outside of India. And that's what has put Toronto on the map.

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The other event that took place, again related to the Punjabi film industry, is that last Thursday, the Premier was part of an event where Dharmendra, one of the top movie stars from India—who happens to be Punjabi—came as the brand ambassador for something called PIFAA, which is, along the lines of IIFA, the Punjabi International Film Academy Awards. It's the first of its kind, and what's really special about it is, it's made right here in Canada.

CURLING

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: A couple of weeks ago, I stood in this House and congratulated Team Glenn Howard as the successful winner of the Brier Canadian curling championships, and I'm very proud today to stand and announce—of course, many people know this—that Team Glenn Howard won the world championships on April 8 in Basel, Switzerland.

The team is made up of Glenn Howard, the skip; Wayne Middaugh, the vice; Brent Laing, the second; Craig Savill, the lead; and the spare, Scott Howard, who curled for his first time in a world title. He, of course, wasn't even around 25 years ago when Glenn won his first world title. Glenn has won four in that time frame and brings a lot of pride to Huronia, to Coldwater, to Penetanguishene, to Midland, to Elmvale—that whole area—

Mr. Norm Miller: To Muskoka.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: And to Muskoka. Apparently, there's someone from Muskoka on the team.

Mr. Norm Miller: Wayne Middaugh.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Yeah, Wayne Middaugh actually golfs in Muskoka and lives in Victoria Harbour. But Miller's trying to take credit for it, of course.

It was a great tournament. I know there will be a lot of celebrations this summer on Glenn achieving the world championship in curling. We just want to say, on behalf of all the people in the Legislature here and from Muskoka and Simcoe county and Canada: Congratulations, Glenn, on a huge win. We're very, very proud of the whole Team Howard team.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, in the last few weeks, the Toronto District School Board has announced that it is laying off hundreds of teachers, education assistants and other staff. The reality is that this school board is facing the cumulative impact of funding starvation. This government, and the so-called education Premier, Dalton McGuinty, have not made the changes to the funding formula that Ontario needs, and that has meant schools closing, staff laid off, and children and parents paying the price.

Speaker, this Premier promised to reassess, reshape, the funding formula in 2010. It's 2012, and there is no sign on the horizon that that very necessary reassessment and fixing is going to happen. In fact, what we see is ongoing cutting of staffing, ongoing shifting of the burden on to children and parents. Who will make sure that our children are safe? How will teachers, already overextended, how will staff, already overextended, deal with those issues? They can't, Speaker, and at some point, problems will arise in our schools that will be impossible for the parents of this province to deal with.

The Premier must come to the funding formula, rework it and protect the children and parents of this province.

MARSHALL ZHANG

Mr. Reza Moridi: I rise here today to recognize the extraordinary and promising discovery by Marshall Zhang, a high school student at Bayview Secondary School in my riding of Richmond Hill. Marshall used a supercomputer system to find a new drug combination that doctors say shows potential in treating the genetic disorder cystic fibrosis.

Cystic fibrosis is a potentially fatal disease that is caused by genetic mutation. Many patients with cystic fibrosis have died in their teens, as there is presently no cure for it. Marshall's discovery entitled him to win top honours in many science competitions, including a first-place prize at the 2011 Sanofi-Aventis BioTalent Challenge, and he will receive the ORION Leadership Award today at the 2012 ORION Think Conference.

While Marshall's science project started yet another school project, his discovery has entitled him to a summer job at a research lab at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and has given hope to many

individuals and their families who have been affected by cystic fibrosis. Marshall's discovery is a great example of the innovative minds of our youth.

On behalf of all Ontarians, cystic fibrosis patients and residents of Richmond Hill, I would like to thank Marshall for his life-changing discovery and for making us proud.

ROTARY CLUB OF ORANGEVILLE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the Rotary Club of Orangeville, which is marking its 75th anniversary this year. Our community has been fortunate that the Rotary Club of Orangeville continues to make significant contributions to key projects that benefit the well-being of local families.

Rotarians remain committed to parks and recreation throughout Orangeville. A centrepiece project in town has been Rotary Park, a well-loved park for families and sports enthusiasts. Additions like Rotary Park's millennium skateboard park as well as this year's splash pad project at Fendley Park are only two examples of their contributions.

As a leader in fundraising, the club generously donates proceeds toward the purchase of needed equipment at the Headwaters Health Care Centre.

As an organization, Rotarians are keen to roll up their sleeves and get things done, often working with other organizations to both spearhead and support many local activities, including the annual Make Orangeville Shine event and hosting a Ribfest fundraiser.

The rotary club is preserving our community sports history through the creation of Orangeville's Sports Hall of Fame to celebrate those who have brought recognition to our community. The Hall of Fame recognizes not only athletes but coaches and officials whose contributions are essential.

I applaud every Rotary Club of Orangeville member for their "Service Above Self." It is an impressive record of achievement throughout their amazing 75 years. As a service club, the Rotary Club of Orangeville is a well-respected community organization that sets an outstanding example of volunteerism and activism. Thank you for your commitment to making our community stronger.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nepean-Carleton has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Education concerning school board accountability. This matter will be debated at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 18.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My friends, in the Speaker's gallery today we have representatives of the

People's Republic of China: Mr. Lee Fang, consul general; Madame Mei Fang Zhang, deputy consul general; and Mrs. Jing Huy Wang, consul. Welcome to our assembly.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NON-PROFIT HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES

STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES COOPÉRATIVES DE LOGEMENT SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Ms. Wynne moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of non-profit housing co-operatives and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés coopératives et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne les coopératives de logement sans but lucratif et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.*

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member for a short statement?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'll make my statement during ministerial statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING COOPÉRATIVES DE LOGEMENT

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very pleased to introduce proposed legislation that would, if passed, bring greater efficiency, accessibility and transparency to the co-op tenure dispute resolution process. Il est indéniable que le processus actuel consistant à résilier les conventions d'occupation pour les coopératives est complexe, onéreux et chronophage pour les fournisseurs de logement sans but lucratif et leurs membres.

1320

There's no question that the current process for terminating occupancy agreements for co-ops is complex, costly and time-consuming for these non-profit housing providers and their members. This is an important amendment which the co-operative housing federation has asked for to ensure that decisions related to evictions are fair to co-ops and their members, and I want to again

recognize the members of the co-op federation who are with us here today. Thank you for being here.

The Ontario region of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada is the main advocate of not-for-profit co-op members and boards in the province. Our government recognizes and appreciates the dedicated work of the co-operative housing federation. We share the federation's commitment to maintaining a strong co-operative housing sector.

Non-profit co-op housing has played a vital role in our affordable housing system for over 40 years. In Ontario, there are around 550 not-for-profit housing co-ops. These co-ops provide affordable housing for 44,000 households which represent about 125,000 Ontarians, including some of our most vulnerable citizens. This is an issue that has been important to our government for some time, and you may remember that Donna Cansfield, MPP for Etobicoke Centre, introduced a private member's bill to help improve the co-op housing dispute resolution system last spring. Regrettably, there was not enough time for Bill 198 to proceed to the final vote.

Mr. Speaker, currently the tenure dispute resolution process for co-op housing is governed by the Co-operative Corporations Act. Under this act, co-ops must go through a lengthy and oftentimes costly process in the courts to evict a resident. We're proposing to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, and the Co-operative Corporations Act to move most co-op tenure disputes from the courts to the Landlord and Tenant Board. The Landlord and Tenant Board is the body established under the Residential Tenancies Act to resolve rental housing disputes. Under the proposed legislation, co-ops would apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to resolve tenure disputes when they are based on grounds currently provided for under the Residential Tenancies Act, or the RTA.

The Landlord and Tenant Board is an independent agency. It provides Ontarians with timely access to specialized, expert and effective dispute resolution. With offices across the province, tenants and landlords have convenient access for resolving matters that profoundly affect their everyday lives.

Monsieur le Président, le transfert des expulsions des tribunaux à la Commission de la location immobilière rendra le processus de règlement des différends en matière d'occupation plus efficace, rentable et transparent, tant pour les conseils d'administration des coopératives que pour leurs membres.

If passed, this legislation would mean that co-op providers and members would have most of the same protections, benefits and responsibilities that are currently afforded to landlords and tenants facing tenure disputes under the Residential Tenancies Act. Evictions based on grounds outside the RTA would continue to be handled through the internal democratic co-op eviction process and the courts. This process needs to be retained because co-ops are governed democratically and have established bylaws which set out grounds for eviction that are not provided for under the RTA.

The proposed legislation would also amend the Co-operative Corporations Act in two important ways.

First, the Co-operative Corporations Act would be amended to clarify that when a co-op tenure dispute proceeds through the courts, it would be judged on the merits of the case. This would allow courts to decide whether an eviction was warranted based on the facts of the case, as well as assessing if the proper procedures had been followed by the co-op.

The second key amendment to the Co-operative Corporations Act would see the streamlining of the internal decision-making process of co-ops.

These amendments would promote the transparency of all decisions, would be less costly and would be less time-consuming for co-ops. They would also have the added benefit of allowing co-ops and their members access to mediation services to work out their differences. This could provide needed relief to the court system.

Our proposed legislation would offer co-op members involved in tenure disputes a process that's independent, transparent and affordable. Our proposed legislation is the result of significant consultation with the co-op housing sector over the past three years.

Notre gouvernement est pleinement conscient de l'importance du secteur des coopératives de logement. Ce secteur est un partenaire clé qui favorise la disponibilité de logements abordables et sûrs pour les familles de tout l'Ontario.

These are the people for whom our government is taking strong action today. Our proposal would help support co-op providers and the families and children who call co-ops their home.

Decent housing is more than a shelter. It provides stability, security and dignity. It plays a central role in reducing poverty. It creates a strong base from which to find a job, raise a family, and contribute to strengthening the Ontario economy.

Our government has made significant progress on our housing agenda. We're making a real difference in the lives of families and in the circumstances of Ontario's most vulnerable households.

Our government recognizes the need for affordable housing and its role in supporting the growth and health of communities across Ontario. That's why we developed the long-term affordable housing strategy, and it's the first of its kind in Ontario.

Our strategy supports our poverty reduction strategy and sets a strong foundation for a more efficient, accessible system for those who need safe, affordable housing. Our government supports the co-op housing sector. We plan to help it remain strong so that it can continue to provide a viable choice for Ontario families.

A housing sector that offers diversity for Ontario is not complete without a healthy co-op sector. That's why we're taking action in proposing this bill today. I urge all members to support this legislation. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Merci.

VOLUNTEERS

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, this is National Volunteer Week. Each year during this special week, we pause to celebrate the enormous impact volunteers have on all our lives.

Five million strong, volunteers are found in every corner of the province. They coach our kids' teams, welcome newcomers, run food banks, defend the environment, support caregivers and knock on doors for worthy causes. They're big brothers and big sisters, advocates and mentors, board members and front-line workers. Some have served for decades; others put in time when they can.

It's especially encouraging to see new immigrants volunteering, building links with the larger community. We all benefit when newcomers bring their skills to Ontario's caring, not-for-profit organizations.

All of our selfless volunteers make a difference, and this is a time of year to show our appreciation. The annual Volunteer Service Award ceremonies are now in full swing in communities across the province. This year, more than 10,000 volunteers will receive the Trillium pin for continuous service to local organizations.

It's important to recognize and thank our volunteers, but we must also foster the seed of volunteerism in our youth. That's why this week we're launching the fifth ChangeTheWorld Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge. We aim to mobilize 25,000 high school students to do at least three hours of volunteer work over three weeks.

We want the experience to kick-start a lifelong commitment of volunteering among our young people. During National Volunteer Week, we'll also award the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers to encourage exceptional community service.

Another highlight will be the presentation of the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Awards for Voluntarism. This award honours individuals and organizations that have made extraordinary volunteer contributions in the spirit of the late Ms. Callwood.

