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**Official Report
of Debates
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(Hansard)**

Thursday 12 September 2013

Jeudi 12 septembre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Thursday 12 September 2013

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 12 septembre 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Mr. Ted Arnott: Speaker, a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, I rise to correct my record. On Monday, I indicated in a statement in the House that the setbacks for wind farms in the province of Ontario were 500 metres. In fact, upon reviewing my files, I find that there are 550 metres of setback—still insufficient, according to my constituents in Wellington–Halton Hills, and certainly I concur with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member for correcting his record on the detail. No other comment usually accompanies that correction. I appreciate that, and it is a point of order that a member can correct his or her own record.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
AMENDMENT ACT
(LEAVES TO HELP FAMILIES), 2013
LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI
(CONGÉS POUR AIDER LES FAMILLES)**

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 11, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver, critically ill child care and crime-related child death or disappearance leaves of absence / *Projet de loi 21, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé familial pour les aidants naturels, le congé pour soins à un enfant gravement malade et le congé en cas de décès ou de disparition d'un enfant dans des circonstances criminelles.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 21, the Employment Standards Amendment Act, 2013, which would provide leave of absence in

respect of family caregivers, critically ill child care and crime-related child death or disappearance. We are supportive in principle of family leave for people who have these kinds of situations, but—and this is possibly a measure of the interesting and timely issues that the legislation taps into—my suspicion is that this bill will be strengthened considerably in committee before it comes back for third reading. That's how legislative business ought to be.

We've had some finger-wagging from the Premier this week and some scolding about how the opposition had better fall in line or we'll have to answer to the people of Ontario at the ballot box. The members of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, like all members of this House, are enormously privileged to serve the people of Ontario. The job we have been sent here to do is to thoroughly weigh the legislation that will impact the lives of Ontarians today and far off into the future, to devote serious and sustained attention to the workings of government, and to call attention to the gap between words and deeds, between intention and action.

Here, I would like to formally welcome and congratulate the new members of the Legislature, who will have a very fresh sense of this incredible honour, Speaker. They are probably still adjusting to the gravity of this role and likely have a keen appreciation of the ability to serve that trust, one that allows them to stand in the Legislature and debate bills that will hopefully shape life in this province. That is all part of holding the government to account, and it should come as no surprise to anyone following the debate that government finds all of this to be a major irritation.

Then again, anyone who has followed the history of this government would know that after two terms of majority rule, the government looked on the input and concerns of members on this side of the House as little more than a technicality. It didn't need our votes to pass legislation, so it didn't need to engage in robust debate about matters of policy and legislation.

Again, anyone who follows the history of this government might imagine that events might have worked out differently if government had accepted that debate not only honours the democratic trust of constituents—debate that, by the way, is part of the conversation the government is constantly saying it looks forward to having—but if government is listening, this potentially improves the decision-making process, Speaker. It should also be pointed out that we in the opposition are also prepared to work with government to forge non-partisan alliances—when I brought forward my first private member's bill,

for example, it had sponsors from the Liberals and the NDP—and to support legislation that serves the public interest.

Things are not as combative as some would have you believe. This week alone we've seen that critical debate go hand in hand with legislative support. We don't simply have to choose between a rubber-stamp role and another round of Kool-Aid and Kumbaya. We can and should aspire to be more than that.

As we turn our attention to Bill 21, it is encouraging to see that progress is possible and that the government not only heard our constructive criticism and various concerns about early forms of this legislation, but took those things to heart. They actually listened to our concerns last session, went back to the legislation and made adjustments and improvements to it. Where the previous bill opened up inconsistencies between the late federal labour code and our provincial labour laws, this bill takes steps to work more simply and effectively within the existing legislative framework.

What does Bill 21 propose to do? It proposes several amendments to the Employment Standards Act that would echo similar changes that the federal government has made to the Canada Labour Code. The bill proposes to create family caregiver leave, up to eight unpaid weeks per calendar year, with respect to each family member set out in the legislation. In order for an employee to qualify for the leave, they must be caring for an individual whom physicians have found to have a critical injury or illness and, as such, cannot care for themselves. This leave would come in addition to any entitlement to family medical leave, critically ill child care leave, crime-related child death or disappearance leave and personal emergency leave.

Bill 21 is a compassionate bill, but the fact that we are having this discussion is a symptom of a larger issue: a problem with the way our home care system is set up at this moment. What we're looking at is unpaid leave for a family member to fill in the blanks that exist in a system that is in disrepair.

About 18 months ago, while Bill 30 was being debated, a memorable headline ran in the *Hamilton Spectator*. It read, "It May Be Easier to Get into a Cemetery than a Long-Term Care Bed." The Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN had an overall wait time of 178 days for placement in a long-term-care home. That LHIN had the second-longest waits in the province when it came to moving patients from acute care hospital beds to long-term-care beds: 107 days, almost twice the provincial average.

0910

Almost 40% of long-term-care residents in the Hamilton area LHIN reported increasing difficulty performing everyday tasks. It was the highest such rate in the province. That was shameful. That is the reality waiting for caregivers: unpaid leave, mounting expenses and little in the way of medical help or emotional support on the horizon.

As safety nets go, it's not hard to imagine better coverage. A sizable portion of the Canadian workforce is

living paycheque to paycheque. They cannot afford to miss a single week, let alone eight weeks. However compassionate the gesture contained in legislation like this, in the bigger picture, it seems rather thin. It begs the legitimate question: Are we really doing our best to address the issues in a sustainable and holistic way, or are we falling into the policy habit of band-aid solutions, and ineffective ones at that?

Just two days ago Statistics Canada's Caregivers in Canada study revealed that last year about 8.1 million individuals—28% of Canadians age 15 and up, Speaker—provided care to a family member or friend with a long-term health condition, disability or age-related needs. Most often, these duties fell to those aged 45 to 64, and over a quarter of caregivers could be described as the sandwich generation, caring for elderly parents as well as looking after their own child's welfare and education. On top of being stretched thin, only one in five caregivers receive financial support. None of us can miss the trends that come along with an aging population. The government understands this well enough.

Various members opposite have, at one point or another, talked about the dignity of aging in place, of the importance of staying at home, and nobody with a heart beating could fault those goals. If it's not obvious, let me say it for the record. Those are noble and worthwhile goals, ones that demand to be taken seriously. I'll always say, as many before me have, that I wholeheartedly support the spirit that brought this legislation forward. I support this government's intent to address this need, to close a gap that exists in our communities and to help the people of this great province. There is no question, Speaker, that resolving that issue will do a lot of good. It is a positive step, no doubt. I'm happy to support and move it to committee where we can hopefully address the concerns that have been brought forward by all of us.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's a pleasure to rise on the family caregiver leave act, an act that we spoke at length about before the session adjourned for the summer, one that I think had broad consensus throughout the Legislature, one that I think has some glaring gaps in terms of its support—financial support specifically—for family members who do require a leave when another family member has been either diagnosed or is critically ill. It's one that I think members have heard from their constituents throughout many facets, one that many of us maybe have experienced on a personal level. We all understand the important need to have that support mechanism in place for a family member.

In fact, I can tell you right now that my mother, who is not working any longer—she's retired—has left the province to go and help her sister, my Aunt Patti. I'll give a shout-out to my Aunt Patti. Love you, Aunt Patti, and miss you. Mom, can't wait until you get home, and wish you well.

My Aunt Patti is going through treatment for cancer, and it's our family that has surrounded my Aunt Patti to

offer her and her family any assistance that's required. If my mother had been working right now, that's a scenario where the family caregiver leave act would come into play.

Now, could my mum afford to take that time off in an unpaid scenario? I don't know. Thankfully, my mum and dad both had good-paying, unionized jobs that offered them support and benefits, but others in this province aren't as fortunate. I wonder if the government actually understands that. Although this may be a step in the right direction, it certainly doesn't go far enough to provide that assurance and real critical assistance that people need when helping out a family member.

So I applaud the government. We're going to vote for this bill. I'm going to support this bill, but I'm going to continue to push for some measure of financial assistance for family members who do take part in this program.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments? The Attorney General.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Thank you very much, Speaker. I listened with great interest to the member from Burlington on this issue. It sounds to me that they're totally in favour. She even wanted the whole process to be speeded along so that the bill could go to committee. My suggestion is that we do that right away. We've had so many hours of debate on this. We all think it's a great idea. There may be some minor issues that that will have to be worked out. There are many other issues that we could be talking about in this House; I think we all agree on that. So why don't we just move it along? Why don't we not put up any more speakers on all sides, get the bill passed, get it to committee and have it reported from the committee back to the House so that it can be implemented as soon as possible, so that all the good things that we've said about the bill and all the good ways in which we can help the people of Ontario to get the kind of support that's required in situations where family members do need the assistance of other family members under this particular act—so that that can happen as soon as possible?

I would hope that after this member has spoken, no other member will get up. We've had many, many hours of debate on it. Let's get it to committee. Let's get it going and stop playing games on all sides—on all sides. I'm not going to point any fingers at the other two parties. We all know that there are games being played here that have nothing to do with the basic substance of this bill, which is good for the people of Ontario, particularly for those people who need help and assistance from family members in time of need. Let's get on with it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: First of all, let's pay tribute where it's deserved. The member from Burlington, I think, gave a very fine speech and a very clear interpretation of the advantages of the bill. It's clear that we support the bill.

I'm a bit disappointed by the minister, the Attorney General for Ontario, who should know better, really. He's really throwing a bit of a slam against the rights and

responsibilities of members to stand for their constituents and give voice to the concerns that they've heard. I make this a real comment because the member from Essex is a perfect and recent example, when he stood up and talked about his Aunt Patti, and his mother taking time off out of her own personal life to take care of her sister, I gather. So let's not trivialize this.

I think he also went on to make a very good point, as did the member from Burlington. This bill is really—it's been said several times—a feel-good bill, but if you take the cover off the book and start looking at the detail, the story itself, there's not five cents of money in it. For those families who are suffering from cancer or a child who may have been abducted or who knows what the purpose, to take time off work could possibly be a barrier for them. They may lose their job. I have a woman now who is complaining to me that she's got to take time off for jury duty, and she's living from hand to mouth and can't do jury duty because she doesn't get her paycheque.

So if you want to look at the bill, we support it. I think it should go to committee. There's only been nine hours and 20 minutes of debate, and there are over 100 members in this House, most of whom want to speak, especially on our side. Tim Hudak, our leader, has encouraged us all to participate strongly, affirming our position on bills. In this case we're affirming the support for the bill, and the member from Burlington did that very well, I thought.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's a wonderful privilege to stand and debate this bill once again. As the member from across the way mentioned, we have to give this bill due process, like any other bill.

0920

Let's set the record straight: The only reason we started discussing this yesterday is because of the extensive work that the member from Nickel Belt had done on the tanning beds, and the discussion that happened here in this House yesterday. It freed up the opportunity and certain slots yesterday afternoon to have these discussions here today. This was nowhere on the radar or on the paper from this government. So let's get that out of the way right now, and let's talk about that for a bit.

The member from Durham had mentioned that this is a feel-good bill, and it is a feel-good bill. If you look at it, in essence what it was before and what it has come to is the family caregiver—and we've added a couple of media clips there where we have critically ill child care and crime-related child death and disappearance leave of absence. But essentially the bill has the same meat that's within it, which was no meat. It's a good announcement, which unfortunately, this Liberal government is known to do. It has little impact to assist anybody.

Some will benefit from it, but the individuals who are going to benefit from it are going to be minimal, because there was a lot of information, a lot of discussions that were held in this House yesterday in regard to how many

individuals across this province are impacted by the loss of one pay, never mind a couple of pays in a given month.

I'm looking forward to this going to committee, and hopefully we can get some meat on the bones of this bill because it's very lacking right now.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Burlington, you have two minutes for a response.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you, Speaker. We have all seen friends and colleagues who have faced immense personal challenges, undergone intense medical treatments or endured family tragedy. We all know the aches of having to be somewhere far from the side of a loved one in need. Bill 21 aims to address that, but it goes further than eight weeks of caregiver help. It would also provide unpaid job-protected leave for parents caring for a critically ill child, parents of a missing child and parents of a child who has died and where the disappearance or death is probably the result of a terrible crime.

Here again, Bill 21 dovetails with federal legislation. As of New Year's Day 2013, the federal government began providing grants lasting 35 weeks for what is basically the equivalent of this bill's proposed crime-related child death or disappearance leave. In June, the federal government began paying out benefits for the federal equivalent of the proposed critically ill child care leave. This is just another example of how constructive criticism and due consideration can improve the quality of the provincial government's bills. Bill 21 improves on Bill 30. It can still be improved again.

Hopefully we can move this legislation forward and strengthen it in committee. At the same time, hopefully the government will give serious consideration to addressing shortcomings in the wider system that caregivers rely on.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

M^{me} France G elinas: I too would like to add a few words about the caregiver act. This is a bill that had been first introduced—it got reintroduced with some changes. The changes basically had to do with children and had to do with a critically ill child as well as children disappearing, which are situations that, I guess, don't happen very often, but when it does happen, I can see why the parents would need to leave work.

In real life, when a child falls sick, when a child is picked up by an ambulance and rushed to Sick Kids or any other children's hospital and the parents get that phone call that your child is now in the hospital, it doesn't matter. I don't know one employer who will say, "No, you have to finish your shift. You cannot go to the bedside of your child who is now critically sick"—as we say they have to be.

I can tell you of numerous examples where children were brought into the hospital. It didn't matter if their dad was at the bottom of Creighton Mine, which is more than one mile down under the ground; they would go and

get them. They would bring them up, and they would be with their child. To think that there are employers out there who would tell you, "No, you've got to finish your shift," is to really think very little of Ontarians, isn't it? Employers are human beings. Employers have children, too, and most of them recognize this.

To me, this bill will help very, very few people. Everything that has been said about the burden on caregivers, all of this is true. Everything that has been said about the aging population and people putting their shoulder to the wheel to make sure that they continue to live in our communities, they continue to be welcome in our families, in our communities—that great work happens because we have caregivers. It happens because we have men and women and daughters and brothers-in-law and everybody else who are happy to make sure that a frail elderly person or a sick child or a disabled adult is part of our community. This is what we do as Ontarians: We help each other out.

When that help demands a little bit too many hours, the number one reason why people cannot step up to the plate and continue to help their loved ones, their neighbours, their friends, is money. It doesn't have to do with the Employment Standards Act, which is what we're about to change. It has to do with money. It has to do with the fact that, if you have to take a week off without pay, you don't get paid. And although we say that medicare is free—yes, hospital services and physician services are free, but everything else around medicare costs a lot of money.

If you are maintaining somebody who is frail or fragile or disabled or needs a caregiver, believe you me, Speaker, you have a list of expenses from my seat to yours, because drugs are not covered, bedding supplies are not covered, any kind of instruments that you need in the home are not covered, and all of this needs to come out of your pocket. And now we're saying that you're going to have to stay home without pay. Who can afford to do that?

So here we have a bill that has a pretty cool name. I like the name. It talks about an issue that is important; absolutely. Caregivers are very important, and we have to do more to support them. We have to do more to show our true colours, that we are a caring community, that we want people with needs, with disabilities, who are frail, to live in our communities, to be fully engaged, to participate, to allow us to share in their lives, to learn from them. We want all of this, but to have all of this sometimes needs a bit of cash, and this is where we're short. We fall flat.

All that the bill is talking about is making sure that you can take a week off. Unfortunately, that is seldom the issue. If something big is coming that has to do with a serious medical illness, employers will realize that. If you have been looking after your mom or your mother-in-law or your aunt or your neighbours or your friends, your employer will know that. And if that person needs extra help, your employer will know that also, and chances are they will give you the time off. But the problem is, will you be able to afford to take the time off?

When the bill was first introduced, I had an issue with “serious medical,” because a serious illness has a definition within the medical world that does not include frailty, that does not include aging. Aging is not a disease, Mr. Speaker. Aging is a normal progression of life. But as we age, people get frail and they may be in need of caregivers but have no sickness whatsoever. They’re just old.

0930

Age is not a disease. I know a perfectly healthy 92-year-old—happens to be my father-in-law—who has no disease whatsoever. Is he frail? Well, he’s 92 years old. I’m proud to say that he still has a driver’s licence, drives his car, does his business, handles his own affairs. But every now and again, does he need help? Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. Not because he’s sick; just because he is aged. He has had a good life, and I hope he still has many, many years. I’m betting right now that he makes it to 100, just to have it on the record. Eight years from now we’ll check if I’m right, but I’m going to buy my card right now, and I bet he makes it to 100.

The fact is that as he gets older, he gets frailer, which means that he may need a little bit of help, but he would not qualify for that because he’s not seriously ill. He’s just older. He doesn’t see as well. He doesn’t hear as well. He doesn’t move as well. He doesn’t walk as well. None of these are diseases and certainly none of these are serious diseases, but that doesn’t mean that he doesn’t need a little bit of caregiving every now and again. I’m more than willing to do this and everybody else in my family is more than willing to do this, and we will continue to do that. But that caregiver leave does not apply because he’s not seriously ill; he’s frail.

Yes, I want it to be on the record, not because I want to stall the bill, but because if we’re going to be doing this tiny step of saying that we will change the labour act so that if you go and help somebody for a week you won’t lose your job, then let’s make sure that we capture as many people as possible in there. Let’s make sure that we have a definition that is inclusive of frailty and that is inclusive of aging, which cannot be defined in the way it is defined now.

I cannot let this opportunity go by without talking about our seriously lacking home care, because with caregivers, there’s always a flipside to home care. I’d like to talk about—I’ll call him Mr. Goudreau from my riding. He’s 81 years old and looking after his wife that is seriously disabled, but this man will keep her at home until his last breath. All he wants is a little bit of help. You figure he could get this through home care. My God—all he wants is to be able to sleep at night. Send him someone so that he can sleep at night, and he will continue to look after his very disabled wife for the rest of his or her life. We can’t even do this. Three nights a week, he gets somebody from midnight to 6 o’clock in the morning; the rest of the nights he’s up. An 81-year-old who can’t sleep has a hard time being a caregiver.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It’s a pleasure for me to rise and speak at second reading to Bill 21. I listened with interest to the member from Nickel Belt and her very eloquent comments with respect to what she sees taking place in this legislation. I also heard the member from Burlington speak a bit earlier.

As the Attorney General said just a few minutes ago, I think that’s why it’s of extreme importance that we get this bill to committee as quickly as possible so that it can go through the further study and examination that it needs and it can come back here for third reading, because it is the right thing to do.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I’m pleased to add a few comments on Bill 21. I think the whole premise of providing caregiver leave is based on some of the realities that families face today. In times past, people lived very often in the communities in which they were raised. They were there and they had a much closer network of family and extended family, and so people could be expected then to be able to provide a bit more opportunity to support those in their community, whether they were neighbours, friends or family. Today, it’s a very different story. Today, we’re looking at communities that are the seven to seven, where people leave at 7 a.m., get home at 7 p.m., and can barely look after the people and the children in their own household.

But the problem with the bill is that it’s now turning the burden essentially to employers, and they’re left to find accommodation for the absence of an individual. While they may be able to do this, in some businesses this becomes a burden, and they then have to carry the burden.

The issue at hand is really the question of the strength of our safety net in our communities, and the importance, then, of looking at increasing the supports for providing those safety nets. Everyone has examples in their own ridings of people who need that additional help.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: As you know, I just went through a summer-long by-election campaign, and, going door to door, one of the things that I encountered more than anything else was the state of health care in our province. I find that health care is held together by so many threads. It can be long-term care. It can be caregiving. It can be the need for better services, shorter wait times. But it’s all held together by threads.

I know when I was on city council for seven years, a member from the other side of town—not a member, a citizen—would come and sit in the audience, because he was always out there raising money for the Ronald McDonald House. We have one in London; we don’t have one in Windsor yet. He wanted councillors to be mindful of the fact that one of the threads in health care that he thought was needed was a Ronald McDonald House, so people needing time away to go up and look after a loved one or a child out of town would have that caregiving capability.

I don't know how many times in my community you read in the paper about a pasta fundraiser to raise money for a family that needs some kind of financial support because they have a child who has been injured or become ill and is being looked after out of town. But that's one of the threads that ties health care together in our province.

Care in the home: We want to keep our seniors in the home as long as we can. We don't want them to overburden the health care system and long-term care. We have enough people who should be in a long-term-care home now tying up a hospital bed.

So we need these threads. We need to look at all of these together, and I think it's one of these golden threads, the caregiver bill, and I really look forward to it going to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise to speak in support of Bill 21. My colleague from Vaughan and others have spoken eloquently on this Bill 21 for well over 9.5 hours. I think it's appropriate for this bill to go to committee. I think that's the right thing to do. That's my remark today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Nickel Belt, you have two minutes for a response.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly want to congratulate my brand new colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh for his comments. It's quite nerve-racking to be a new member in this House, so I wanted to congratulate him for his taking part in this debate.

One other part of the bill that is problematic for me is the time frame of one week. That was there in the previous rendition of the bill; it is there in this rendition of the bill—where you have to take a week at a time. Well, for a lot of people, the number one reason they have to miss work is a doctor's appointment. They want to take a loved one to a doctor's appointment. Often an elderly person, a person who would qualify for the definition of a seriously ill person, is at home with a serious, chronic illness, but the bill does not allow that.

0940

To know that you don't have to be asking for a favour or any of this, that if you ask for a day off to take anybody—your mother-in-law or your spouse or a child—to the doctor and that you're protected by law, to me, would have a real value, because this happens often. Now, what ends up happening is that you will ask your employer, who can say yes or no, and you feel like you're asking for a favour. Having it in the act, to me, would be a real step forward: If you want to take an elderly, seriously ill person or any aged, seriously ill person to the doctor, you know that you are protected by this act, that if you ask for the day off, you will get it. That would be a step forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rod Jackson: This is the first opportunity I've had to welcome the five newly elected members to the

House. I wish them all the best. I look forward to working with you in the future, in the coming days.

It is a pleasure to rise in the House to speak to this act, the Employment Standards Amendment Act (Leaves to Help Families). It's a privilege to speak to a bill that touches upon some of the most difficult experiences any person or family might be faced with. We all agree that some of the most traumatic experiences someone can experience are their loved one becoming critically ill or losing a child. Because these issues are ones that everyone can or will relate to at one point in their lives or another—and it's also something we don't want to face. It's something none of us hope we ever have to face. But we, as a society, have addressed it before in the existing Employment Standards Act, 2000, and we should continue to ensure that families can make it through these most trying times. I understand the Liberals would like to extend the scope of the act by striking out “organ donor leave, personal emergency leave” and substituting “organ donor leave, family caregiver legal, critically ill child care leave, crime-related child death or disappearance leave, personal emergency leave.”

Like the rest of our caucus here on this side, I'm supportive of the people and the families in these challenging situations, and that's why I'll support this bill. However, this legislation has some fundamental shortcomings, and I'm proud to stand here representing Barrie and to have this opportunity to speak to this bill. I think any indication from the government side that this is a waste of time and somehow something that doesn't need to be done and needs to be rushed through is inappropriate.

The shortcomings of this bill, which I think will be very important to sort out at committee—this bill plays on an emotional subject that we hold very dear to us. It makes it easy for objective judgment to become clouded if we don't carefully study it, and I think it deserves all the debate it will get in this House. We are responsible to ensure that this bill ends up as worthy legislation that will truly help Ontario families and will not become just another piece of the Wynne government's good-intentioned, little-substance, window-dressing bills: an idea that looks nice on paper but does little to actually help the families in very difficult and trying times. We need to make sure there's substance to this. My fear is that this bill actually lacks the substance that it needs to really have the effect that I think is intended, and well-intended.

First, we must remember that to truly help Ontario families, we have to climb out of the impending \$30-billion debt hole that this government has walked us into. We have to become serious about clearing up our debt and deficit, first and foremost. From this government's budget, they've not demonstrated to all of us that they are still serious about paying down the debt and deficit. Indeed, it's the fifth consecutive deficit budget that this government has presented to Ontario taxpayers. I guess with this bill they got a little more creative by trying to pin its costs on the feds through EI, which is presumptuous at best.

That leads me to a greater issue here, Speaker. First, there is no money, as was alluded to earlier. This bill has no money attached to it for support of people in this situation. Maybe that's why the Liberals have decided to try to put it through with the aim that the feds will pay. I don't know where such an immense sense of entitlement comes from. You simply don't make bills on behalf of another entity. That's more than presumptuous. It's like me promising my constituents the Liberals will make good on their campaign promises or make good on their promises to get this province's finances back on track. We still see very little evidence, if any evidence, of that at all. It just doesn't work.

Is this government honestly going to expect that the federal government will pick up the tab for Ontario? Really? Is that what this bill is expecting will happen? As I said, it is extremely presumptuous if that's the case.

We can't let this bill become another example of the government's inability to carefully plan and execute what it has promised Ontarians. Hopefully, when this bill gets to committee, we can work to ensure this piece of legislation is simply not just another empty promise.

We also can't let this Liberal government just conveniently point the finger at the federal government if this doesn't work out. Pointing fingers at others is something this government has become habitually good at, just like they did after the G20 and in the wake of the Ornge scandal, never mind the gas plant scandal. The gas plant dumping debacles—I don't even know what count we're up to in document dumps. We used to actually be able to say, there's the first document dump, the second document dump—

Interjection.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Yeah, something like that. A few million, as the Attorney General says. Thanks for that.

But it further proves that this Liberal government is often not prepared to take full accountability for their actions. That's the real fear that Ontarians have right now. They don't trust this government to follow through on their actions and to be open and transparent with them. If we do not consider the economics of this bill, quite simply then the costs will be put onto small business owners as well, or employees themselves certainly will feel the burden of unpaid leave.

Small businesses generally have one or two employees. In fact, in the Barrie area I know that 75% of all the people who are employed are employed by businesses with four or less employees. So really, small business is big business. Small business is the main economic driver in our province. When businesses face the burden of having an employee gone, it is very stressful on them, as well as on the family.

Of course, you hope that employers are going to be accommodating in a best-case scenario. You really hope that they will be. The reality is that I think there are some employers who won't take this to heart and won't treat their employees fairly. That's why I think this legislation is needed.

But if one of the employees goes on leave, how does the government expect a small business to carry out its daily operation? We have to be cautious of adding an unnecessary burden to small and medium-sized businesses, especially at this time when their budgets are already stretched to the maximum.

Second, I don't know many people today who can actually afford to take more than a week of unpaid leave off of work. This could lead to a terrible situation for anyone to be in, having to be forced to make a decision between caring for a loved one or paying for the essentials of life; food and rent, for example.

Let's face it: The sky-high cost of living is a direct result of this government's poor economic management and fiscal and energy policies. Average hard-working Ontarians simply cannot afford to take so many weeks of unpaid leave. Take hydro costs, for example. The hydro bill for the average Ontario family has gone up 84% since 2003.

Additionally, I think it's more important to also talk about the problem of the deficiency that an employee must take a minimum of one week off to be eligible. As my colleagues have previously noted, there has to be more flexibility here. Sometimes caring for an ill loved one or dealing with the loss of a child or some of these issues that were mentioned needs an afternoon, or a day or two days off of work to go to a doctor's appointment, or a morning off for a sick relative, or a few days to take care of finances and prescriptions; that sort of thing. It may mean bringing a child to chemotherapy once a week. There needs to be more flexibility built into this bill. I'd love to be able to see that.

Furthermore, we just can't let this bill become another example of this government's poor planning. For one, it doesn't provide adequate guidelines for what constitutes serious medical conditions. If the government leaves such an important definition open and free for interpretation, it's highly likely that this intended bill could turn into a dysfunctional disaster. There has to be more clarity here. For example, an employee who should be qualified for leave may not be given one because the doctor does not think he or she has a serious medical condition. Good laws should have clear definitions, and I think Bill 21 falls short of this simple expectation.

The previous form of this bill, Bill 30, I believe—I'm glad that since then the government has made more of an effort to reach out to Ontarians to find out what the potential consequences may be for the average hard-working Ontarian. Before, because consultation was so limited, the government failed to address the real needs of Ontarians, and I think there has been more of an effort here.

Without more consultation, this bill may also create another unintended consequence on businesses in more unnecessary red tape. We need less regulation. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimates that red tape is costing Canadian businesses nearly \$6,000 per employee each year. That's about \$2,000 more per employee when compared to United States, who's one of

our main competitors in the world market. The negative economic effect of red tape on business in Ontario is obviously something this government doesn't understand, given the amount that they've created.

0950

The recent creation of the College of Trades, for example—or, as many like to call it, the tax on trades—demonstrates that this government is completely out of touch with what Ontario businesses need to thrive and survive and employ more people. Ontario can't afford meaningless and expensive window-dressing legislation. We need substance. We need to help hard-working Ontario families and businesses, and not just play with their emotions. Let's get down to business.

While I support this bill, I believe there's still work to be done. No one is going to disagree that this bill was drafted with the best of intentions, but each of its inadequacies could be potentially a ticking time bomb waiting to explode. That's why I'm eager to see this bill debated more and go to committee and be improved. We need safeguards in the bill that will ensure that this bill will do the best to help Ontario families dealing with some of the hardest issues that a family can face.

In addition, we need consultations with Ontarians to find out what the impacts are on Ontarians, and that they will not pay for any unforeseen consequences.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's an honour to be able to rise in this House and speak on Bill 21 and comment on some of the remarks from the member from Barrie.

He said some things that we agree with. He spoke about families; he spoke about, "If you're going to want to make legislation, make it worthy legislation; let's not just talk about legislation for making a press release." I think that's one of the roles of this House: to stand in our place and bring things to the table that haven't been brought before.

He also spoke about, "This bill has no money attached." It is tough for a lot of families. You can say, "You can take eight weeks off," but a lot of people can't afford to take one day off. So it sounds nice in principle, but does it really work?

I'd also like to take a few seconds to talk about what the member from Nickel Belt said earlier this morning, because she raised a couple of issues, one especially that is the reason why we have to fully debate issues in the House. She raised the issue that aging is not a disease, and this bill does not cover people who take care of a parent or a family member who is frail due to aging, not necessarily sick—not that you can get a doctor's note that they're sick. That is a really, really good point.

Points like that are the reasons why I'm a bit offended by some members that we have to hurry up and we have to push this through. We could push things through without thinking, but is that really serving the people? Because that's when you lose the points that change legislation from a good press release to worthy legislation that

helps as many people as possible, and that is our role here.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Attorney General.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I want to address the larger issue here, particularly those people who may be watching who are probably thinking to themselves at this point in time, "How is it possible that three parties basically agree on a bill and they've been talking about it for the last 10 to 12 hours"—at different time periods when you put it all together—"and it isn't moving forward quicker than that?"