Ontario has a strong and proud tradition of volunteering. Our government is working to renew and revitalize this cherished legacy. We understand that the only reward our volunteers seek is to know that they're making a difference. So I invite all members and all Ontarians to make an effort this week to tell our volunteer champions how and why their actions count. Let's extend a heartfelt thanks to those who do so much to make our communities better for everyone, every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Responses? The member for Leeds–Grenville.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the Ontario PC critic for municipal affairs and housing, on behalf of our caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, I'm pleased to respond to the minister's statement

and the Non-Profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012.

Our party has long supported the idea of removing co-op housing disputes from the court system and putting them in the hands of the landlord and tenant act. It's long overdue that the minister would act on this initiative by making a very straightforward amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act.

The changes, I think we all know, would remove those 300 co-op dispute cases that are currently dealt with in the courts, to be dealt with much like many other residential disputes. I'm pleased that the co-ops federation of Ontario—I had the pleasure of meeting with you at your recent lobby day, and I think at that time I certainly gave you our feelings on the bill. As some of you know, I did speak it to as well during my opening address on Bill 19.

1330

For those who know how this place works, I was pleased to receive the compendium and the bill dutifully on my desk when I arrived, so I will endeavour to review the legislation and to sit down, if necessary, with the minister. But certainly I want to repeat that in the past our caucus has supported the concept, the intent and the spirit of the legislation.

I will say, however, that this is the second bill that the minister has made which I would describe, Speaker, with all due respect, as basically a housekeeping amendment when it comes to this legislation. I want to remind the House that, during Bill 19, I did indicate my eagerness and my hope that the minister would bring somewhat more substantive legislation on some of the real, serious housing issues that we have in the province. Really, I'm not trying to make a joke here; it's a very serious matter. We have a number of issues in the housing sector that I think collectively, in this minority Parliament, we could solve.

While I'm pleased that my friends have got their amendment, there are some other issues that I think, Speaker, with all due respect, we should be discussing.

VOLUNTEERS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: National Volunteer Week gives us a chance to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of volunteers in our daily lives. It is Canada's largest celebration of volunteers, volunteerism and civic participation, and I am proud to rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus to recognize the thousands of amazing volunteers across the province who give selflessly and volunteer to make a difference.

Volunteers do, in fact, make a huge difference in our communities. According to Stats Canada, in the survey of giving, volunteering and participating, in 2010, 47% of Canadians aged 15 and over gave their time to a group or an organization. That's more than 13.3 million people and equates to 2.1 billion hours or 1.1 million full-time jobs.

Recognizing this hard work is the essence of National Volunteer Week. Events such as tonight's Caledon Vol-

unteer and Citizen Achievement Awards honour those who have contributed above and beyond to our communities and give well-deserved credit to our volunteers.

When I was establishing my private member's bill, the Helping Volunteers Give Back Act, I had numerous opportunities to speak with many volunteers who are very giving of their time and talents. When I asked them why they volunteered, they offered many different reasons, but the one they all shared was to give back.

Communities benefit greatly by having an active volunteer sector. Volunteers are everywhere: in our schools, in our hospitals, in our arenas and many, many more places throughout our communities. They represent every walk of life: professional, student, senior, moms and dads, and friends and neighbours.

Volunteerism represents people working to improve the lives of others and, in doing so, enhancing their own. Volunteers are a positive force across all of Canada, and their work is often the cornerstone of a healthy community.

That is National Volunteer Week and why it is so important to highlight the benefits provided by volunteers and to thank them for all they do for us, for our families and our communities.

On behalf of myself and the PC caucus, I would like to thank all Ontario volunteers for their selfless dedication in everything they do for us on a daily basis.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'll be responding to the minister's statement on the co-op dispute resolution bill.

We welcome this bill on housing and we welcome many more bills on housing that are of a positive nature. We have sent letters of support to your office, supporting the federation and their wish to actually move this to a dispute resolution process.

It has the potential to make it easier and less costly for both sides of the equation to get through the painful process of eviction disputes. It can save a co-op member money; it can save the federation money. I'm told that some of these cases can cost as much as \$50,000 in the court system. Lawyers make good money these days.

Still, it's hard to cheer a bill that took five years to come to fruition. In 2007, the Liberals made a promise to look at this issue and bring it forward, but it's here today.

It's also hard to cheer a bill when there are still so many outstanding issues around the housing crisis in this province. Too many families are stuck waiting for affordable housing—a 7.5% increase this year over last year—152,000 households.

Many people are paying rents they can't afford. I think it's one in five families that spend more than 50% of their income on rental housing, and many of them are forced to cut back on food and clothing and medication—400,000 at food banks here in the province of Ontario. And many of them are living, as I spoke about during Bill 19, in housing that is substandard, both in poorly repaired social housing and private housing.

We need to have many more co-ops here in the province of Ontario because these kinds of programs and projects actually build communities; they're not just a unit of housing. They create friends and social interactions, and they really do a good job building communities.

Cynics would say that this bill was introduced to distract Ontarians from the utter lack of action in the budget, but I'm not a cynic.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: But you're not a cynic.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm not a cynic—to distract the public from the many things that the government could be doing about affordable housing, the delays and the repair lag.

So it's hard to get excited about this bill when there's so much else that urgently needs to be done, but we are supporting our friends here from the co-op federation. We will review this bill carefully, but we won't stop pushing for comprehensive action to ensure that all Ontarians have safe, affordable housing in this province. Thank you very much.

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Michael Prue: In response to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, volunteering is, in fact, part of our identity as Canadians. We value civic participation and embrace the spirit of community—all of the communities in which we collectively live. There are some 13 million people in this country who take time to volunteer. They volunteer in a whole wide range of things, from children's baseball teams to valley cleanups around the environment. They volunteer bringing Meals on Wheels to those who are shut in, and home-visiting programs to our elderly. They volunteer in so, so many ways, and they need to be saluted. They need to be held up for the wonderful people they are.

We need to remember in this Legislature, and indeed all the people of this province and of this country, the invaluable work they do. They are the glue that holds our communities together. They are the people who make a difference. Without them, we would live in a much poorer place. Remember, they don't do this for remuneration; they do this because they care so deeply and passionately about the place where they live. They are there to make sure that the needs of our communities are met, so that kids have a decent place to learn how to play baseball or hockey or soccer, so that old people are not left out, so that we all have a better place that we call this wonderful land of Canada, this wonderful province of Ontario.

PETITIONS

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I think it's wonderful that the

member for Parry Sound–Muskoka is here while I’m delivering it.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary provincial highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

“Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

“Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

“Whereas the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka’s private member’s bill provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

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

“That private member’s Bill 9, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated provincially owned highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process.”

Speaker, I’m pleased to sign it and send it to the table with page Shaumik.

1340

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: I have 4,000 signatures here today. I would have brought more, but they told me to split them up over several days. They’re from northern Ontario and as well from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north’s economy; and

“Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

“Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

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

“That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately.”

I fully agree, affix my signature and give it to page Talin.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I have a petition from residents of the great riding of York South–Weston, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

“Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

“Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

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

“Respectfully requests full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Sarah.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents. The issue is four 2.5-megawatt wind turbines being proposed by Leader Resources in the area of Port Granby in my riding. The two lead petitioners are Kulpreet Khurana as well as Gerry Mahoney. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the residents who have signed this petition have concerns regarding the direct and indirect impact on the well-being of inhabitants and the local environment in the vicinity of industrial wind turbines; and

“Whereas there are concerns regarding setbacks, health issues, the impact on the local environment and property values; and

“Whereas the residents who have signed are certainly in favour of renewable energy but are not reassured by the current level of research on the subject; and

“Whereas the wind turbine proposal is within proximity of the Port Granby crown land low-level radioactive waste site, [and] concerns have been raised about the compatibility of these two” environmentally sensitive “projects adjacent to each another;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to call for” an immediate “moratorium on industrial wind turbines and for the project in Clarington and other such projects to be halted.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to Brady, a page from my riding of Durham.

TOURISM

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I’m pleased to present the following petition:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas tourism is a vital contributor to the economy of northwestern Ontario, bringing hundreds of millions of dollars into the province’s economy from other provinces and the United States, unlike other regions in the province whose target demographic is people who already reside in Ontario;

“Whereas northwestern Ontario’s tourist economy has been under attack by government policies such as the cancellation of the spring bear hunt, the harmonized sales

tax (HST), the strong Canadian dollar and difficulties passing through the Canada/United States border; and

“Whereas studies have shown that tourism in the northwest nets significantly more money per stay than other regions of the province, in part due to visitors frequenting historical sites, parks and roadside attractions that they learn about through travel information centres;

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

“To keep the travel information centres in Fort Frances, Kenora and Rainy River open permanently to ensure that northwestern Ontario maximizes the benefit of our tourist economy.”

I'm pleased to support this petition.

IMMIGRATION POLICY POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, entitled “Respect for Diverse Communities.”

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

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

“Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

“We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

“That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

“That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

“Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

“That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity.”

I most certainly support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to you via page Dia.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. Jeff Yurek: It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it's very important. They've sent some letters to the Minister of Energy, which he has not answered.

“Whereas the residents of Elgin–Middlesex–London are concerned about the sacrifice of 400 acres of prime agricultural land in the town of Belmont to the development of a solar farm despite the Green Energy Act's prohibition of building on such high-grade agricultural land;

“Whereas the company First Solar claims their use of such valuable land is justified under the older renewable energy framework that was in place when the company received its OPA contracts;

“Whereas the government has grandfathered the project into the new Green Energy Act, thereby allowing the company to circumvent any municipal opinion and review;

“Whereas the government has effectively allowed this project to use favourable aspects of two separate regulatory frameworks while avoiding aspects of those same frameworks that are meant to protect one of Ontario's most vital finite resources: its world-class agricultural land;

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

“To put a moratorium on the solar development in Belmont until the province decides by which set of regulations First Solar is to abide.”

I support this petition and affix my signature.

SEWAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I rise to submit a petition on behalf of the members of Erie Road in the Harrow region of my riding of Essex.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has issued a provincial officer's order on the Earl Wright drain to the town of Essex. As a result, the town of Essex must construct an extension to the sanitary sewer. The process to extend the system must begin immediately; and

“Whereas the estimated cost [is] between \$15,000 to \$17,000 for property owners with 50-foot frontage and \$23,000 to \$27,500 for property owners with 100-foot frontage;

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

“We, the citizens of Erie Road South ... in the town of Essex who have signed this petition, call on the Ontario provincial government to implement infrastructure funding through the Ministry of the Environment to help offset the cost of the newly extended sanitary sewer along Erie Road South in the town of Essex, thus making our properties and municipality more eco-friendly, as directed by the ministry. The total cost of the sewer extension is placed on the town of Essex, who in turn must pass on this considerable expense to the land-owners, leaving us, the undersigned, with an enormous burden in initial payout costs or debentured, with yearly taxes doubling.”

I agree with this petition and I will submit it to the Clerk with page Safa.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from my riding of York South–Weston.

“Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

“Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

“Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

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

“Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice.”

I agree with this petition. I will affix my signature and hand it over to page Sabrina.

1350

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the horse racing industry employs approximately 60,000 people, creates \$1.5 billion in wages and \$2 billion in recurring expenditures annually; and

“Whereas the partnership that was created between government and the horse breeding and racing industry has been a model arrangement and is heralded throughout North America, with 75% of revenues going to the provincial government to fund important programs like health care and education, 5% to the municipalities and only 20% goes back to the horse business; and

“Whereas the horse business is a significant source of revenue for the farming community and rural municipalities;

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

“That the Ministry of Finance continue the revenue-sharing partnership with the horse racing industry for the benefit of Ontario’s agricultural and rural economies.”

I support this petition, affix my signature and I will send it with page Shaumik.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I have another petition from members from the Woodslee community in my riding of Essex.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Windsor–Essex Catholic District School Board has begun a process to consider closing St. John the Evangelist school;

“Whereas St. John the Evangelist school is vital to the future well-being of the Woodslee hamlet and its students; and

“Whereas schools are not just buildings for learning; they are the heart of the community;

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

“To take whatever steps are necessary, including boundary adjustments, to keep open and maintain the long-term viability of St. John the Evangelist school.”