I'll tell them why. When you have a majority government, basically the House leaders get together and arrive at a scheme that each bill will be given X number of hours of debate—some longer, some shorter, depending on the importance of the bill. Sometimes the government, as well—and I've been on both sides of the House—will say, "We've had enough debate," and they will invoke closure. No government likes to do that, but you have to do that every now and then if you want to get bills moving forward.

People should also understand that the real work that's being done on these bills is not so much in the House here—and I respect everybody's right to speak on the bill—but it's really done in committee. That's where all the details get ironed out.

So what we have going on here right now in this minority government situation, where a closure motion would never pass, is that you've got the Conservative Party basically saying—and I know what you're saying—is that, "We've got the right to speak for 20 minutes for each and every member." They've got about 40 members, or a few less than that, so they can speak for 800 minutes, which is X number of hours, on each and every bill, whether they agree with us or not. That is filibustering, and that's what doesn't make this place work.

There are some really important issues that should be discussed here that aren't being discussed. I think the people of Ontario should understand that. They should talk to their Conservative members, if they have one in their riding, and say, "Let's get on with the business of governing. Get your work done. Get these bills through committee and let's really implement them as soon as possible for the welfare of the people of Ontario."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott: The member for Barrie gave a fine speech this morning. I was glad to be here to hear it. He, I think, showed this House why the people of Barrie entrusted him with the responsibility of serving them here last October 2011, and why he deserves to be re-elected when the election eventually does in fact come.

This important bill—the Attorney General is quite right; this is an important piece of legislation and certainly that's why members of the Legislature from our side of the House want to bring forward the ideas and the concerns of their constituents, as well as our support in

principle for this piece of legislation, this Bill 21, because I think we all agree that there are many circumstances where families do need some leave from work and it's important that employers understand that, too.

But I think we also need to recognize that the bill has to be given thorough discussion and needs to go to committee and that there will be an opportunity, hopefully, for public hearings, because this bill impacts a lot of people, not just the individuals who require the leave, including the business owners, of course. I would hope, expect and anticipate that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, for one, would want to bring forward their ideas and suggestions so that we can improve this bill in the public interest.

The Attorney General seems to forget that the House was prorogued by the outgoing McGuinty government for some four months, and it makes it seem a little bit insincere on their part when they complain about the pace of legislation going through this House when in fact they shut down this place for more than four months, which of course really stopped, to a large degree, I would argue, dimmed the lights of democracy in the province of Ontario, because during that time there was no opportunity for the Ontario Legislature to sit, to deliberate on important issues like Bill 21 and the principle within it, and we weren't able to hold the government to account. I think that has to be put on the table, as well as the right of opposition members to speak on important issues. We are elected by our constituents to come here to represent their views, their beliefs and their values, and we submit that we will continue to do that as long as we are here. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier le député de Barrie pour ses commentaires. Je crois que ce qu'il a apporté à la table, vraiment, va nous aider à avoir un meilleur projet de loi. On est en train de parler d'aidants naturels. Pour moi, il y a un aidant naturel qui me vient en tête, et c'est M. Yvon Goudreau.

C'est un homme de mon comté, de Chelmsford, qui prend soin de son épouse, Shirley. Shirley est à la maison et veut demeurer à la maison, et lui, il fait tout en son pouvoir pour qu'elle demeure à la maison. Yvon Goudreau, c'est un aidant naturel exceptionnel et il commence à être âgé. Il a plus de 80 ans. Tout ce qu'il demande, c'est d'être capable de dormir le soir. Il prend soin de sa femme de 6 heures le matin jusqu'à 10 heures le soir. À 10 heures le soir, il aimerait pouvoir dormir sa nuit pour être là pour aider sa femme le lendemain et pour faire ce que tous les aidants naturels font : profiter au maximum des gens qui nous entourent, de pouvoir vivre avec eux et de demeurer dans leur maison.

Il est venu me voir plusieurs fois pour dire : « France, j'ai besoin d'aide. Il faut que je dorme la nuit. Ma femme a besoin d'aide pendant la nuit. Il faut que je me repose. » La première ministre, M^{me} Kathleen Wynne, était dans mon comté il y a deux semaines. Il est même allé la voir pour lui dire : « J'ai besoin d'aide. » Je suis

allée plaider son histoire avec notre centre d'accès aux soins communautaires pour qu'il ait de l'aide le soir, et toujours pas. Tu sais, on a des projets de loi qui ont des beaux titres. Oui, on veut aider nos aidants naturels, mais dans les cas comme le cas de M. Goudreau, où il a besoin d'aide, l'aide n'est pas là. J'aimerais qu'on change ça. Merci.

1000

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Barrie, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, the Attorney General, the member from Nickel Belt and the member from Wellington-Halton Hills for their participation in this debate.

I will say, Speaker, that debate is important. It's not always about whether we all agree on something or not; I think it's about what we all think about these bills. In this particular case, it's correct. We do agree that this bill needs to go through, but I think we also should be able to agree that this bill needs to go through its due process so it can be as good as it can be. I'd like to think that the government is open enough to understand that there's value to all of us and all the input that we bring in this House. Not all of us sit in the committee, unless we want to go to Committee of the Whole on it—I'm game for that. But you know what? We all have the right to speak to this bill. We all have input. I have specific input I want to give to it, and I believe I did today. I won't apologize for that. We can't even begin to shrink from our responsibilities in this place. This is one of our responsibilities, and I'm proud to execute it. This is about getting things done and getting them done right. Not fast all the time is best, right? We have to make sure that we cover all the bases and we make sure all these things are covered.

There are some misgivings of this bill. This does present some problems for employers. They need input into this. They need to have their concerns addressed. Employees who may or may not benefit from this bill need to have their issues addressed. We're looking at some legislation that looks good. It's great window dressing, and it has great intentions. I really do believe that. But a lot of the people who need to benefit from it won't be able to. We just assume that it's going to get picked up by EI. I can only assume that's what the government is assuming when they put this bill through, because these people aren't going to have much other option. And a minimum of one week to be eligible for the leave? It needs to be changed. We need fulsome debate. This needs to go to committee and get done for the people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'm pleased to rise to give my comments on this particular bill. I want to apologize to my friend across the way, the Attorney General, for not having remembered his ministry a while ago. Maybe it's because we have an outstanding file between me and him that he never got back to me. So, since he forgot about

getting back to me about it, I'm kind of throwing the stone back. I'm sure Isabel out of Manitowadge would really like to hear us talking to each other. We'll touch base after the file today. Again, I do appreciate the comments that he made.

Again, I pointed out earlier the reason why we're talking about this bill this morning. We need to give credit where credit is due, and that's to the member from Nickel Belt. For five years—I think for longer than five years—she was working extremely hard on the tanning bed bill. She was doing the work. She was going out talking to individuals. She was going out, making sure—bringing these issues forward, and after a prorogued session, we got this idea, this great idea, which seems to be a theme that is happening with this government—it was taken in by one of the Liberal members, and we dealt with the tanning bed issue. We had several discussions on that tanning bed issue bill, and we had an overall consensus.

We've been talking about it for, like I said, at least five years. We finally got it moved forward. That is the reason why—because the tanning beds is what we were supposed to talk about for the entire balance of this week. This bill was nowhere near on the radar. So for the members, for the Attorney General across the way to say that individuals are filibustering—I think what we're doing is a very democratic process, to talk about our issues and what our constituents are telling us from back home, and bringing those issues forward. I think that's very important, because by having these discussions, that's how we're going to be able to enhance this bill.

For the people that are listening, they're actually engaging in the discussions that we're having right now. Those who are interested in moving this bill forward have an opportunity to collect the information that is being discussed through this House, and the opportunity they have as individuals to come forth and give their testimonial in front of the committee—that's what they're looking forward to. So it's not wasting time. We are moving forward with it, and I think it's everybody's right and opportunity to talk about what's going on back home.

Now I'm going to use this opportunity to talk about—I'd love to use this opportunity to talk about many things. I'd love to talk this morning about the job cuts that are happening in ServiceOntario and MNR offices across northern Ontario, but that's not what we're talking about here this morning. Those individuals are also worried about this bill because they're weighing the decisions that they're going to have to make: "If I take a leave, am I going to have a job? Will I be here tomorrow morning? I don't know if I'm going to be here."

These individuals who work through the MNR and over at ServiceOntario kiosks provide a huge service for all of our communities. A lot of them—and I know these ServiceOntario agents go over and above the call—would actually help some of these individuals fill out these applications. Once we agree on this process to get family members with them—because in northern Ontario we

just don't have those regular resources; the individuals that you deal with are your neighbours. It's your aunt that's working over at this kiosk. These are essential services and important services that we need to maintain in northern Ontario and in our communities.

Now, again, I really do want to talk about the caregiver bill but I would also like to talk this morning about the operating costs of small water treatment plants across northern Ontario, particularly in Algoma-Manitoulin. I have the community of the North Shore. I have the community of Serpent River and those areas, and also Manitowaning, who are facing huge, huge costs with water bills, but that's not what we're talking about this morning. That's important, but those are things that those individuals are talking to me about. But then again, they are also faced with making certain decisions. "Will I be able to afford to take care of my mother? If I can't afford to provide for my family and if I can't afford to pay my bills with the municipality because of the high operating costs of our water treatment plants, I can't do it."

So those are some of the things that people are telling me about. When we're talking about clean and safe water—just clean, safe water that you can actually drink. We enjoy drinking the water that we have here, but I still have in Algoma-Manitoulin people who can't even go to their kitchen tap and pour a glass of water and drink it. That's important, too. But we're talking about the caregiver bill here this morning. Now we're talking about water. I have a lot of water, and right now my heart and my mind are with the communities that I have back home: Johnson and Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional, Huron Shores and Plummer Additional—all these townships have declared a state of emergency because of too much water.

I indulge you, Mr. Speaker, to give me the leniency to talk about these communities. They're going to be going through some very difficult times. Why? Because some of their loved ones can't reach them. The waters that have come down have basically kept them away from being reunited from their family members. Communities are working diligently. I've talked with Minister Meilleur, who has been working with the communities, and also with Minister Jeffrey, who has been also assisting with the areas and making sure that the resources are there. Those are issues that are important to me this morning, Mr. Speaker, and those are the things that matter most to me this morning.

But we're talking about the caregiver bill this morning, and I'm going to get back to that bill very shortly. But I wanted to highlight some of the important issues that are going on in Algoma-Manitoulin. Those are the issues that are front and centre with me this morning.

As I mentioned in some of my comments that I made yesterday, I have this wonderful, wonderful neighbour. Her name is Georgine Boucher. I look at her as a nanny. She takes care of our place when we're not around. She keeps her eye out. She makes sure that nobody is coming into the household, and if there is something, she makes sure she documents it and she watches it. She does have a

daughter; she's a teacher, and she does have a good son-in-law who would take care of her, but we also live right next door to her so my wife is also there to help her if ever she was in need. But she's one of those lucky ones.

There are many, many Georgine Bouchers in my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin who don't have the luxury of having good neighbours or even having a neighbour. They are stuck in an isolated area and they don't have family members. Either their kids live far away or they don't have the opportunity to reach out to care for them. So, as an individual, and as many individuals across northern Ontario, they would like to have that opportunity to care for them.

But if you look at the definition—there are a lot of definitions here: spouse, parent, grandparent, stepson, father, stepchild, grandparent, step-grandparents, relatives, spouse, brother-in-law. But if you look at number 8, it says, "Any individual prescribed as a family member for the purpose of this section." As far as I'm concerned, she's a family member, and a lot of people feel that those individuals are family members. Those aren't addressed in this bill, and we'd like to see that.

I also have a wonderful father-in-law. He's a wonderful man and, well, he's sometimes stubborn. We do get along as long as we're not in the same room. But he, as well, is getting up there in age. Five years ago—I wish I had more time; you really would enjoy this story—he was diagnosed with cancer, so he lost a portion of his lung. Unfortunately, because of the scarring and everything, he can't do what he really enjoyed, which is his firewood. My wife and my mother-in-law—young as a cookie, but she as well is starting to feel her pains a little bit more. So part of my summer holidays that I had is that my wife felt the need to go care for her parents back home. We took three days and we went up there and we did what my father-in-law enjoyed doing his entire life, which is firewood. So we bucked it, we cut it, we split it, and we stored it. I'm glad I had that opportunity to do that.

As politicians and parliamentarians, we tend to lose what brings us close to our true values back home. It's actually something I enjoyed doing with my wife for a very, very long time. It was really enjoyable. I actually really enjoy doing the firewood. But not everybody has that opportunity to care. It wasn't that he was ill; he just needed a little bit of care. We need to find a way through this bill to actually accomplish that.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'm delighted to introduce, in the west members' gallery, my colleague from Thornhill, the honourable Peter Kent, MP. We work together in tandem—a great guy. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I'd also like to introduce, from the York Regional Police, the head of the diversity, equity and inclusion bureau, Inspector Ricky Veerappan.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to ask my colleagues in the House to welcome two fantastic community volunteers from Don Valley West: Nawal Ateeq and Mohammad Wani. Welcome.

Mr. Steve Clark: I would like to introduce, in the public gallery today, Alexandra Prefasi-Horning, who is the mother of our amazing page from Leeds-Grenville, Peyton. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to introduce, in the east members' gallery, Mr. Jeff Mole from the Trillium Energy Alliance. Please welcome him to Queen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I would like to welcome delegations from the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada, the Ontario Lung Association and the Canadian Cancer Society.

In the members' gallery are the honourable Steve Mahoney, a former member of this House and also a former member of the House of Commons; Mr. Tim Armstrong, a former deputy minister of this government; Mike Haynes; and Natalia Mozayani.

Also, from the Ontario Lung Association, we have Elizabeth Harvey and Connie Choy, and from the Canadian Cancer Society, Kelly Gorman. Please join me in welcoming these delegations. They are here to celebrate the introduction of radon awareness legislation by Dr. Shafiq Qaadri.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I would ask you to help me welcome, in the members' gallery, the Honourable Suzanne Anton, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice for the province of British Columbia. She is joined by her deputy minister, Richard Fyfe; and her chief of staff, Evan Southern.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'd like to introduce my friend Jeff Mole, a community energy activist from the Muskoka area.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'd like to welcome a visitor and friend from my riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North. Judy Flett is a well-respected educator, currently serving at Lakehead University as the programs coordinator in the department of aboriginal education.

A valued leader in the region and a mentor in the field and a mentor in the field of aboriginal education, Judy was instrumental in developing and implementing a successful youth entrepreneurship program in Far North communities working with the Right Honourable Paul Martin. Her contributions are numerous. I'm pleased to welcome Judy Flett.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I'd like to introduce Ron Barr, who is president of the Greater Ottawa Truckers Association. He's here with us today.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills also should have acknowledged a lovely lady from Carleton-Mississippi Mills and Ottawa. His lovely wife, Janet, is here.

But I also have another introduction. The other day, I had introduced my friend and said that had left. Re-

member my friend who I had worked for Joe Clark with? He is here today. You don't seem to be howling about Mr. Clark today. My friend Ed Sem is also here, from British Columbia.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sure the member from Nepean–Carleton is going to get some good brownie points from the member from—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no, he was thankful.

As is the tradition of the Speaker, I will introduce a former member, Mr. Steve Mahoney from Mississauga West in the 34th and 35th Parliaments. Welcome, Steve.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier, following up on yesterday's questions where I called upon you to keep your promise to the people of Scarborough when it comes to the subway that you had promised during the by-election. Yesterday, I know you met with TTC chair Karen Stintz, who had a very similar viewpoint that I did. So if I didn't convince you, hopefully Councillor Stintz did.

A simple question, Premier: Will you keep your promise to the people of Scarborough from the by-election and build that subway, just as council asked?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Our commitment to the people of the GTHA and beyond has been to build transit, and we are doing that and we will keep that commitment, Mr. Speaker. We have committed that we have \$1.4 billion, plus another \$320 million that we commit to building a subway in Scarborough. That commitment is on the table. We will move forward with that.

Quite frankly, I have to say that Karen Stintz has been an advocate for transit. She has been an advocate for transit all along, which is actually not the case of the party opposite. The party opposite has not supported us on building transit because, as you know, there are many, many projects going on around the province. We have not had the support of the official opposition. I'm glad to see now that they are interested in building transit, and I look forward to working with them as we make those investments that are so necessary for the economic well-being and growth of the GTHA and the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Let's be direct about the record, Speaker. Leslie Frost built the Yonge subway, Robarts built the Bloor line, Bill Davis extended the Bloor line, lengthened Yonge to North York—

Interjections.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I was on a roll, Speaker.

Mike Harris built the Sheppard line.

The number of subway stops the Liberals have built in Toronto: zero. The number the PCs have built: 64.

All we're asking, Premier—you said you were going to be different than Dalton McGuinty. Will you keep your promise to the people of Scarborough, or are you going to weasel off the hook?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That was an interesting litany of investing in subways. We stopped the Eglinton line at—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings, come to order. The member from Nepean–Carleton, come to order. The member from Renfrew, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, you didn't think I missed you, did you?

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Since we came into office in 2003, we've been investing in transit. We will continue to invest in transit. We will keep our commitment to the people of Scarborough to build the subway in Scarborough, Mr. Speaker, and that \$1.4 billion will go into building that line on the alignment that has been the alignment all along in the plan. That's the conversation that I had with Councillor Stintz yesterday. We will continue to make that investment, and I hope we'll be able to work with the city council in order to do that, because the people of Scarborough need that transit. We need to make that investment in order for the people of Scarborough to be able to have the access to their work and to their schools that they need.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Liberals may talk a good game. They may talk about subway stops; they may announce subway stops. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal government, additional Liberal subway stops: zero.

And here's what I worry about: You made a promise in the by-election. Now you're trying to wiggle off the hook on that promise, it's clear. You send out your transportation minister, who, quite frankly, has the stability of a ball in a roulette wheel popping around. But gambling on a subway: That's a hell of a risk.

Why don't you actually stick to the plan, the city plan, the original plan, build it from Kennedy, Scarborough Town Centre to Sheppard? It's the right thing to do. Please keep your promise. Don't pull a Dalton McGuinty. Don't flip-flop. Do what you said you were going to do.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

1040

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Leader of the Opposition knows that the people who are going to be

using the extension of the Spadina line are very excited about the opening of that line. I know that the Leader of the Opposition knows, because he actually lives quite close to the work that's being done on Eglinton Avenue, that there are holes that will not be filled in. Those holes are actually going to function and we're going to have the Eglinton Crosstown line because that's the investment that we have made.

One of the issues that I talked about with Councillor Stintz yesterday was that the federal government has not come forward to put money into an expanded version of the line that the city council would like to see. I said to Councillor Stintz, if she can find a way to bring that money forward then that's one thing. But the fact is that money has not been forthcoming. We have made the commitment. We're the only level of government that has made that commitment, and we will stick to that commitment of \$1.4 billion.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: My question is again for the Premier. Madam Premier, you just said you met with the chair of the TTC yesterday. Why didn't you meet with the chair of the TTC before you made your announcement—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm waiting for them to go back to John A. Macdonald and the railroad, Mr. Speaker. The reality is, these new Tories haven't built a subway. That group never, ever, laid a line. That group only filled it in. And I have met with—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you.

And yes, I have had several meetings over the summer with Karen Stintz, my dear friend over there, and the last time we offered them \$1.4 billion, the only money we had for a subway, the chair of the TTC answered us by declaring—while the press conference was going on—that it was dead on arrival. She wouldn't take the money. She couldn't take yes for an answer, and failed to support a joint strategy to get the federal government to the table.

I was just speaking to Mr. Kent pointing out that Ms. Raitt and Mr. Lebel haven't met with me in six months. Your federal members won't have a conversation—

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

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: Madam Premier, every time the Minister of Transportation opens his mouth, he either insults someone or releases a new plan. I wouldn't trust him to run a one-car funeral.

Premier, what I want to know is: How do you plan on getting this transit built without the support of the TTC and the city of Toronto?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I have great respect for the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, but I think we disagree on one thing: His idea of subway building is to pass a motion; ours is to write a cheque. Mr. Speaker, we don't need to go back to 1867 or 1967. All we have to do is look at the record of the members opposite: Lots of motions, not a single cheque; lots of subway stations closed; lines cancelled and filled in.

This government has boring machines right now under Eglinton, on the University line. We have more work; we have \$16.4 billion. We're the only party, the only government with serious money into this: 90% of the funding. They owe an apology to the people of Scarborough for misleading them—

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

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: Speaker, this plan is full of holes. There isn't the money here to do what's needed. They're counting on the city of Toronto to put up money and they haven't even discussed the matter with them. They've also put forward a plan that the TTC says is not feasible technically. Now, how in the world can you responsibly go to the people of Scarborough and tell them you've got a plan that you haven't even researched?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Stop the clock.

I continue to try to find the decorum that I seek. When I'm speaking and people have to use their earpiece, that means others are speaking while I'm trying to make a point.

I'll remind members that I do not like when members' names are used in the House. I want ridings to be referred to or titles to be referred to. It does not elevate the debate; it actually lowers it and it becomes personal. Please stay on focus with what that request is. It will help the decorum rise.

Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we kind of like engineers. As a matter of fact, we like evidence and we like engineers.

Metrolinx has a very competent set of engineers, and when proposals came forward, they were asked to evaluate them. Mr. Collins and the Metrolinx board have said very clearly the technology is feasible; this works.

We did not ask city council for a new plan or an alternative route. We said we want to stick with the existing route. We asked them whether they wanted an LRT or a subway. They said they wanted a subway. We said we will build the subway.

We have a process called iCorridor in the Ministry of Transportation. I think it is the most advanced engineering and planning tool in North America. It says that a subway doesn't make much sense; that actually, the original plan for LRT after Scarborough out to Sheppard is that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Councillor Thompson and Minister Duguid are going to look at those issues in a

thorough study and look at connectivity and take the time to do that. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we'll listen to the engineers.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Before the session began, New Democrats put our priorities on the table. We want to ensure that the results people were promised are actually delivered: that home care wait times will go down, that youth unemployment will go down, that auto insurance rates go down, and that Queen's Park gets some new transparency from the Financial Accountability Office. But the Premier still hasn't set out an agenda, Speaker. She seems more interested in playing politics and making election threats that even she doesn't take seriously. Is the Premier going to keep playing games over issues she knows will be supported, or will she just get down to work?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's just be clear that today, in fact, there will be a vote on the issue of the Financial Accountability Office, Mr. Speaker. So we are moving ahead with those commitments that we made.

The comments that I made at the beginning of the week about wanting to find those areas where all of us in this House could work together to pass legislation, to move ahead on issues where we could find agreement, like consumer protection, as an example; like the Financial Accountability Office—I thought it was important that we identify those areas. There is lots of room for continued wrangling on other issues, but where there is agreement, it seemed to me that it would make sense for us to agree that we would move ahead on those issues. That was my point at the beginning of the week. That remains my point, and I am pleased that we are moving ahead with some of those issues.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, Ontarians want to see their politicians focused on results for them, not on their own political interests. That's why New Democrats are focused on creating jobs, improving health care, making life affordable and making government accountable.

There's a lot of work to do, but the Premier seems much more interested in picking fights over legislation that we've already agreed to pass instead of focusing on the work that she needs to do here. Is the Premier ready to deliver on the commitments she has made or can we expect more of the same political game-playing?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, part of the delivery on those results is making sure that we get legislation through the House. That's part of what I have to do, what we have to do as elected members, to make sure that we can deliver on those results. There are three bills moving forward this week, which I'm very pleased about. It's exactly what I was talking about. Consumer protections: We've got all-party support. The Leader of the Opposition voted for it. That's a good thing. We're moving ahead on the tanning bed legislation. That had all-party support—and on the Financial Accountability Office, as I said. That's the point I was making.

I feel very, very good that we're able to move that legislation ahead for the very reason that the leader of the third party identifies. We need to get results. We need to make sure that we act on those commitments, and that's what I'm committed to doing.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In the lead-up to the spring budget, we made it pretty clear that we need a fair and balanced approach to balancing the books. The government's plan to create a new \$1.3-billion tax loophole for corporations so they can write off the HST on wining and dining their clients was a cost that we just simply cannot afford here in the province.

1050

Now, the Premier and the Minister of Finance said that they'd take action on that file, but nothing has happened. If the Premier is looking for some priorities, that's one the people need her to deliver on. Speaker, why hasn't she made it a priority?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here's an area where there's a disagreement about what has happened or hasn't happened. Before the leader of the third party started to ask these questions in the House, the finance minister had been in touch with the federal government and had raised this issue. He has also made the point repeatedly that it's not a loophole. It's nothing new; it's the rollout of the HST. So we did make it a priority. And I'm not saying that the third party didn't raise the profile of the issue; they did, and that's as it should be, but we have taken action. We cannot act unilaterally, and so the finance minister has taken the appropriate action by being in touch with the federal government, and we will continue to pursue that.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. People want to see their government deliver results, but all they see from the Liberals is more games. We worked hard last spring to get some help for drivers paying the highest auto insurance rates in the country, and commitments were made in the budget. But this is what people have seen: the government working overtime to help insurance companies pad their bottom line while they're moving at a glacial pace when it comes to helping drivers get some fairness and some relief. Is the Premier ready to make this a priority?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've made it a priority, and the finance minister made it clear that we are acting on the commitment to reduce auto insurance rates by 15%. It is easy to craft a sound bite about a complex issue, but I think it does a disservice to people to suggest that somehow the leader of the third party could snap her fingers and, all of a sudden, there would be an automatic 15% reduction across the province. That is not how insurance works, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that there are costs in the system that need to be removed. We have issues of fraud in the system that need to be removed. We

are working with the system to make sure that those costs are removed so that there can be a reduction across the province. And the fact is, it's an average reduction across the province.

We will see that happen. We are working on making that happen, and that was our commitment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The government seems to snap their fingers and get the auto insurance industry some pretty good bonuses to their bottom line, but they can't seem to snap their fingers and help out consumers. That's a bit of a problem.

We're taking a step towards future government accountability with the New Democrat plan for the Financial Accountability Office, but people are expecting real answers when it comes to the Liberal record on the gas plants. Now, the Premier insisted that the public inquiry wouldn't be needed because the committee would be able to get all questions answered. But this is what Ontarians have seen this week: Every time I've asked if the Premier will support expanding the mandate of the gas plants committee so we can ask Liberal insiders about their interference with the Speaker, she dodges that question.

It's pretty simple: Will she do her part so Ontarians can get answers, or will she keep protecting senior Liberal insiders?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I thought we were talking about auto insurance, so I'm just going to say something else about auto insurance and then I will come to this other question, which seems like it's a different question. But I just want to make sure that the leader of the third party knows that in a memo that was an internal memo in her party on August 23, the statement about us, about the Liberals, was, "We cannot truthfully say they've broken a promise...." That's an NDP—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —memo. So the reality is we're following through on our commitment. She knows it, Mr. Speaker. She knows that we are following through on what we said about auto insurance, and we will continue to do that.

On the other issue, I think I've answered the question many times. I'm open to having the questions answered that are asked at committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I tried to give the member a little bit of leeway in the posing of the question and its relationship to the first question, and it didn't seem to match, so I'm going to ask the member to stay focused on the original question in her final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, the questions are about the government's promises in getting results on the things that they've promised. They've been pretty consistent, so I'll continue on that vein.

I can say to the Premier—through you, to the Premier, Speaker—that making a promise is one thing, but delivering it at a glacial, glacial, glacial pace is something that we're quite worried about, and that's, I think, some-

thing that Ontarians are worried about, because what they're tired of is, instead of their priorities taking precedence, they're tired of political games taking precedence here, Speaker. They want their government to actually deliver results and they want their government to actually be accountable.

Now, will the Premier stop posturing, stop playing games and get down to work by keeping the promises that she made in the budget?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member for that.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to be clear with the people of Ontario that we are acting on every single one of the commitments that we made in the budget, Mr. Speaker. Our work this fall is about making sure that we put those commitments, those strategies, in place.

Over the summer, the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities were working to make sure that the youth employment strategy was put in place, that those funds were there, that that \$295 million would be accessible for young people as they look for opportunities in the workforce.

The \$100 million for roads and bridges and infrastructure in rural and northern communities—we worked to make sure that those criteria are in place so that municipalities could apply for those funds.

Those are the things that are going to make a difference to people. Those are the commitments that we're acting on, including auto insurance. But every single one of the commitments that we made, we are taking action on.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr. Jack MacLaren: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act will shut the door on Quebec contractors coming into Ontario. In spite of countless labour mobility agreements between Ontario and Quebec, Ontario contractors are stopped from working in Quebec, while Quebec contractors have full access to the eastern Ontario construction market. Ontarians want equal access to the Quebec construction market.

Minister, numerous workers have expressed their growing frustration with this gross unfairness. Will you support Ontario workers by demanding that Quebec take down their barriers to Ontario construction contractors and workers coming into Quebec?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Labour?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the honourable member for the question, but, Speaker, our government is focused on creating more jobs for Ontarians. The honourable member's bill would do just the opposite. It will create trade barriers that will jeopardize—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Northumberland—Quinte West, come to order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: —infrastructure projects in our province and hurt jobs, not only across the province but especially in the city of Ottawa.

Speaker, what's been approached, in terms of the private member's bill, is the wrong approach. We've seen this bill before, when the Harris-Hudak government had the same bill before, and it did not work at that time. It resulted in a loss of jobs. It resulted in a court case, which the city of Ottawa lost, as a result of that particular piece of legislation. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I remind you again that when somebody's answering from the answering side, there should be no noise—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And no noise on the other side.

Please finish.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm done. Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Minister, the original Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act became law in 1999 to solve this worker mobility problem with Quebec. It was repealed in 2006, when the government signed the agreement on labour mobility between Ontario and Quebec. Since 2006, the Quebec provincial government has reverted to their old ways, creating a regulatory system designed to punish Ontarians by shutting Ontario contractors out of the Quebec construction market.

Minister, will you and your eastern Ontario colleagues support the construction workers of eastern Ontario by voting for the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act? Will you demand that Quebec open up their borders to Ontario construction workers?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Labour.

1100

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker.

You know, don't take my word on the impact of the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act. This is what the mayor of Ottawa had to say today: "The previous legislation did not correct concerns about worker mobility, and the exact same legislation is unlikely to do so in 2013. Therefore, I could not support your private member's bill," and that is to the honourable member.

But, Speaker, this is what John DeVries, the president of the Ottawa Construction Association, said—this is the construction association of Ottawa representing the industry: "Bringing back the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act is not a solution. In essence, Ontario was penalizing our workforce—not exactly the desired outcome."