I support this petition, I have signed it and will submit it with page Manak.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

POLITIQUES D’IMMIGRATION

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, entitled “Respect for Diverse Communities.”

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

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

“Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

“We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

“That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

“That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

“Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

“That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity.”

I certainly support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to you via page Carley.

SENIORS’ HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jim McDonell: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act protects tenants in dwellings, long-term-care homes and retire-

ment homes from sudden and unfair increases to their rent; and

“Whereas additional costs such as the provision of meals and other services are not subject to the said act; and

“Whereas there have been episodes of repeated, large and unjustified increases to the stated costs of meal provisioning in Cornwall and area; and

“Whereas residents do not have a say in the procurement and administration of meals and other services provided by the facility, nor can they opt out of such services when notified of an increase in charges, being thus committed to a ‘take it or leave it’ choice;

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

“(1) To instruct the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to enact regulations ensuring fairness, protection and choice for residents of retirement homes and long-term-care facilities that provide any other necessary services such as, but not limited to, meals and personal assistance at extra cost to their residents;

“(2) To instruct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to undertake a comprehensive review of the administration of retirement homes and long-term-care facilities with respect to the provision of services other than lodging that involve an extra charge to residents.”

I agree with the petition and I will be handing it off to page Andrew.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (RENT INCREASE GUIDELINE), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (TAUX LÉGAL D'AUGMENTATION DES LOYERS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 5, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I recognize the member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just had to check the clock first: I have 10 minutes. I thought we might be down to 10 minutes by now.

The bill is a fine little bill. As my colleague from Welland said earlier on the introduction of a new bill relating to co-ops, what is being proposed here is fine. Who's going to say you don't want rent increases capped

at 2.5%? Everybody's going to agree that we need to keep them down, because we have to keep life affordable.

But having said that, what is this government not doing around the whole issue of tenants, tenants' rights, affordable housing and everything else? This government must know; this government did know. This government campaigned on trying to help tenants. We know that 13% of the tenants of this province live in poverty. We know that 20% of them pay more than 50% of their wages, of their income, each and every month to keep a roof over their head. That is not sustainable in the long term and eventually causes tenants to spend money on housing that they cannot spend on clothing or transportation or education or a hundred other things that most of us would take for granted.

We know that nearly 23,000 people spent nights in homeless shelters in the city of Toronto alone last year. We know that in the city of Toronto last year there were over one million visits to food banks. So it's all well and good to talk about a 2.5% increase, but the tenants' associations tell us that what this is going to result in is approximately a \$3-per-month savings for someone whose rent is \$1,000. So they're going to save \$3 over the 3% guideline that was there last year. I mean, \$3? Please. Let's not make this into anything bigger than what it is.

We know that 152,000 people are on the waiting list for affordable housing in the city of Toronto alone, and that number keeps going up year after year as this government builds virtually no affordable housing, even though they promised to. I remember back in 2003, some eight or nine long years ago, that wonderful election we had, and everybody was so full of promise and the Liberals were promising everything. In 2003, they promised to build 20,000 units of affordable housing each and every year. Eight and a half years later, they've made it up to almost 16,000. That's not per year; that's 16,000 in eight and a half years.

This is a crisis that's out there. It's a crisis not only for the people who are tenants; it's a crisis for people who are just looking for a decent place to live.

At the same time that they're promising 2.5%, they have left in place vacancy decontrol. The Liberals promise—and I love this quote from 2003, right from the Liberals' little red book. I quote them: “We will get rid of vacancy decontrol, which allows unlimited rent increases on a unit when a tenant leaves. It will be gone.” Eight and a half years later, nothing has happened at all. We still have vacancy decontrol. We still have landlords jacking up the rent when tenants leave, and the new guy, the new person who comes in, loses it all. Nine years, no results: That's what this Liberal government is all about.

1400

So, today, they have a bill that says that we're going to cap it at 2.5%, and they expect applause from everyone. Well, I'm very sorry; you're not going to get applause from me. You have to do it. We're going to vote for it. But, look, this is a much bigger issue than what you're putting before us.

We have the Residential Tenancies Act, which is being changed somewhat today for co-ops—another good thing—but that same Residential Tenancies Act subsection 6.(2) is still extant. What it says is that it exempts the owners of newer buildings from having to comply with the rent guidelines. Those newer buildings are now 20 years old. Surely the Residential Tenancies Act in that regard should be changed. Why should the tenants of those buildings be subject to guidelines above 2.5% when, in fact, the building is now 20 years old and is itself starting to show signs of wear and tear?

You've got the whole problem of proper state of repair. In the minister's own riding in the Thorncliffe Park area—she was there a couple of weeks ago, maybe a month ago now, to look at the sad state of repair in her own riding of the apartment buildings that are there. I'm very familiar with those because they are in the former borough of East York. They were in a pretty sad state of repair when I was mayor, but we did things. We had the authority and did things to make them better.

Those authorities are not there anymore. This government has not acted on them, and so you're going to go into apartments right across this province in very bad states of repair, with leaky roofs. You're going to go in there where elevators don't work. You're going to go in there with problems with bedbugs and cockroaches and mice and vermin infestation and holes in the walls. You're going to go in there with cupboards falling off, with refrigerators and stoves that don't work, with mould, with everything else. And nothing is happening around this issue, but the landlord can still raise the rent by 2.5%.

We think that there is a solution. We have suggested many times to this government that we license landlords. We have suggested that those bad landlords can be weeded out by use of a licence and that if they're not keeping proper repair, they don't have their licence renewed and they can't ask for guideline increases.

Surely people have the right to live in good and decent housing, and surely this government should be concerned about that. But all we see from this government is the same tired thing, because they are required to do it by law: Once a year, they come forward and set a rent guideline. That's all that happens around here. That's all they do. They don't do anything else that's meaningful.

They have left AGIs in place, AGIs which allow landlords to do repairs to a property. So if they do no repairs for 10 or 15 years, they can suddenly come along and say, "I had to put in a new roof. I had to put in new asphalt in the parking lot. I had to repair the elevator. I had to do X, Y and Z, which cost me money." Therefore, not only do you get the rent guideline, but you can get up to an additional 3% to make those repairs that should have been done each and every year. So you get tenants paying not 2.5%, but they phone my office, and I'm sure they phone everybody else's office in this entire Legislature, and say, "If it's only 2.5%, why is my rent going up 5.5%? All the landlord has done is repair a roof that was in bad need of repair for many years. Why is my rent going up like this?"

So, we need to limit this. We need to limit what landlords can do. They are supposed to keep their properties in a state of good repair. That's what the 2.5% increase is intended to do. A portion of that is to keep the property in good repair. Bad landlords aren't doing that. What they're doing is, they're coming along and every three years they're applying for a 9% increase—3%, 3%, 3%—because that's what the law allows, and then after those three years, they come and do it again. We think that this needs to be capped. We think there should be a minimum of one application every five years, and that it should not be 3%. It should be considerably less: 2% or even 1%.

The government has an opportunity here. The government has an opportunity that they're not doing. They have an opportunity to license landlords. They have an opportunity to allow municipalities to build housing. All it takes is a change to the zoning bylaw that the municipalities would have that, but they don't do it. They have an opportunity to spend some money on affordable housing, which they do not do. They have an opportunity to license landlords. They have all these opportunities, and yet all we see all the time is a little, tiny, minor bill to set the rate because they are required to do it.

Would that this government had some chutzpah. Would that this government had some desire to help tenants, particularly those who are living in poverty, to live in better housing and to have affordable housing available to the 152,000 people in Toronto alone who are on the waiting list and who are living in sometimes decrepit positions.

I ask the government to do more than what is contained in the body of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mario Sergio: I was listening to my colleague the member from Beaches–East York very attentively, and I'm very pleased that at the end he and his colleagues are going to support this bill, because it is a good bill. It's got good material and good intentions and will be good for the tenants in Ontario.

In my own particular riding, I have a lot of tenants. I'm not going to claim that I have the largest rental population, but let me tell you that I have an excellent mix of seniors renting, low-income people renting and single parents renting. I can tell you that I can vouch for some of the comments that the member has made, and that is why this bill addresses one very main problem: It is to give tenants in Ontario some four years of breathing space, if you will, where for four years they know what their rent is going to be, how much it can be increased, the maximum or the minimum. I have to commend the minister for bringing the bill forward.

It cannot go any lower than 1%. Why? To give the landlord, if you will, the opportunity to maintain the building and do repairs. Why the 2.5% maximum? So tenants know that their rent cannot go any higher than 2.5%. If they wish to make an arrangement between the two of them, so be it. The legislation does not prohibit

that. But the fact is, I think this protects tenants for the long run. It gives them an opportunity to concentrate on other things—running their lives, the education of their kids—instead of worrying about next month's rent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure exactly why we're debating this. But I remember the member from Beaches–East York—he means very well, and I support the idea, the concept that affordable housing is important for all Ontarians, to look forward to that in a time when “affordable housing” is almost like an oxymoron. Look, in Toronto you have to be a millionaire just to buy a house. So it isn't affordable. And then you look at how we're going to make living affordable for people. It's all to do with taxes and levels of service. So there's a larger debate here, subordinate to this.

In fact, if you look at the bill, there's really nothing in it. I think the people of Ontario should know that. It's about half a paragraph. It's actually about 25 lines. All it does is say that the guideline for a calendar year shall not be less than 1% or more than 2.5%. So there's really nothing in here, and we kind of agree with it. Why are we wasting the time when the economy of Ontario is heading toward a cliff and we're going there at precipitous speed and Dalton McGuinty and his team are doing nothing about it? That worries me, because all of what he's not doing is what's going to cost people more.

But there is a small line in here—pay attention to this now—that says, “The minister shall have the guideline for each calendar year published in the Ontario Gazette not later than August...” So it looks to me like the minister can actually set that, as long as she or he gazettes it.

I know the member from Beaches–East York, a compassionate person, an informed person and the last mayor of East York, I believe. So he knows of what he speaks, and I will be listening to his two-minute rebuttal to see if there is anything else.

The issue that the minister entered into today with respect to co-op dispute resolution, I think, is something. Why wasn't that put in here? They could have put those two bills together. Why are they wasting time here when the economy and jobs are really what we should be talking about?

1410

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: The NDP have actions on tenants' rights. I just named some of the things we'd like to see implemented and obviously weren't dealt with at all in this bill. Strengthening rent control to a certain level was done here, but not to a level we'd like, obviously, because there's still some movement on repairs that owners do for their buildings and then put it on to the tenants and could increase it up to 5%.

We like to see: implement landlords' licensing; protect tenants from excessive utility charge increases and eliminate above-guideline increases for utility costs; extend protections for more tenants; ensure social hous-

ing residents have the same protection in terms of determination of their rent owing or changes in rent subsidies by allowing the Landlord and Tenant Board to review decisions under the social housing reform act; remove exemptions to compensation for tenants evicted because of landlords' own use of rental units; implement standard lease agreements, making leases clear and understandable for tenants and removing surprises or hidden clauses by implementing a standard-form lease agreement for renting, subletting, subleasing and utility charges; and improve access to justice for tenants.

What else needs to be done to make rent affordable and to protect tenants is closing loopholes in rent control. Currently, landlords are exploiting the fact that the rent control law doesn't apply to vacant units or newer units by imposing huge increases in rent to those units. The NDP will fight to stop this practice.

We also have to crack down on slum landlords and increase the supply of affordable housing to tens of thousands of Ontarians.

We have to make rent affordable.

We also have to reduce the cost of heating and hydro. This is a huge item. Some people's hydro—they have to pay that first and they can't pay their rent.

Make housing a human right.

Speaker, there's a long way to go. This bill barely touches on the many things that have to be implemented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm pleased to respond to the speech from my colleague in the New Democratic Party. I can't, Mr. Speaker, though, allow the occasion to pass without picking up on the comments from the member from Durham, who said, first of all, that he judged the bill by the length of the bill. That's a first for me. I think the importance of the bill has to do with its substance, not the number of words. He also said: At a time when the economy is in a delicate, precarious position, why are we dealing with this? I guess I ask him and his Conservative friends: Why, when the economy is in this situation where we need stability, are they trying to force an election on the people of Ontario? But, Mr. Speaker, that's an aside.