Lastly, this is what Richard Hayter from the building trades in Ottawa said about this bill: "This act certainly won't make"—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. Last week, the minister blindsided everyone and announced an uncoded and technically challenged subway proposal. By acting unilaterally, this minister and this government have created unprecedented division and chaos in Scarborough transit planning. This action is setting back new transit in Scarborough, which is already a decade behind schedule.

Why didn't the minister work with city council and the TTC to get them onboard so we can finally get some shovels in the ground in Scarborough?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Councillor Thompson, who is the city councillor in the area and the chair of the economic development committee, will be shortly convening a meeting with my colleague Minister Duguid to address the planning and connectivity issues.

We looked very carefully at this line—and it was not me; we have two ministries. The Ministry of Transportation went through iCorridor, which looks at ridership, which we estimate—and I don't mean me, I mean the experts—at about 10,000 riders on this portion of the line. There is not that level of ridership after the Scarborough Town Centre and there isn't the evidence yet to justify a subway beyond that point. As a matter of fact, the original plan in the negotiations with the city seems to suggest that the BRT and LRT and the other projects in that connectivity, on the evidence, on the engineering, make more sense.

The person sowing chaos here is the member opposite and the party opposite, who can't produce an option that's viable, nor can they support any funding, any revenue, and they constantly undermine efforts to fund the subways that the Scarborough folks want.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Well, here is the support that the minister has for his scheme thus far: The CEO of the TTC says the plan is technically challenged. The chair of the TTC says the plan doesn't meet the city's transit objectives. Experts like Steve Munro say the plan simply cannot be built for \$1.4 billion. This minister has no partners. The minister has insulted the people he needs to get this done.

When will the Liberal government drop the hubris, get back to the conversation and build the relationships needed to move forward with transit?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I didn't develop iCorridor. I'm not the executive vice-president, Jack Collins, and his engineering team, who said this was feasible. And I don't think Ms. Stintz or the member opposite is an engineer, and I'm not. So that was the ruling from Metrolinx. That was quite clear. This government would not proceed on something that wasn't engineeringly feasible, and took great care to make sure that it was. As a matter of fact, I released the other day

iCorridor and GeoPortal, which are the most advanced planning tools that look at ridership and land use, and we have a highly—

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —with those who want to work with us.

When Ms. Stintz declared that the \$1.4 billion was going to result in a plan that has no business plan—Mr. Flaherty and I are both waiting for the business plan on this alternate route that has never been seen by anyone. We're actually sticking to the original route that has been researched and on which millions of dollars have been spent. You're proposing a plan that's been pulled out of the air.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. This summer, the government implemented changes in the way physiotherapy services are offered in Ontario. I understand that these changes were necessary to crack down on fraud and improve access to physiotherapy for Ontarians in all parts of Ontario. Still, some of the seniors in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt are worried that these changes can make physiotherapy service less accessible to them going forward.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can she tell my constituents why these changes are necessary and also reassure the seniors in my riding that they will continue to receive the physiotherapy they need?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very grateful to the member from Scarborough—Agincourt for this question, because I do welcome the opportunity to clarify some of the issues around our changes to physiotherapy.

I want to be very clear, Speaker: Eligibility for physiotherapy has not changed. The people who were eligible before are still eligible. What has changed is our delivery model. These changes will allow us to deliver physiotherapy to far more people and to expand exercise programs and falls prevention programs. Speaker, 200,000 more Ontarians will be able to access services as a result of these changes.

We're doubling the number of physiotherapy clinics so people across the province, no matter where they live in this great province, will have access to clinic-based physiotherapy. We're also bringing physiotherapy into family health care, so our family health teams, nurse-practitioner-led clinics—

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm sure the many seniors in my riding will be delighted to hear that physiotherapy services are being expanded.

I understand that these are the first major changes to the way physiotherapy is being delivered and billed in over 40 years. I know my constituents will be happy to hear that the government is modernizing physiotherapy in Ontario. But there are many seniors and other people who require physiotherapy in Scarborough—Agincourt

and across Ontario who are worried that they will see interruption in their services as these changes are being implemented.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can she tell the House what is being done to ensure those who need physiotherapy services will continue to receive them?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: My highest priority is to ensure that seniors get the services they need to stay healthy, mobile and independent. We are working with LHINs, with the community care access centres, with the community clinics and with other partners to ensure a smooth transition to the model.

Speaker, I'm happy to provide an update to this House. Assessments are taking place across the province. People are receiving physiotherapy under the new model. This is very good news: 12 of the 14 LHINs have now eliminated the wait list for in-home physiotherapy. This is great news.

More than 700 sites across this province have exercise programs and falls prevention programs in place. St. Hilda's Towers in Toronto, for example, has falls prevention classes; they started last Friday. Resident assessments are ongoing. Seniors are already benefitting, and as we expand this even more, seniors will benefit from these changes.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is to the Premier and Minister of Agriculture and Food. The 2012 Liberal budget, aided and abetted by the NDP, kicked the legs out from under the horse racing industry. They did so with no consultation and no concern for the thousands of jobs that would be lost, mainly in rural Ontario. But the government did create three new part-time jobs for former cabinet ministers, and it also created work for consulting and communications firms.

My question to the Premier: Can she tell us what her government's Horse Racing Industry Transition Panel has cost taxpayers so far?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you for the question. I know that the member opposite, because he represents a riding that is quite rural, understands the importance of having a sustainable horse racing industry. I also know that he understands how much people like John Snobelen, Elmer Buchanan and John Wilkinson know about the horse racing industry. He knows how important it is that we have people with expertise giving us advice.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Attorney General, just when I'm going to nail them, you do something. I'm not going to nail them, but consider yourself nailed.

Premier.

1110

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now I'll nail you.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the member opposite wants the horse racing industry to be sustainable. I've written a letter to the panel. I've asked for a five-year plan. They are working on that five-year plan, working on the recommendations, and I look forward to acting on those recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Premier, it took a freedom-of-information request to learn the truth. The panel billed taxpayers for compensation, expenses and outside consultants. Their grand total so far is \$526,649. The Premier's new instructions to the panel will push the bill even higher. Panelists are billing taxpayers \$750 a day for attending meetings and often for just making conference calls. Even a laundry bill was approved. We need to know how this Premier justifies putting thousands out of work and then spending over half a million dollars cleaning up the government's mess. Does the Premier really think that this is the way to support the horse racing industry and win back rural Ontario? If so, the Premier is sadly mistaken.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are paying John Snobelen and Elmer Buchanan and John Wilkinson to do this work. Yes, they have billed expenses. There was an administrative error—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like you to hear this: There was an administrative error made in terms of the billing of a dry-cleaning bill that has been—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd like to hear it.

Interjection: Me too.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not helpful. Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There was an error made. There was a bill approved that shouldn't have been—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lambton, come to order. Right as soon as I sit down, it doesn't start back up again. The intent is to get it quiet.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That bill that was approved in error has been paid back. All of the expenses now fall into line with the guidelines of the OPS.

The point is, though, I thought that the party opposite wanted to see the horse racing industry on a solid footing. I thought that the party opposite wanted to see race dates and wanted to see breeders in good shape. That's what we want on this side of the House.

CHILD CARE CENTRES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Education. This morning, parents and children at École Napoléon in my riding were told that effectively their

child care centre was being shut down on Monday. Twelve children and their families are being thrown into crisis over child care. Parents who have to go to work on Monday are scrambling to find a place for their children. Children are asking why they're going to be separated from their friends. This school and its unlicensed day care have been inspected by your ministry for the past three years and no one noticed that an unlicensed child care operation was going on. Why did it take three years to notice and speak to the school?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you for your question. You obviously have raised some issues around inspections in child care, and I will absolutely look into that. It's not an issue that I've been advised of. This is the first time that I've heard about it, but I do commit to look into the issue and see if we can figure out what went on there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Minister, you have a lot of looking to do. Chaos could have been avoided at École Napoléon if, a few inspections ago, a few years ago, the operator had been told, "You need to have a licence for doing this kind of child care work." Now parents are facing this upheaval. They're facing chaos. They're trying to figure out how to pull their lives together. They're trying to deal with their children who are upset. If the operator is willing to move quickly and comply, is your ministry willing to move quickly to licence them?

Applause.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the applause but I have a second part: Will you consider giving them a provisional licence if they meet the criteria so that the children don't have to be moved out of the school?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you again for the follow-up. As I said, I have not been advised of this particular situation, so obviously I cannot make a commitment to take any particular next step. But I will absolutely look into this. The member has made a couple of suggestions that may prove useful. I will ask my staff to look into those particular suggestions as well.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Steven Del Duca: My question today is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, Ontario's construction industry is an important part—a crucial part, in fact—of our economy. At a time when we need more apprenticeships, more jobs and a stronger economy, construction companies continue to positively invest in our province.

In my community of Vaughan, construction workers play a particularly important role, building our neighbourhoods from the ground up. Unfortunately, this summer, we saw multiple fall-related injuries and fatalities in the construction industry. I also recall, of course, a very serious scaffolding tragedy that occurred on Christmas Eve just a few years ago.

Speaker, through you to the minister: With construction workers playing such a crucial role both in my riding and across Ontario, what is our government doing to ensure the safety of our construction workers so that tragedies of this kind can be avoided?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member for the question and his commitment to the safety and the protection of all workers.

Speaker, when Ontarians go to work, we all want to make sure that they go home safely as well. Workplace safety is the Ministry of Labour's number one priority, something that we work towards every single day. We are working hard to ensure that both employees and employers know their rights and are fulfilling their responsibilities. Therefore, we make sure that we are enforcing the law to its fullest extent.

For instance, the member mentioned the Christmas Eve tragedy that took about four workers' lives. I'm proud to report that our government appealed the decision of the lower court, which had laid a fairly low fine. We were able to successfully increase the fine to the company to \$750,000, the largest in Canadian history.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the minister for his answer and also for his continuing energy on this particular file. It's very, very important for my community, for the industry and for our entire province. I am glad to hear that the Ministry of Labour and the minister are focused on ensuring the safety of workers on construction sites, particularly in relation to falls.

It is important that we continue to take these kinds of proactive steps to prevent avoidable accidents. Both my constituents and all people across our province should know what kind of measures they themselves can take to keep our construction workers safe on the job.

Minister, could you please speak to the two blitzes that you've mentioned and explain how these types of initiatives will benefit workers in our construction industry?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Ministry of Labour, as the member alluded, will be conducting a blitz on roofing awareness and fall hazards in the construction industry. These blitzes will focus on worker safety at heights and take enforcement action against those who fail to adequately train and protect our workers.

There are many ways to keep workers safe at heights and prevent them from falls through floor-opening covers, travel-restraint systems and fall-arrest systems. Enforcement during the fall hazards safety blitz will primarily focus on the implementation and effectiveness of these varied solutions.

We will also be checking that workers using fall-protection equipment have adequate training, as well as ensuring that guardrails and covers are adequately maintained to ensure that they are protecting workers properly.

Speaker, with these safety mechanisms in place in construction sites across Ontario, we believe we can make a difference in reducing injuries in our construction sector, and ultimately save lives.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Minister of Education. Despite telling us last spring that the reopened teachers' negotiations from the legislative contracts wouldn't cost us anything, yesterday you actually admit-

ted that, after fiddling with those contracts, there would be a new cost—but you had no idea what it actually was. You said, "I want to get the accurate number," so you "struck an implementation cost estimate working group."

Minister, that's why I asked the auditor to intervene. Yesterday and the day before, a senior education source told the Toronto Sun twice that the estimated cost could be as high as \$500 million. I've publicly estimated anywhere between \$300 million to \$500 million once the unions' demands for me-too clauses are implemented.

1120

Minister, my questions are these. Why did you tell this House last spring that the enhancements were savings when yesterday you admitted what we knew all along: that it was going to cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars? And what kind of minister, during deficit financing, goes out and gives massive payouts to unions without knowing the true cost six months ago, still not knowing what the true cost is today?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Could we just clarify what the situation is here? In January, when we announced the savings that were related to the 2012-14 collective agreements, we announced that the savings were \$1.8 billion. That continues to be the case, which is what I have consistently told you. We have found, since January, some additional savings related to the collective agreement, and that is the money that has been directed towards the enhancements.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Where did you get the money? People need to know.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: She just told you.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I just told you. When we found additional savings, they were redirected. The important thing here is that we have classroom peace because we agreed to have discussions with our—

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

Before you move on, I would like to remind everybody that questions are put through the Chair, and the answers are put through the Chair, which avoids some of the heckling responses.

Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I can't really appreciate that clarification. I feel as though I may have been misled, as has the public, given the responses that we have received.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Withdraw, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I will withdraw, Speaker.

The clarification is passing strange. I don't know how you can have \$1.8 billion in savings and then increase people's gratuities at retirement, at maternity leave and at sick leave. Once again: The minister admitted to us yesterday in this House that she actually has no idea what the costs were this spring when she had a union giveaway to, I quote, her "friends."

She has refused to provide me and this House with details after numerous questions—in letters to her and order paper questions—where I asked specifically for her to outline the \$1.8 billion in savings and to outline exactly what those added costs were. She had said that she had peace in the education sector, yet we know that boards are still unable to sign agreements with the unions.

Back to her: Minister, why have your friends in the unions continued to obstruct local processes, even though you have given them exactly what they want, at a cost we have no idea—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes. I'm pleased to tell you that, as we had discussions with our partners, we absolutely had cost estimates at every point. The school boards challenged the cost estimates, we put together a committee to look at it, and in fact, our cost estimates were entirely reasonable.

In fact, we often found, when we got the information from the school boards, that the actual costs were less than the estimated costs. It is to the advantage of the taxpayer, I would say, that we have worked through the implementation committee process, because in identifying the true costs, we have actually found further savings.

NUISANCE BEARS

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Liberal budget cuts to the MNR have resulted in the cancellation of the live trapping and relocation of nuisance bears and have left people with a 1-800 tip line instead. Over the summer, there have been several near-fatal human-bear encounters across the north. Northerners feel abandoned by the ministry and don't even bother reporting problem bears anymore, since the ministry doesn't offer any physical assistance anyway.

In a recent news release, the minister stated that "the ministry is currently in the process of reviewing more effective options" for dealing with nuisance bears. Could the minister tell northerners what those options are?

Hon. David Oraziatti: I certainly appreciate the question from the member. The member is well aware, as a northerner—as am I—of the ongoing challenges. From year to year, depending on the specific circumstances in northern Ontario, whether there's food availability with respect to a number of bears that are harvested each year, we have different circumstances in different communities. And in some communities, we have more prevalent issues than others. We've worked with those communities to ensure that we are giving them the assistance they need when it comes to supporting them and identifying their problems.

In fact, we have spent more money than any other jurisdiction in North America on our Bear Wise program, about \$34 million to date, helping and assisting communities right across northern Ontario.

But I certainly do acknowledge with respect to the member's comments that there are some communities in northern Ontario that are facing significant challenges around nuisance bears, and we're committed to working with them to find more effective solutions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, to the Minister of Natural Resources: Northerners have been forced to protect themselves against nuisance rogue bears, and for

those who aren't equipped to do so, their option is to phone a friend or, in a life-threatening situation, call the police, and then the municipalities pay the bill.

Because of this government's inaction or action, bears are increasingly seen as pests and marauders instead of the majestic animals that they really are.

Speaker, does the minister believe that ignoring rogue bears is good wildlife management, and is he willing to continue to put northerners' safety at risk?

Hon. David Oraziatti: Absolutely, we are not interested in seeing anyone at risk. Public safety is paramount in these circumstances.

What I think the member should be aware of is that at the time the Conservative Party cancelled the spring bear hunt in 1999, we introduced the Bear Wise program and we also extended the fall bear hunt so that relatively the same number of bears would be harvested each year.

In fact, just the other day I received an email with respect to Mayor Politis in Cochrane, in the member's riding, in regard to a nuisance bear. The information that I have is that our bear technicians set up a trap with respect to this nuisance bear, which the OPP have identified as being a significant problem.

Our folks are out there responding where appropriate and when they're being called to do so, but I'm certainly interested in working with the member opposite and other northern members to find ways—

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

MICROBREWERIES

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Our government has put together a strong plan to help people across this province, a plan that will create jobs and give all Ontarians the chance to succeed. One of the key elements in our plan is to work with businesses and renew support across a variety of industries.

Your ministry recently announced its renewed support by extending the Ontario Microbrewery Strategy for two more years to help create jobs and expand the industry.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Economic Trade, Development and Employment: Could the minister please inform this House what this government is doing through the Ontario Microbrewery Strategy to help small brewers explore new marketing, training and tourism development opportunities across the province?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I thank the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for her great question.

I am pleased to inform the House of a recent funding announcement of \$1.2 million in annual funding our government has made to renew the Ontario Microbrewery Strategy from 2014 to 2016. This will help Ontario craft brewers better market and raise awareness of locally made lagers, ales, pilsners, porters and the all-important stouts. These are brewers like Steam Whistle, Mill Street, Muskoka Brewery and Flying Monkeys Craft Brewery. A little known fact about these brewers is that they are the largest purchaser of Ontario-grown hops.

This investment will help the craft beer industry right down the supply chain. By extending funding for the microbrewery strategy, our government will help to support the success of this important industry. This funding will not only support brewers themselves but will lead to many spinoff jobs that these brewers create through their success in local agriculture and the hospitality industry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Minister, for your response. This is really exciting news for craft brewers across the province and especially in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, as we are host to a thriving brewery, the King Brewery in Nobleton, which I'm sure this House will be excited to hear recently won a gold medal in the Kellerbier category and the bronze medal in the Bock, traditional German style, category at the 2013 Canadian Brewing Awards. Ensuring that flagship sectors in Ontario like these continue to see support from our government will only keep our economy diverse while creating jobs for the future.

1130

Mr. Speaker, on the day before Toronto Beer Week kicks off, when many of these craft brewers will have a chance to showcase their fine brews, through you, could the minister update the House on just how big the craft beer industry is in Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, that's a great question, and I thank my colleague for the opportunity to speak to it.

Over the last eight years, the pace of growth in the craft brewing industry has accelerated, with nearly 45% growth in sales; in fact, leading sales of all products in our LCBO stores. Nearly 1,000 people across the province are directly employed by craft brewers. That's 20% of all the people in that sector at over 47 microbreweries around the province. This industry is gaining such momentum that in 2012, Niagara College offered Canada's first brewmaster and brewery operations management program, and everyone in the first graduating class found industry jobs.

Mr. Speaker, this doesn't even begin to tell the story of the spinoff jobs created across a variety of sectors, including agriculture. Ontario craft brewers highlight a real made-in-Ontario success story, something we can all be proud of as we continue on the government's path to creating a fair and prosperous Ontario.

PROVINCIAL PARKS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, the families who live in Rondeau Park, a chartered cottage provincial park since 1894 in my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, have been told that they'll have to find a new home in 2017 and tear their cottages down at their own expense.

These are hard-working Ontarians who expect to keep their homes and continue supporting their community while doing so. Instead, they are being threatened with the loss of their unique heritage community because the government has decided the park needs to be returned to nature, with little evidence to back up their claims.

Minister, we need to work together. Will you listen to the families of Rondeau, who have spent generations as stewards of this beautiful park, and either allow them to purchase their property or at least agree to extend their lease agreements?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I'm certainly pleased to have the question today. The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has given me another letter today, which we will be taking a close look at. The member opposite knows full well we've had a number of discussions on the matter and our ministry is very actively engaged on this issue. We want a positive resolution to this.

The member also knows that in 2010 we released a policy to propose extending the leases to 2038. There were some strong polarized views that came into play, and there have been a number of reviews around the ecological integrity and the natural habitat of this park to ensure that that's maintained.

But I want to assure the member opposite that we're committed to finding a positive resolution here. We certainly respect the cultural and historic significance that these individuals and the organizations in the area have with respect to Rondeau and these leases.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I believe that there is an everyone-wins solution here: Rondeau Park, Ontario Parks, Chatham–Kent, leaseholders, the environment and the economy. Minister, they all win. Families will be able to reinvest in their homes with the confidence of tenure behind them.

You and I have had many discussions, as well as your predecessor, Minister Gravelle. We've discussed options with regard to this. I've also asked the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to grant the heritage designation that this park and the cottages so rightly deserve. Instead of destroying the local ecosystem with an extensive teardown, the park gets to keep its proud stewards while giving up less than 1% of its area.

Minister, I ask you, will you endorse this crucial project for Rondeau families?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Again, I say to the member opposite that we're committed to finding a positive resolution to this. With respect to the designation of the area, as the member also knows, that is a function of the municipalities. But we do have guidelines and standards when it comes to provincial property and provincial parks.

Again, I want to say to the member opposite, we're committed to finding a positive resolution that helps to protect the cultural, historic significance that these residents have enjoyed for many decades and generations, as well as protect the natural biodiversity of this park.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care and Health. In the budget, the Liberal government claimed that mental health is a top priority, yet it's cutting mental health beds at Providence Care in Kingston and firing 70 nurses, housekeepers and food

service workers who care for vulnerable patients in their time of need. Can the minister please explain to mental health patients and their families in Kingston how cutting beds and services will improve the care they receive?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I assure the member opposite, and I think she knows this, that our government is very strongly committed to providing improved services for Ontarians with mental health challenges.

Part of our commitment to mental health is building up supports in the community. That is where the greatest need is, and when we do that right, when we support people to live independently, we can close beds in institutions where they previously have been residing. We have almost doubled spending for community-based mental health services and we're serving more than 500,000 Ontarians in community mental health and addictions programs every year.

Speaker, we must provide 24-hour care for those who need it, but when people can be supported in the community, that is where we will be supporting them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I find it odd that the minister is relying on a more-than-20-year-old study done by the Harris government when it comes to hospital restructuring. I think the people in Kingston deserve much better than information based on studies that were done over two decades ago. The Premier's commitment, however, was to expanding access to mental health services, and that commitment is ringing very, very hollow for the people of Kingston because this government's actions don't back up its words when it comes to the looming cuts at Providence Care in Kingston.

Is cutting mental health care beds and laying off nurses this government's idea of transforming health care in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, our commitment to transforming health care is to provide people the care they need where they need it, as close to home as possible. Because of changes in our understanding of mental illness, we are able to care for more people in the community. I do not think people should be in institutions when they can be cared for safely and productively in the community.

I do believe the members opposite believe in community-based mental health programming, and that's exactly what we're doing. When we have successes in the community, it does reduce demand for institutional-based care.

DEFERRED VOTES

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LE DIRECTEUR DE LA RESPONSABILITÉ FINANCIÈRE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to establish a Financial Accountability Officer / Projet de loi 95, Loi créant le poste de directeur de la responsabilité financière.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On September 11, Mr. Milloy moved second reading of Bill 95. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Milloy, John
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Murray, Glen R.
Balkisson, Bas	Holyday, Douglas C.	Naqvi, Yasir
Bartolucci, Rick	Horwath, Andrea	Natyshak, Taras
Bisson, Gilles	Hoskins, Eric	Nicholls, Rick
Bradley, James J.	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Campbell, Sarah	Hunter, Mitzie	Oraziotti, David
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jackson, Rod	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Pettapiece, Randy
Chiarelli, Bob	Jeffrey, Linda	Piruzza, Teresa
Chudleigh, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Qaadri, Shafiq
Clark, Steve	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Leone, Rob	Sattler, Peggy
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Schein, Jonah
Crack, Grant	MacLaren, Jack	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	MacLeod, Lisa	Singh, Jagmeet
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Todd
Delaney, Bob	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Dhillon, Vic	Marchese, Rosario	Taylor, Monique
DiNovo, Cheri	Matthews, Deborah	Thompson, Lisa M.
Duguid, Brad	Mauro, Bill	Vanthof, John
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Wilson, Jim
Fife, Catherine	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNaughton, Monte	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Forster, Cindy	McNeely, Phil	Yakabuski, John
Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yurek, Jeff
Gerretsen, John	Miller, Paul	
Gélinas, France	Milligan, Rob E.	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those against, please rise.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 91; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 5, 2013, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will recognize a point of order from the member from Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: It isn't a point of order. I just want to thank all the members who wore pink today in support of the campaign standing up against bullying today. I want to thank all the members that took the initiative of doing so.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's not a point of order.

Since there are no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It's a pleasure for me to rise and recognize my dear friend Asif Khan, who is visiting us here and sitting in the members' gallery.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WES FOR YOUTH ONLINE

Mr. Bill Walker: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to tell you about a new initiative for youth in my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and the riding of my colleague and MPP for Huron–Bruce, Lisa Thompson. Wesforyouthonline.ca is Internet-based counselling for youth, accessible at all times and ready to listen when our youth are ready to talk about their tough personal challenges.

Cyber-counselling is a novel concept, and I think it's a valuable one, as it will offer a counselling medium familiar to today's tech-savvy teens. I'm sure all of you will agree that today's generation is very comfortable communicating and connecting with others through the Internet, be it social media, networking or, in this case, seeking therapy through wesforyouthonline.ca.

Lisa and I would like to also take a moment to recognize and sincerely commend the brave and compassionate people behind this great project: Yolanda and Jamie Cameron of Walkerton. Losing a child to suicide is a difficult and painful experience that is every parent's worst conceivable nightmare. In 2011, the Camerons realized such a shattering tragedy when their son Wes took his own life.

And so this project was born out of a memorial fund that Yolanda and Jamie set up in Wes's memory. They want to use the money to help all children who may be suffering from bouts of self-doubt, who are feeling alone and struggling with problems important to them and feel unable to reach out to teachers, coaches, peers, friends, parents or siblings for help. The online counselling service will ensure that our youth keep talking about their problems and that there's always somebody on the other end of the line, be it the Internet or telephone, to hear them out.

Wesforyouthonline.ca is partnering with www.therapy-online.ca, which has been offering Internet-based counselling since 1994. They have also partnered with the Canadian Mental Health Association and Community Foundation Grey Bruce.

Wesforyouthonline.ca has two experienced counsellors who have been specially trained in cyber-counselling through courses offered by the University of Toronto. Funding the service will require corporate and private donations and sponsorships to keep the programs running.

Lisa and I encourage all members to find a way to support the website and help to raise awareness and promote emotional wellness.

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yesterday, my office had the occasion to visit one of the world's biggest and best film festivals, the Toronto International Film Festival, which the whole world knows about.

TIFF has an industry side which is overshadowed by the stars and red carpets and the amazing films that make TIFF so wonderful. But the industry side of the festival is where movies of the future and stars-to-be are made.

Contrary to popular belief, arts and entertainment is a huge sector of Ontario's economy. TIFF is obviously a gem for Ontario and attracts a great deal of attention; movie and television production is well known too—but it's not as well known that film and television production in this province brought in over \$1 billion to Ontario's economy in each of the last two years.

Not only that, but the arts economy is spread right across this province, too. In fact, in my riding of Kitchener–Waterloo, home to so much of Ontario's research and innovation, Christie Digital develops, markets and manufactures some of the world's most advanced digital projectors.

Their cutting-edge projectors are used at more than 100,000 locations—in fact, many of you actually have these products in your own homes and your own ridings—and are used on over 38,000 screens worldwide featuring Christie Digital cinema projectors, including at the Toronto International Film Festival. Christie Digital's 4K projectors are showcasing some of the biggest film premieres in the world.

We're so proud of Christie Digital. We're so proud to be part of the Toronto International Film Festival. Arts, culture and the economy: They are all connected and to be celebrated in the province of Ontario.

COPTIC COMMUNITY

Ms. Dipika Damerla: It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest wishes to the members of the Coptic community as they celebrate their new year.

In the Coptic Orthodox Church, September 11 is the feast of Nayrouz, when martyrs and confessors are commemorated. This day is also the start of the Coptic new year and the first month of the Coptic calendar.

The Coptic calendar itself predates the birth of Christ by at least three millennia. During the time of the pharaohs, the appearance of Sothis in the Egyptian sky signalled the rise of the Nile and the start of the new planting season. Mid-September is usually when the waters of the Nile River rise, and prayers are lifted to God for the rising of the waters of the rivers for irrigation and to ask for his blessings at the beginning, or crown, of the Coptic calendar year.

Apart from the church's celebration, the new year is celebrated by eating red dates, which are now in season. The red of the dates symbolizes the martyrs' blood that they were willing to shed for Christ, and the white date

heart serves as a reminder of the martyrs' pure hearts. So as you celebrate with family and friends, may the new year mark a new beginning of peace and good fortune for the entire Coptic community.

NEW HAMBURG FALL FAIR

Mr. Michael Harris: Tonight kicks off the 159th anniversary of the New Hamburg Fall Fair. As part of our heritage, it's important that we take the time to celebrate the local arts and culture of our community.

Since 1854, neighbours, families and friends have been coming together to celebrate these things and learn more about our local agriculture and food. At the fair, there will be cattle and horse shows, a draught horse pull, horse jumping and wagon rides to celebrate this year's theme: horses. In the arena, they will host the fair Ambassador Competition, an annual spelling bee, a baby show and a presentation by the local 4-H club. I wish the best of luck to all those participating in these events.

As a child, my favourite part of the fair, of course, was the frog jump. That's why I'm excited to host a frog jump competition at this year's New Hamburg Fall Fair on Saturday afternoon. I encourage children 13 and younger to join in the fun. For more information, visit my website, MichaelHarrisMPP.ca.

Of course, events like this could not happen without the countless hours given by the organizers, volunteers and contest participants. So I'd like to thank all of them for their hard work. I encourage the folks from Wilmot township, Waterloo region and those listening to participate in the many activities the fair has to offer this coming weekend. Thank you, and hope to see you at the fair.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES NIAGARA

Ms. Cindy Forster: I rise to address the ongoing funding issues with regard to children's protection services in this province. FACS of Niagara has recently announced the closure of the Regional Adolescent Centre in Welland, after operating for nearly 40 years. The closure will affect up to 40 full- and part-time employees and will see an end to this specialized care for the 20 youth who call the centre home.

While FACS maintains that no youth will go without appropriate services, the fact remains that the closure decision was made without a clear plan on how or where these youth will receive adequate care. Purely a fiscal decision, the centre is closing because of the widening gap between funding and service cuts. After years of unsustainable funding decreases, FACS received approximately \$4 million from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services last year. But with limitations on the new funding model, they are falling further and further behind, anticipating a \$2-million deficit this year.

To add even more fuel to the fire, the ministry has recently mandated that CASs are required to submit balanced budgets, which will have a direct impact on core

services, severely destabilizing child protection services and presenting a significant adjustment to the workforce.

It's time that the Minister of Children and Youth Services provided stable and sustainable funding options to FACS to avoid more cuts to vital services like the Regional Adolescent Centre in Welland.

TANYA KHAN

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, often when we bring forward member statements here in this House, we highlight happy moments. Unfortunately, today I do rise to mark a far more sombre event.

Having said that, it remains an honour for me to rise and pay tribute to Tanya Khan, an inspiring woman: a wife, a mother, a daughter, a sister and a friend; an exemplary individual who had an incredible impact on everyone who met her and who left us tragically and far too soon.

Tanya was a popular teacher in my community who had a richly deserved loyal following among the students that she taught both at Kleinburg Public School and Louis-Honoré Fréchette elementary school. She was a noteworthy and widely recognized advocate and champion for diversity and interfaith dialogue, with an unparalleled zeal for life.

1310

Her love and respect for others was genuine, and many were touched by her warmth and compassion. In fact, thousands came to pay their respects upon her passing, which is additional proof of the indelible mark she left on our community. Her influence was, and remains, considerable.

Her eloquent legacy will live on in the fond memories that her husband, Asif, and their daughters, Alia, Safiya and Nadya, will forever hold dear.

Tanya Khan, a truly remarkable, one-of-a-kind individual, will never, ever be forgotten.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Speaker, with your permission, I have an Ode to Freedom and Diversity.

In La Belle Province, they may dare

To tell you what you may not wear,

What symbols you may never bear

or what you can't put on your hair.

Muslims, Christians, Jews, beware!

You give the separatists quite a scare.

Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, take care!

You are not welcome over there.

Ontario, thank God, need not despair

of such hateful laws or divisive hot air.

We are free in thoughts, free in prayers,

Free in expression and all private affairs.

We value our rights over laws doctrinaire

Our diversity gives us such richness and flair.

When it comes to our faith, we say "laissez-faire"

and follow the words of the wise man Voltaire.

Voltaire said once that, "Man is free the moment that he wants to be."

In Ontario I'm glad to see

We don't forfeit rights so easily.

PC, Liberal and NDP,

I commend all three parties here before me

We may fight over details, but never shall we court voters that hate those who dress differently.

So say what you want, say it with ease in English, Arabic, Greek or Chinese

Show us your faith, it's not a disease,

And wear whatever you damn well please.

I'd like to commend Monte Kwinter for bringing forward his motion. I look forward to its unanimous passing at our earliest opportunity.

YOM KIPPUR

Mr. Monte Kwinter: This weekend, Jews around the world will observe Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the most solemn of Jewish religious holidays. Yom Kippur is observed on the 10th day of the lunar month of Tishrei, and it is when Jews seek to atone for their sins and achieve reconciliation with God.

Yom Kippur concluded the 10 days of repentance that begin with Rosh Hashanah, New Year's Day, on the first day of Tishrei. It is on Yom Kippur that solemnity and cessation of work are most complete.

The purpose of Yom Kippur is to effect individual and collective purification by the practice of forgiveness of the sins of others and by sincere repentance for one's own sins against God.

Yom Kippur is marked by abstention from food and drink. Jewish congregations spend the eve of Yom Kippur and the entire day in prayer and meditation. On the eve of Yom Kippur, the Kol Nidre, famous for its beautiful melody, is recited. Friends also ask for and accept forgiveness from one another for past offences on the evening before Yom Kippur.

The services on Yom Kippur itself last continuously from morning to evening and include readings from the Torah.

Yizkor, which are memorial prayers for the recently deceased, are also recited. The service concludes with the Ne'ilah, the closing prayers.

Yom Kippur comes to an end with the recitation of Shema Yisrael and the blowing of the ritual ram's horn, known as the shofar, which marks the conclusion of the fast.

L'Shana Tova to all.

McNAUGHTON'S

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It's a pleasure to rise to recognize the 65th anniversary of our family business, McNaughton's in Newbury.

The store was first opened in 1948, selling general hardware and farm supplies, by my grandfather Jack

McNaughton, and has been a story of growth and change ever since that time.

In 1980, the store joined Home Hardware. In 1988, my parents, Gary and Susan McNaughton, purchased the family business. At this time, there were three employees but, soon, running the store became a family operation as my brother, Mike, my sister, Nicole, and I all started helping and working around the store.

In 1995, we added a RadioShack franchise, and, in 1997, a lumber supply company. In 2000, we added an M&M Meat Shops; in 2004, an LCBO agency store; and in 2010, a Rogers store.

Not only does 2013 mark the 65th anniversary of our family store, but it also marks the 50th anniversary of my father and my mentor, Gary McNaughton, buying his first business.

Speaker, for the past 65 years, my family has been proud to serve our community and serve our customers at McNaughton's in Newbury, and I would like to congratulate the entire team of 60 people who work at the store, our suppliers and our customers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

Reports by committees?

It's now time for introduction of bills. The member for Etobicoke south.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Etobicoke North, Speaker, but we hope to have south at some point, too.

I move second reading of Bill 96, Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.

Bill 96, An Act to raise awareness about—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am sorry for interrupting, but I think you're not doing the introduction of a bill; you're doing a second reading introduction. Am I correct in that assumption?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker. I move second reading of the bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We're not at that point right now. You'll have to do that in private members' time.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TERRY FOX DAY ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA JOURNÉE

TERRY FOX

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 99, An Act to proclaim Terry Fox Day / Projet de loi 99, Loi proclamant la journée Terry Fox.

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): The member for a short statement, please.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Terry Fox ran 40 kilometres every day for 143 days before the disease forced him to stop. He inspired many Canadians to carry on where he left off. Each Sunday, each year in September, participants walk, run, jog or bicycle in memory of Terry Fox and his historic Marathon of Hope. The bill proclaims the Sunday of the Terry Fox Run in September of each year as Terry Fox Day.

Essentially, Mr. Speaker, we as a society may build monuments or name sections of road. However, unless you actually drive that section of highway, one never knows the distance that is truly travelled.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Milloy is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

The government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I move that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 37 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Milloy moves that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 37 be waived.

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Hon. Michael Chan: I'm delighted today to rise to welcome visitors from around the world who are enjoying all that our province has to offer while they are here for the Toronto International Film Festival.

Speaker, our government is proud to support the Toronto International Film Festival, a marquee event that celebrates the strength and success of Ontario's film sector. Attracting thousands of movie-goers, film industry representatives, filmmakers, actors and international media, TIFF truly shines a bright spot on our province while placing us on the map as a premier cultural capital. TIFF has grown to become one of the top film festivals in the world, while at the same time, Ontario has emerged as one of the largest film and television production centres in North America.

1320

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is proud to roll out the red carpet and welcome the world, but we are also proud to applaud and support our talented industry. The province has invested in a number of this year's TIFF selections, including *The Art of the Steal*, *Enemy* and *The Husband*, all of which were filmed in Ontario. And when it comes to film distribution, Entertainment One, a company based in Toronto, has 29 films in this year's festival.

This year our government will further support the industry with cultural media tax credits, the lion's share of which goes to the films, television and digital industries. Since 2003, we have made other strategic investments in the industry. For example, we have supported the Toronto International Film Festival with more than \$62 million, including \$35 million for the Bell Lightbox.

Our government also recognizes that in a constantly evolving industry, we must make sure that Ontarians have the skills to succeed and to help us solidify our international reputation as a leader in the screen-based and digital entertainment sector. Speaker, what I am referring to is access to the necessary education, experience and expertise. It's crucial and critical to Ontario's continued success in this field.

This is why we are proud to partner with the Canadian Film Centre, a centre which plays an instrumental role in preparing our next generation of cultural pioneers, trailblazers and visionaries. This weekend, I was pleased to affirm our 2013-14 budget commitment when I announced that we are investing \$9 million over three years to help expand the Canadian Film Centre's acclaimed training programs and further develop Ontario's screen-based and digital entertainment markets. This provincial support builds on the \$9-million investment in the film centre that we announced in 2010.

Mr. Speaker, helping make Ontario's film and television sector more competitive is part of our government's plan to create jobs and build a fair and prosperous society, and our investments are paying off. Over the past five years, economic activity in the film and television sector has nearly doubled. Last year, the sector achieved its strongest results ever, contributing \$1.28 billion to the province's GDP, employing close to 29,000 Ontarians.

I'm proud to welcome our many visitors to TIFF. I'm proud that our government has played an important role in ensuring that TIFF is a success. I'm proud of our government's part in supporting and developing the screen-based industry as a viable and growing sector of Ontario's economy.

Most of all, however, Speaker, I'm proud of the thousands of men and women who work in these industries and whose talent, skills and expertise shine not only during TIFF but throughout the year. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the thousands of TIFF organizers and volunteers for their tireless efforts to make the festival such a great success year after year.

Speaker, members of the House, don't take my word for it. Please go see one of the several hundreds of films yourself and please enjoy the festival.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Being a cultural thing, I should have an ode, but I didn't have time to write one.

It's a pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon and respond to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and highlight the many great things happening at the Toronto International Film Festival. I would say that the Toronto International Film Festival is a phenomenal event. It's the second-largest film festival in the world. You know, it's not always good to be second, especially if you're in politics, but to be second to the Cannes film festival—which has been around for a thousand years, I'm sure—is a very, very good thing.

TIFF began in 1976 as a Festival of Festivals, collecting the best films from other film festivals around the world and showing them to eager audiences in Toronto. That first year, 35,000 enthusiasts watched 127 films from 30 countries. By 2012, those numbers had grown to feature 372 movies from 72 different countries, enjoyed by over 400,000 people, all visiting Toronto—no wonder it has been hard to get a hotel room in this city during the last two weeks.

The Festival of Festivals was renamed the Toronto International Film Festival in 1995 and has introduced many of the world's greatest film artists to Toronto audiences. Over the past few years, many great accomplishments have been realized at TIFF, including the opening of the new home called the TIFF Bell Lightbox. That facility has enabled TIFF to expand to truly become a creative global leader and one of the world's premier organizations in the discovery and understanding of film. The TIFF Bell Lightbox features five cinemas, two restaurants, major exhibits and learning entertainment facilities. As a result, TIFF has become one of the most important respected film institutes in the world.

Today is day 8 of this film festival, and what an outstanding festival it has been so far. Many fantastic world premiere movie screenings such as *Gravity*, *August: Osage County* and *Devil's Knot* have already awed thousands of people. While a number of outstanding films have already debuted, the festival is far from over.

As a strong supporter of the Canadian film industry, I'd like to take a moment to pay tribute to the strong Canadian presence at this year's festival. Several Canadian filmmakers, including Denis Villeneuve, Jennifer Baichwal, Michael Dowse, Robert Lepage and Xavier Dolan are among those celebrated for their work, which includes high-profile talent like Harry Potter star Daniel Radcliffe. Also, director Atom Egoyan directed *Devil's Knot*, which has been acclaimed as one of the leading films of this year's festival. I saw it Sunday night, and it is an excellent movie.

On behalf of the entire PC caucus, I'd like to thank the many organizers, sponsors and friends of the festival whose continuous hard work and dedication make TIFF a reality. When you go to TIFF, there are people wearing orange shirts with "Volunteer" splashed across, and

anything you want to know: where you have to go, how to get in, where to get a ticket, where to find this or that or other things—these volunteers have been extremely well trained, and they're very, very helpful. It's not just a volunteer wearing a T-shirt; they have really done a terrific job in training and organizing their volunteers.

Over the remaining four days, I sincerely encourage all members of this House to take in all that the Toronto International Film Festival has to offer.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm particularly pleased to speak about the Toronto International Film Festival and Ontario's film industry, when we are just past the halfway point of this year's TIFF.

Over the past few years, my wife, Carole, and I have attended TIFF screenings and begun a greater appreciation of good films. The magic of TIFF is that the films screened are not necessarily destined to the big chains but are created to tell compelling stories and to awaken our awareness.

Films at TIFF are from many different countries and are often co-operative efforts by filmmakers and producers from two or more countries. Not every film grabs our attention, but they do for many others who are ardent filmgoers. The lineups of film buffs expectant at what depths certain writers, directors and actors will take themselves to bring meaningful issues to their audiences is a visual reminder of the impact that TIFF has on our society and a reminder that Toronto's economy receives a significant economic boon because of TIFF: not only the venues at which films are screened, but the local restaurants, mobile food vendors, hotels, parking lots and many other stores and businesses. The media who come to Toronto vying for the best close-up, the best scoop and the exclusive interview all provide advertising for this city, this province and this country—advertising that would be a prohibitive cost for most of our budgets.

1330

The government states that it has invested \$4.8 billion in the whole province's film, entertainment and cultural industries and that \$62 million of this is to TIFF and the TIFF Bell Lightbox. Laudable, but is it enough? Is taxpayers' money supporting enough cultural endeavours throughout the entire province?

Hamilton, where I'm from, has a strong film industry with many unique locations, everything from long-term filming to commercial and advertising shoots. Ontario has many, many breathtaking places unique from any other country and any other province or any other state that would work well in many of the films. But are we working hard enough to promote these regional treasures, to pump local entertainment and cultural industries? I'm not sure. I would like to hear from the minister that even more is being done to spread the work and diversify additional cultural and entertainment money throughout the whole province.

I'm happy that we support TIFF, along with many private sector sponsors, and I expect that the province provides significant support to Hot Docs and other similar film festivals in Toronto. But again, let's ensure

that more money is provided and additional efforts are made to support film, live theatre, TV series and more throughout our entire province.

Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, I want to extend a sincere thanks to those hard-working people who make sure these various cultural events happen. Particularly, I want to thank all the volunteers, without whom most of these events would not function well at all.

I am actually thrilled that we have such a wonderful festival in Toronto and I'm sure that many of our other communities would love to be hosts to other events that would certainly expose us to many different—because we have a very diversified population, we have diversified cultures. We have over 200 cultures in this province that would love to show their history and their culture to the world. Hopefully, the minister and his ministry will put more money into cultural, film and other media events throughout the entire province, because we have a lot out there that are cherished, unknown treasures that we want to share with the world.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to have a role here today.

"Whereas the United Senior Citizens of Ontario has expressed its concerns over the high costs of parking at hospitals in Ontario on behalf of its more than 300,000 members; and

"Whereas thousands of Ontario seniors find it difficult to live on their fixed income and cannot afford these extra hospital parking fees added to their daily living costs; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association Journal has said in an editorial that parking fees are a barrier to health care and add additional stress to patients who have enough to deal with;

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

"That Ontario's members of provincial Parliament and the Kathleen Wynne government take action to abolish parking fees for all seniors when visiting hospitals."

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and present to Pratah, one of the pages here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Scarborough—from Mississauga East—Cooksville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Mississauga—Streetsville.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Streetsville.

FAMILY SAFETY

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm just trying to make sure that we know who's who.

I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly about the Safer Families Program in Peel region. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Safer Families Program is a successful partnership of Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin, Family Services of Peel and the Peel Children's Aid Society (CAS), receives year-to-year funding from the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and is a critical component of social services to families within the Peel community; and

"Whereas the intervention model for Safer Families currently operates with no waiting lists, an important consideration for families experiencing domestic violence and child protection concerns, as they require immediate access to service; and

"Whereas the Safer Families Program is aligned with Ontario's child poverty agenda, is committed to preventing violence against women, and contributes to community capacity building to support child welfare delivery; and

"Whereas currently, Safer Families serves 14% of all domestic violence cases referred to Peel Children's Aid Society and has the ability to double the number of cases it handles;

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

"That the government of Ontario adjust its funding to supply ongoing core funding rather than year-to-year funding, and realign funding to double the percentage of cases referred by the Peel Children's Aid Society and served by the Safer Families Program."

Speaker, I completely agree with this petition. I am pleased to sign it and to ask page Erica to carry it for me.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I apologize to the member from Mississauga—Cooksville.

Mr. Paul Miller: Streetsville.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's what I said.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank Cathie Kelso from Spencerville, who gave me this petition after a recent Lyme disease information and awareness session in Roebuck.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of its professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize

testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I'm pleased to affix my signature and send the petition to the table with our fabulous page from Leeds-Grenville, Peyton.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes; and

“Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently don't complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

“Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where the Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes. We need accountability, transparency and consistency in our long-term-care home system”;

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to expand the Ombudsman's mandate to include Ontario's long-term-care homes in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors.”

I agree with this petition, and will affix my name to it and ask page Kieva to bring it to the Clerk.

FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Whereas the people of Ontario deserve to be able to look after their sick or injured family members without fearing that they will lose their jobs at such a vulnerable time;

“Whereas the people of Ontario deserve to be able to spend time looking for a child that has disappeared, or take time off to grieve the death of a child that was murdered without fearing that they will lose their jobs;

“Whereas the federal government has recently extended similar leaves and economic supports to federal employees;

“Whereas the government of Ontario, and the Premier of Ontario, support Ontario families and wish to foster mental and physical well-being by allowing those closest to sick or injured family members the time to provide support free of work-related concerns;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, during spring of 2013, Bill 21, the Leaves to Help Families Act.”

I fully support it. I'll give it to page Efua.

TAXATION

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the cost of living in northwestern Ontario is significantly higher than other regions of the province due to the high cost of necessities such as hydro, home heating fuel, gasoline and auto insurance; and

1340

“Whereas an increase in the price of any of these essential goods will make it even more difficult for people living in northwestern Ontario to pay their bills and put food on the table;

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

“To reject any proposed increase to the harmonized sales tax, gas tax or any other fees or taxes in the northwest; and instead investigate other means such as increasing corporate tax compliance or eliminating corporate tax loopholes in order to fund transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.”

I fully support this, will affix my signature and give it to page James to deliver to the table.

PROTECTION OF RESOURCES

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a petition entitled “Protect Our Waterfalls.” It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontario waterfalls and natural resources are being hoarded by private developers for energy projects worth billions; and

“Whereas crown land is too valuable to be awarded to private individuals or corporations for energy undertakings; and

“Whereas renewable energy alternatives must be considered with a view to investing the profits for the betterment of the community and for the betterment of Ontario, not the enrichment of private investors; and

“Whereas the Ontario government must facilitate a better process to enable communities to respectfully consider available options for local energy opportunities;

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

“That the members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario amend the Public Lands Act to prohibit the disposition of crown land for private energy projects.”

I'll forward this to the table with page Sean.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the many seniors from Leeds–Grenville who have forwarded me these petitions over the summer.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care plans to eliminate OHIP-funded physiotherapy services currently provided to seniors in retirement homes—and changing the current provider of the service as of August 1st, 2013; and

“Whereas last year the government spent \$110 million on physiotherapy for seniors in long-term care, but with the proposed changes this will decrease to \$58.5 million; and

“Whereas, instead of the 100 to 150 visits per year a senior may receive now from their dedicated, on-site OHIP physiotherapy staff, the change would mean a CCAC therapist would provide only five to 10 visits on-site only to seniors who are bedridden or have an acute injury; and

“Whereas this change not only reduces the funding available, but also moves funds from the lowest-cost provider (OHIP physiotherapy providers at \$12.20 per treatment) to the highest-cost provider (CCAC at \$120 per treatment); and

“Whereas these services are proven to help seniors improve in their activities of daily living, mobility, pain and fall risks;

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

“To review and reverse the decision to eliminate OHIP physiotherapy services to seniors in retirement homes and continue with the provision of at least 100 treatments per year with a mechanism to access an additional 50 treatments, if medically necessary, with the current low-cost OHIP physiotherapy providers.”

I’ve had the petition enacted by the table and will send it with the page.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition that was collected during our Labour Day celebrations in Sudbury. It reads as follows:

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: on average, 97% of collective agreements are negotiated without work disruption; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

“Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Katherine to bring it to the Clerk.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Scarborough residents north of Ontario Highway 401 and east of Don Mills are without a rapid transit option; and

“Whereas a strong transit system is critical for increasing economic development and tackling income disparity; and

“Whereas this geographical area continues to grow and the demand for strong rapid transit continues to increase; and

“Whereas Sheppard Avenue is a major artery for automobile traffic for commuters travelling from suburbs to downtown Toronto, and travelling from suburb to suburb; and

“Whereas ground-level rapid transit would increase traffic, restrict lanes for automobiles, and add further risk for pedestrians and commuters at dangerous intersections along Sheppard Avenue; and

“Whereas demands for underground rapid transit along Sheppard Avenue have been part of public discourse for over 50 years; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario previously approved a plan from the city of Toronto to extend the Sheppard subway line from Downsview to Scarborough Centre; and

“Whereas an extension to the Sheppard subway line will require contributions and co-operation from the city of Toronto, the province of Ontario and the government of Canada;

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

“To support the extension of the Sheppard subway line east to Scarborough Centre; and

“To call upon all levels of government to contribute multi-year funding for the construction and operation of an extension to the Sheppard subway line.”

I fully support the petition, and I will give it to page Aly Muhammad.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further petitions? The member for Durham.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. John O’Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I hope to be the last one today.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care plans to eliminate OHIP-funded physiotherapy services currently provided to seniors in retirement homes—and

changing the current provider of the service as of August 1st, 2013; and

“Whereas last year the government spent \$110 million on physiotherapy for seniors in long-term care, but with the proposed changes this will decrease to \$58.5 million; and

“Whereas, instead of the 100 to 150 visits per year a senior may receive now from their dedicated, on-site OHIP physiotherapy staff, the change would mean a CCAC therapist would provide only five to 10 visits on-site only to seniors who are bedridden or have an acute injury; and

“Whereas this change not only reduces the funding available, but also moves funds from the lowest-cost provider (OHIP physiotherapy providers at \$12.20 per treatment) to the highest-cost provider (CCAC at \$120 per treatment); and

“Whereas these services are proven to help seniors improve in their activities of daily living, mobility, pain and fall risks;

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

“To review and reverse the decision to eliminate OHIP physiotherapy services to seniors in retirement homes and continue with the provision of at least 100 treatments per year with a mechanism to access an additional 50 treatments, if medically necessary, with the current low-cost OHIP physiotherapy providers.”

I'm pleased to provide this, sign it and give it to Ian, one of the pages.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. The time for petitions has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

RADON AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT, 2013 LOI DE 2013 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

Mr. Qaadri moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 96, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces / Projet de loi 96, Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I appreciate this time allotted to me to raise a very important issue that I think has deep public health implications going forward. I would like to

thank my colleagues, not only MPP Reza Moridi of Richmond Hill, Minister of Research and Innovation, for originally fathering this particular bill, but also a subset of our health care caucus, the honourable Soo Wong, Scarborough–Agincourt, a registered nurse, and the honourable Dr. Helena Jaczek, Oak Ridges–Markham, one of my physician colleagues in the caucus, who will also be speaking to this bill.

1350

At the outset, I think we need a quick orientation—I apologize if the physics may get into some elevated science talk. There is a famous element, maybe a dangerous and possibly even somewhat evil element out there called uranium-238. Of course, many of us will be familiar with this particular element, as it was originally what was used, in a highly enriched manner, to create the atomic bomb—nuclear bombs, both strategic and tactical. The issue is that this is a very prevalent element throughout the world and in our soil, certainly throughout Canada, North America and essentially anywhere you look.

It's a very heavy element, which means it's sort of like a balloon at the microscopic level and has lots of little particles inside. These, of course, are known as protons and neutrons. By the way, there are 92 protons and 146 neutrons. They don't all want to stay in there, and they leak, and that, of course, is the issue today. Because when they do leak, they create what are called daughter products or progeny. Essentially, they have little babies that populate our homes, our air, whether it's this air I'm breathing in Parliament or particularly in enclosed spaces.

This, of course, is the health implication for Ontarians: in attics, in basements, in crawl spaces and even more so when you go deeper into the earth, whether it's mines, particularly uranium mines, but many, many other kinds of mine situations. That's when this leaked by-product of this evil element, uranium, can accrue in such a concentration that it leads to a real impact and, unfortunately, negative health effects for Ontarians.

I would also, of course, as I'm speaking, acknowledge the presence of the honourable Steve Mahoney, who is the head of the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada, as well as my colleagues from the Canadian cancer institute, who are here to lend both material and moral support for this particular bill.

What actually is going on? The radon by-products that eventually come from this ever-present uranium—by the way, just to mention, you can't actually wait for this stuff to go away, because you'll be pleased to know the half-life of uranium—half of it will live on for more than 4.5 billion years, which likely exceeds the mandate of even the most popular government. In any case, this stuff is not going anywhere. If it has an enclosed space—as I said, attics, basements and so on; by the way, buildings that have very poor ventilation, which is maybe half the buildings in the country—that is when the products of this gas, actually parts of them, become solid particles and basically fly around on the dust we inhale and are

inhaled and go into the lungs. That, of course, is unfortunately the cause of about 15% or maybe 20% or so of the lung cancers in Canada. About 80% of the lung cancers in Canada are of course caused primarily by smoking, but 15% to 20% or so are actually caused by inhaled, stale-air, radon gas particles. That's a major deal if you think about it.

By the way, we know this because unfortunately we're seeing more and more folks who don't actually smoke but yet are coming to our medical attention because of lung cancer. There are, of course, many other conditions or triggers of lung cancer. It's not only smoking and radon gas. It's usually a menu of choice items that are all selected; for example, genetic predisposition, family history and so on. But when you align all these various negative factors together, that is one issue that unfortunately is becoming more and more prevalent. I have to say that with this particular bill, Ontario has the opportunity of joining many other jurisdictions across the world, be it the United States or the United Kingdom, by the way, that are much further along in institutionalizing, formalizing and codifying the monitoring, regulation and remediation of airspaces that have excess radon gas.

As I was saying, a little about the history: Uranium-238 is found essentially everywhere—soil, rock, water. It's in the air in this particular building. It's underneath us. Of course, that has deep implications for our built environment, which is becoming more and more common. As I mentioned earlier, when radon gas is released—it's released first of all into the atmosphere, and more or less dissipates. But when it essentially leaks into or is caught or trapped in enclosed environments, and all of our homes and work environments and so on have these types of issues—that is when the concentrations of those decay particles, those progeny or fissionable particles, actually collect on microscopic pieces of dust. I could give you the micron measurement, but I'll spare you. But that's the stuff that we inhale, and over time it can actually lead to real cancer DNA effects within our own cells.

We know this particularly because, as I was mentioning, if you need a really enclosed space, talk to miners. There are studies that show, unfortunately, thousands of folks in various—for example, uranium mines in Elliot Lake, 220 documented deaths and up to 400 estimated lung cancer deaths from the Elliot Lake uranium mine alone, a single mine. It's been on the watch list, radon gas, and its health effects, even from 1974. The Ontario Royal Commission on the Health and Safety of Workers in Mines issued warnings, but I think there's been a lag for us to actually institutionalize these types of issues.

I will give you, for example—I know we're not allowed to use props, and far be it from me to ever use a prop in this chamber, but this actually is a radon measurement kit. Basically, it's placed within a basement or an enclosed space, usually the lowest space in the home, because I guess that's where the air is going to be heaviest and sink, and it's left for a certain period of

time. It's a long-term measurement. It's not like, for example, a carbon monoxide or smoke alarm. It doesn't go off instantaneously. But you leave it and it allows the radon to collect. It's sent away to a third-party laboratory and then a report is generated.

Of course, there's lots of numbers attached to the radon radiation reading. For example, 200 is a kind of—again, I'll spare you the units because that gets into high-level physics, but in any case, if the reading is 200 or above, that is considered potentially dangerous and needs to actually be, as we say, remediated or addressed, dealt with. Situations in which people are breathing that material on an ongoing basis expose them to true radiation-induced DNA damage, and as I'm sure all of you will appreciate, that can have deep long-term health effects. As I said earlier, folks from the Radiation Safety Institute as well as the Canadian Cancer Society are very much here to support us in that.

So, for example, about 2,000 lung cancer deaths occur because of radon itself in Canada, with 40% of those, about 800 in terms of number, dying in Ontario, so 800 Ontarians dying because of radon, often many of them non-smokers who unfortunately end up developing lung cancer.

Why is this important? Can't we train a dog or buy some monitor at Canadian Tire or put some little acid paper out and see if it turns blue? No. This is a colourless, tasteless, odorless gas. It has effects but it is part of the background radiation. What I was startled to realize was that despite cosmic radiation, despite all the different things you might think in terms of radiation that's coming your way because of either chemicals in the environment or substances or even, for example, TV screens, whatever energy source that you're near, unfortunately, the most background radiation that you will be exposed to is actually from radon gas.

So this is not an obscure thing. It's not a made-up thing. It's not an environmental tree-hugging thing. It is something that is real. It's causing illness. It's widespread. Everyone is exposed to enclosed airspaces, whether it's in the home setting or the work environment. I think as we are learning more and more about these DNA damage effects, that's why the call is going out. Especially when we have, for example, daycare centres, universities, hospitals, the very places where we want to ensure physical, mental and social peace and safety in those environments, those are the very places that we need to have institutionalized, codified measurements so we can actually see across the board, particularly in our public spaces.

Speaker, with that, as I mentioned earlier, I'm honored to have the support of a subset of the health care caucus: Dr. Helena Jaczek from Oak Ridges–Markham and the honorable Soo Wong, a registered nurse from Scarborough–Agincourt. They will also speak to the deep, important, abiding and urgent need for radon measurement and remediation in the province of Ontario to avoid long-term radiation-induced lung cancer and bodily damage.

1400

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: At the beginning here, I want to show some appreciation for the presentation this morning by the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada. The information kit that they provided each of us on this issue has been described by the mover of the bill.

To put it in context, the board of governors has some pretty august individuals there. I'll just give a couple of names and shout-outs: the Honourable Steve Mahoney, of course, who's here; Roy McMurtry, who is well respected; Patrick Dillon, who is on the College of Trades and many other things that the McGuinty government has placed him on; Duncan Hawthorne, the chief executive officer for Bruce Power; and a number of other distinguished individuals. It's a real triumvirate—in fact, it's very representative of First Nations—of industry, government and labour, which is an important thing.

In the information they provided, there's a cross-Canada survey on radon concentrations in homes. It's a final report. I had the occasion to look at Durham—the riding that I represent—and some of the surrounding areas. The sample sizes are quite small, but it is important.

I would say at the outset and make it very clear that we would support the bill to go to hearings—some of the mechanics within the bill; not the safety arguments that have been put on the table. That isn't the issue. There are scientists here. The minister who introduced the bill initially—I have great respect for the work he has done, and he is very familiar with the issue, as he worked in that industry.

Why I'm standing here is because I met with a constituent of mine—I'll put his name on the record—Bob Wood, president of the Canadian Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists. They're dedicated to helping Canadians understand the reduced rate of gas exposure in the home, and they are supportive of the bill as well. I did meet and spend some time, and much of the data that has been presented here in the House is important.

On the technical side of the bill, I want to make some clear distinctions. They need to be addressed. I saw some maps that put areas of the province in red, which means highly exposed—and other areas that weren't highly exposed. The moment I was in real estate, I would look at these red areas. If a house was worth \$500,000 and this gets out, the house would be worth \$200,000. So there are implications with these maps. I need to completely understand the accuracy of the science. These sample sizes of 90 or 95 people are not significant when you're looking at a population of, say, a million people or something like that.