As I say, Bill 19 is an important bill which builds on our commitment to tenants, our passage of the Residential Tenancies Act in 2006. Mr. Speaker, the whole thrust of that bill and in this bill that has come forward and in measures in between has been to find that balance where we want to protect tenants and at the same time give landlords the flexibility and the resources they need to make sure that their rental accommodation can be kept up to date and they can address those needs as they go further.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud, coming from Waterloo region, with the work that has been done not only to protect renters in our area but also in terms of the issue of affordable housing which has been related by a number of members, including the member who just spoke on this issue. Waterloo region has been a true pioneer in

terms of reaching out to the private sector, particularly the non-profit private sector, and entering into partnerships with them so that they can build affordable housing.

A few days ago, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of visiting Supportive Housing of Waterloo region. With only a few seconds left, I will just say that it is put together by a group that was involved with the Out of the Cold program and a way to provide supportive housing for those who are most in need. They did it through a very innovative partnership with the region, which I certainly applaud.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for questions and comments. We return to the member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleagues from York West, Durham, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and the Minister of Community and Social Services for their comments.

We in this province should be doing much more than what is contained in the body of this bill or what this government is doing. A country like Sweden, with about as many people living in that country as live in Ontario, 10 years ago embarked on building a million units of affordable housing. They have built 100,000 units of affordable housing each and every year for the last 10 years in Sweden, and they have met that goal. Can you imagine if this province seized the same initiative and built a million units of new, affordable housing instead of, over the last eight and a half or nine years, the Liberals building 16,000? There is a fundamental difference between the attitude of the Swedes and the attitude of this government.

We have people here living in poverty. We have people here living in absolute substandard housing with slum landlords, with vermin, with all of the things that one is going to find and the social conditions that go with them.

It is not enough for this government to simply control the rents, as the member from York West had to say. This government must be striving to do much more, and failure to do that is tantamount to throwing up your hands and saying, “I’m powerless; the economy is bad,” or whatever they want to say. That is not the case.

Where other people have a will, they have shown that a way can be found forward. In the city of Toronto, they have shown that where there was a will to redevelop Regent Park, there’s a way that can be found forward. This province, this government, has to find that same will. They will find a way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before I call for further debate, I’ll remind all members that questions and comments are to be referenced back to the member who had the floor, who was giving the speech as opposed to engaging in debate.

Further debate?

Mr. John O’Toole: It’s a pleasure and an early privilege to have the opportunity to speak on Bill 19, the one-paragraph bill. There is importance in the size of the

bill. When you look at this discussion today, I’ve made it very clear in my remarks, as did the other members—if I could trouble the young page for two glasses of water, please. Thank you very much. Pardon me.

The point is that we all agree, I believe substantially, that affordable housing is a laudable objective. I believe that all parties would wish that to be the case.

If you look at the fundamental cause for the dilemma that Ontario is in, I place the blame squarely at the feet of Dalton McGuinty, the Premier of Ontario. The reason I say that is, he has had eight years and everything he has touched has gone up in price. So the one thing you can be assured of is that the cost of rent is going to go up.

The rent review guideline is a method for keeping rent affordable. It has been published and is published each year. It’s indexed generally to the CPI, the consumer price index. That gives the landlords the ability to pass on that much. However, when you look at the taxes on multiple residential—that’s the classification for apartments: multi-residential. When you look at condos, you now have the condo fee. Both of those fees are going through the roof. They’re not controlled by this function.

Furthermore, I would say that there’s a simple economic argument here. If you look at what causes the consumer price index to go up or the cost of borrowing capital to go up, it’s the amount of growth in the economy. When you have inflation, that kind of growth in the economy, you will always have higher interest than the rate of inflation. Interest right now is quite low. I believe it’s federal policy, monetary policy, to keep interest low, because our whole economy is based on consumption—people buying homes. I think there’s a bubble in the housing market right now. Certainly, it has been the case in the United States and other jurisdictions. I believe Canada is imminently waiting for that, and some of the economists have forecasted that. If you’re looking at the affordability of your house today, which translates into affordability of accommodation, you would know, Mr. Speaker, that it’s very much predicated on the cost of money: What’s the mortgage rate? If interest goes up, the mortgage rates will go up, obviously—the cost of borrowing money.

You look at comments made during this debate that one in five people today are spending more than 50% of their income on housing or shelter.

1420

Now, to wrap around this, shelter and stability of residence is very important for people, but more important for children, whether it’s for schooling—but for adults, to have a place to call home, to have the security of a roof over your head and a place to call home and a place to mail your future opportunities for employment, or to make phone calls, or to at least set up a home-based business or to get your feet under you in our economy. And I think there’s nothing in here for small business in the budget that we’ve just seen. There’s more red tape than ever. Now they’re looking at home businesses in residential places possibly being taxed as commercial use.

I'm quite concerned that this debate doesn't go nearly deep enough with respect to the fundamental cause of making housing affordable. And if I look just recently, just for the sake of completing some remarks here, there's an article this past weekend in the Sun, on Dalton McGuinty's "Mythical Green Jobs." This is the article. I'd encourage people to read it. It says, "If you believe Ontario's Premier is creating 50,000 green jobs, you'll believe anything." Now, this is validated by—it says, "McCarter concluded: 'A majority of the jobs will be temporary. The (energy) ministry projected that of the 50,000 jobs, about 40,000 would be related to renewable energy,'" and be temporary. "'Our review of this projection suggests 30,000, or 75% of these jobs, would be construction,'" which only last a few years. The "'high proportion of short-term jobs was not'"—here's the issue. Most of the jobs left at the solar will be somebody driving a lawnmower to cut the grass. These are not jobs.

Now, their second plan for jobs is to have a big casino in Toronto, strip clubs and pornography. This is such a weak and dismal vision for Ontario's future. It saddens me. They should be looking at developing the culture of this province, not tearing it apart. So I'm very disappointed. There's no vision, and this bill—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: It does relate back to the bill, Bill 19. Today, the Minister of Municipal Affairs said—and I think our respondent, Mr. Clark, was quite fair about it. He said it's a good first step. He said the co-op housing dispute resolution process should belong to the Landlord and Tenant Act in a dispute resolution process. It's out of the courts and more affordable to resolve these disputes.

I believe that co-ops are a good form of home ownership. The reason I say that is that there's pride of ownership and there's commitment to the community. As I said, I think as the NDP member said today, it is about building communities. In Toronto right now, the whole housing thing, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is condominiums. What is happening, it's my understanding, is that many developers, rather than have apartments pay higher rent—you would know that. Multi-residential tax rates are higher than residential rates, and they're converting condos into rentals. Many entrepreneurs are buying floors in the condos rather than the whole building, then they're subletting those or letting those out, and the rate of tax is cheaper because it's a residential tax rate as opposed to a multi-res.

What is problematic there, of course, in affordable housing is the condominium fees. And there's nothing here that I see as any attempt to sort of—there was a discussion about the reserve fund issue as well as the board disclosure issue. What's an entitlement under the capital reserve fund? These are issues we should be talking about, because that's the new form of housing in Toronto. You'd have to be a millionaire—you don't need Dalton McGuinty's help to buy a house in Toronto if you're buying a home in Rosedale. He'd be asking you for a donation.

Bill 19, to me, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, sets out a rent guideline. We get that. What's next? I'm so disappointed in what's actually going on. There was a question again today asked of Ornge, and the minister ducked it; she sidestepped it. She was ignoring it. In that context, we've asked for a select committee. Everyone knows—

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Are you going to adjourn the debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: You pay attention. Everyone knows that we've asked for a select committee, and I hear some of the members are interested now. We're at the real substance of the debate now. The substance of my remarks now is this: We've asked for a select committee to review and subpoena people under oath for Ornge, and they've just ignored it. Even the House leader—I see him here on duty today. He's here because he pulls that trick. Premier McGuinty gives him notes and he reads them. But here's the way it works. Right now, as my sign of protest, I am moving adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. O'Toole has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1425 to 1455.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Will the members please take their seats?

Mr. O'Toole has moved the adjournment of the debate. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and be counted by the table staff.

Thank you very much. You may take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and be counted by the table staff.

Members may take their seats.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 23; the nays are 41.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion lost.

The member for Durham still has the floor.

Mr. John O'Toole: I can only say on behalf of the opposition how disappointed we are. All we're asking for is a bit of civility and the fact that we really need to have a select committee examine this issue. The waste and lack of respect are unacceptable. It's on this matter that I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. O'Toole has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1458 to 1528.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Will the members please take their seats?

Mr. O'Toole has moved the adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while they're counted by the table staff.

Take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted by the table staff.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 21; the nays are 42.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion lost.

The member for Durham still has the floor, and I return to the member from Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I hope we've made it eminently clear that the reason for these procedural motions is that there is no respect. We want a select committee to resolve the issues around Ornge. The minister has never answered one question in the House, and Bill 19 allows us this privilege to do that. If there were any other motions where I could get them to pay attention, I would be here standing for the people of Ontario, because it's the right thing to do.

With that, I'm waiting for the NDP and the Liberals to comment on my remarks on Bill 19.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to the member from Durham. You know, his speech was an excellent speech, but he rudely interrupted himself twice. So it's rather difficult to remember what he had to say an hour and a half ago, but I do remember a couple of things that he talked about.

I do have to say, before I get to those, that his position on the select committee is a correct one. I am just not sure that the tactic is the right tactic. But I think the government does have an obligation to obey the order of the House that the minister said she would be bound by. Really, in a parliamentary democracy, one is only as good as one's word. When you promise to do and then don't do it, it reflects very badly, not only on the person who made the promise but on the entire Legislature, and I would ask the government to reconsider. Even though we in the NDP do not agree with the tactic, we do agree with the principle.

Now, as to what he had to say, he spoke at some length about this particular bill and about whether or not the bill was everything that it could be or should be. The comments that he made were accurate in that this is a very tiny bill, and one ought not to reflect, in the size of the bill, the importance of the bill. But surely this is not groundbreaking legislation; this is legislation that is required. It has to be brought forward.

Interjection: Housekeeping.

Mr. Michael Prue: It's housekeeping legislation. It's done every year or every other year. When the rate has to be set, any government, any stripe, any time would have to bring forward such a bill. The fact that it is of such

short duration says that this is really the only thing that the government is interested in: setting that rate. The member quite rightly brought that out.

He also quite rightly brought out the government's lack of an action plan when it comes to the economy. I really have to agree with him on the whole issue of a casino. Is that the way the government is going to raise money in the future in this province? I would think it's a very poor economic strategy at best, and I would agree with him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mario Sergio: I have to say that perhaps the members of the House may have had enough speaking on the actual bill that is for debate. I can appreciate the member from Durham there. I mean, we had two votes in the House. We wasted one hour. We have the friendly member from Beaches–East York there addressing, again, this particular committee that they want in the House without speaking on the bill that's with us, and it's an important bill.

We're dealing with an extremely important bill with respect to tenants, how they are being governed and rent increases and whatever have you. So I think we should be concentrating on that. Evidently, the opposition says, "Oh, we've had enough. We know what to do with it." I hope that they will support it. I'm glad to see that the NDP will support it.

But I think the most important thing is to let the people out there, our tenants—how they feel with respect to this particular bill. The bill contains one very important clause, Speaker: that every four years, this will be reviewed. The rent will be reviewed. As it is being proposed now, we're saying, "Not less than 1%, not more than 2.5%." It is to give the opportunity to our tenants to plan, in the long run, their holidays, their kids, their vacation, their mortgage, their housing, their jobs, whatever they wish to do, without having to worry that the rent is going to go up by 6% and 8%, as it did years ago. People would be saying that it's going to go 6%, 8%, so we have to put something where people would feel comfortable, and this is what the bill does.

I think it's important to tell the people out there the reality of the content of this bill. It is good for the tenant—it is good for my tenants. I know it's good for all the tenants in Ontario, and I hope we can move it along to a public hearing and then come back and approve it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm very pleased to have the opportunity today to respond to the comments made by member O'Toole, a very active member in this Legislature, someone who puts a lot of effort not only into his own riding but into the legislative debate around here.