I know it's random, and I know how it moves slowly through the soil—the gas that has been described—the component of measurements and the standards.

The point here is, really, this is a national issue. That's important. There should be national standards so we're

not targeting areas or avoiding targeting other areas. That's potentially risky.

Here's what the bill itself says. The act requires a Ontario Radon Registry and requires random measurements, which is problematic; it should be a scientific-based solution.

Then it says, “The minister is required to educate the public,” which we're doing. I think it's important, and I thank you openly, publicly and personally as well. I do have one of those measurement devices, and I know a specific home that I want it to be used in.

It uses a word here which is a legal thing. It “encourages” homeowners to measure radon levels. “Encourage” means it's not the law.

Here's what it does say: “The minister is also required”—that's the word, between “encourage” and “required”; this is what lawyers do—“to ensure that the radon level in every provincially owned dwelling is measured” and remediation taken, which is appropriate. But you see the inconsistency of “encourage” and “require.” That's the issue here, in my view. It's the only issue. It's not the science. Do you understand? The moment you're required to do it and you have it, bingo, the house is worth nothing. That's the issue; that's the only issue. Now, it's not all about the money, but I'll stop there, because other, more qualified, people wish to speak on this, but I would like to see it go to committee.

Thank you for presenting the bill to us today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm really pleased to be able to talk about Bill 96, the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, that was presented by my colleague across the aisle. This is a bill that the NDP will be supporting, and I will try to explain why.

My colleague went into quite a bit of detail to explain to people who are listening what radon is and why it is so dangerous. I won't repeat what he had said, but let's start this by making it clear that once this particle gets into your lungs, it will stay in your lungs, it will do damage to your lung tissue, and your chances of getting lung cancer go through the roof.

Although we have made much progress in treating lung cancer, unfortunately it is often fatal. I cannot stress enough that this is a preventable illness. If you don't breathe this in, it doesn't get into your lungs. If you know where it is, how to get rid of it is relatively simple: ventilate the place.

I come from Nickel Belt. When people talk about nickel, they talk about Sudbury. All of the mines in Nickel Belt are in my riding. Some of them are incredibly deep. If you look at Creighton mine, it's more than a mile deep.

The member has already explained that this gas that attaches itself to dust is very heavy, so if you think that it goes to the bottom of your house, like in the basement, think of where it goes in a mine: at the bottom of the shaft, where the workers are.

Is this something that we are aware of? Absolutely. Anybody who works in a mine will tell you that you have to look at the concentration of radon in the air. They do this. When you do find it, the solutions are not hard. Ventilate the place better, the stuff goes out, and you're done. The bill says it very well. It's a question of awareness.

When we talk about awareness, there are many, many stories and many heroes that come from my riding. There's a man called Homer Seguin, who is a hero and a champion because he recognized a health and safety issue and did something about it. There is another hero in my riding called Jean Gagnon. Jean Gagnon was a grade 10-educated Frenchman who came to work in the mine and saw what was happening in the sintering plant, where all 250 men—there were no women at the time—who worked there died. They all died of cancer because in the dust particles in the sintering plant was something that was giving you cancer, and all of them are dead—four, actually, are still alive and are battling cancer.

I'm telling you that because it's the point of the power of awareness. Once you know about something, you can take steps to prevent it; you can take steps to protect yourself. In the case of this particular gas that attaches itself to dust, we know how to measure it. We know where you can find it. I come from hard rock mining. Do we move rock in Sudbury? There's blasting going on pretty well every five minutes. If there's any gas to be released in between the cracks, it's going to happen in a mining town.

There's another mining town not so far away, where my colleague lives, that has uranium mines. The same thing happens there. This gas comes into our homes through little cracks in the basement. You may not know this, but even in beautiful neighbourhoods where the homes are worth—a half-million-dollar home in Sudbury is really, really nice; it's not like in Toronto. A \$300,000 home in Sudbury is a very nice home. Many of us have rocks in our basement. I have a nice house. I have a big rock in my basement. That's just the way it is when you live in the centre of the Canadian Shield. But in and around those rocks, vapours can come in from underground. Everywhere in Sudbury, there is tunneling and there are mines. Although the shaft may be miles away from your home, the tunnels go for miles and miles underground. They come under our houses and they come under our city, and some of that gas comes up.

1410

A lot of work has been done by the champions I was talking to you about: Homer Seguin and Jean Gagnon. But at the same time awareness has taken place in the workplace, it has not been transferred to the homes and to the people of Ontario. So I know that people are always worried when you look at a map and you see that "I live on this map and it's in red"—code red or something; I'm not too sure. I don't know why it's in red, but it's always in red when it's something dangerous. For anybody who works in a mining community, there's a good chance that your house is someplace on the map that is in red. Am I

going to run away and sell my house? Absolutely not. But am I going to protect myself? I bet you. And it's easy to do.

Although we're not allowed to use props, somehow a prop was sort of used today to show you what this thing looks like. It's a little box about that big by that thick. You stick it in your basement; three months later, you get the reading. For \$15, \$25—voilà. I wouldn't call this a big investment. And if you do find out that the reading is above what it's supposed to do, here again, ventilation of a home is not rocket science here. We're talking about better circulation. We're talking about an air exchanger. We're talking about things that are there, which kind of brings me to the next step as to, when finding out about this is pretty easy, when taking measures to protect you is also not that hard. When we look at the federal level and the building code has already been changed to make sure that you protect yourself—because protection is way easier than dealing with it once you're sick—I'm sort of surprised that we haven't moved on this in Ontario.

I'm happy that the member is bringing a private member's bill, and I guarantee you I will do my utmost to make sure that it gets supported, to support him, to support the bill so that it becomes law in Ontario. But there are alternatives to this. The government could easily change the building code this afternoon. It doesn't even come to the House. It's just a regulation that would change the building code to ensure the level of air exchange that the federal building code has put in. Then you don't have to worry. From now on, you know that people don't have to put this little thing in their basement anymore. They don't have to pay the \$25 to have it read. They don't have to worry because the homes will be built in a way that makes sure that you are not at risk. It's not going to change all of the homes that already exist, I agree, but from now on, it would protect everybody.

It always surprises me when here are members of the Liberal caucus—I would say pretty knowledgeable members of that caucus—who come forward with well-prepared private member's bills that are supported by people with incredible knowledge, and yet easy solutions exist that could make a difference but are not being acted upon. It leaves me puzzled. But there are very many things that puzzle me about this place, so this is just one more of them in a long series of puzzling stuff.

But that put aside, never, never underestimate the power of one person. When Jean Gagnon first stepped foot into the sintering plant and told the guys around him to wear their masks, he was laughed at. The boss basically isolated him, in hope that he would go away or transfer to another place. Slowly but surely, he was able to make a small change—a small change that was the right thing to do. He was able to tell people at work that, "When you work in this environment, you have to wear a mask." Although for a lot of the guys it was too late, for a lot of people that came after him, it helped tremendously.

Don't get me wrong: The sintering plant is gone, and I never want it back—not in Sudbury, not in Ontario, not anywhere; that was way too dangerous. But the point is

that when a member of this assembly rises and when he brings forward the level of information that he has shared with us today about what radon is about and the risk that that brings to our health, I think that it's an impetus for all of us to move this forward. We all know more today than we did before we started this discussion, and I think it's up to all of us to bring the knowledge that we now have back to your communities and encourage people.

The stats that he has talked about are staggering: 850 people die each and every year in Ontario because of lung cancer because of this gas. That's over two deaths every single day in this province. I don't know if you've had a loved one go through treatment for lung cancer; it's better to be avoided. I wish that everybody who's fighting lung cancer right now will win their battle and that the treatment will go well. But we have to face the reality that 850 Ontarians will die this year and will die next year if we don't change. The change is within our grasp. I think we owe it to all of us, and we owe it to every Ontarian, to put our shoulder to the wheel and push this bill through.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm sharing my time with my colleague from Oak Ridges–Markham.

I'd like to begin my remarks by thanking my colleague from Etobicoke North for reintroducing Bill 96, but also to acknowledge the work of the Minister of Research and Innovation for being the father of this proposed legislation. Bill 96 will raise awareness and education in Ontario, but, most importantly, it's about protecting Ontarians across the province.

As my colleague from Etobicoke North said earlier, as a registered nurse for almost 30 years and an advocate for a smoke-free Ontario for almost 30 years now, I see this proposed legislation as more than just about public safety. This is a public health issue, so let me start with that premise in my remarks.

A very key component of Bill 96 is about public education. For those of you who are watching today, on page 2 of the proposed legislation, it says about the duty of the minister in terms of this proposed legislation. The minister "shall conduct public education programs, and provide the public with information, about the health risks associated with exposure to radon and ways to reduce the risks."

A very important part of Bill 96 is to educate the public and raise awareness about the negative health effects associated with radon. We know the data, and my colleague from Nickel Belt just eloquently spoke about the fact that, right now, we know—there's enough research and data to prove it—that radon significantly increases the risk of developing lung cancer.

The next question has to be asked: What are we doing about it? It's one thing when we don't have the information and we don't do anything. Now that we have the information—furthermore, we also know that 90% of all lung cancer deaths are associated with smoking, but smoking is one piece. We also know that radon—a 1-in-3

chance of developing lung cancer. Again, my colleague from Nickel Belt also mentioned this particular statistic.

The other big part of the proposed legislation that I want to focus my minimal time here on is the proposed radon registry, which is a very, very important part of the proposed Bill 96. This registry, if the bill is passed, is similar to the one that has been enacted in the United Kingdom, whereby you can track the trends and history of radon levels across Ontario.

1420

I heard my colleague from Durham, the concern about the value of the home etc. Let me be very clear: Yes, I am concerned about a home's value, but let's not kid ourselves. The most important part of each of our roles and responsibilities in this House is our safety. There's no price on the cost of your family's safety and every Ontarian's safety. Let's let that be very clear.

The proposed bill talks extensively about creating a registry that would address a number of pieces. Let me go through what the registry would do.

It would be a useful tool to track trends and history, but more importantly, it would assist individuals such as homebuilders, professionals and residents in an effort to control radon exposure by providing historical indoor radon records; contribute to ongoing updates of radon maps and assist governments both provincially and at the municipal level in identifying radon-prone areas; and find ways to monitor mitigation to reduce radon in the neighbourhood.

But more importantly, this type of registry raises awareness and educates the community. Again, like I said, 60 years ago we knew very little about the cost and health effects of second-hand smoke. Look at how long it has taken our community to have our government ban smoking across the province of Ontario, not just in workplaces; it's now gone into public places like restaurants, and I believe the city of Mississauga and Durham region have extensively gone outdoors in terms of second-hand smoke.

In terms of the proposed legislation, I want to, in ending my remarks, applaud my colleague from Etobicoke North and the Minister of Research and Innovation for providing the leadership to protect Ontarians and making sure every dwelling, every public place in Ontario, is safe and not exposed to radon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I'm happy to rise today to speak to Bill 96, the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act. Like Bill 77, the carbon monoxide act brought forward by my colleague the member for Oxford, Bill 96 has the potential to make a positive impact on Ontario homes and workplaces. Like carbon monoxide, radon is a colourless, odorless and tasteless gas that can build up in enclosed spaces. Also like carbon monoxide, it is a silent killer.

Radon is naturally found in the environment and comes from the decay of uranium in rock, soil and water. As you might expect, it is radioactive and a health

hazard. Radon won't suddenly kill you when you sleep, but breathing air containing high levels of radon has been connected to an increased risk of lung cancer.

What kind of risk are we talking about? According to estimates by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, radon is the second most frequent cause of lung cancer after smoking cigarettes. In fact, some EPA studies suggest radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, slightly higher than second-hand smoke. An estimated 10% of lung cancer deaths in Canada are directly related to radon exposures in homes and other buildings, and 40% of those deaths are in Ontario. That's roughly 800 deaths every year due to indoor exposure. Unlike carbon monoxide, however, radon has made limited headway in terms of public awareness.

One of the key elements of Bill 96 is the requirements for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to educate the public about radon and encourage homeowners to measure radon levels in their homes and take whatever action is necessary. The minister would also have to ensure that radon levels in every provincially owned building are measured and that corrective action is taken where needed. Owners of enclosed workplaces would have similar obligations.

A two-year nationwide Health Canada study found that one in 20 Ontario homes had radon levels above the current recommended guidelines. If you're worried that you might be one, you can pick up a do-it-yourself kit for about \$40.

This is a real problem, so it's good that we have a chance here today to increase awareness around this issue and to work together toward solutions. Bill 96 is legislation I'm happy to support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It is my pleasure to rise again in support of the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2013, which provides for the establishment of the Ontario Radon Registry and seeks to reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces. It was introduced, as has been mentioned, by my friend and colleague the member for Richmond Hill, now the Minister of Research and Innovation—as we all know, a physicist, a scientist, and the first to alert this Legislature to this problem—and now, of course, by my friend, colleague and fellow physician, the member for Etobicoke North. I would also like to thank the members of the Radiation Safety Institute, the Canadian Cancer Society and the Ontario Lung Association for their reception this morning.

As a physician, I'm going to be emphasizing the negative health effects of radon, primarily lung cancer and death. Our colleague from Nickel Belt, as always, has reminded us of the human toll. For me, the statistics are truly alarming, very important and, of course, do cause the kind of anguish in the sufferers and their families. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in Ontario, and you may be surprised to hear that radon is one of the leading causes of it, second only, of course, to tobacco smoking. Once diagnosed with lung cancer,

individuals only have a 15% chance of living longer than five years.

Thirteen per cent of lung cancer deaths are due to radon. This translates, as many people have already said, but repetition is always good, to some 2,000 lung cancer deaths per year in Canada, which would mean some 850 deaths a year in Ontario alone due to radon exposure. On average, that means approximately two deaths per day here in Ontario due to radon.

Many jurisdictions have examined the impact of radon in the causation of lung cancer and have found similar statistics. So again, in the United States, 10% to 15% of all lung cancers are due to radon, and the European community has estimated some 15% of all lung cancers. So you've got a great deal of consistency, which is always reassuring from the scientific point of view to decide whether there is a causative factor at play.

As has been said, no formal regulation on what is an acceptable level of radon in a dwelling exists in Canada. However, Health Canada, along with the Federal Provincial Territorial Radiation Protection Committee, did develop some radon guidelines a number of years ago. As has been said, the unit of radiation used to measure exposure to radon is becquerels per cubic metre of air, and the Health Canada guideline for safe exposure was reduced from 800 becquerels per cubic metre to 200 becquerels per cubic metre of air in 2007. However, most industrialized countries have far more stringent standards than Canada. As an example, in the United States, the safe level is 150 becquerels per cubic metre and the WHO guideline is 100 becquerels per cubic metre.

Between the years of 2010 and 2012, Health Canada performed a cross-country survey on the presence of radon in Canadian homes. It was discovered that 7% of all homes in Canada have radon levels of over 200 becquerels per cubic metre, and that the average for Ontario is 4.6% above the 200 becquerels per cubic metre level. This may sound relatively small, but it's certainly very significant.

Public Health Ontario calculated the number of radon-related deaths attributable to exposure to radon in an article published online on August 14, 2013, titled "Lung Cancer Risk from Radon in Ontario, Canada: How Many Lung Cancers Can We Prevent?" At this point, I'd actually like to put very sincere appreciation to Public Health Ontario. It's an agency that not many people are aware of. It was brought into being following the SARS epidemic of 2003. Dr. Sheela Basrur, the former chief medical officer of health for Ontario, recommended that such an agency be put in place. It was originally known as the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, now Public Health Ontario. It's under the leadership of Dr. Vivek Goel, and they are incredibly open to receiving your questions on issues related not only to infectious disease, which was the original purpose of the agency, but any epidemiological or toxicological questions you may have.

1430

In this article, they discovered that if all homes in Ontario above 200 becquerels per cubic metre—the

current Canadian guideline—were remediated to background levels, it is estimated that 91 radon-related lung cancer deaths could be prevented each year in Ontario. Looking at some other guidelines: If we adopted the American guideline, we would save some 149 individuals from lung cancer deaths; the World Health Organization guideline, at 100 becquerels per cubic metre, would prevent some 233 lung cancer deaths.

In 2009, the World Health Organization published their Handbook on Indoor Radon: A Public Health Perspective, which takes that very important preventive approach to radon exposure. It recommends that national, regional or local authorities consider enacting building regulations and building codes requiring radon protection measures in all new buildings under construction. This bill does that. The handbook also stressed the need for educating the public about the benefits of radon prevention. Again, this bill does exactly that.

It's somewhat ironic that we have legislation in Ontario that does protect those who work in the nuclear energy industry, those exposed to X-rays and those who work in uranium mines, but in our own homes, where people live and raise their families, and in buildings where people congregate—schools, hospitals, long-term-care facilities, correctional facilities etc., we are not governed by these same protections. Clearly, these areas need more than the current Health Canada guidelines. This legislation addresses these important components, and I urge all members of this House to support this very important bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to rise today and add my voice to supporting this particular initiative.

One of the dangers we have in looking at this issue is the fact that there seem to be so many other things that are demanding our attention, and yet when you begin to understand the importance of radon and the fact that it can be in your basement, and because it's a natural chemical that is odourless and so forth, it's very difficult to squeeze it onto the radar screen of public awareness, and I think that's probably the biggest challenge we face. By bringing it to the attention of the Legislature, albeit for the third time, it's very important to continue to work on the notion of how important it is and raise that level of awareness. It's certainly true when you look at other issues that sometimes grab public attention and are relatively minor.

I know for me, one of the most important features of learning about this was the fact that you often hear people talk about someone who has passed away as a result of lung cancer and who never smoked. It's almost like a defiance: "You see; it's not the only cause." I think that, today, when we know that it is the second cause, it's working from that level of awareness that is vital to being able to make people aware how these dangers exist.

Certainly for me, I thought back on those people I knew who died of lung cancer but they never smoked,

and now we know that it can be mitigated for such a relatively small cost. To be able to buy a kit for \$40 or \$50, to be able to mitigate the escape of the gas in your own home or in a public building: These are fairly simple, straightforward initiatives that you can take. It belongs in the same category as the member from Oxford's bill, the Hawkins Gignac bill. We should act on it and on this in a timely way and bring that kind of measure of safety to our homes across the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very pleased to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 96, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces. I would like to thank the members from the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada who took the time to meet with me about a month or so ago, and thank Mr. Mahoney, particularly, and his staff for pointing out the need to have Bill 96 enacted and to speak in favour of it.

We have heard about the dangers of radon. I think it's very little understood by most Canadians, and I think it is important that we bring this forward at this time. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, radon is the second most frequent cause of lung cancer after cigarettes, resulting in an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year. Of course, radon is also the number one cause of lung cancer for non-smokers.

The World Health Organization also states that radon causes 15% of lung cancers worldwide, and it has also started an international radon awareness project to help other countries raise awareness, collect data and encourage action to reduce radon-related risks. Dr. Michael Repacholi, the World Health Organization's radiation and environmental health unit coordinator, stated, "Radon poses an easily reducible health risk to populations all over the world, but has not up to now received widespread attention."

I see I'm running out of time rather quickly here, Mr. Speaker, but all I can say is that this is important because, as the member from York-Simcoe has indicated, this can be very easily mitigated, but it has to start with awareness. I'm very pleased to see that it looks like it will receive all-party support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Etobicoke North, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I'd like to thank my colleagues from the PC side, the members from Durham, York-Simcoe and Whitby Oshawa; my colleague from the NDP, France Gélinas, députée de l'Assemblée législative pour la circonscription de Nickel Belt; and, of course, my own colleagues from Scarborough-Agincourt and Oak Ridges-Markham.

An important issue: Radon needs to be, I think, much more in the public awareness, as was mentioned by my colleague from Oak Ridges-Markham. She reviewed a number of the scientific facts: the fact that it's ever-present, it's in enclosed spaces and it's leaking from, for example, substructure, stone and rock formations.

We need to create an Ontario registry. We need to actually have a map, especially in high-density, high-traffic areas, for example, daycare centres, public hospitals, universities and even, by the way, high-rise buildings. This is an important issue, not only for public health and medical care, but ongoing, because as we have more and more of our built environment and intensification going on across the GTHA and many other locations, radon unfortunately seems to be becoming more and more prevalent, and therefore, its by-product—lung cancer—because of the inhaled particles.

So, it's an important issue. We need to measure it. I agree with some of my colleagues here who say that we need to institutionalize it, codify it and make it part of Ontario law. I'm certainly going to speak to my fellow colleagues here in caucus. I would simply conclude by saying that we don't really care what you wear on your head on this side, but we are concerned about the air that you breathe, particularly if it includes excess amounts of radon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We will take the vote at the end of private members' business.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I move that, in the opinion of this House, Ontario should endorse the new National Standard of Canada for psychological health and safety in the workplace entitled "Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace—Prevention, Promotion and Guidance to Staged Implementation."

The National Standard of Canada is a voluntary standard developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada that provides a systematic approach to develop and sustain a psychologically healthy and safe workplace by focusing on promoting employees' psychological health and preventing psychological harm due to workplace factors through:

- the identification of psychological hazards in the workplace;

- the assessment and control of the risks in the workplace associated with hazards that cannot be eliminated (e.g. stressors due to organizational change or reasonable job demands);

1440

- the implementation of practices that support and promote psychological health and safety in the workplace;

- the growth of a culture that promotes psychological health and safety in the workplace; and finally

- the implementation of measurement and review systems to ensure sustainability.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It is a pleasure to rise this afternoon to bring forward what I think is a very straightforward but a very important motion.

I would like to, when I start, first introduce some guests who have joined me here today. From the Canadian Mental Health Association of Halton, we have the chair of the board, Kimbalin Kelly, with us today. Kimbalin, thank you for joining us; it is appreciated.

Mental health, I think, as all members in this House know, is an issue that affects or has impacted every member of this Legislature in some way, or certainly their families. I think we all have a family member or we have a friend or we've got constituents who have faced mental health challenges at some point in their life. Even some members in this House probably have personal experiences of their own.

The motion that I'm bringing forward today, and asking for your support on, focuses on building a healthy workplace in the province of Ontario. I've already outlined the motion. What I would like to do is talk about what gave me an interest in this issue in the first place, and that is that some time ago, I got the opportunity to talk about the impact of mental health challenges on our workplaces and our economy.

But I think it's worthwhile to go back a few years and remember that, at a very important moment in our province's history, we did something in this chamber when it came to dealing with mental health and addictions issues. Some of the members who are present today would be quite familiar with that exercise, and it was the work of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions.

It was a time when all three political parties pulled together in this Legislature, came together on a very, very important issue. In fact, it was a motion that came from a very well-regarded member of the opposition, the member for Whitby–Oshawa, that led to the creation of the select committee. It was approved by the government, and it was supported by the third party. I had the privilege of chairing this committee.

What we found out from the report is that there was something we could do. There were changes we could make.

Each of the province's three political parties was represented on that committee by members who I think stepped forward. They weren't asked to serve. They stepped forward; they volunteered to serve because they had a personal commitment to people who were living with a mental illness or with an addiction. Regardless of our political convictions or any partisanship, we recognized as a group that we could do better, and we must do better.

I want to just go over the people who were on that committee. There was the person who came up with the idea in the first place, the member from Whitby–Oshawa, Christine Elliott, who is with us today; you yourself, Speaker, the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, Bas Balkissoon; the member from the third party, from Nickel Belt, France Gélinas; Oak Ridges–Markham,

from the Liberal side, Helena Jaczek; Dufferin–Caledon, from the Conservative Party, Sylvia Jones; Peterborough, well represented by Jeff Leal; Guelph, represented by the now-Minister of Education, Liz Sandals; and a former member of this House who was very well thought of, from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Maria van Bommel.

Our committee held public hearings on 30 dates, and we heard testimony from over 230 presenters from all regions of the province of Ontario. We looked at over 300 submissions that came in the form of DVDs, journal articles and briefs. We also went beyond the traditional hearing venues. We were allowed to make site visits to mental health and addictions facilities in several First Nations communities. The stories and the experiences we heard greatly affected each member of the committee. We worked co-operatively and we came up with what I thought was an excellent report with a series of recommendations.

In response, the province launched Open Minds, Healthy Minds, which was a comprehensive plan for mental health and addictions. It offers a comprehensive approach to transforming the mental health system through a clear mission forward and long-term strategies for change.

The first three years of this plan started with children and youth, and over \$11 million to place 144 mental health nurses in our schools. We created 19 new specialized nurse practitioners. We started providing culturally appropriate services to more than 4,000 aboriginal children by providing more than 80 new aboriginal mental health and addictions workers. This keeps youth out of the justice system by adding more mental health court workers. We invested in youth, and over 500,000 Ontarians were served by community mental health and addictions programs in 2010-11. So I believe we're a long way towards doing what is the right thing to do for our children. The next step, obviously, is to work on an adult strategy, and I look forward to that.

We're working with First Nations communities because we found there was a special need in those communities, and we've also realized, from a gambling and addictions perspective, that we need to do more, and we've provided, at this point, as a result of the committee's work, over \$39 million in new funding.

Now, at the same time we were doing our work, there were other organizations around the country who were doing similar work, because I think people around the country and the province had said, "This is an issue whose time has come." In 2006, a standing Senate committee of the federal government completed the first national study of mental health, mental illness and addiction. It found that across this country a number of challenges faced Canadians dealing with mental health issues. This helped launch the Mental Health Commission of Canada, and what they had a mandate to do was bring together leaders and organizations from across this country to improve the mental health system and to begin to change the attitudes and behaviours of Canadians towards mental health. It has created a number of

partnerships. It focuses on key projects and issues, and it makes recommendations as to how to best improve systems that are directly related to mental health.

One of the commission's focuses is on helping employers improve how they can protect their own employees' mental health in workplaces to better prevent mental health problems and illnesses. The commission has led to the development of a voluntary national standard for psychological health and safety in the workplace. It also developed recommendations to support increased employment among those people in our society who are living with a mental health problem or an illness.

The standards were developed because what was discovered was that mental problems, mental illness, mental health has a staggering impact on our economy. The select committee heard that, nationally, the impact could be as high as \$30 billion a year, but the latest numbers are showing that this is probably even higher, and accelerating.

In any given year, one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem or illness. Nearly a quarter of the country's working population is currently affected by mental health problems or illnesses, leading sometimes to absenteeism and sometimes "presenteeism," which is coming to work but not being very productive. It also leads to employee turnover.

It appears from the research that adults in their early and prime working years are among the hardest hit. Approximately 30% of short- and long-term claims for disability in Canada can be directly attributed to mental health problems and illnesses. Over the next 30 years, the cost of lost productivity due to absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover is estimated to reach a staggering \$198 billion in today's dollars. It is the number one cause—and this surprises a lot of people, Speaker—of disability in Canada.

Senator Michael Kirby, chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, in a 2007 speech to the Canadian Club in Vancouver, highlighted the paradox of work and cited a witness before the Senate committee, who said, "Therein we have one of the fundamental paradoxes we face today: Work is good for your mental health and work can make you crazy." That is, I think, getting right down to the issue.

Now, some companies have taken a lead role in this. Some companies have done a fantastic job, and I'm asking Ontario to follow in the footsteps of some of those corporate leaders who have started to take action. I wanted to use the time remaining just to tell you about some of the companies that have done a great job.

I'm going to start with Bell Canada. It's one of the companies that was first out of the gate to endorse this national standard. In September 2010, Bell Canada launched a comprehensive strategy aimed at getting people in Canada simply to communicate about the issue of mental health. The strategy—we've all seen it on TV—is called "Let's Talk." What it is, is Bell donates a fixed amount of money to stigma reduction and to other mental health programs based on the uses of long

distance on a certain day or texts on a certain day. The president and CEO of Bell Canada, George Cope, has noted that on any given day in Canada, 500,000 Canadians are absent from work due to psychiatric problems. As I said before, it's the number one cause of long-term disability, so it makes business sense as well as social sense.

1450

Another good company that has moved a long way is one that we'll be familiar with in these chambers, and that's Great West Life, our own carrier, a large Canadian insurance company. As a service to all employers in Canada, GWL, Great West Life, offers a Web-based program called Workplace Strategies for Mental Health. The program has two objectives. The first is to increase knowledge and awareness of mental health, and secondly, to enable employers to turn that knowledge into action in a cost-effective way.

Another company, Morneau Shepell, is the largest company in Canada that offers human resources consulting and outsourcing services. It has introduced an innovative approach to workplace mental health for human resource leaders.

Other companies that have made efforts include Manulife, Canada Post and Scotiabank.

What I've heard in the local community—and why I'm asking all members to support this motion is because I think they would hear this in their own communities as well. This is from the chair or the CEO of my own LHIN, the Mississauga Halton LHIN. What Bill MacLeod says is, "Keeping people healthy is a responsibility that must be shared to make a true difference. Employers who understand the importance of optimal mental and physical health in the workplace are essential partners in building healthy communities."

Other people who have stepped forward include certainly the head of psychiatry at Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. What he says is that employers should be applauded in promoting the mental health of Ontarians, that we need to have a vision to appreciate its relevance to our province's success.

When we consider that 30% to 50% of all short- and long-term disability claims in Canada are due to mental-health-related issues, we must acknowledge that our mental health programs are a priority, especially in the workplace, where we spend the majority of our working hours.

My time is just about up. I'm asking all members of this House to help this province take a step forward by becoming the first province in Canada to endorse the work of the Mental Health Commission of Canada and to take a lead in ensuring that Ontarians have a better future as they deal with mental illness.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to speak to the member from Oakville's motion concerning psychological health and safety in the workplace. Certainly the national standard,

of course, that he was referring to was developed under the leadership of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, and I think it is important to note that it is, of course, a voluntary standard and was developed with the assistance of a technical committee that consisted of employers, organized labour, service providers, government and regulatory authorities, and workplace mental health and safety specialists. It's pretty recent. It was just released in January 2013.

The work that's being done by the commission is really groundbreaking. The Mental Health Commission of Canada was established by the federal government in 2007, and they have a number of wonderful projects that they are working on right now, including six pilot projects on homelessness in major cities across Canada. So they're really looking at finding solutions to that major problem that is affecting so many people in our cities as well.

In fact, it was the creation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada that was the inspiration for the creation of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions here in this Legislature. Like the member from Oakville, I would say that it was one of the best things that I've done since being elected here seven years ago, to have the opportunity to work with my colleagues here in the Legislature, and the member from Oakville kindly named everyone who was involved in it. But I think that was what was sort of the impetus for that, to allow for a provincial organization and to develop recommendations that could work in sync with the work that's being done by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. So I would say that today's motion is very much in keeping with the work that was done by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. I've brought a copy of our report here that was completed in August 2010.