Mr. Speaker, I know there were a lot of people who were concerned about the use of the bells today. I think it's been made fairly clear. The reason for the use of the bells is very clear. We are adamantly opposed to the fact that the government refuses to call a select committee to

look into the Ornge issue. We thought it was the will of the Legislature. We had a vote on that, and we thought we would have the commitment from the government to carry on with that.

They use the excuses that there's an OPP investigation, public accounts, the auditor and all this sort of thing, but the will of the House actually was to have a select committee. That's why we feel very disheartened that that never has taken place to this point, especially when you look at that it's almost three quarters of a billion dollars, we believe. It has been a very important amount of money to the citizens of the province of Ontario.

So I applaud my colleague for playing the leadership role with the bell movement, and I expect more in the future until we actually see that select committee. I think the citizens of Ontario deserve that. They deserve answers to the questions that are operating around that.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to say a few words, and thank my colleague for bringing it forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: I would also like to voice my opinion on Bill 19. It's unfortunate: I understand the reasoning behind the bells ringing also, but I did a lot of work in preparation for my time in the debate, and I'm now not going to have that opportunity. So it's a lot of time wasted, too, on that point.

There is a lot of serious work that needs to be done in this House. We have a lot of people in this province who look forward to affordable housing and safe housing, and when time is wasted on antics, I'm sorry, but I take offence at that. Like I said, I understand why they're doing it, but there is enough wasted time in this House that when we are here to work, we really do need to get to that work.

I'm sure I'll be voting in support of this bill, but it lacks a lot. We have so many safety concerns with houses. We have people who can't afford housing. A bachelor apartment in Hamilton is \$510 per se. A person on social assistance makes \$599. That's 85% of their income, and then you guys freeze social assistance. So we have big problems going on that bills like this aren't fixing. We should be putting our time to good use, bringing good bills forward and making sure that they count for real Ontarians who need us to be working on their behalf, not for the CEOs, because they're not struggling with these issues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): that concludes the time for questions and comments. I return to the member for Durham for his two minutes to reply.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to thank the member from Beaches East–York. I think he got it that the minister is lacking responsibility here. We all understand the reason for the procedural backlog. It's the refusal to honour a vote in this House calling for a select committee, which the Minister of Health herself agreed with, and now we're trying to make them at least keep their word. That's ultimately what this is. It's keeping your word.

1540

I want to thank the member from York West, but he said that I wasted an hour. I didn't waste an hour. This is democracy. You have to be patient with democracy. We're trying to make a point here. The point we're making is your arrogance and indifference to the mood of the opposition and the people of Ontario. You are on a breakaway. You're not listening to the heart and soul of Ontario. And we, I believe—our leader, Tim Hudak, and the team on this side—are.

The member from Simcoe North got it perfectly right when he said that I was an active member, but he said and reminded us all that the bells that were ringing, for those listening today, are actually the Ornge bells. When you hear those bells from now—it's like Pavlov. They remind you that it's actually Ornge, the Ornge helicopter waste, a billion dollars of waste. Every time you hear a bell now, you start salivating and you start to think, "Ornge helicopters." What a waste of money. Those Liberals are at it again. That's how I feel. I think of George Smitherman; he's on the payroll at Ryerson.

I would say, in all fairness, I know the members from the NDP, as we, support people of modest means and the need for affordable housing.

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: And now the Liberals are laughing. They're only ones that are compassionate. It's not true. All members here want to make Ontario better. The only difference is, they're so arrogant they won't listen to us. Even the vote on HST off energy: As an example, we voted together for the people of Ontario; they voted against the people of Ontario. This bill is nothing but a shell. But remember, when bells ring, it's all about Ornge.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am pleased today to be able to talk about the bill, G19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act. I understand that the intention behind the bill is to make rent more affordable and predictable by capping allowable annual rent increases charged by private landlords at 2.5%, down from previously inflated levels of more than 3%. While I think this bill can help a few Ontarians dealing with affordability in housing, it barely puts a dent in the housing crisis faced by so many in the province. We need to address the real issues behind the housing crisis to ensure that every person, every family, has the right to affordable housing that is safe and secure and free from excessive increases, and protect the rights to livable and well-repaired units.

As we all know, there are over 1.3 million tenants in households in Ontario and another 125,000 residents living in housing co-ops, which accounts for over one third of our province's population. The fact that over one third of Ontarians can't afford to purchase a house should be alarming for all of us and send a clear message that we need to be doing more. Thirteen per cent of households live in poverty in Ontario, and approximately 630,000 of those households are unable to afford shelter that meets

basic needs, basic levels of adequacy, sustainability, and affordability standards. According to 2006 census data, 45% of Ontario tenants represent more than 580,000 households paying 30% or more of their incomes to rent. To make matters worse, 20% of Ontario tenants representing more than 261,000 households pay more than 50% of their income to rent.

We know that the risks of homelessness increase dramatically when rental costs consume more than 50% of income. Please just ask one million Ontarians who were forced to use food banks over the past year alone. That's an extremely high number, and it's really shameful.

The numbers can't be ignored any longer. The people in this province can no longer be asked to live so precariously. We can't continue to ask more than one third of Ontarians to shoulder more and more of the housing burden while the dream of home ownership becomes a thing of the past. The reality is that tenants of this province earn, on average, less than half of the income compared to that of a homeowner. They, too, are suffering from this recession, and are doing so on less than most, and their hopes are dwindling quickly as the dream of homeownership is clearly no longer for all of us.

While I understand the noble intentions behind this bill, I find it's lacking in taking real steps to address the rental housing crisis. We are dealing with more than 152,000 low-income Ontarians on waiting lists for social housing as of January 1, 2011. Combined with a glaring lack of a social housing strategy for close to eight years, we are only beginning to touch upon the real issues.

This government made promises to the people of this province. They promised to deliver 20,000 units of affordable housing over the course of four years. What the people of this province actually got from that pledge was 2,000 units of affordable housing over the course of eight years. This province needs a long-term commitment to build affordable housing, not half-measures delivered over double the time frame to meet the basic need and right to safe and secure shelter.

This bill fails to address the reaction of social housing providers who feel that proposed rental caps will only make it harder for providers to obtain revenues to sufficiently manage ongoing, escalating maintenance costs. The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association has already written to the Premier, asserting that this bill will have "the unintended consequence of negatively impacting the sustainability and ongoing financial viability of both social and affordable housing projects."

Vacancy decontrol is one of several areas of the crisis that this bill does not account for. There are no provisions in this bill that address or prevent landlords from increasing any rent amounts they choose on a vacant unit. Again, back in 2003, the party opposite promised, "We will get rid of vacancy decontrol, which allows unlimited rent increases on a unit when a tenant leaves. It will be gone." That's the quote. My concern is that this bill provides a perfect opportunity to include the provision, yet fails to include it even now.

We also need to consider new builds in our conversations on rent regulation to allow for all private market rentals, regardless of when they were constructed. As it stands currently, subsection 6(2) of the Residential Tenancies Act exempts rent regulations for sitting tenants in newer buildings. Many of those have now been rented for more than 20 years. I and my fellow New Democrats say, enough with the loopholes and exemptions. Action is needed now to ensure that any form of rent regulation applies to all rental units, whether occupied or vacant.

Other major concerns that I and my caucus have with this bill is the lack of protection for tenants on maintenance and repairs to units. We support the vision of landlord licensing. This is a key component of ensuring repairs and maintenance are achieved without risk to the tenant. My colleagues Mr. Prue and Mr. Miller already laid out an NDP vision for action on tenant rights earlier today that was initially raised by Cheri DiNovo back in 2010.

I am unsure why this government refuses to take meaningful steps towards addressing the housing crisis. I really hope that they will be amenable to our suggestions to improve the lives and homes of more than one third of Ontarians who desperately need us to do more.

Affordability today is on the forefront for many Ontarians. Bills with respect to home heating and HST on home heating are making people find themselves in a crunch. Those who are on fixed incomes especially have challenges making life more affordable. One of the things that I know the party opposite is trying to do is a small step towards adjusting the inflation on rent increases, but it's not enough for those who are suffering on OW and ODSP. They can't afford even a 1% increase.

1550

Ms. Cindy Forster: Or the working poor.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Or the working poor, for that matter. Increasing it by 1% or 2.5% is not going to help the working poor and those on OW and those on ODSP. We can't afford to allow these people to suffer anymore. They are already trying to make ends meet by going to food banks.

It's not acceptable that people have to choose between heating their homes, putting food on the table and having to pay their rent. Everyone deserves a home that they can afford, that's safe and is in good repair.

I urge this government, when we do send this to committee, to please take into account that we need to make some changes in order to address affordability issues for everyone and just not a small amount of people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnett): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mario Sergio: I was very pleased and touched by the presentation by the member from London-Fanshawe. She concluded by saying that we hope that this particular piece of legislation will travel and we will see it at the various committee levels. Hopefully, this is the intent, actually, of the legislation: to debate it in the House and

move it forward. Let's go more publicly and let's have more input.

I have to say that the bill, Speaker, got here because of the consultation that has been done on this particular bill with all the stakeholders who have something to say on how tenants are being governed in Ontario. The results, in this bill, are because the minister, the government, have been listening to those who have made submissions. That is why we have proposed this particular piece of legislation. I think it's good.

I think it's good that we debate it, that we send it to committee, and then let's see what else can be brought forward by the opposition and other people out there on how we can make it any better.

Let me say this: I think the members on the other side know very well, in the past, what tenants were paying on a yearly basis. The fact is that we have taken into consideration those particular conditions that tenants were in, and we've said, "Okay, we want to give you a bit of space, that for four years you know what's coming. You can plan. Instead of worrying that the rent may be up 2%, 3%, 4%, 5%, you don't have to worry about it anymore because 2.5% is the top or 1% is the bottom." Now they can worry about their holidays, their education, their living style, their health, anything else. They don't have to worry anymore for four years.

Speaker, I thank you for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I want to stand up and talk about comments made by my colleague from the third party.

This is just a feel-good bill. It's another example of issues that aren't being addressed.

I see from a study from the city of Toronto where 49% of the residents, families, in Toronto are renters, and yet since 1996 only 5% of the units being constructed are rentals. We can see that this is a huge issue that has got to be addressed.

It's nice to say that they're going to look at controlling the rent, but they've done everything they could to make sure the real cost of renting has gone up. If you look at the cost of hydro and energy, the cost of property taxes, the HST—many cases where they talk out of two sides of their mouths, where they're looking at standing up in front of the public and saying, "We're looking at control of the rent." Well, rent hasn't been going up. If you look at rental units where these items are actually taken out of the rent, we're averaging 1.7% over the last five years. So I really don't see a problem. On the other hand, we're looking at rates of hydro increases around 80%.

If you really want to make housing affordable, you have to look at the supply and the other costs that not only renters are feeling, but everybody across the province of Ontario.

People are getting tired of the promises. I heard during the last election a promise to build more housing units, something that hasn't happened over the eight years this government has been in place. As my colleague from the third party has said, it was in their 2003 election promise.

But I guess we're getting used to these promises that aren't being upheld. I heard not too long ago a promise to do a select committee on Ornge if this House voted for it. We all know what happened there: another promise that's not being kept.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to compliment the member from London—Fanshawe. She hit on some very important points.

But speaking from where I'm from, Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, 21% of the people in my riding live below the poverty level, and 1%, 1.5% or 2% could be a killer to them. If this government really wants to do something, let's talk about lowering hydro rates. Let's talk about getting decent jobs or at least part-time jobs so they can put food on the table.

It's absolutely insane. This bill is like a two-line bill. You are not dealing with the problems. You're simply satisfying either the rent review board or the owners' association. That's all you're doing: another feather bill. It's not effective. It's not going to help anybody. If you really want to help people, I've got single moms that come into my office. They can't afford their hydro bill. They can't afford to put food on the table with three kids in tow. What do I tell them? There's like a two-year waiting list for housing. What do I tell these people? And these guys that are making over \$500,000 have got their nose out of joint because they might have to pay \$3,000 more a year.

Give me a break. Where's reality? What's wrong with some of the people in this province that have got all the money? Did they forget about where they came from? Did they forget about the people that live in their community? I think they have. It's about time this government took the bull by the horns and started fixing prices to help lower hydro and lower food costs and lower the things that are really going to help the people at that level. Because those people that don't eat properly and can't get proper medical attention end up being on the medical system, which costs us more and more every year, because they're not getting nutrition, they're not getting exercise and they haven't got jobs to put food on the table.

Why don't we get real around here and do some real good work and start helping those people?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: Let me remind my colleagues what the purpose of today's debate is. The purpose of Bill 19 is about protecting the tenants in Ontario. Let's not go into this tangent about this and that. It is to ensure all tenants have accessible and affordable housing. The purpose of Bill 19 is to limit the annual rent increase in accordance with the guidelines which are linked to the consumer price index for Ontario.

Section 120 states very clearly that it will not be less than 1% and will cap at 2.5%, Mr. Speaker. I also want to remind my colleagues opposite that when the NDP was

in office in 1993, the average rent guideline increase was 4.9%. In 1994, it was 3.2%. And when the PCs were in office, the average rent increase was 3% in 1998, and in 2002 the rent increase was 3.9%.

So what are we doing here? We're doing it to protect the tenants, Mr. Speaker. The proposed changes, if passed, will provide some stability and affordability for all renters. I have thousands of renters in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. In these uncertain economic times, we've got to do everything we can in this House to provide stability and affordability and make sure our renters have a stable rent, but more importantly, also help the landlord to maintain the rental unit. This is the right thing to do, because at the end of the day we're here to support our constituents and also make sure that the rent rate increase is within their means.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for questions and comments. I return to the member for London–Fanshawe, who has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker. I do appreciate members opposite for their comments on my 10-minute speech on the bill.

Again, I think affordability is the theme of what we're talking about today, because we're trying to make life more affordable for everyday Ontarians, and one of the solutions that the Liberal government thinks is going to make an impact is capping rent increases at 2.5%. Again, I'll reiterate: That is a small part of the whole story that we have here in front of us with regard to affordability.

1600

Heat and hydro: I woke up last week and gas prices had gone up 10 cents. Affordability is going to touch everyone with regard to rent, food, gas and home heating. Everyday life has to be affordable, and part of that piece of the puzzle is again people who have jobs. The member opposite from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek touched on it. We need to make sure that we have some job creation. If we're going to give tax cuts to corporations, we need to have strings attached so that people are getting good, permanent jobs with benefits. The economy is going to be driven if people buy homes. So we want to have job creation so that people can feel secure and invest in a house. I really appreciate the fact that this is a small step toward affordability, but there are bigger, bigger issues when we talk about affordability.

So thank you for your comments. I hope that when this bill does go to committee, we look at the fact that it's not just about rent; it's about affordability overall, that we have to make sure it's coming out of our pockets.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before I call for further debate, I remind the House that we are debating Bill 19, and I would ask members to confine their comments to the bill. As well, the questions and comments obviously have to make reference to the bill and the speech that was just given.

Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my privilege to rise in the House to speak to Bill 19, and as I always try to do when

I come into this sacred House, I try to look at things with a balanced approach, an objective approach and of course give due diligence as a member of the official opposition and find ways to ensure that we're doing what's needed for the people of Ontario in the best way possible.

Although this bill, in my mind, probably has good intentions, it will do little for the most vulnerable people of Bruce and Grey counties, not to mention the people of Ontario, for that matter.

The member across the way just referenced that it's about protecting tenants, and like many things, it's not just a one-sided coin. What about the people who own rental housing? They need an ability to pay. They need an ability to make money with their businesses. They've had the HST imposed, and that added another 8%. So how do they recoup these costs? Like anything, we have to ensure that there's the ability for businesses to survive and be prosperous.

This bill again—a couple of paragraphs, a very insignificant bill in many respects—imposes a consequence without consulting the stakeholders. Now what does that sound like to you? To me it sounds like the horse racing industry that we've just witnessed recently: no discussion, no consultation. In that case, an agreement they signed in good faith as a cost-sharing agreement—and I would be remiss if I didn't suggest it brings in \$1.1 billion to the economy of Ontario—in the blink of an eye, without any consultation and any thought of consequence to the 60,000 jobs, they pulled it.

Similar to the budget we just had introduced in this very House, they missed the mark. They're talking about tweaking things. They're talking about frills.

Mr. Paul Miller: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I realize that you would like to stick to the issues. The last speaker, Mr. O'Toole, started talking about Ornge, and we're getting off topic again. We all stuck to topic over here. It was all about cost and affordability. You tell us to stick to the topic. Maybe they should stick to the topic, too. I think it's only fair.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Oh, absolutely. I would remind the member that we're discussing Bill 19, and I would encourage him to confine his comments to the bill.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm happy to do so, Speaker. In fact, I'm trying to paint a bit of context to get to my next points, which are very relevant, I believe. Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Miller. It helps segue right into where I'm going.

As I said, it focuses on issues that really are wasting time. They talked about wasting time a little earlier. This is a bill that will have no significant impact. As my colleague from Leeds–Grenville suggested in his opening remarks on this bill, we need to be talking about significant and substantive issues like: What is the root of the problem why we don't have enough affordable housing? Could it be the cost of energy, which is drastically increasing under this government's watch? Could it be

about the waste of resources? There's \$3 billion that I could cite, but I won't digress into the specifics because I might be off topic. But \$3 billion: How many affordable housing units could we do if we had that money put into affordable housing?

We should be talking about substantive issues like jobs—600,000 unemployed people; the deficit—\$15.3 billion, which is going to go to \$30 billion if we don't soon do something; the debt is going to double to \$400 billion. Those are substantive issues. Talking about a 1% to 2.5% increase in a thing that was an anomaly—one year it went to 3.1%, and all of a sudden the Earth is falling in. What about this deficit that they doubled in less than eight years? We need to really get to the pragmatic part.

My colleague Mr. O'Toole spoke to this Bill 19. It gets back to the very core. My two boys at home—we talk a lot about politics, of course, and I'm trying to teach them the fundamentals of democracy. They said to me, "Dad, there was a vote a little while ago, wasn't there? You and the NDP voted"—I think it was 54-50. They suggested something that would have had a real, significant impact to the people of Ontario. Bill 4 would have removed the HST from home heating, the retail sales tax. But that party across the floor chose not to respect democracy and said, "No, we will not take it to committee." That would have impacted those people who are less fortunate, who don't have the ability to pay and who are on fixed incomes, like my mom. This bill is not going to have any significant impact, I believe.

I think my colleague from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek referenced a "feather bill." This is a feather bill, I believe; something that's not going to have significant impact to most people. I want to talk a little bit about that, because I believe that what's pushing up the cost of rent today are those unaffordable energy costs—a 46% increase: Who can afford a 46% increase? Whether you're the tenant or the owner, that's just unbelievable. We cannot dispute that under the Liberal government the cost of living in Ontario has shot up substantially. It's devastating to those who can least afford it, mostly low-income earners, seniors, most of whom occupy rental units or rely on local food banks.

Since 2003, it says that Ontarians have been slapped with a new tax—I want to just add: by the Liberal government, not all of us, because I don't want to be painted with that brush—a 13% HST and, zap, with shocking utility rates.

Where is the cap? If they had just thought about a cap on the budget and on their spending for the last eight years, we wouldn't have a \$15.3-billion deficit.

This bill is not going to do anything, really, to create more units. It's not going to do anything to create more affordable housing. It's not going to stop one less dispute. It has to look at both sides of the coin. You have to be able to have a fair approach to both sides of the issue. Those people that own these units as an investment, their way of earning money so that they can perhaps help those less fortunate, need an ability to

recoup their costs. A 1% to 2.5% increase is not realistic, and this is a bill that just doesn't deserve the time we're spending on it.

We need to get back to things like Ornge. That's a \$700-million fiasco that's happening in our midst today, and we've asked for a select committee and this government across the aisle will not allow us to even go to committee and have that select committee, although the minister in this House agreed that if that was the will—I believe the words were "the will" of the people—she would agree to go and appear before them.

Speaker, on that note, I can't do this anymore. I would call for an adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Walker has moved the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be another 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1609 to 1639.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Will the members please take their seats?

Mr. Walker has moved the adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted by the table staff.

Take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise now and be counted by the table staff.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 20; the nays are 35.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion lost.

I now return to the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, who still has the floor.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Speaker. I'll try to start off where I left off.

I've spoken to a number of people in my riding, landlords in particular, small landlords, people who are just trying to inch a day out, make a bit of money, trying to make a living. Instead of renovating their units, instead of investing in capital projects, they're struggling to cover the rising operational costs. Could I suggest that a 46% cost-of-electricity increase is unexpected?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I ask the House to come to order. I have to be able to hear the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

I return to the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: This is just primarily what we've been talking about. We try to raise an issue in the House of a substantive nature—Ornge, for example; the budget, for example—things that are going to make a difference to us. We talked about Ornge, and the minister herself said if it was the will of this House, she would speak about it. We voted. She has now reneged, just like the horse racing industry agreement that they've done.

Speaker, I cannot tolerate that they will not talk about the substantive things that are going to help our province and those people who need our help the most. Speaker, I call for an adjournment of this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Walker has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1642 to 1712.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Will the members please take their seats.

Mr. Walker has moved the adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted by the table staff.

Take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 18; the nays are 37.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion lost.

I believe the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound still has some time on the clock and he still has the floor.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Speaker.

As I started off with this, my concern is that we're talking about things that aren't substantive. We're not going to change what we need to do. We need to be talking about creating jobs, cutting expenses, cutting spending, reducing the deficit. This is tweaking around the edges, just like their budget, and I cannot support that. We need to be talking substantive. We need to be making selective choices. We need to be honouring our commitments and doing the right thing, the honourable thing, when we're in this House. We need to ensure to be talking about things that are going to make a difference in the lives of Ontarians—

Interjections: Ten, nine, eight, seven—

Mr. Bill Walker: Speaker, this bill is not what it's purported to be—

Interjections: —four, three, two, one.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That kind of counting down shows profound disrespect for the House, and I would ask members not to do it in the future.

I'm going to return to the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. He has an additional 10 seconds to wind up, if he chooses to use them.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Speaker. It's nice to have respect and civility in this House.

We're all here to do the right thing for Ontarians, and we need to ensure that we're talking about substantive issues. This bill is not enough. This is tweaking edges. We need to get back to the real things: the budget, reducing spending, creating jobs. Speaker, we cannot support this in its current fashion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a pleasure to rise to discuss this issue. I have to say, Speaker, when I was first elected in 2006 to this Legislature, when I would go door to door talking to people in apartment buildings, people faced difficulties, but rent control was not at the top of their list. But increasingly, as the cost of living has gone up, as people have had to make do with salaries, wages, incomes that have stagnated, as people have been pushed hard by landlords who not only go to the limit on the guideline every opportunity they get but go beyond that, what I find amongst more and more tenants is the need for substantial protection.

This bill is going to be very small comfort to those tenants; very small comfort. Will it give them the support they need to contest an above-the-guideline increase before the rent and review tribunal? I don't see that, Speaker. Will this bill be part of a larger project to provide people with housing they can afford? I don't see that, Speaker. Will this bill deal with an earlier piece of legislation by this government that directed landlords to be able to put in individual meters for apartment use of electricity? I don't see that, Speaker, even though those tenants have no control over the building envelope, the quality of the technology put in their units. This bill will not address that.

So this bill will give very small comfort to tenants in this province, many of them seniors living on fixed income, many of them new Canadians waiting months and months and months—not just waiting; actively going out and looking for work and not finding it. Speaker, cold comfort, indeed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mario Sergio: Again, I'm delighted to make some comments on Bill 19, as we were discussing Bill 19. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, I believe, was the last speaker, and he was addressing somewhat Bill 19, but he deviated into affordable housing in general and housing and support.