One of the things that we talked about in the select committee—we made 23 recommendations, and one of them was to work with employers to develop more opportunities for people living with a mental illness to participate in the workforce.

Currently, largely because of the stigma that's still associated with mental illness, it's very difficult for people with a mental illness to get a job and to keep a job because, a lot of times, employers simply don't know how to deal with it. While I think employers are currently pretty accommodating to people who have a physical disability, there's still a lack of education about what to do with someone who has a mental illness. I think that developing psychologically healthy workplaces is another important step that we need to take in making sure that we can get everybody who wants to work and is able to work into our workforce.

The standard, as I said before, is voluntary. I think that's really important to note, but I have a suspicion that there will be a lot of companies that will want to become involved with this because it's—financially, first of all—in their interest. As the member from Oakville indicated, mental health illnesses are estimated to account for

somewhere between 30% to 50% of both short- and long-term disability claims in Canada, and more than 80% of employers note mental illness among the top three drivers of both short- and long-term disability claims. So first and foremost, if you're only looking at the financial bottom line, it's in the interest of employers to be involved in developing some kind of standards in their own workplace.

Of course, there are many other reasons for employees. It's in their interest to have the standard being adopted and having a program in the workplace because it just creates a more safe and welcoming atmosphere that allows people to work better. We hear a lot about people being bullied and harassed in the workplace. If you have a standard that everyone can adhere to, hopefully you would see that disappear.

For employers, besides the direct financial costs, there are, of course, the indirect costs. It has been cited as a really important risk-management tool because as more and more employers are becoming legally responsible for incidents of harassment in the workplace, this will be one way for them to mitigate that risk: by having proper processes in place in the workplace.

It also leads to increased organizational recruitment. One of the things that many businesses have found is that by hiring people with a variety of abilities and needs in their workforce, it can allow them to be more creative and more flexible and to be able to develop their products and services more fully. So again, it helps the employers in recruiting good people and in improving their own products.

Finally, it's good corporate social responsibility, and I think increasingly corporations are taking a look at that and wanting to be more responsible.

In addition to this motion, which of course I said I fully support, there is another one that I would just like to mention; another resolution—or act, actually—that is before the Legislature, or hopefully will come back, and that's Bill 32, the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, which was brought by the now Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and co-sponsored both by me and by the member from Beaches–East York. It doesn't directly deal with it, but it strengthens the role of human resource professionals, and I think they're going to be the ones who are going to be key in bringing in these types of standards on psychological health in the workplace.

I would commend both this motion and the act when it comes forward—hopefully soon—for support by all parties in this Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is a pleasure to talk to the motion introduced by the member from Oakville, as well as to respond to some of the comments that have just been made by the member from Whitby–Oshawa.

Of course, the member from Oakville was the Chair of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, of which I was a member, as well as the member from Oshawa. This report has made 23 recommendations, and

unfortunately very few of them have been followed through. But that doesn't mean that the initial impetus to do this review is not still there. It was the member from Whitby–Oshawa who had first approached the House so that we would look at a Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. In the way that this House works, for reasons unexplained, it actually got picked up. Eighteen months of work went into this, and I think some pretty solid recommendations came out. Although I'm disappointed that no action has been taken from those recommendations—or very few; they've acted on one of them—the work in itself helped raise awareness about mental illness and addiction.

1500

Some of the statistics have been shared with you, but I'd like to repeat some of them just because the numbers are staggering in and of themselves.

When we talk about the 4,000 Canadians who commit suicide every year, every one of those 4,000 deaths is preventable. Healthy people don't commit suicide. People who are ill or people who have a mental illness are at very high risk of finding themselves within those 4,000 people.

Some 30% of short-term and long-term disability claims are for mental health problems. If we ask employers, 80% of them will tell you that mental health problems and illnesses are in the top-three drivers of short-term and long-term disability claims. Some 47% of all approved disability claims in the civil service in 2010 were due to mental health conditions. We've already shared with you that \$6 billion in lost productivity is directly linked to mental health problems and illnesses. That's a lot of money.

The stats go on and on. In any given week, there are 500,000 Canadian employees who are not able to work because of a mental health problem; there are about 355,000 disability cases due to mental health and behaviour problems; and there will be 175,000 full-time workers who will call in sick because of a mental health issue.

What the member from Oakville has brought forward is a way for employers to be proactive in helping those workers.

Some parallels have been done between the accommodations we do for physical illness and the lack of accommodations we do for mental illness—because mental illness is still stigmatized. In many, many workplaces, if you show a mental illness, you are told, “Toughen up, princess, and move on.” You are stigmatized. You are passed over. You are treated differently. This is wrong. It is wrong on many, many levels, but it happens.

People in Ontario have empathy. When we hear that somebody in our midst is sick, we want to help them. We want them to feel better. But if we hear that they have a mental illness, we isolate them. We shut them out. We make it harder for them to get better. The motion that we have here would turn that on its head and will make sure that we do what comes naturally to a lot of people when they face a physical illness—but for some strange reason

continue to be discriminated against when it comes to mental illness.

The first thing that this motion is going to do is that we would have an active stance by employers to prevent harm to workers' psychological health. If we go on with this today, we will give the tools to employers to be able to assess the risk and prevent harm before it's done. That means identifying stressors and identifying ways that people become mentally unwell because of what they do at work. Then we would look at how we promote psychological well-being. So not only do we make sure that our workplaces prevent harm from happening, but employers would take an active role in promoting psychological well-being.

The member from Oakville has named a number of employers who have already started to do this. Bell Canada has to be commended for their Let's Talk program, which they launched Canada-wide. Basically, this is one piece of a fairly well developed health promotion strategy that looks at how you build resilience, how you make people psychologically healthy.

The parallel can be drawn to physical health. People understand that if you do physical exercise, such as going for a walk—a brisk walk, if you can handle it—you will do some good to your physical health, but you will also do some good to your psychological health. If you take time to build teams that work well together, it improves productivity at work, but it also acts as a way to promote good mental health, what is called promoting psychological well-being. There are many, many ways to do that at work, and each and every one of the workplaces is different.

Some workplaces, we know from the start, have a very high incidence of mental problems. If you look at all of the first responders—whether you look at firefighters, EMS personnel, police officers or people who serve in the army—those people will see things that will affect them.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What about politicians?

M^{me} France Gélinas: And maybe politicians, as well, my colleague is saying.

We already know that those workers are at risk. We already know that when you witness a traumatic incident, it will affect your well-being. It will affect your psychological health. It will put you at risk for mental illness.

Those workplaces tend to be dominated by men, tend to be dominated by a macho culture. They tell each other, "Suck it up, princess." This is so devastating, but it can be changed, and it is being changed.

I can talk for the Sudbury fire department, where my husband works. Things have changed dramatically from the time he first started fighting fires to what is there now. Before, a debriefing on a critical incident would take place. Everybody would more or less laugh at whoever went and talked to the debriefing counsellor, and then put him down, treat him as a sissy, and I'll spare you the rest of the words that were used.

Well, fast-forward, none of this is happening anymore. Do they continue to see critical incidents? Of course.

They're firefighters. They do first response, they go to car accidents, they're there when people pass; they're there when people have the worst day of their lives. Think of all the worst days of everyone's lives and put them all together. This is what their job looks like.

So now, critical incident debriefing is mandatory for everybody. And guess what? The rate of suicide among firefighters is going down. The same thing happens with EMS. The same thing is happening with police officers.

I'm giving you the extreme so that people understand, but you don't have to be a first responder to have stress at work. The amount of work you have, the expectations we put on you and the resources that are at your disposal to be able to face this workload are all stressors. If you take time to go through them, if you take time to have open dialogue, you will be able to put forward and promote psychological wellness.

Of course, in order to do this, you have to be able to resolve the incidents and you have to be able to resolve the concern. To identify it is a great first step, Mr. Speaker. But once you have identified it, there has to be a way of dealing with them; otherwise, all is for naught.

When you look at the work that was done by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, we raised expectations throughout the province. This was a committee that travelled. We travelled to the far north, where some of the First Nations are only accessible by air. We went to those First Nations. We looked at what was happening with the mental health and addiction issues, and we put forward recommendations to try to help them.

1510

I can't see why we're not implementing those 23 recommendations, but the step that the member from Oakville is bringing forward is progressive. It will change workplaces for the better. It is worth the support of this House. It shines a warm light on mental illness and makes it something that you can talk about without taboo, something that you can talk about that will make it easier for people to reach out. I hope we pass this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Today I rise to support the motion introduced by the MPP from Oakville asking the government of Ontario to endorse the new National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

It's certainly pleasant to hear about the work we did on the select committee. For those of us who were on that nonpartisan committee, it was certainly a pleasure that we could put partisan politics aside and concentrate on this extremely important issue. Of course, that committee was so ably chaired by the member from Oakville.

When we were on the select committee, we heard about the true cost of mental illness in the workplace, and it was really quite staggering. As the member from Oakville mentioned in his opening statement, these issues in the workplace could cost the Canadian economy as much as \$30 billion annually. This is simply too much. A

healthy workplace where employees can grow and thrive is vital, and a place they can be accepted and understood even more so.

Often those with mental health issues suffer in silence because of the stigma attached to them. This is especially an issue in the workplace, where people are dependent on their jobs for their livelihood, and they fear the consequences of revealing their mental health issues, so instead choose to say nothing.

Our select committee certainly felt more needed to be done to raise awareness of the role that a positive work environment plays in the success and mental health of its employees. Employers who have understanding of the challenges faced by people with mental health issues will also be better able to provide an environment where those employees can succeed in their jobs.

The national standard provides a systematic approach for companies to evaluate, implement and review their policies surrounding mental health. It encourages employers to evaluate their workplaces for psychological hazards and assess the risks associated with these hazards.

We know that a job does more than just improve a person's financial situation; it can also improve confidence and self-esteem. It provides a forum for social inclusion, a key condition for wellness. It creates independence. If companies in Ontario follow the National Standard of Canada and implement practices that support and promote psychological health in the workplace, many will benefit, not just those who have a particular mental health issue.

As the member from Oakville has said, there are many companies doing excellent work in regard to creating tolerant workplaces and developing corporate cultures that promote psychological health amongst their employees. The national standard won't hinder their efforts but would provide a framework for other companies to adopt for their own employees' benefit.

Now, our government certainly has been making progress in the field of mental health and addictions. I'm certainly very aware that not all 23 of the recommendations that the select committee made have been followed, but I'd like to assure the members of this House, in particular the member from Nickel Belt, that I'm doing everything I can, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, to see what progress is being made. I'm told I am the terror of the bureaucrats, and I'm quite proud of that particular designation.

The government's ambitious 10-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy seeks to break down silos and streamline service, to improve access in what is an often-complex web of systems and checkpoints. The first three years of the strategy, as has been said, have concentrated on ensuring our children with mental health issues are appropriately identified and directed to the treatment resource necessary for them.

Anecdotal evidence, I know, but I was speaking to the former president of the Ontario Medical Association,

who is himself a child psychiatrist. In his practice, he is certainly seeing progress made in the first three years of the strategy. Children are being identified much sooner and being directed to the appropriate resource they need.

In conclusion, I'd like to support the member from Oakville's motion today. This will be another step forward—perhaps not the leap we would all wish that we could take but significant in and of itself.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Interjection: Chatham.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Chatham–Kent–Middlesex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Just north of me, but Chatham–Kent–Essex.

It's my pleasure to rise today and speak to the member from Oakville's motion to endorse the National Standard of Canada for psychological health and safety in the workplace. It's incredibly important for all of us to discuss mental health in the workplace and in our workplace, the Legislative Assembly.

Promoting this issue on the job is an essential component of a comprehensive strategy to improve the mental health of all Ontarians. While on this topic, I'd also like to thank our health critic, the member from Whitby–Oshawa, for her tireless dedication to promoting mental health and addressing the many problems in our mental care system today. She was an integral part of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, which put forth 23 recommendations to improve mental health back in 2010. Unfortunately, the mental health system in Ontario remains somewhat woefully inadequate as a number of those recommendations have yet to be implemented or perhaps have been ignored.

While doing some background research, I was really amazed to learn of the following statistics that I'd like to share with you: First of all, did you know that over half a million Canadians have missed work because of mental health problems or illness? Mental health is also the number one cause of disability claims in Canada. One in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem or illness. In Chatham-Kent, my riding, there were well over 11,000 mental health outpatients last year. All three parties promote a preventive approach to health care. If employers can take a proactive approach to encouraging mental health, we will benefit greatly in the future.

I'm reminded—several years ago, there was a TV car ad. It was about replacing the filter in your cars. The mechanic said, "You can either pay me now or pay me later." I like to think of that as, that's all about being proactive. Of course, looking at employers today, I would hope that employers would take the advice of that mechanic back in that TV ad, and that is, take proactive steps so that they can minimize, if not eliminate, the mental health aspects in the workplace today. It will lessen their costs and, overall, it will lessen the health care costs of our Ontario government.

Of course, this is also an issue that I have a personal connection to. Speaker, for 25 years, I was a motivational

speaker, teacher, trainer. I specialized in stress management, communications, staff motivation, conflict management, all of which were designed to help staff deal with change in the workplace. As we know, change can sometimes be extremely stressful because of that fear of the unknown. We need to be able to give our employees coping devices so that they know how to and can learn how to handle stress in their lives, because stress can be a 24/7 challenge, not just to employees but to every one of us even in this Legislature.

The personal toll on employees and their families is enormous. The financial cost to their employers is also significant. By adopting a voluntary standard, employers have the opportunity to improve the quality of their workplace and increase productivity.

Supporting mental health helps the individual, the employee, their family, their employer and society in general. They're able to keep working and contribute during tough economic times. By keeping Ontarians healthy and in the workplace, we can save money across the province as less people are forced to go on disability and seek treatment.

1520

I'm an advocate of: A happy employee is a productive employee, and also, a healthy employee. So let's keep those endorphins flowing. Endorphins, of course, are produced by the body; it's a natural chemical 100 times more powerful than morphine. That would keep those health costs down as well.

Speaker, I support this motion. I'm very happy that we were able to address mental health today. However, this discussion must extend beyond the walls of this Legislature for true change to happen. I hope that Ontario employers and Ontarians will keep talking and keep taking proactive steps about mental health and help reduce the stigma surrounding it. Business and government cannot afford to ignore the mental health of Ontarians. Together, we can work together to ensure that we develop and take proactive steps to create a healthy Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: One might ask how society and how workplaces might react when an employee's body breaks down. Suppose you break a bone, sprain your ankle, hurt your knee, come down with a virus or contract a disease. Is it reasonable to expect that one's family, friends, employers, neighbours and community will rally in support of someone with a body that needs to heal? The answer, of course, is yes. It's a no-brainer. The thought that one might do anything other than be as helpful and supportive as you can for an injured friend, for an injured co-worker or a family member is abhorrent—it's just not who we, as Canadians, are.

So how about a person with an injured mind? Now it's not quite so clear. Not that long ago, I remember a stand-up comic with a little bit of what he thought was dark humour, saying that anybody that would see a psychiatrist needs to have his head read. That's what makes the

bill introduced by my friend and learned seatmate from Oakville so important. What he's usually too modest to tell people is that he did his master's thesis on this topic, and its title is self-explanatory: Workplace Mental Health and Competitive Advantage. It's those last two words, "competitive advantage," which is what this motion is all about.

Today is a typical day in Canada, which means, as two of the previous speakers have noted, that about 500,000 people across Canada have missed work. That works out to about 170,000 lost days today in the province of Ontario. It's like losing the entire city of Kingston for a single day.

The member for Oakville's thesis uses this quote from a 2006 Senate of Canada report on mental illness:

"In no other field, except perhaps leprosy, has there been as much confusion, misdirection and discrimination against the patient, as in mental illness.... Mental illness, even today, is all too often considered a crime to be punished, a sin to be expiated, a possessing demon to be exorcised, a disgrace to be hushed up, a personality weakness to be deplored or a welfare problem to be handled as cheaply as possible."

The paradox is that small and medium-sized companies, for whom a single employee and his or her talents and expertise and skills may be strategic, are less inclined than a larger company to set aside funds and to have a plan to manage mental illness. Stress gives rise to mental illness, though much research shows that work plays a therapeutic role in a person's recovery from mental illness. The paradox, as the member from Oakville's thesis shows, is that the majority of those with a serious mental illness cannot find work. People have no issue talking about an allergy, a bone fracture or a muscle sprain. We need people to feel as free to talk about being depressed or to be coping with bipolar disorder.

Recent research shows that a company's performance is enhanced when it shows it cares about the welfare of its employees and understands the impact that good working conditions have on the stress levels and well-being of its employees. Insurers now offer advice to their clients on enhancing workplace mental health. It's the right thing to do, it's the compassionate thing to do, and it's also good business. Not surprisingly, the companies that have been the most proactive in promoting mental health are also seen as the most desirable places in Canada to work.

This motion is an important statement for all Ontarians by the people whom they send to their Legislature to speak on their behalf, and I urge its support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity speak on this very important motion. I want to congratulate the member from Oakville for bringing this matter forward.

The health and safety of Ontario workers is our number one priority. This includes mental health in the workplace. This is not only an important social issue, but

it is of key importance in ensuring productive workplaces and a growing and sustainable economy.

The new national standard on psychological health and safety in the workplace will help workplace parties to recognize mental health as a key dimension of a healthy workplace to support both social and economic goals.

The Ontario Ministry of Labour recognizes the value of employers and employees working together to develop strong workplace practices to create supportive work environments to help address mental stress and promote healthy living. In fact, on February 19, our government stated in its throne speech that it will continue to expand access to mental health services and support efforts to reduce stigma for men and women coping with mental illness. It also committed to working with partners in all related sectors to coordinate the best response to these challenges.

One area that's very important is around job-related post-traumatic mental stress, or PTSD. In September 2012, our government, through the Ministry of Labour, announced the launch of a round table to help workers who are faced with PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder. The round table supports our ministry's goal to encourage employers and employees to work together to develop strong workplace practices to reduce the risk of workers developing PTSD. The focus of the round table is to enable workplace parties to share approaches to deal with traumatic mental stress in the workplace through a multi-sectoral exchange. That round table is continuing with its work, which is extremely important.

Also, at the WSIB level, the board is providing compensation for traumatic mental stress when there is a clear link between the work and the injury or illness. Claims for PTSD are being adjudicated by a specialized team of case managers on a case-by-case basis, according to WSIB policy.

There is a fair amount of work that is going on, ensuring better mental health in the workplace, but of course we can do more. These are best practices that have been outlined which are part of the motion. It is extremely important that we ask our partners in the private sector to take those steps to make our workplaces healthy for everyone.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Oakville, you have two minutes.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It is a pleasure to rise once again and to thank the members from Whitby–Oshawa, from Nickel Belt, from Oak Ridges, Chatham–Kent–Middlesex, Mississauga–Streetsville and Ottawa Centre for their kind comments. I believe that the motion looks like it has the support of at least those members who spoke today, and I sincerely hope that it does achieve its passage.

I wanted to thank Kimbalin Kelly from the CMHA Halton for turning out and supporting this today. From her work with CMHA Halton, she will tell you that employment is a major part of a person's recovery from mental illness.

I wanted to tell you what a few other people said to support what looks to be the pleasure of the House: that this motion pass.

This is from Jeff Moat, who's the president of Partners for Mental Health. He says, "When over half a million Canadians miss work each and every day because of mental health issues, the time has simply come to take action."

1530

Also, we have a quote here from the CEO of CMHA: "We envision and strive for an Ontario where mental health is recognized and promoted as a vital component of overall health, safety and wellness for all citizens, and the endorsement of this standard will be an encouraging step towards this vision."

Speaker, I think when corporations are faced with the option of doing something or not, they often view things as a cost. They often think, "Well, that's going to cost me money. Times are tough. I can't afford that money. We can't afford that money. The shareholders can't afford that money." The proof is overwhelming on this issue: Those employers that treat mental health with the seriousness it deserves, those employers that invest in mental health, are the most profitable companies. The employers that look after their human capital as well as their financial capital are the corporations in Ontario that are going to succeed.

By supporting this motion today, we help Ontario business and we help all Ontario citizens.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll take the vote at the end of private members' public business.

FAIRNESS IS A TWO-WAY STREET ACT
(CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY),
2013

LOI DE 2013 PORTANT QUE LA JUSTICE
N'EST PAS À SENS UNIQUE (MOBILITÉ DE
LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE DANS L'INDUSTRIE
DE LA CONSTRUCTION)

Mr. MacLaren moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 80, An Act respecting labour mobility in the construction industry aimed at restricting access to those taking advantage of Ontario's policy of free mobility / Projet de loi 80, Loi sur la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre dans l'industrie de la construction visant à restreindre l'accès de ceux qui profitent de la politique de libre mobilité de l'Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House today to speak in support of Bill 80, the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act. This bill is in response to Quebec's unfair practice of effectively stopping Ontario construction contractors and workers from working in

Quebec by creating a mountain of red tape, permits, fees and harassing inspections and fines. Bill 80 will slam the door on Quebec construction contractors who want to bid on Ontario provincial and municipal government projects.

Our message to the Quebec government is this: If you are going to shut Ontario construction contractors out of Quebec, then we are going to shut Quebec construction contractors out of Ontario. Quebec's disdain for the common-law rights of Ontarians, specifically an individual's right to freely associate and participate in a free market, demands a provincial response.

Normally, Conservatives do not approve of the creation of protectionist interprovincial barriers which restrict labour mobility and trade—just the opposite. We prefer free markets and want barriers removed. We want open borders that would allow the free, unrestricted movement of construction contractors and workers between our two provinces. However, until the Quebec government comes to the negotiating table and true labour mobility is restored in practice, Bill 80 should be enacted and enforced. Our objective is to restore unfettered labour mobility in a competitive marketplace and ensure that Ontario construction companies and workers are treated fairly.

To understand why this bill is needed, let me tell you a few stories of how Quebec's unfair labour practices impact Ontario workers.

Walter Pamic is an Ottawa electrical contractor. He and his staff attempted to acquire the required permits that would allow him to bid on jobs in Gatineau, Quebec. After 30 or more hours of filling out forms, he and his staff threw up their hands in frustration and quit, because they didn't think they would ever be able to satisfy all the requirements of the application process. So Walter Pamic's company is not allowed to work in Quebec.

If Ontario dump truck drivers go into Quebec, they will be fined just because they have Ontario licence plates on their trucks. The Greater Ottawa Truckers Association represents hundreds of dump truck owner-operators who are short of work and desperately need the opportunity to bid on Quebec jobs if their businesses are to survive. These dump truck owners get very angry when they see Quebec dump trucks working in Ontario while they are not allowed to go to Quebec. It is not fair.

An Ontario man bought a new dump truck from a dealership in Quebec. The truck needed some warranty repair work done at the dealership in Quebec. He was told that he could not drive the truck to the Quebec dealership, but instead would have to load it onto a Quebec-licensed flatbed trailer and have it hauled to the Quebec dealership for the required work. That is absurd.

Here is another example: In order for Ontario truckers to deliver products sold to Quebec customers, they are required to apply and pay for a day permit for their truck stating what day they will be in Quebec, what bridges they will enter and exit Quebec from, what highways they will drive on, the address of every customer they will deliver to, and at what time they will leave Quebec. This is ridiculous.

Ontarians experience all these barriers to enter Quebec, yet when we look around Ontario, we see many Quebec contractors, workers and trucks. Although we do not object to Quebecers being in Ontario, because we believe in free markets, it is galling to Ontarians, because Quebec does not allow our workers into their province.

Bill 80, the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act, is not new. It was passed into law in 1999, when it received support from MPPs from all three parties. It was then repealed by the McGuinty Liberal government in 2006, when the two provincial governments signed the Agreement on Labour Mobility and Recognition Of Qualifications, Skills and Work Experience in the Construction Industry. Ontario has abided by the intent of this agreement, and Quebec workers come into Ontario, as they should, but Quebec has not abided by the agreement, and Ontario workers are stopped from going to Quebec. So far, the Ontario Liberal government has refused to hold Quebec to account, and there has been no consequence to Quebec for this hurtful and unfair infraction. The Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act is the consequence.

To address the question of skilled labour shortages in Ottawa and the need for Quebec labour, let me explain. Section 2 of the act provides a special exemption for (a) Quebec workers who are working for an Ontario contractor, (b) Quebec workers whose specific skills are necessary to a specific project, and (c) Quebec workers who are needed in Ontario because of a shortage of skilled workers. These same exemptions were included in the original Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act of 1999.

We have strong support for this bill in eastern Ontario across the general public, from construction companies and their workers, and from numerous construction associations. The following associations expressed their support: the Greater Ottawa Truckers Association, the National Capital Heavy Construction Association, the Ontario Electrical League, and the Ottawa Sewer and Watermain Construction Association. I have letters of support here from all four of those organizations.

Leaders of municipal governments particularly support Bill 80. Mayor Philippe Barette of Témiscaming, Quebec, supports Bill 80. He wants access to Ontario construction workers to service his town, because Quebec construction workers live three to four hours away from his municipality and are therefore very expensive for the people in his municipality to hire. I met with Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli and Mayor Barette in Témiscaming, at which time Mayor Barette expressed to the media his very real frustration with Quebec provincial government protectionism.

1540

At another media event at the Quebec border east of Cornwall, with both Jim McDonnell, MPP for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, and Ian McLeod, mayor of South Glengarry township, they expressed their disappointment with Quebec's protectionism. It is here that we witnessed first-hand Quebec delivery trucks coming into Ontario to make deliveries while Ontario trucks couldn't go there. It's not right, it's not fair and it has to stop.

Over the summer, I met with 17 of the city of Ottawa's 23 councillors and asked them to support the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act. Almost all of those councillors were supportive of Bill 80. I found this to be a constructive collaboration between provincial and municipal politicians from different parties working together to help Ontario workers. It was politics as it should be.

When asked if he will support Bill 80, the Minister of Labour replied that he will wait for the five-year review of how the labour mobility agreement is working. The agreement was signed seven years ago and no review has ever been done or even requested. It would appear that we may be waiting a long time for this study to be done. The time for studying the problem is over. As a resident of Ottawa, all the minister has to do is talk to Ottawa contractors and workers and he will find out very quickly that there is a very real labour mobility problem.

How is it that the minister in charge of this portfolio is still unaware of the problem when everyone has been complaining about it for years? If your car has a flat tire, you don't study the problem; you fix the tire and get back on the road. Minister, it is time to get the labour mobility car back on the road.

Bill 80, the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act of 2013, is exactly the same, word for word, as the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act that was passed into law in 1999. The reason we need this bill passed today is exactly the same reason that it was passed in 1999: Quebec has created a mountain of red tape that effectively stops Ontario construction contractors and workers from working in Quebec.

In 1999, there was support from members of all three parties to pass the bill into law. Today, in 2013, we again need support from members of all three parties to pass this bill into law. It is the same bill to fix the same problem, and we need the same support from the same parties. I ask you, my colleagues in this historic House of government, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, to set aside party allegiances and do the right thing: Vote yes for Bill 80, Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act, to help Ontario construction contractors and workers get back to work. These workers are asking for our help, and they deserve our support. It is the right thing to do now, just as it was in 1999.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of our party to speak to Bill 80, entitled Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act.

New Democrats understand that there continue to be irritants regarding construction mobility between Quebec and Ontario. We also understand that this government urgently needs to increase assistance to small contractors who continue to encounter frustrations in dealing with the paperwork required to obtain work in Quebec. However, this bill is not the answer and would only make things worse.

It is opposed by all major eastern Ontario construction stakeholders on both the employer and union sides. For

example, both the Ottawa Construction Association, representing the contractors, and the Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec Building Trades Council, have been very outspoken on their opposition to this bill. They believe, as do New Democrats, that the passage of this bill would wipe out significant gains over the past few years by all major construction stakeholders and believe that it is better to work out the remaining barriers through the Jobs Protection Office and other programs such as Head Start.

There has been significant progress regarding labour mobility between Ontario and Quebec in the construction sector since the Labour Mobility Act was passed in 2006 and the Jobs Protection Office and complimentary measures were put in place.

Major stakeholders are particularly supportive of the Head Start program that was created in 2009 to assist Ontario workers to satisfy Quebec credentials and to direct Ontario contractors through the Quebec requirements for compliance to obtain work in Quebec.

In addition, on September 11, 2009, a trade and co-operation agreement between Ontario and Quebec that included the 2006 labour mobility agreement was signed. According to both employers and union groups, this agreement added clarity to issues like transportation, public procurement, regulation, economy, energy, co-operation and dispute resolutions. The above issues are precisely the issues Bill 80 is supposed to solve but does not.

For background on this bill, Bill 80, the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act, is based on a statute that was originally passed in 1999 and repealed in 2006 when the Labour Mobility Act was passed by the present government. So it only applies to the construction sector. In the 1990s there were some Quebec laws that made it difficult for Ontario-owned construction companies and Ontario tradespeople to work in Quebec. The 1999 act retaliated against those certain laws in Quebec by placing similar restrictions on Quebec tradespeople and Quebec-based companies seeking work in Ontario. The 1990 bill carried on a voice vote on May 4, and it seems, at that time, all parties supported it.

But in the 1990s, the labour market in the construction industry in Quebec was highly regulated and highly unionized. In addition, the province of Quebec had formal and informal policies that favoured Quebec-based contractors when awarding large infrastructure projects; for example, Hydro-Québec essentially restricted the awarding of contracts to Quebec-owned firms. Skilled tradespersons from Ontario found it difficult to work in Quebec at least in part because of the strict limits on what trades could perform such work. Ontario workers found it difficult to join locals even in the same union.

From Quebec's perspective, the 1990s restrictions were justified. More Quebec union members felt that Ontario firms were only competitive because they paid their workers lower wages. They also believed that Ontario firms often ignored Quebec's strong occupational health and safety laws. However, it is also true that when

construction jobs were not available in Quebec, many unionized labourers sought non-union jobs in eastern Ontario.

Although the Ontario and Quebec governments reached an agreement in 1996 to allow more labour mobility, by 1998 it was clear that the situation had not improved. Unemployment in Ontario's construction industry was higher than the province's average as a whole. The Mike Harris government at the time passed the Fairness in a Two-Way Street Act in 1999, which had the following restrictions: that no Ontario government contract could be awarded to a firm that was based in a restricted province, although the only such province defined under those regulations passed at that time was Quebec. This applied not only to provincial government but municipal boards, municipal governments, school boards and government enterprises such as Hydro One. The law also applied to the subcontractors of the bidders.

Although the legislation was passed in 1999, this was largely an attempt to force Quebec back to the bargaining table. However the situation continued to worsen and the act came into effect in 2002.

There have been some real impacts of that original legislation. According to major eastern Ontario construction stakeholders, the 1999 act had a limited effect on construction mobility, although the situation did not grow any worse. Many Quebec companies that hired large numbers of Ontario workers, such as SNC-Lavalin, were unintentionally restricted from bidding for contracts and had to be exempted from the effect of the act. In addition, most Quebec companies of sufficient size set up an Ontario company in order to comply with the new law, which put most of the burden on smaller companies that could not afford to have a dual presence in both provinces.

The situation following the Labour Mobility Act of 2006—again, Bill 80 seeks to revive the Harris-era labour bill that was repealed and replaced by the Ontario-Quebec labour mobility agreement in 2006. It was replaced after years of escalating trade disputes, even after 2002, that resulted in Ontario construction workers being unfairly barred from Quebec construction projects, without clear dispute resolution mechanisms.

1550

According to major construction associations and building trade unions, the 2006 labour mobility agreement not only helped reopen the Quebec border to Ontario tradespeople, but it also created the Jobs Protection Office to represent Ontario tradespeople working in Quebec. Obviously, as I mentioned before, it was followed by the Head Start program in 2009 to assist Ontario workers to satisfy Quebec credentials.

I could go on at length about the nature of this bill. Suffice it to say, we understand that the different jurisdictions in this province, when it comes to labour mobility, are complicated. Going from Ontario to Quebec certainly poses a whole host of issues. As a former construction worker, although I've never worked in Quebec, I certainly know fellow colleagues who have

worked in Quebec and understand that it is difficult and poses some problems, specifically if that is a new, I guess, venture for a small contractor.

Similarly, there are difficulties entering into other jurisdictions, such as Alberta. There are several firms in southwestern Ontario that are looking to increase their presence into the province of Alberta and often need some assistance through intergovernmental programs to find their feet, so to speak.

What I think is happening here is that we have a small subset of contractors who certainly don't have the ability to enter into that market in a real, tangible way. They see an opportunity but yet, for whatever reason, are precluded or excluded from being able to enter into contracts and bidding on those jobs as other larger firms would be.

I understand that frustration. It certainly makes sense for us to make overtures to those smaller firms to see if there can be assistance provided through, as I stated here, the Head Start program that does facilitate some of the legislative requirements there.

However, this bill here poses, really, the nuclear option from our standpoint. We see that it definitely will put a wall up between the province of Ontario and Quebec and shut out really any progress that has been made for workers and contractors who have developed and worked through the differences in legislation and differences in code and in processes. In terms of construction work, that presented barriers in the past.

I certainly was not privy to those initial discussions and those initial tensions between the province of Ontario and the province of Quebec. I can only feel that at that time, when these bills were being introduced, there were larger implications and larger problems that were sort of on the surface of what the bill is attempting to do here today; some issues that had national ramifications, issues that have been dealt with, thankfully, since then. And I think we're making progress still, to work with the province of Quebec and other jurisdictions to ensure the free flow of labour, but it's an ongoing process. It's an evolutionary process and one that I think this bill certainly doesn't assist in.

This one puts the brakes through any co-operation, any sense of working together, any sense that we can be complimentary in our jurisdictions and actually find opportunities for firms on both sides of the interprovincial border to work together, one that our party has clearly indicated doesn't address the need of those firms that actually do require the assistance and can use the assistance. This simply builds up a massive interjurisdictional wall for labour to move freely.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I think that you can sense, and members of the House can sense, that New Democrats stand opposed to Bill 80. We do understand that there will be an ongoing need for us, as a Legislature, to identify areas where we can assist in ensuring that our construction workers and companies can cross into Quebec and facilitate the work that they do, as well as ensuring that Quebec workers can come over here and assist in our provincial affairs and our provincial

construction projects that they may be specialized in. Of course, we know that there are certainly some great firms out of Quebec that do some wonderful work. Let's not build up trade barrier walls and labour mobility walls that certainly don't need to be put into place. We can have a clear conscience on this, we can have a clear vision, but this certainly is not a bill that will allow us to get there.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the time given today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me to speak on this matter.

I do want to start first by thanking the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills for bringing this bill. I know he's been working hard on this matter. He and I have had conversations about this bill as well. As much as we don't agree on the merit of the bill and we disagree as to the impact of the bill, I do want to thank him for the work he has done. I also want to thank the member from Essex for his comments. A lot of points that I wanted to raise he made quite eloquently, so thanks to the member from Essex for his wisdom on this issue.

I think, Speaker, all members in the House—the intention of the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills as well—desire to create more jobs for Ontarians. I think we share that goal. I think where we part our ways is the way in which it's trying to be accomplished through this legislation.

We, as the government, are of the view that this bill is going to kill jobs, this bill is going to undermine the great work that has been done in terms of building infrastructure in Ontario as opposed to the other way around. This is not the way to ensure that we have more jobs being created in Ontario. Building walls, building trade barriers within Canada to an important province like Quebec, which is next door—or anybody internationally through other countries—is not how we grow an economy. I think that is a fundamental difference between us and the Conservatives in this particular regard. This is the wrong approach.

This bill, as the sponsoring member himself acknowledged, was brought forward for the first time 14 years ago by the Harris-Hudak government. Now, I don't understand, if this bill did not work 14 years ago, how is it going to work today and help issues? I think what we have accomplished through the labour mobility agreement of 2006, and then further enhancements that were made in 2011, has resulted in significant improvement in the relationship, has resulted in significant labour mobility between the two provinces.

There were some serious challenges with the bill back in 1999. There were numerous exemptions that were created in that bill because it caused a lot of problems, notably exemptions of many large companies based out of Quebec that do a lot of work in Ontario, build infrastructure and create jobs—companies like Dufferin Construction Co., Lafarge Canada Inc. or SNC-Lavalin, for instance, just three big companies.

I want to note that SNC-Lavalin right now has the contract in Ottawa to build the light rail system. It's a \$2.1-billion project; \$600 million of that funding is coming from the province of Ontario. We will seriously jeopardize those kind of projects, not to mention the thousands of jobs that particular project is going to create in the Ottawa area for both Ottawa contractors and Ottawa workers. There was also a legal challenge that took place, back in early 2000, against the city of Ottawa because of this particular bill that was existing as a law, and the city lost that legal case, all highlighting that there are some significant challenges associated with this particular bill and it's not going to really help in making sure that we enhance labour mobility.

1600

I do want to mention many key players in the construction sector in Ottawa that are against this bill. One of the largest associations is the Ottawa Construction Association, which represents contractors in our area. They have been very much opposed to this bill. Their president, John DeVries, actually wrote a column entitled "Let's Not Bring Back Fairness is a Two-Way Street." He gives many reasons in that article, but mentions that bringing back Fairness is a Two-Way Street is not a solution supported by the Ottawa Construction Association. Similarly, the Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association, which represents many developers in the city of Ottawa, is not supportive of the bill.

But there have been a lot of benefits for Ontario companies and Ontario workers due to the bill. For example, the Mechanical Contractors Association of Ottawa informs me that there are eight Ottawa-based companies that are doing work on the Quebec side worth about \$150 million as we speak. That's very significant, because they are using both Ontario- and Quebec-qualified skilled trades to successfully complete these projects—\$150 million of work that is being done by companies in Ottawa on the Quebec side.

Similarly, if you talk to the elevator contractors in Ottawa, they will tell you that the majority of the work that has been done in terms of maintaining elevators and escalators on the Quebec side, in Gatineau, is being done by companies that are located in Ottawa and by workers that live on the Ontario side.

Lastly, I recently found out that the bricklayers, for example, under Local 7 of the building trades, have performed, in 2012 alone, about 107,000 hours of work on the Quebec side. That's just in one year of Ontario bricklayers doing work on the Quebec side. That, I think, highlights very significantly the kind of positive impact on our economy that we have been having in Ontario as a result of the labour mobility agreement.

The city of Ottawa is not supportive of this bill. In fact, the member opposite who brought this bill tried to convince the city to endorse, through a motion, this particular bill, and the council refused to do so. They want to enhance further the labour mobility. In fact, the mayor of Ottawa—a former member of this Legislature,

Jim Watson—had written to Mr. MacLaren indicating that the city does not support this bill because it does not correct the concerns about worker mobility. In fact, he said, “I could not support your private member’s bill because it would not improve the situation for workers in Ottawa.”

Not to mention, lastly, the building trades in Ottawa, who have been very pleased by the labour mobility agreement because it has given opportunities for skilled-trades workers on the Ottawa side to be able to work on the Quebec side. In one of their statements recently, the building trades mentioned that, “Bill 80 would kill jobs and eliminate future opportunities by placing a wall at the border and blocking Ontario workers from working in Quebec and/or Quebec firms from doing work in Ontario. That is why we are calling on all MPPs to stand up and oppose this devastating bill.”

I think these are all valid points, and it is important that we heed this advice. I do want to acknowledge, though, the presence of Mr. Ron Barr from the Greater Ottawa Truckers Association. Mr. Barr and I have had the opportunity to meet and to talk about some of the concerns that the truckers and haulers have felt in our area. I have given him my commitment to work with him to see how we can find those solutions that will help his members to be able to access and do more work. I look forward to that opportunity.

Lastly, I will just encourage all members to vote against this bill, because this is not how we are going to create jobs in Ontario. We need to continue to enhance labour mobility between the two provinces and to develop and build our economy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It’s a pleasure to be able to speak today in support of Bill 80, the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act. My riding of Nipissing borders the province of Quebec. I have seen first-hand the inequity the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills is addressing here and the negative consequences it has for residents on both sides of the Ottawa River. I’ll be giving a specific example very shortly.

Barrier-free trade is a cornerstone of the economy. The ability for workers and contractors to operate across provincial borders is essential.

Ontario and Quebec have the busiest border trade in Canada, representing a quarter of all of this country’s interprovincial trade. Construction labour is a key part of this relationship. But right now, there is an unlevel playing field. Quebec is not living up to interprovincial agreements that are supposed to guarantee free movement between Quebec and Ontario for construction workers and contractors, whereas Ontario is living up to the open-door, open-border policy.

Over the past 20 years, there have been five agreements on labour mobility signed between Ontario and Quebec, all of which have been ignored by Quebec. This means Quebec construction contractors and workers have been able to easily work in Ontario. They undercut

Ontario’s bidding prices for work because they don’t pay Ontario WSIB premiums and retail sales tax. Ontario contractors and workers cannot work in Quebec due to mountains of red tape, redundant accreditation and harassment from provincial enforcement officers. This is unfair and has gone on for too long.

Let me give you an example. The former president of Tembec, a 1,000-employee company in the small community of Témiscaming, Quebec, about 45 miles from my home in North Bay, was telling me a story one day. On Christmas Day, his natural gas furnace went on the fritz. He called the contractor in North Bay, the closest community to Témiscaming, Quebec, and said, “I know it’s Christmas Day. I need you here.” The guy said, “Yes, of course, I’ll be there. Where are you?” “Well, I’m in Témiscaming.” “I can’t come. I can’t work in Témiscaming, Quebec. I can’t get the accreditation. I will not pay the tens of thousands of dollars of fees that I need to pay just to cross the border to fix your furnace.”

Now, this is in the dead of winter. He had to wait four days till a Quebec contractor from another community quite far away—three hours away—was able to come in. Four days in the winter with no heat in their home because of this law. That is why Témiscaming, Quebec, Mayor Philippe Barrette stood up, not only for Quebec but for Ontario. He says this bill is driving costs up. When that contractor four hours away does get the call to come into Témiscaming, the rates have skyrocketed. That’s a great example I want you to think about. Just think about what you’re doing to Ontario. Supporting this bill creates jobs and supports the economy of Ontario. Not to support this continues to hurt the 600,000 men and women who woke up this morning without a job that you’re not helping.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I grew up on a farm just a couple of kilometres inside the Ontario border, so I’ve witnessed the number of Quebec workers and contractors working in our area, and I’ve heard from and know many of the private plumbers, carpenters, electricians, contractors and more from my area who are not allowed to work across the border in Quebec. It’s not fair, and it’s not right.

A friend tells me of a house that’s being built today in Lancaster, a little town about seven miles from the border—we hear the government talking about how things have changed—not an Ontario licence plate to be found in the yard. Not only that; the supplies all come from Quebec, the cement trucks all come from Quebec. There’s no requirement in Ontario for these companies to collect sales tax, so this is tax revenue that we’re not getting. So there’s a 13% advantage before we even start. This is a huge disadvantage for Ontario contractors and suppliers who are trying to make a living in a border town. Those who have attempted to license their vehicles and businesses to allow them to work inside Quebec are hit with a huge wall of regulation, red tape and harassment when they try to cross the border.

We talk about small companies. I worked for a small company—Bell Canada. We had all the licensing needed

to cross the border, but the word was, when they had the inspection across the bridge, we didn't cross—we had an area of Grenville across from Hawkesbury that we looked after—because they seized the vehicles and you lost a day's work. I remember talking to one of our administrators in Toronto who set the licence up. He was furious. He said, "You know, I could travel to New Orleans a lot easier than I could travel to Montreal to get one of our trucks fixed."

That's just the way it is in this province. They will not work by the rules. It's a huge disadvantage for people. I know that the largest companies can get work, when there is a shortage in Quebec, but the rest of us can't.

Construction and paving companies in my area in Cornwall cannot cross the border into Quebec to deliver their concrete or building supplies, but the opposite is not true. It's not the way we want to be in Ontario, it's not the way it should be, but it's the way it is.

1610

A friend of mine—a local electrician who this government actually put out of business after 50 years of work because of his master electrician's licence—was delivering his daughter to McGill, her residence. His truck is seized because his name is on the door, and he's fined. That's what goes on. He's not even working in Quebec, but that's what happens.

I think it's time that we make these changes and fix what's happening here. I commend our member from Carleton—Mississippi Mills for the bill and look forward to voting for it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to say a few words in support of Bill 80, the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act, which has been brought forward, of course, by our esteemed colleague the member from Carleton—Mississippi Mills.

The purpose of this bill, of course, is to deal with the significant labour mobility issue between Ontario and Quebec whereby Ontario workers and businesses are effectively prohibited from working in Quebec while the opposite is true for Quebec workers and businesses in Ontario.

With over 600,000 people out of work in Ontario today, it really is important to create a level playing field and opportunities for Ontario businesses and workers. I really don't understand why both the government and the third party in this kind of a context aren't standing up for Ontario and supporting this bill. They certainly did in 1999 when it was originally introduced. In fact, it did receive all-party support at that time.

I have to say I have a bit of a personal interest in this bill because it was originally introduced in this Legislature on April 28, 1999, by my predecessor and somebody I know pretty well: Jim Flaherty, who was then the Minister of Labour. When this was originally introduced, he noted at the time that this was already a 30-year problem. Now it's getting closer to a 45-year

problem, and it still hasn't been addressed, notwithstanding other labour mobility agreements that are simply not working.

I would just like to quote one thing that Mr. Flaherty commented on in his speech. He said:

"I would rather not have to introduce this bill. Our clear preference is free labour mobility and open borders. We believe that free trade and labour mobility are vital to the economic growth of both Ontario and Quebec.

"That's why I urge the Quebec government to act now to create a level playing field. That way we can dismantle the barriers we've been forced to erect and both provinces can start enjoying the benefits of free trade and open borders."

Certainly that's our preference as well, but we're clearly not getting the attention of the Quebec government. It's simply time to stand up for Ontario workers and businesses, and I would urge the other parties in this Legislature to do the same.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You know, it's interesting that you quote Minister Flaherty, because he's done some very good things. Right now, the HST has reduced business costs in Ontario by about \$8.5 billion in the last year and is one of the significant factors—

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's actually your federal Conservative Party that said that. I'm quoting the federal finance minister: \$8.5 billion in reduced business costs in Ontario alone from the HST. That contributed significantly to the 163% job recovery here in Ontario and the general uplift in the country. That is a view that the Liberal Party and the federal Conservative Party have actually agreed on, and that tax reform was quite dynamic.

The other piece where I also agree with Mr. Flaherty—and I have said many times in this House in a very non-partisan way that he is one of the best finance ministers this country has had, and his leadership role internationally has been very important.

Applause.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm glad the members opposite are clapping, because life in this House would be so much better if they shared the view of Minister Sousa and Minister Flaherty, and Mr. Fedeli would join and make it a trio; we would get a lot more co-operation. But then you didn't support the HST. Had we followed you, I think the estimates are that we'd probably have a couple of hundred thousand fewer jobs in Ontario right now, if we and the federal government—in fact, our job recovery would be as much as 30% less.

So if you can't take it from us, because it's a little humiliating, maybe you could just follow your federal party's finance minister, because we seem to be getting along better with him than you do sometimes.

The second piece that is really important in trade, Mr. Speaker—and I know my friend Minister Duguid and I have spent a lot of time working on labour training and

share some passion for this. We'll tell you that one of the other things Mr. Flaherty did, which I was very aware of and this government was very supportive of and has taken similar steps, was to reduce the taxes on un-assembled parts coming into Ontario to accelerate manufacturing and assembly. That is one of the reasons that our manufacturing sector is doing very well. As you know, there's a challenge there because we're making more automobiles than we ever have before because of that. Now the challenge is, what were those unassembled parts, Mr. Speaker? Those unassembled parts were modern automotive robotics that have made our automobile plants some of the most productive in the world.

It would be nice to have a sophisticated debate here. I listened very carefully to give you some feedback, and if you want to debate me, having an elevated debate on substance here every once in a while isn't a bad thing. The opposition party has made this point, that somehow there's a problem in the auto sector because we have less people making more cars or producing more cars, and it employs fewer people. The Conservative Party position provincially is the opposite of their counterparts federally. Their federal government counterparts point out, as we do, that the auto sector in Ontario is the strongest that it ever has been and that it is that automation—it was those tax changes that actually allowed the plants to be more competitive and produce more cars with fewer input, which is why—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Am I finished?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Yes. Further debate?

Mr. John Yakubuski: It's a pleasure to speak on this bill today. Let me begin by starting out with what my colleague said in the first place and what Mr. Flaherty said in 1999. We'd rather not be doing this, but agreement after agreement after agreement that has been reached by this province and Quebec has failed to be honoured by the province of Quebec because they look for loopholes in which to place new restrictions on mobility of labour coming across from the province of Ontario.

You're left with one action. When we're continually disadvantaged, you have to take strong action. That's something that I know this government is not used to doing. It's not in their DNA. They like to namby-pamby around the issue to the detriment of Ontario and they would rather stand up for Quebec workers than they would stand up for Ontario workers.

Every once in a while, Speaker, when the bully has had his free run in the schoolyard and people try to say to the bully, "What you're doing is wrong. You need to stop doing what you're doing," you know what happens? The bully keeps doing it. But I'll tell you what stops the bully. It's when somebody stands up to him and punches him in the nose. He gets it. He figures it out.

If this bill passes, at least then we're saying in the province of Ontario that we're serious about this issue;

we actually care; that we're going to do something to try to level the playing field between our province and the province of Quebec. This is not about being against workers in the province of Quebec. This is about supporting workers in the province of Ontario.

I say to the Premier, if you don't want to support this act, well maybe you need to start doing something to make it easier for Ontario workers to get work in the province of Quebec. The next time you go to one of your so-called Premiers' conferences—you know, those three- or four-day shindigs—I'm going to tell you, maybe you need to stop berating and crying for Stephen Harper to fix the problems that you've created by your financial mismanagement in Ontario and maybe you need to sit down with your provincial counterparts and work out real mobility legislation that works.

In the absence of that, I would urge all the members on the other side of the House, are you going to make your choice? Are you going to stand up for Ontario or are you going to continue to sit on your hands when the interests of Ontario and its workers are at stake? You have your choice today, and I urge every member on the other side to stand with us in the PC caucus, to stand with us in eastern Ontario and to stand with Ontario workers. I know it's foreign to you to do that on the Liberal side. And the stuff that I heard from the NDP was just rich. It's time to stand up for Ontario workers. You have your opportunity today.

1620

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my colleagues in the House who commented on our bill: Essex, Ottawa Centre, Toronto Centre, Nipissing, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Whitby–Oshawa, and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I would like to say that the last four seemed to have a pretty firm grasp that we do have a problem and that we need to fix it, so I'd like to thank them for their words.

Recently, Premier Wynne stated, "There are issues that we agree on, issues that are non-partisan, and we should be able to move ahead on those." Bill 80, Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act, is completely non-partisan. Demanding fairness for Ontario workers is not a partisan issue. It is the right thing to do.

Ontario construction workers are asking for our help. This is the job of elected representatives: to defend our citizens against bullies. Ontario construction workers, contractors and truck drivers are asking us, their elected representatives, to vote yes to Bill 80. It is time once again to pressure the Quebec provincial government to put a stop to their bully tactics and level the playing field for Ontario workers.

Given Ontario's stumbling economy and high unemployment, this bill is not only non-partisan, it is a no-brainer.

Passing this legislation will send a clear message to the electorate that when Ontario citizens face an outside threat, the parties will unite to defend them.

Vote yes to Bill 80 and send that clear message to the people of Ontario and the people of Quebec that we support Ontario workers.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Sit down, please.

The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

RADON AWARENESS
AND PREVENTION ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION
AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION
CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will first deal with ballot item number 34, standing in the name of Mr. Qaadri.

Mr. Qaadri has moved second reading of Bill 96, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I request that the bill be sent to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Qaadri has requested that the bill be referred to general government. Agreed? Agreed.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH
AND SAFETY

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Flynn has moved private member's notice of motion number 41. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

FAIRNESS IS A TWO-WAY STREET ACT
(CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY),
2013

LOI DE 2013 PORTANT QUE LA JUSTICE
N'EST PAS À SENS UNIQUE (MOBILITÉ DE
LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE DANS L'INDUSTRIE
DE LA CONSTRUCTION)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. MacLaren has moved second reading of Bill 80, An Act respecting labour mobility in the construction industry aimed at restricting access to those taking advantage of Ontario's policy of free mobility.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1624 to 1629.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can members please take their seats?

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Holyday, Douglas C.	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Leone, Rob	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Colle, Mike	MacLeod, Lisa	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Milligan, Rob E.	
Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia	

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hoskins, Eric	Natyshak, Taras
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Piruzza, Teresa
Campbell, Sarah	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Sattler, Peggy
Coteau, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Schein, Jonah
Damerla, Dipika	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Mauro, Bill	Singh, Jagmeet
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Tabuns, Peter
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Taylor, Monique
DiNovo, Cheri	Miller, Paul	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David
Fife, Catherine	Moridi, Reza	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Murray, Glen R.	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 25; the nays are 43.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WIRELESS SERVICES
AGREEMENTS ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LES CONVENTIONS
DE SERVICES SANS FIL

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 10, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 60, An Act to strengthen consumer protection with respect to consumer agreements relating to wireless services accessed from a cellular phone, smart phone or any other similar mobile device / Projet de loi 60, Loi visant à mieux protéger les consommateurs en ce qui concerne les conventions de consommation portant sur les services sans fil accessibles au moyen d'un téléphone cellulaire, d'un téléphone intelligent ou de tout autre appareil mobile semblable.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: The Ontario PCs have been at the forefront of consumer protection ever since the 1960s. The current Consumer Protection Act was passed by our leader, Tim Hudak, in 2002. We are always open to discussing consumer protection.

With over three quarters of Ontarians having a mobile phone, any legislation that affects the wireless industry actually affects millions. However, the most influential regulations in the wireless industry, such as roaming charges, must originate federally. The CRTC has acted, and the new code will be in place soon. All the bill's provisions are in the national code, and the CRTC even went further.

The CRTC code gives consumers a better deal on cancellations of contracts with a subsidized device, because it makes your device depreciate over two years rather than Bill 60's four. The CRTC caps roaming charges at \$100 unless the consumer demands otherwise. The provincial legislation can't order that. The CRTC caps over-usage charges at \$50, which this bill doesn't do. Cell shock is the very reason for this bill's existence, and it fails to address it.

The CRTC addresses the growing market of prepaid phone plans, which Bill 60 ignores. The CRTC adopts the same approach as Bill 60 for lost and stolen phones and for phones handed in for repair. The CRTC orders companies to disclose their complaints.

The CRTC establishes a duty for companies to make consumers aware of the need to monitor their voice, text and data usage. Bill 60 doesn't do that. Bill 60 would, eventually, maybe, order companies to have early warning systems for over-usage charges when the technology is right.

Back in May 2012, I cautioned the government that they shouldn't fix what there's an app for. There are a number of free and cheap apps for all phone operating systems that track your voice, data and text usage and can even give you a warning if your carrier doesn't already do so.

Bill 60 is redundant. We agree with the principle behind it, but all the action items have been addressed already by the CRTC. The only visible difference is Bill 60's mandatory disclosure of whether the phone has been refurbished. Wireless ads already disclose this, and it's a standard within the industry. Although it's not mandated, the companies are already doing it. So are refurbished phones what we're really talking about?

These principles apply across many industries, not just the wireless, and if the minister truly cared about Ontario's consumers, she would drop Bill 60 and submit a broader, more encompassing act covering all of the issues. We can't add other industries in in a committee because the amendments would be out of order. They aren't in the spirit of the original bill.

The prominence of the all-in price in advertising is, of course, an important issue for consumers, and the CRTC addresses all-in pricing at the point of sale. We are

willing to discuss this principle for advertising, but why just for wireless? Car manufacturers can advertise low prices without the dealer fees, and the dealers are on the receiving end of customer anger because of the inevitable extra costs.

The minister should drop what is now an obsolete bill and focus on the broader principles of what she still advocates for: an all-in pricing act. We can discuss that: a broad, all-encompassing equipment condition disclosure act. We can talk about that as well.

I branded the bill's predecessor, Bill 82, the me-too act. The government has been seeing other provinces take the legislation of the wireless and wanted to join the club. At that time, we did not have the CRTC regulations code in effect. There was a need for it. Although this bill was finally introduced just, I guess, weeks before the federal bill, it certainly has made it redundant.

Complaints about wireless companies are almost a national pastime, so obviously a wireless bill gets good press. This bill has lost its meaning because it is trumped in its entirety by the CRTC code. However, it's a good earner of column inches in the press, and I guess that's what we're seeing, because we have a government here that has no plan for jobs, no plan for the economy, so they're trying to change the channel.

Bill 82 was called when there were rumours of an election. Bill 60 was submitted just weeks before the CRTC unveiled its national code in order to capture the last PR opportunities. Now the Premier won't rule out a fall election, and likewise, we see Bill 60 come before us again.

The government sat on its hands for four years and wasted several opportunities to pass wireless legislation. They're trying to play catch-up with a level of government it cannot reach. The wireless train has left the station. This is the fourth bill in four years, so there has been much opportunity to pass this.

We could be discussing non-profit corporations across Ontario, providing essential services to our communities. They are waiting with bated breath to see Bill 85 through. It is in this minister's portfolio, and its passage is quite important in view of the 2014 proclamation of the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act.

1640

We could be discussing the collection of interprovincial fines, Bill 34, but we aren't. We could be taking action to prevent a repeat of the Toronto G20, where the government passed a secret regulation and then abandoned its duty to co-ordinate law enforcement during the event, leading to the largest mass arrest in Canadian history. We could be acting for free speech and open debate by discussing the Protection of Public Participation Act, Bill 83, which would ban lawsuits designed entirely to intimidate the plaintiff's critics with the prospect of high defence costs. We could also be focusing on job creation, encouraging businesses to set up in Ontario. We could be taking action for substantial pensions, modernizing our labour system and many more issues that I've heard about from my constituents over

the summer. Instead, the government insists on plain publicity-seeking.

Just a few points on the latest CRTC code that was issued in June of this year: The minister commented in Tuesday's debate to the effect that the CRTC is "a voluntary sort of thing" is incorrect. The CRTC code is mandatory. The minister's suggestion that the industry is challenging the CRTC code in court is also incorrect. A suit has been filed to seek clarity on whether it applies to contracts signed before December 2, 2013. Nobody is challenging the code's applications to all wireless contracts signed in Canada after December 2, 2013. They only want total clarity on whether it's retroactive.

The minister is incorrect in her suggestion that there are no penalties or remedies for breaching the CRTC code. The code is enforced by the Commissioner for Complaints for Telecommunications Services. The commissioner can award costs and penalties for breaches of the code or any other issue they investigate, and they have done so in the past, numerous times. This is compared to the Ministry of Consumer Services, which has been shown by the Auditor General of Ontario to have a lack of meaningful enforcement tools.

It's sad to say that this bill is now almost completely irrelevant. The CRTC code is very clear that it takes precedence over any provincial consumer legislation or regulations targeting the wireless industry. Unless the government is prepared to challenge the federal jurisdiction over telecommunications, the bill is no longer required. So why are we here rushing through Bill 80 after the fact? This is the fourth time this bill has been introduced—once during the days of the Liberal majority government, when they could have taken action on this government bill and breezed it through the House. After all, it had all-party support. So why now, with so many priorities on the table?

We see in this province that we have 600,000 people looking for work. We have an economy that's sluggish, and consumers worried about their jobs being there next month. We have accountability issues. We have many issues to deal with in this province, and we see a list of bills being introduced over the next few months that really don't attack the real issues that I believe the residents of my riding and certainly across the province are looking for. They're looking for something that will get this economy back working and people back to work.

Accountability: This seems to be all about changing the page. We have all kinds of scandals in this government. We have the gas plants' cost. We still don't know that. We have the Auditor General's report coming out in a few weeks. But we all know that the government has that report. Why aren't we hearing just what that is now? Why do we have to wait for more—I mean, we've seen over the last two years since I've been here every effort taken to make sure that we don't get the true costs. First of all, there were efforts made even through the first by-elections to try to get back to a majority Parliament so that they could rule these out of order, these questions. I know they're embarrassing questions, but they're

questions that under a majority system—the House has a right to know. The House always has a right to know. But the opposition in a minority government has the ability to request those. We have the deletion of emails that we're still talking about.

Priorities: We really wonder about the need for this legislation before us. Issues: the resignations that have gone through this government. Clearly this is a government that's in trouble and wants to see the channel changed.

Then we hear about the Green Energy Act and the issues with that. Constituents are calling my office; they can't afford to live in this province anymore. They're sitting there on pensions. They haven't seen increases over the last number of years. Certainly the 1% increases, which is typical of the people that are lucky to have an indexed pension, is not cutting it anymore. You're seeing power bills go up 100%. How can we expect that they can keep up with a pension that is actually frozen?