For the benefit of the members, let me say what we have done in the last few years. We have provided repairs for new units for some 22,000 units. We've provided rent supplements for some 35,000 Ontarians, and we have prevented some 18,000 evictions with our own rent bank program. Speaker, we have managed to provide a \$1.2-billion agreement with the federal government. Thank goodness they came on board. We built some 4,500 units for affordable housing, and we have repaired over another 50,000 units.

Now, the bill itself that's under for debate is to provide some stability for tenants to let them know that their rent will not, for four years, go either lower than 1% or higher than 2.5%. With all due respect, I don't think they see this as an important issue for tenants, but it is for my tenants, because now they know that stability means, for four years, they can address other issues, either work, kids, recreation, buying a car, doing whatever they want

to do, without worrying about the rent going up next year or next month.

Now, this is fair, I think, for both. Tenants know that their rent is not going to go any higher than 2.5%, and landlords know that it's going to go down any more than 1%. I think it's fair, but I hope this will go to committee and we can have more input from the opposition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Obviously today is a bit of a proud day for residents of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. They've got their local Bill down here, a second Bill, if you will—stereo Bills, sometimes. He said he was going to come down here and fight. He was going to fight with respect. We've seen him in action this afternoon fighting for a select committee so we can get down to the bottom of what's been going on with yet again another Liberal scandal.

1720

I had an opportunity to get up to the member's riding last summer. He has quite a background. He's done just about everything, as a board member, a manager, a coordinator, an auctioneer, a master of ceremonies. He brings an awful lot of skills to this Ontario Legislature. He said he was going to come down here and fight for jobs, do something about the debt. We've now found out it's a much more horrendous debt than any of us had been told previously. He's been debating the rent control bill.

Why would the Liberals bring in a rent control bill? Obviously, those of us that knock on doors know that people in Ontario, people in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, can't afford their rent. They're subject to the largest income tax increase in the history of Ontario. They're subject to the largest sales tax increase in the history of Ontario. We're now continuing to see this government rolling out the largest electricity rate increases in the history of Ontario. So you've got an ass-backward way of doing something with rent, because people can't afford it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I spoke to this bill at length, for about an hour, I think, the week before last. Once again, it's a small bill that addresses 1% of the issues that actually are affecting Ontarians with respect to affordable housing, the cost of rent, the cost of utilities, food.

My colleagues and I had a bit of a discussion as people were speaking today and we said that if there was more effort made at reducing utility costs, ensuring that people had enough social assistance to actually pay their rent and feed themselves, that we would save tons of dollars—probably millions of dollars in health care costs, because we all know that nutrition is one of the most important things you can do to maintain your health.

We also know that people actually have to go out and steal food because they don't get enough money on social assistance to be able to feed their families. And then we end up with people in jails because they're committing

petty theft in order to feed their families, and we know that it costs \$45,000 or \$50,000 a year to actually keep someone behind bars just because they were out trying to get some food or something else to look after their family.

This government needs to set some real targets and put some real dollars towards the affordable housing strategy. It made a commitment to that in its platform, but there is no mention of any dollars in the budget for housing in this province, so I think the government needs to put some money where its mouth is and get going with building some affordable housing in the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. We now return to the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Bill Walker: It has been a pleasure to speak to this bill, but I go back to the fundamentals. This is all about being responsible. It's talking about the things that are really going to move our province forward. This bill is nothing more than something to detract us and distract us to having real, substantive debate about things like the budget.

Interjection: Ludicrous. Window-dressing.

Mr. Bill Walker: It is ludicrous. It is window-dressing. We need to be talking about things that are going to get our province turned around. We are a have-not province. I'm embarrassed to say that. We need to be leading Confederation.

Talking about a 1% to 2.5% increase on something that is not going to impact many people across our province—we need to ensure that we're talking about those things that are definitely going to make a difference. We need to be talking about things like the budget, like reducing spending, like adding jobs.

This is nothing but window-dressing. This is just distracting, like a lot of the bills they bring out. They haven't thought it through. They didn't speak to the—as I mentioned earlier, very similar to the horse racing industry. All of a sudden, "This is where we're going. Tough luck. Sorry about your luck."

You can't go there. You need to speak to the people who are going to have consequences. This is going to have—

Interjection: Listen to the people.

Mr. Bill Walker: Listen to the people, absolutely. They need to understand that these are going to have ramifications far broader than just a 1% to 2.5% increase. Everyone has to be able to look at this and understand: Is it going to be helpful? I trust that the people at home watching and those people who will hear about this are saying, "Why are we talking about something that is so out there when we haven't addressed the big issues?"

They are going to double our deficit to \$30 billion. They're going to double the debt to \$400 billion. How many affordable housing units are we going to be able to put out there for anyone in need with that type of industry going on and that type of disrespect for the people who pay the freight?

This is nothing more than something to distract us from the big topics that we should be talking about—the

budget, debt reduction and improving and increasing jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I feel it is necessary to once again remind the House that we are actually debating Bill 19, that the comments should be making reference to the bill and that the questions and comments following the speeches should be making reference to the speeches that have been made.

Further debate.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's my pleasure to add to the debate on Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2011.

Once again, this isn't, in itself—it's getting old here, but I'm new here. To me, this isn't really a bill in itself; it's a housekeeping measure. Is it a good thing to put not a freeze, but a freeze on the rate that rents can rise? Yes. In itself, it's not a bad thing, but it seems more to create speaking points than to actually do anything. If we quote the Federation of Metro Tenants' Association, if this bill had been in place for the last two years, on an average \$1,000 monthly rent, it would make \$3 a month difference. So it's not really as big a thing as it's being portrayed.

People are saying that people are going off topic, and some people have been going a bit off topic. But I've been listening to this debate over the last—and reading about it, and some of the things, it's hard not to go off topic because there are a lot of things that affect renters and tenants and landlords that won't be impacted by this bill.

So that I won't get accused of going off topic, I'm going to read something from the minister's opening debate. This is from the minister: "I think we tend to forget sometimes that there was a time not long ago when government didn't see a role for itself in monitoring available housing, let alone partnering to build housing....

"We tend to forget that there was a time when government did not take that responsibility as part of what it was expected to do, but we do." Once again, this is the Liberal minister. "We think it's a very important aspect of our responsibility as a government to monitor the housing supply in the province, to make sure that there is a balance, and Bill 19 is one aspect of that responsibility." But once again, even in these words, the words make it sound much bigger than what's actually going on.

If we quote someone else—and a lot of people like to quote the Drummond report. In the Drummond report—and to many, he's the king of cuts—but Mr. Drummond recommends "doubling the allocation for affordable housing in the Infrastructure Ontario affordable housing loan fund to \$1 billion, to be financed by the sale of government bonds; reversing the cuts in both operating and capital dollars for affordable housing in the past year and restoring the approximately \$600 million that is required to build new homes, repair run-down housing and support housing-related services." If even Mr. Drummond recognizes there's a problem in affordable housing bigger than what Bill 19 is seeming to address, then I think we've got bigger fish to fry in this sector.

It really came to my attention last week. It was constituency week last week. One of my appointments scheduled was Mary in Kirkland Lake. Mary is 77 years old. She really reminded me of my mom. She's the same age as my mom. She could be all our moms or grandmas. She was prim and proper, and she came into my office and she had just been evicted. She had been evicted, and it was done correctly. The notice had been given.

1730

The reason that this is happening in places like Kirkland Lake—there is a downside to being in a boom town when it's booming, because you can charge astronomical rents. Mary was evicted because the landlord wants to make more money. Was she protected by this bill? No, not at all. But another big problem that Mary faces in this town—because we haven't spent what we were promising the people to spend, or what they were promising the people to spend: We haven't spent on affordable housing, on geared-to-income housing. Remember, in a boom town, there's no such thing as a cheap apartment unless it's regulated.

Mary's wait for geared-to-income housing in Kirkland Lake is two years. Her eviction date is May 31. Now, there's nothing in this bill that's going to help Mary—nothing. Mary isn't an isolated case. That's the biggest problem. My staff are doing everything we can to find a place for Mary in this province—in this province, where we argue about 1% to 2.5% and where we say we've spent all this money and blah, blah, blah, and we've got percentages, we all quote percentages, we all quote big numbers and no one understands, but the real question is, what about Mary? What about all the Marys? That's the real questions. May 31—the wait is two years for geared-to-income housing in Kirkland Lake.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: For seniors.

Mr. John Vanthof: For seniors. And people think, "Yeah, well, she should have prepared better." You know what? A lot of these are hard-working people who worked their whole lives in towns like this. Inflation got the better of their pensions. In a lot of cases and in mining towns, pensions, when they did happen—what happened is, they had dummy companies. They transferred the mine to another company, and the pension was gone once again in this province, in this country.

I don't have an answer for Mary; I don't have an answer. And you know what? I can't give her an answer, "Well, you know what? G19: They're working really hard on G19. And once we get that in, we'll help you out." Telling Mary about the healthy homes renovation tax credit is another one. It will help a certain—

Interjection: Small percentage.

Mr. John Vanthof: —small percentage of people. There's no doubt about that. This bill will also help a certain small percentage of people. And in itself, once again, it's more of a regulation change than a bill.

We have the chance. We have the chance to actually—and since Drummond is actually saying we should spend more money on affordable housing, I think all three parties should agree. We actually have a chance in this House to do things that really, really impact people.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Why don't you put that on your list of demands?

Mr. John Vanthof: Maybe we should.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Maybe those sprinklers for old-age homes, too.

Mr. John Vanthof: Well, we are doing our best on this side to make sure that this minority government works. It's up to the party opposite whether or not to worry about it, because on this side of the House, we are worried about the Marys across the province. We don't want to give them answers, "Well, we're working on amendments. We're working on a little regulation change," because this case—and it's not the only one that I've had, but it was one of the toughest ones, because I saw my mom across the desk. Because I'm standing here and because I've got a business as well, I'm capable of taking care of my mom, but not everybody else is. It's fine to banter back and forth, but it's a serious, serious issue, and I hope that we take the opportunity to seriously look at this and to propose more encompassing bills and make big—if changes need to be made, let's make them. But let's not try to take bills like this—and the healthy homes renovation tax credit is the same type of thing. Is it bad legislation? Probably not. Are we going to support it? Yes. Is it legislation that the people of this province really deserve?

Interjection: Or need.

Mr. John Vanthof: Or need? You know, someone like Mary. I spent a lot of time today talking about Mary, but Mary is a real person who, on May 31, not due to any of her own fault—this is the one time in her life that she needs help from us, and this is the one time—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: She lived in that apartment for 14 years. This is the one time in her life that—our system is going to fail us. I hope that we come to our senses and do something for Mary. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I listened to the comments made by the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. I appreciate a lot of what he has to say. In my riding of Scarborough Southwest, we have a large tenant population, and I've been in a lot of those apartments, knocking on doors for many, many years during election time. I would say that I agree with a lot of what he has to say. There are people out there, tenants, who are suffering. Our government has tried its very best to address as many of those concerns as possible. I think this bill is supportable. I thank the member for indicating his support at this stage. I'm sure that at committee, when it gets to committee, there will be more discussion about it and possibly some amendments. Hopefully we can agree on some of those amendments.

Last year, our guideline increase was 0.7%. That's the lowest on record. So we are trying our best to help tenants in every riding across Ontario. Now, I remember that the Conservatives introduced a bill many years ago—it was called the Tenant Protection Act—that

actually worked in favour of the landlords. People were asking me, "Why is this law in place? It really took away a lot of my rights as a tenant." We got rid of that act and brought in Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act. It focuses on the right thing, rent increase guidelines for every year. Some of the apartments in my riding are in very poor shape. We need to address that issue as well. The capital repairs in my riding are huge. We have a lot of affordable and assisted housing units in my riding, but the main thing is to get this out of the debate here and bring it to committee. Once we're at committee, we can address it and make changes or amendments to this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the time to address this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Peter Shurman: First of all, I want to say congratulations to my relatively new friend from Timiskaming–Cochrane for a good piece of debate. While he excuses himself for being new, I would have to say: New or not, you're quite perceptive, sir. You're right: This bill hardly warrants being a bill. That's not to say we don't support it. I've seen private members' motions that are longer than this bill. It's a regulatory issue, and it's taking eight hours of debate in this Legislature to come to the conclusion that we should allow the minister to set a guideline that's somewhere between 0.5% and 2.5% on a per annum basis based on the CPI. That just summarized the entire bill right there. So why bother debating 10 or 20 minutes?

The points that have to be made here are not so much about the nature of the bill as what we're talking about. We're talking about rentals. In a time when, if you really want to address the global scenario—and let's talk about Toronto. Take a trip outside next time the bell rings, which seems to be fairly often in here; I'm not sure why. Take a look and count the number of cranes you can see in the sky. It must be 40. Maybe there are 50. These are cranes that are building condominiums. Who is buying those condominiums? Offshore money, for the most part, because they know a good investment when they see one. So they get rented as condominiums that are not under the control of this act. That's what we're dealing with. As a matter of fact, in the last condo that I lived in, which I owned, it was a rental conversion, which is also happening. Why? Because the property can be better used when people are getting condo investments into those units—nice units—as opposed to the rental ones.

1740

So what we're talking about here is a very narrow edge of the wedge, a very thin piece of our society that, granted, needs protection and that's why my party will vote for it, but if you really want to look at the rental situation in Toronto, very particularly, or anywhere else in the province, you have to get an awful lot broader than just whether or not we're going to be in line with the CPI.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I wanted to have some feedback on the presentation given by my colleague here.

He talked about seniors, and Mary, in particular, who is having a very unfortunate incident happen where she's going to be evicted, and the fact that there is a booming town in Kirkland—I think he said Kirkland Lake—Mary's rent probably is going to be unaffordable when she's looking for a new residence. So here's Mary on a fixed income, with no affordable housing in sight in the same city she's been in for the last 14 years, and a messed-up pension because of one company sending it to another and then losing it. How do we help Mary? We need to help Mary and other seniors by having affordable housing so that they have alternatives, a good place to live, seniors who—I hope Mary doesn't end up in a very unpredictable circumstance and, heaven forbid, have to be homeless. That would be really devastating, to have a senior who can't find an affordable place to live on the street, when they've worked all their lives and deserve the dignity of having a home that they can be safe in and age in until they're ready for a nursing home or, hopefully, good home care so that she can remain in her apartment even longer.

Having this small bill presented isn't helping Mary, and affordable housing is part of something that all Ontarians are asking for in my riding as well. I met with seniors—the Argyle seniors' group—and that was their first question. They said, "Teresa, we want to see more affordable housing." That's something that's extremely important to seniors.

Even though this is a very small step to affordability, it isn't enough.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I want to thank the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for sharing with us the concerns raised by his constituents, and I do recognize the concern about housing.

But let's go back to what the purpose of this bill is all about. The bill is focused specifically on the guideline, on making sure that it will be not less than 1% and not more than 2.5%, capping the rent increase. This is what my constituents in Scarborough–Agincourt are asking me to advocate for, in terms of protecting the tenants and at the same time making sure the landlord is supported as well.

Like many of us in this House, we have thousands of tenants in our ridings, and this government is committed to protecting both the tenants and the landlords supporting them. We recognize the concerns with this bill, but that's why we have committees to debate this bill. I also want to recognize my colleague from Scarborough Southwest about his comment, bringing this bill forward and then having a debate in the committee.

The proposed bill allows some stability and affordability for our tenants during these tough economic times, while at the same time recognizing the fact that we also have to support the landlords so that they can maintain and operate those apartments.

Mr. Speaker, it may not be a perfect piece of legislation at this time, but it will address accessibility and

affordability for tenants across Ontario. It is the right thing to do at this time. I think this piece of legislation allows all of us to address the issue of housing across the board, but for the first time to address the tenant increase, the rent increase, and that's an important thing to start with, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We'll return to the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to thank the members who commented on my comments: the members from Scarborough Southwest, Thornhill, London–Fanshawe and Scarborough–Agincourt.

There's been a lot of talk that when the bill gets to committee, we'll be able to amend, but there's not much to amend. It is pretty straightforward, and you know what? We're not complaining about that part. What we have a problem with is the big words surrounding it, all the help we're giving, when it's actually very narrowly scoped. If this were a broader-based bill, then we would have a chance to put amendments forward that would make a difference to more people. What this appears to me—once again, I support it. I don't have a problem with what this very narrow thing does. It would be much better for the people of Ontario if we made bigger proposals, had grander ideas, so we could actually have meaningful debate in committee about how we'd actually make things better for as broad a scope as possible.

It's going to be hard to amend this bill to help more people than it does, and that's the problem. It's got more speaking points in it than it has actual meat in it. If you read the speaking points, if you listen to the speaking points from the government—got no problem. If we get there, it's great for the campaign trail, all the things we're doing for tenants. But it gives more speaking points than it actually has meat, and I'm really hoping that we get to the point where we actually provide bills that have meat, where we can actually amend them or change them and really argue about real things so we can make things better for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I rise today to speak to Bill 19. I have to say that I'm disappointed. Rental housing in Ontario is facing some tough challenges, both on the landlord side and on the tenant side as well. One just has to walk through our local Queen's Park neighbourhood to see all the new condominium developments advertising units that will be future rental units starting at over \$250,000 each.

It's little wonder we aren't all homeowners, and many people in this province might not want to be one. Sometimes it's a career that makes it very difficult to put down roots to purchase that family home, or perhaps it's just a commitment that they're unwilling to take on with all the uncertainty that's going on in this great province. They just can't count on anything anymore. They remember the promises that this McGuinty government made of affordable living, of no tax increases, of tackling the energy issues and more. But what have they seen

that's scaring them and forcing them to jump out of the housing market and into the renting market, and taking on perceived lower-cost units of the rentals? For one thing, Ontario's unemployment rate has been higher than the national average for over five years, and the outlook isn't reassuring. This government continues to borrow at record levels when even their hand-picked experts are warning them about getting spending under control and with countries failing all around them simply because their governments would not address the debt issue. The McGuinty government finds it easier to foolishly close its eyes and pass the cost of their mismanagement and excess on to our children and grandchildren.

But more likely it's a matter of things being unaffordable. They've seen the cost of ownership skyrocket over the past eight years, with people losing their homes because of a lack of employment opportunities and private sector salaries that are not keeping up with inflation. They have seen the largest tax increases in the history of this province with the Ontario health tax and the HST and over 100 other tax and fee increases over McGuinty's term in government. A mortgage used to be a tool for those wishing to settle and build their life in one place by spreading reasonable costs over one's working career. In the current climate, particularly in urban areas, we witness instead how mortgages have become unaffordable when added to the escalating costs of hydro, property taxes and other living expenses. Truly, the past eight years are becoming known as the Liberal reign of terror.

This kind of market is not one that Bill 19 pretends to address. The people whom the party opposite wishes to dupe with this bill are those Ontarians who cannot—

Interjection.

1750

Mr. Jim McDonell: Okay—aim to step up the property ladder, the families facing tough situations, who see their paycheques vanish into rent, energy, HST, payroll deductions and more. These Ontarians are not playing to be poor, so this government shouldn't be playing politics with them.

Bill 19, as I will explain, does nothing and creates a bigger problem down the road. Let's take, for example, the city of Toronto, where, according to a study done in 2005, over 90% of the rental units in Toronto were built before 1991, with most of them being even older. The same study showed how, between 1987 and 1996, more than a third of the completed housing units were destined for the rental market. Between 1997 and 2005, that dropped to barely 5%. This means, for those on the other side not paying enough attention, that unless this city has experienced a sudden boom in rental construction during the past seven years, the rental units subject to the rent increase guidelines—those housing units that Bill 19 is supposed to protect—are getting older and older. These houses and blocks are subject to all the ills of aging. They will need some major work and major repairs soon, if they don't already. They've become less desirable.

They are probably not as energy-efficient as the newer ones, a point that I'll get to later.

I won't blame the exodus from the rental market I just mentioned on the rent increase guidelines, though it would be easy to do so. The ownership market is much more lucrative and promises much faster returns than the rental ones—buy, sell, cash and repeat. There are no searches for tenants, no credit checks and no reference checks; no dealing with tenants who refuse to pay or cause a nuisance or bring their units into disrepair.

When it comes to spin, this government can't be outdone. It's easy for them to claim that we may not have strict rental controls and the landlords are free to apply for over-the-guideline increases at any time.

The immediate effect of Bill 19 will be to force more and more landlords to submit their actions to bureaucracy every year. More applications mean more hassles for both landlords and the Landlord and Tenant Board. Let us remember that whenever we deal with the Landlord and Tenant Board, it is never cheap. And what Bill 19 accomplishes outside the greater immediate costs of the landlord—a strict ceiling on the rent increase guidelines may be the final nail in the coffin for some landlords, who include hydro and energy prices inside the rents. Hydro rates have increased 84% since this government took over, and are forecasted to increase more than 40% over the next four years. Again, the math doesn't add up for this government.

The most vulnerable tenants, instead, will feel this government's failed energy policies bite them the hardest, sometimes forcing them out of the private rental market and into social housing. My constituency office receives many calls every week from vulnerable tenants struggling to make ends meet because of the rising costs of living, and rent is not usually their biggest complaint.

Let's leave the affluent rental developments for a minute—those that my honourable colleagues may inhabit—and venture into the lower-end rental market. There is little research required before one stumbles across reports of infestations, disrepair, fire hazards, health hazards and general living conditions that one would gladly do without. What can a landlord do in a large development other than repair and pass on the costs and hope for some improvements?

The present system is inefficient and needs reform, but Bill 19 cannot even qualify as a Band-aid. It seeks to tackle a problem that's not there.

Let's take a look at this. The rent increase guideline has been below 2.5% for most of the past decade and below 3% throughout. In fact, it has averaged under 2.1% for the past 10 years and under 1.7% for the last five. So where is the problem?

Clearly, this bill does not address the real issues and is only meant to have the appearance of meeting the needs of renters in Ontario. The real issues need to be solved. There have hardly been any development completions in the private sector destined for rent. The rental housing stock is aging and government policies are eating away at the incomes of Ontarians. With landlords able to apply

for increases above the guidelines, what is the bill accomplishing?

I would hope that this party opposite is not so manipulative as to force more Ontarians into social housing and thus require a stranglehold on their lives. The average stay in social housing is 10 years. As the *Globe and Mail* reports, “We shouldn’t be proud of how many people live in public housing. We should be ashamed.”

Bill 19 is openly hostile to landlords and is against tenants in equal measure. It is a signal that landlords’ business is not welcome, nor are their interests. It’s even worse than a feel-good bill. It solves no problems and will only spook the private rental market. Rumours,

mostly unjustified, of house prices cooling in Canada, particularly in Toronto, are abundant. What keeps our smaller landlords from selling up? When they eventually do, or the oldest rental units get condemned or demolished, what shall remain except newer units or longer, exhausting waiting lists for social housing? If this is the Liberal image of housing bliss, then I wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemy.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being quite close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milligan, Rob E. (PC) Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Grant Crack, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Teresa Piruzza
Bob Delaney, Victor Fedeli
Cindy Forster, Monte McNaughton
Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: David Zimmer
Sarah Campbell, Michael Coteau
Joe Dickson, Rosario Marchese
David Oraziotti, Laurie Scott
Todd Smith, Jeff Yurek
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Bill Mauro
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely
Donna H. Cansfield, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Jim McDonell
Phil McNeely, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Présidente: Laura Albanese
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Shafiq Qaadri
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren
Paul Miller, Rob E. Milligan
Shafiq Qaadri
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Gilles Bisson, Donna H. Cansfield
Steve Clark, Garfield Dunlop
Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Norm Miller
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, France Gélinas
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
Michael Coteau, Grant Crack
Vic Dhillon, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Mario Sergio
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Jane McKenna
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Amendment Act, 2012, Bill 65, Ms. Wynne / Loi de
2012 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les
coopératives de logement sans but lucratif, projet
de loi 65, Mme Wynne**

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