We see the industrial rate in Ontario, the average industrial rate, double that of our Quebec and our US neighbours, in Michigan and actually in Manitoba. How do you expect our companies to be able to compete when our power rates are so much higher? Now we had the realization just this week that they're having so much trouble and spending so much money selling and trying to get rid of our surplus power that they're actually paying the wind suppliers not to produce electricity. I guess they do that and are hoping that nobody will notice. But obviously, wind power is unpredictable. They've had to build other facilities, gas plants to look after that power, because unfortunately, if we go back to yesterday, which was one of the hottest days in September in the history of this province, there was no wind. It's interesting to note that when there's no wind, there's no power. So it's unpredictable and can't be counted on. I don't think they want to go back to the public and every day in the summertime—peak times—during the day when there's no wind, shut the power down, saying, "Well, sorry, folks. We're relying on wind power. Unfortunately, there is no power right now." So you can imagine the government paying so much for their touted wind products that they actually ask them not to produce it.

Then we have the \$1 billion in inefficiency added to our hydro bills every year that we're paying for. The spilling of water over the dams—\$300 million per year; \$500 million per year is what we're paying our neighbours to take the power. Now we have to add on, of course, the cost of power that we're paying our wind providers not to provide power, to shut it down; \$80 million to vent steam at our nuclear plants. It just goes on and on and on. It's no wonder that the people of Ontario are starting to wake up to the cost of electricity and starting to join the dots and see why our manufacturing jobs are gone.

We've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. I guess the answer to this is to cloud the employment numbers by hiring 300,000 more government workers. The trouble

with government workers is it takes tax dollars from the private sector to pay for them. All that means is your costs go up. When the costs go up, you have less competitive—then you have less people paying your taxes, and we go out.

Here was an attempt by the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills today to look at some of those tax dollars that are leaving the province. As I talked about, people in my riding see cement trucks coming in from Quebec, deliveries from building supplies. Imagine building a house and the amount of money that goes into supplies; 13% of that, those taxes—I guess the Ontario portion is 8%—we’re not seeing here because nobody is paying it. They’re not interested in putting rules in place to see that that happens, even if with the less regulation in Quebec, they can operate cheaper. But when they come here, they know already that their product is 13% cheaper.

I come from an area where 13% is a lot, and I know a lot of people are hiring people or getting products delivered from Quebec. We have to start looking after what’s good for the province; we have to start looking for people and jobs. I had a project that I was trying to do earlier in the year and get it done during const week. I had a little bit of carpet being placed. It was supposed to happen when I was at home so I could be around. The day before, the supplier calls up and says, “We’re so busy, we can’t get it done.” So I said, “Well, really, I have to get it done because there’s nobody here to let you in the house next week.” They said, “Well, if it’s really important, we’ll see what we can do.” So sure enough, I get a contractor who comes in to lay down the carpet.

1650

When he’s done, he says, “I’d like to talk to you. I live in St. Isidore,” which is just across in my neighbouring riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, “and I’m working about a day a week. I only work when the supplier is so busy that his Quebec labourers can’t handle the business.” So he says, “They come in. Of course, they’re part of larger unions. They’re not busy in Quebec, so they are coming in and working under the table for less money. They don’t have to pay the WSIB and all the other things that happen here.” He says, “I’m forced to work one day a week. I can’t survive on that. I can’t raise my family on that.”

That’s what’s happening with this labour mobility thing. It’s not the big corporations that aren’t getting jobs; it’s the average Joe who is trying to make a living. I have friends who are carpenters and electricians. They can’t get work in Quebec, yet they sit here and they lose contracts to contractors out of Quebec that build the houses. They do it. It’s an expanded playing field that we don’t have. I mean, we’re up against the border. We can’t go into the States and we can’t go into Quebec. So, really, if you’re in eastern Ontario, you’re heavily penalized by these actions from Quebec.

We’re a party that really supports open borders, and we’re trying to enforce that through legislation. We see things that are happening in the press today with the

Quebec Legislature. They do everything they can to ensure that Ontario workers don’t work there. I know the pipeline companies come across from Alberta, all the way across the country. They get to the township of South Glengarry and they lay off all the employees who aren’t from Quebec and hire Quebec workers across the border, right across the province of Quebec where our based employees worked with them. It’s just not fair. It’s particularly worse when we have people who are looking for work, people who are now collecting unemployment insurance or ServiceOntario benefits, all because we won’t take action, and I think it’s time that we stepped up.

We see a bill like this, Bill 80, and you really have to wonder. This is a bill that arguably, when it was introduced, we didn’t know when the CRTC code would be coming out. It was promised this year. Even myself, I didn’t expect it before the fall. But it’s here. It was issued June 3. It supersedes everything in this bill, and yet that’s a priority for this government? You have to wonder, is it not time to wake up and look around?

I heard my seatmate saying that Ontario has the highest indebtedness of any jurisdiction that’s not the federal or—

Mr. John O’Toole: It’s \$19,000 for every single person.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Yes, \$19,000. It’s the largest debt in the world. It’s higher than Greece, and we’re talking about lower-tier jurisdictions like Ontario. When is it time to wake up? I hear people talking about Michigan, bankrupt, and their debt is not nearly what Ontario’s is. It’s just time to look at what this province really needs, where we need to go with it.

You know, there are so many cases back where I live. Even if you’re going to deal with cell service, why don’t we look at trying to get cell service across the province? If you get off the 401 or out of the main cities, cell service is non-existent. We’re doing major programs in this province to roll out high-speed Internet, but we refuse to use the latest wireless technologies. Instead, we’re using old, outdated one-meg technologies that don’t work well, are not sustainable. It’s just time to sit back and look at, really, if we’re going to spend money, why aren’t we spending it in a place that really gives this province a little bit of an advantage? It’s very difficult to operate in this world today if you don’t have high-speed Internet. Yet here’s an area where we’re spending hundreds of millions of dollars of provincial money, and we still refuse to use technology that would allow the rural areas to also get cell service.

Can you imagine what would happen if you told the city of Toronto they were going to lose their cell service? Well, that’s just the average day when you get five miles off the 401, and if you look around this great province of ours, there’s a lot of territory that’s more than five or 10 miles off the 401. It just could be so easily fixed when we’re spending the money anyways. Move it towards the technology. With that extra revenue, I’m sure the money we’re dedicating to try to roll out wireless 1-meg modem

Internet equipment that now is getting hard to get because it's now starting to break down—it's old enough that you can't buy it new. Suppliers would come in—maybe one of the major cell companies—and, with a little bit of government encouragement, would put some of this equipment out in the rural areas where it is now a safety issue.

If you're travelling up the highways, even in the major areas—if you get off the 401, people like to think that their cell service is going to work if they have an accident, but that's just the way rural Ontario is these days. It's unfortunate, because it wouldn't take new money. It's money that's being misspent today. I know I tried, a number of years before I was involved in this job—in my previous job as the mayor of South Glengarry, I tried to bring that across to the ministry. They were not interested in listening, and the money that we received—granted, we were too early for the new cell service, but, the rest of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry that have now, over the last two years, had this expensive equipment put out, still don't have cell service. We're in better shape there, because we have the 401 that goes through it, than many of the other areas are just off the 401.

I think it's in areas where we see that we have to, as a government here and a Legislature, look at trying to make us more competitive. We can spend money where we need to spend it or hold back. I mean, there's no shortage of waste. I didn't get around to talking about the Ornge air ambulance scandal that's still going on. This government is still doing everything that it can to make sure that we don't find out what exactly was spent there. We know from the Auditor General's report that this agency actually created, I think it was 12 spinoff private corporations, for profit, all being funded through the Ontario budget. They're not interested in finding out, because I guess they don't want the answer, because they don't want the public to know—salaries that were outrageous.

Members in my party—Frank Klees stood up and asked the question well before the last election. It was looked into by the minister, who said, “Don't worry; it's okay,” but then we find out afterwards, after we received a little bit of the information, that it wasn't okay—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm trying to find even a nodding acquaintance to the subject of the bill here, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Could I ask the member to speak to the bill that's in front of us?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Basically, what I'm trying to say is that we're debating a bill that is now redundant. I asked the government to point out areas that are not covered now in legislation that is federal. I mean, really, when it comes to cell service, unlike the Quebec labour issue we have, when you cross the border into Quebec or Manitoba, the cellphones work. It's a federal jurisdiction.

Granted, we waited for years and years for them to come out with a code of conduct that we need in this country—no question. I think all of the provinces agreed that it should be done federally. Some of them had to act. Obviously, the government federally was slow acting, but they've come through now. I would have thought they would have dropped this bill. After three attempts of taking it through and letting it drop, now, when everything is covered, it all of a sudden becomes a top priority of this government.

I think that there are some small issues that really apply to cell companies, but they apply to many different companies. That should be looked after. We should drop this bill and look at more widely spread consumer protection issues that haven't been addressed. I know, as I say, that since we have so many cell subscribers in this province, it's a very popular bill. People aren't aware that it's covered at the federal level—and a much better job at it.

That's my message, really. I think it's time to start looking at some of the priorities in this province. Obviously, cell service is not one of them. As a party, there are a number of bills before us—the tanning bed act—a few of them that we all agree we all support. We don't think that we should be tying up the Legislature with these bills. We've certainly been, for some time now, agreeable to moving them through. We haven't seen a willingness from the government to move them through until they're trying to make an issue of them, but we'd rather see this Legislature tied up with important issues in this province, so we've agreed to move those bills through and move them through committee. Everybody agrees with them—the third party, the official opposition and the government—so what's the issue here? Let's move them through and let's get back to what the people of this province are really worried about. They're worried about their jobs. They're worried about the economy. They're worried about their children's future.

1700

I know that when I grew up, I didn't have to worry about the debt that we're talking about today, and my parents were worried about that. We're talking about a debt that was probably 10% of what it is today when they were my age. They were worried because they weren't used to borrowing money, and this government has certainly honed its skill at it. They've doubled the debt. If you listen to their own adviser, Don Drummond, he says it's on its way to tripling.

I was reading an article in Maclean's magazine earlier this year, and they were placing Ontario's likelihood of defaulting at 88% in the next 10 years—the province or the jurisdiction most likely to default. This is not a secret. I guess they're lucky that a lot of people don't read obscure magazines like Maclean's magazine. It's a pretty well-read magazine in this province. There are all kinds of warning signs. We see—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Speaker, I want to remind the member to please speak to Bill 60 and not about the debt and all the other things.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'd ask the member to carry on. Please stay on the topic of the bill that's in front of us.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker.

Interjection.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a master on our side. He's giving me some advice which I plan to follow.

As I say, I'm tying this bill into—is this bill needed any longer? Is it worth the discussion we're going through here? I hear a government that's talking about the importance of getting this economy going, and we're talking about a bill that, quite frankly, is better looked at by the federal legislation that has already taken care of it. I'm not sure why we're taking it, other than I guess, as I said, it's trying to change the channel on something that we really should be worrying about. It may be an embarrassment to this government, but we should be talking about them. We should be talking about the scandals and the wasted money. This is money that could be going towards health care—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would warn the member for the last time—if you would speak to the bill that's in front of us.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Speaker, I'm talking about the need for this bill. We're looking at legislation, and I guess I challenge the government to point out something that's in this legislation that's not already covered in federal law—law that is certainly a higher level.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You can't repeat it often enough.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Yeah. I'm just questioning why we're moving through this legislation. What is the purpose of it?

I pointed out many things that we should be dealing with, and I think that's certainly fair in this discussion of this bill. It's not what I'm hearing in my riding. I'm hearing of issues like long-term beds. We can't place people. We don't have them. We're placing people in Cornwall in facilities that are outside of the riding. I hear that all the time. When you're dealing with moving people to areas that are more than an hour from their home to get a long-term bed, I think that talks about the issue. I don't hear them talking about this bill, Bill 60, and the need for new legislation, because if they're at all informed, they realize it's already there. It has taken away the need for this. We supported the bill. We still, I guess, support it in principle, but it's redundant. It's no longer required, and we just think that there are many different areas that they should be working on.

In talking to my own colleagues and my residents, we just wonder where this government is going. We think it has bigger fish to fry, things that could really make Ontario competitive again. I guess I commend them this week for their decision to start paying our wind power producers to stop producing—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would state to the member that I've already warned you. If you carry on, you're just asking me to move on the debate. I

would like you to speak to the bill that is in front of us, because you continue to stray away from the topic.

This is my last warning. If not, then I will move on to the next speaker.

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's hard to talk about this bill. There are things in it, but when we look through them, they've been looked after. I think in the last part of my speech, we talked about some of the issues that are talked about in this government—I'll just go back to some of my notes here—and they're dealt with already.

We talked about the voluntary sort of thing. This is not a voluntary code of conduct at the federal level; it's mandatory. That was one of the issues they talked about. They have no choice; they have to follow this. The suggestion that the CRTC code is being challenged in court: Nobody is challenging this bill. The cell companies have all agreed to follow it, so there's no need for this. I've even talked to the minister of the day. There are probably some minute things we could talk about, but the bill should be reduced to those, and actually, there's a need to cover that same issue of the refurbished equipment. Why is it restricted to cellphones? Should it not be right across the electronics industry? We could support that, and I think that's an easy bill.

That is the basic business practice. When you go through, if you're buying a cellphone at Future Shop or the Source, they'll tell you if it's refurbished or not. That's not covered in this bill. It is covered at the federal level, but I think it's something that could be covered in all electronic equipment.

We talked about how there are no penalties. I worked for a company that, at different times over the years, was challenged by the CRTC and the commission for complaints on telecom services. Those fines are worth hundreds of millions of dollars, in cases. I remember one: \$200 million. These aren't small fines that are being levied against these companies. They do listen.

I just get back to the fact that I think, instead of debating this bill for hours, we should probably be looking at more important things. Where we need to go in this province: That's a discussion. We talk about many issues in my riding. I'd like to see legislation that would increase the availability of cell service, but that's not in here either. Money that is going in within the ministry could be redirected in a way that would sponsor that. It would help more people in our area get the data services they need; it's not there. I hear from businesses that don't have service. In the township where I live, the lack of cell service throughout really makes it tough for emergency services, because they just aren't available. And where they are available, they're very sketchy; they're unreliable. There are constant drops. There's no talk in here about quality of service, which is possibly proper. It leaves it up to the consumer to choose what works. Unfortunately, once you get out of the big cities, there are no options. You're lucky if one supplier actually services an area.

Those steps are really where this bill should go. I think Ontario is a huge location. We have a problem with the

population being concentrated in certain areas. But when you look at the northern areas of this province and what they contribute to the economy, when you look at the rural areas, the agriculture—big portions of our economy, but they're ill-served by this bill because it doesn't address the shortage of service in those areas. If we're going to go through and make a point of passing this wireless legislation, we have to look at the areas that are underserved. There's no shortage of issues that we've heard from people driving into areas with a lack of service. It's unavailable to get emergency services.

Maybe I've talked long enough about it. Hopefully the government has listened and will look at hitting some of the priorities in this province. We'll see what happens. This used to be a priority. It certainly has been diminished in the last few months, because now it has been covered by a higher power: the federal legislation that is looking at services across the country. It is not restricted by our provincial borders.

1710

In my experience, when I drive to Quebec, service is much better than it is in Ontario, just because there's less droppage. They passed their legislation years ago—I'm sure not as early as the member opposite first introduced the private member's bill—and in that time frame we've seen changes, at least to the service product there, that seem to be working. On this side, though, we don't seem to see that, and we don't seem to see the desire by this province to work out some of our places where we have a lack of service, poor quality of service.

I know that's economics. You are allowing the companies to move in to the highly competitive areas where state-of-the-art equipment is being placed. These companies don't have a lot of capital. They don't have the ability to take money—basically, the urban areas are the cream of this industry, and the pie is being cut up into smaller parts.

As soon as you get outside of the city, where the big players have to provide some service because they do need to link up the cities, we don't see any competition. Trying to get buyers out there is next to impossible, and I think some regulation—even where there are facilities. I know in our area—I have a little bit of a technical background—we have towers that service areas where the radios are pointed up the highways, and they don't point back towards the areas off the major highways. I think legislation could somehow regulate that to make those areas work better. That's something that would be of very little cost to these suppliers. We've allowed them to build their 120-foot towers. I think the onus is either to open them up to other suppliers more readily or point the radio so that you get a full view. The technology is there. The equipment is installed. The fibre backbone or transport backbone is there, but we haven't addressed that.

I think those are issues that not only affect eastern Ontario, but southwestern Ontario, the north. These are expensive facilities, and they don't have to share them. If they do share them, it's very expensive. These are important infrastructure items where we should be more apt to utilize them the best we can. I think it's sad when

you live a mile and a half north of the 401, and you have no service. That's what happens when you don't force the companies to somehow better serve the territories.

I know with the basic telephone, we used to collect a little bit of money across the province, across the country, and turn that money back so that it goes back to subsidize the less-dense areas. That's good for everybody. When people leave the cities and travel out in the country, they would probably like the idea that if they went off the road or into a ditch, they would actually have the emergency services that their cellphone provides. Today, in most of those areas, all you get is a signal saying there's no service.

I thank you, Speaker, for being able to talk about this today. I look forward to hearing comments.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to congratulate the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry because I believe he covered a lot of good ground and he made a lot of sense as he spoke to this particular bill. Both he and I and other members of the Conservative Party and Liberal Party, I believe, supported Bill 82 when it was introduced. There were a lot of good things in this bill that we spoke to that were very useful. There needs to be greater protection for consumers of wireless phone, smartphone and mobile device services. There's no doubt about it. That's why we spoke strongly in support of that bill. But his point and one of the main points is that the CRTC, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, has ruled on this and has covered a lot of ground which covers largely what was in Bill 82, now Bill 60. If that is true—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Some.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The minister says, "Some," but as far as I can tell, it covers a lot of ground that's already in this bill. If that is true, then we're debating something that now is, as the member said, redundant. It might have been useful to separate what the CRTC has already ruled on that's in this bill, separate that, and introduce a new bill with things that they haven't covered that fall within provincial responsibility and perhaps tackle other issues that we've spoken to—at least New Democrats have—with respect to the whole idea of having a consumer advocate, which is something that I believe we desperately need.

When consumers take on telecommunications giants, they're on their own, and it's very difficult for the majority of consumers to take them on. Usually they don't, because they don't have the skills, they don't have the money, and they don't have the power or the knowledge, the know-how, to be able to take on a giant of that sort. We could be talking about a consumer advocate that I believe consumers would really love. But my friend from Bramalea–Gore–Malton will have a lead soon, and he will cover some of these subjects. I look forward to that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to rise to speak on Bill 60, the Wireless Services Agreements Act. This bill would help Ontarians in their everyday lives by strengthening consumer protection for people who use wireless services. Cellphones have become a necessity in life, and it's good. People are using cellphones to help improve their lives, personally and professionally.

At one time, cellphones were considered a sort of status symbol, because originally, when they came out, they were quite costly. Thanks to advances in technology, costs have come down, but there remain problems with respect to different companies using unfair billing practices. That's why we brought forward this bill.

I'm going to go over some of the elements of this bill. First, it would require full disclosure of the goods and services, which would explain which services are included and how the total costs add up. Suppliers will be obligated to disclose the manufacturer's warranty, if there is a warranty, and would have to provide that in writing. Cancellation fees would have to be explained as to how they're calculated. One thing I've had a few complaints about, and an issue I've had personally, was problems with roaming charges. Often it was unclear what I would be charged if I was visiting the US or overseas. That was something that was unclear, which I'm hopeful this bill will attempt to address.

The bigger component of this bill, I think, deals with providing easy-to-understand agreements. People who are proficient in English have a hard time understanding the fine print in some agreements. I think—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you.

Questions and comments? The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to clarify things right from the beginning, at the outset here. Our critic, the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, is a very qualified technical person. Now, this bill, as he alluded to several times in his remarks—we basically agree with most of it. Who wouldn't agree with consumer protection? However, when you boil it down here, there's more said than done in this bill. To be honest with you, the member who just spoke, Mr. Dhillon—I can't think of his riding—

Mr. Ted Arnott: Brampton West.

Mr. John O'Toole: Brampton. My point is, he read from the preamble of the bill. I get that. I listened with some interest, because I have an interest in this topic, and I want to give a compliment—a shout-out, if you will—to the minister, Tracy MacCharles, from Durham. She's a very caring person, and she's been given this from David Oraziotti basically, and to your credit, you gave him most of the time to speak on the bill.

I think we're all passionate about making sure we have fair and open disclosure on the billing practices of all cellphone companies. I believe the federal government has a role in this for setting standards, and we should adhere to that. I think our critic has done a great job on the two consumer bills that have come forward

this week. He has had a couple of one-hour lead speeches where he tried to fill the time and add some information and knowledge to the public who might be listening or watching on television—they could easily watch Oprah or Dr. Phil, but that's a whole different discussion.

I'd say this: Our party would probably support this bill. It needs to go to committee, because there's a lack of clarity in the bill. The section in the preamble: "For example, a supplier must comply with certain disclosure requirements in order to amend a wireless agreement." How vague can you be? Let's be specific about what disclosures are required. That's what I want—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Questions and comments?

1720

The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, you have two minutes.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'd like to thank the member from Trinity–Spadina, the member from Brampton West and the member from Durham.

I think that the member from Trinity–Spadina—he agrees that the issues have been dealt with, and they have been.

The member from Brampton West talked about full disclosure and the roaming charges. Well, the roaming charges are not handled in this bill because it's outside the jurisdiction. It's handled in the federal bill. The CRTC actually puts a limit of \$100 on it. And it must be handled at the federal level, because it's interprovincial. I think that that's positive, but that that's the shell shock—that part of it has been looked after. The issues that I've heard here have all been dealt with.

I know that the bill was put forth by the member opposite many times, and there was all-party support for years on this. I'm not sure why we're dealing with it now.

I guess we could just go back. There are a lot of important things in this province to deal with. I think this bill is now well beyond its best-before date, just because it's been looked at. I commend the minister for moving on it; it certainly was an issue at the time. By the time she got into the role, though, the timing of the issue was well past.

There are many different things in the ministry that we could be looking after. I think we talked about some of it: electronics equipment in general, just being more clear, even though that is a standard. It's not the law, so sometimes things like that have to be cleared up. There are some of the issues with the Corporations Act—that group is waiting for a solution. We could be moving into that, or we could just be working on the economy in another ministry, because I think that's important.

Mr. Rob Leone: Let's talk about jobs.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Yes. So I think that that's important. It's jobs and the economy that I hear about.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I think I must also give some credit to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South

Glengarry. He did cover one of the glaring problems with this bill: the fact that there is a certain element of redundancy. There are, in fairness, some different aspects, which my colleague from Trinity–Spadina mentioned. I think the proposal of cleaving out those differences and just putting those before this House would have made a lot of sense. The redundancy is superseded by the CRTC anyway, that is, in terms of telecommunication, a higher level of authority—and it's not necessary to bring those same issues provincially.

In fact, I'll talk about what the CRTC did. They actually have, in some of the important aspects, gone further and placed caps and limits, which are exactly why this issue started making headlines. The issue of cellphones and the potential abuse that people could face, and some people did face, in terms of overcharges, not being notified when they were going over their limits—there were a number of stories coming out.

One story, anecdotally, was about a young son of a vacation-goer. His child was playing around with his phone, and it turned out that he had racked up upward of thousands of dollars of roaming charges without the parent knowing. It was just a video game of some sort, and playing it had racked up thousands of dollars of charges because of roaming overages. That made big headlines, and rightly so. This is a serious issue. Why could this happen? How could this overuse of the data roaming continue without any sort of notification, without any sort of checks and balances in place? It is very important to address it.

The timing of the bill, the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry mentioned, was actually quite well summarized. The bill initially was being introduced when Ontario was playing catch-up. Other provinces already had a wireless protection bill in place; Ontario didn't, and so Ontario wanted to get caught up and provide some protection as well. Well, that made sense, and the bill was introduced. But then subsequently, the CRTC already covered all these issues and more, so then the relevance of the bill obviously was diminished.

Let's talk a little bit about the importance of cellphones and what we need to be doing in terms of providing good protection for consumers. One of the things we know and studies have confirmed is that cellphone usage, and this is something that we all can tell in our own lives colloquially and anecdotally, is increasing. That's a well-known fact. People are using cellphones more and more. In fact, many people are switching to cellphones over the use of land lines. That's something that's an ongoing trend.

A somewhat more interesting trend and something less well known is that cellphones are becoming increasingly the main vehicle through which people access the Internet. That's an important point to note: Cellphones are something that people are using more and more often to access the Internet.

Why I bring this up is that the Internet, more and more, is not a luxury or a source of entertainment; it's actually becoming a very serious necessity, and that's for

a number of reasons. One is, simply put, knowledge: It's a way of democratizing knowledge. With the Internet, you can access information that otherwise would have been very difficult to access. You can access information from universities. You can see some of the world-class, cutting-edge procedures and technology in the convenience of the Internet. You can access that. So as that becomes more important as a way of providing information to the general public, access to the Internet becomes more and more important.

I'd like to propose that it has now become an essential resource. If that's something we accept, then providing more access to this essential resource is important. It's particularly important if we look at issues of poverty and issues of affordability. If we accept that the Internet is now important to access, that it's an important resource that we need to access, and if we accept that more people are using their cellphones to access the Internet, then a consumer services issue that we need to address is: How can we make the Internet more affordable, particularly given the fact that people are using cellphones to do so? We need to look at managing the actual cost of cellphones and the rates that are being charged.

Canada is one of the most expensive places in the world to send text messages, to make phone calls and, most importantly, to use data. That's an area I think where we really need to put more pressure to actually make it more affordable. That's an area that this bill does not address, and that's an area that many people complain about if you travel overseas. I had the great opportunity of travelling overseas. In the Scandinavian countries, their data rates—it's a developed nation, a smaller country than Canada, so issues of scales of economy don't apply. In those countries, they're paying as little as half of what we're paying in terms of data charges. Other countries that are developing nations are paying even less than that. Again, I think that's an issue we need to address, and it's not being addressed.

The reason, again, I suggest that access to the Internet is such an important issue is, for many government services, for online forums, for accessing many services, right now the easier way to do that is going through the Internet.

One of the things, though, that I am encouraged by in terms of why this bill has made it to the floor here is that it is an indication of an alternative form of democracy. When we look at one of the key reasons why I think this bill became so popular, became an issue that has made it through the floor of the Ontario Legislative Assembly, is because there's a high number of complaints received by the CCTS, the Commissioner for Complaints for Telecommunications Services.

In 2010-11, the CCTS received 8,007 complaints, which constituted a 114% increase over previous years, so a significant increase in complaints; like I said, 114%. Of the complaints received, 62% of those complaints were in respect to wireless companies or wireless contracts. One of the things that I am encouraged by is that people complained about an issue; they complained

about it to such an extent, and there was such an increase in complaints, that this issue that people thought was a problem, the fact that their wireless contracts were unfair or there were disclosure issues or there were overages, there were charges that they were shocked to see—we talked about shell shock—those complaints then prompted the government to take some action. At a time when many of us are concerned with growing apathy—the Lieutenant Governor also talked about the fact that apathy is a serious issue, voter apathy, the fact that people are not participating in democracy.

1730

I'm encouraged that this form of democracy—by complaining about something—resulted in some action. I want to encourage people who are listening and who may be interested in this issue that your voice does matter. Complaining about issues is important. It's a fundamental part of democracy. If there's something going on in any industry, whether it's in a consumer services file, a labour file or any area that this government has anything to do with, please complain. That's your voice. That's the strength of democracy. Complain about what you don't like. That's a way to get some action done. In this case, one encouraging component of the fact of this bill being brought before this assembly is that it was as a result of a number of complaints.

What I'd like to now cover is—clarify the redundancy and where there are some distinctions. What the CRTC did—it was released June 3. It's going to come into effect December 2. The CRTC essentially will release something called the wireless code. The wireless code basically provides a guideline with specific remedies, as well as punishments for any infringements on this code, and it clarifies a number of areas.

One of the major parts that the CRTC wireless code does cover is the importance of use of clear language, language that people can understand, language that's put forward in a simple manner. That's mirrored by what's included in Bill 82, which has now been reintroduced as Bill 60—the importance of disclosure. That aspect has been covered in terms of the plain language used, the prices and the services that are covered by the particular wireless provider. Those issues are already covered.

Cancellation fees and commitment periods are all covered. The monthly minimum charge needs to be explained expressly—that's all covered by the CRTC—optional services, clarification on what the roaming charges will be, service coverage maps, which was a major issue in Brampton, given that there are some providers that don't cover the entire region of Brampton. So those areas are all covered.

The CRTC goes even further and talks about prepaid services. They actually cover more than what we're covering here in the Ontario Legislative Assembly. The important part of the CRTC is that they actually placed caps. Again, this was the major issue. People were seeing their bills, when they were going on vacation or travelling for work—they would come home and see a \$1,000 bill. Someone saw a \$20,000 bill for their cell-

phone. Imagine you came home, you opened up your mail—you went on vacation, you probably spent a little bit of money to go on vacation—thinking, "Okay, I'm going to get back to my regular life and make sure things are in order." You open up your mail, pull out your letter and you see a \$20,000 cellphone charge, and you're floored. You're like, "I was on vacation. I wasn't really using my phone. What happened?" That is a major issue, and that issue is directly addressed by the CRTC. It's not addressed in our Bill 60 provincially. It's already been addressed.

There are caps on data charges. There are caps on international roaming, as well as notifications. I think that's very important. At the minimum, wireless companies should ensure that they provide an update—"Hey, listen, you're going over your data roaming charges," or "Your international roaming charges are at this level. Do you wish to continue?" That notification is essential. That's all included now.

The reason why it's important to talk about the redundancies and the fact that the CRTC code goes even further is that it calls into question why the government chose to bring this bill forward. I think that's a very important issue to discuss: Why this bill and not the plethora of other bills that could have been brought forward.

This wireless service agreement act was important at a time when there was no CRTC code that covered it; I agree. That's why, as many of the other speakers have said, it received all-party support—because it was necessary. People were upset about what was going on. They wanted some sort of protection, and it was a requirement and, in fact, it's a duty of this government to provide some protection. That was a good step. I'll give credit to the government for bringing the issue forward. That was appropriate.

But at this point in time, given the guidelines provided by the CRTC, it's not as relevant. It doesn't have that same level of importance. I would contend that there are other bills, like the anti-SLAPP legislation, which would be much more important to bring forward at this time. That's something, in my opinion, that would protect the hallmark of democracy, which is the right to dissent. People should be able to get up in their communities and say, "I don't agree with this development. I don't agree with this proposal. I think this is ineffectual, unhelpful," whatever their issue may be. That people who work in their communities and are trying to raise issues are being silenced with lawsuits is offensive to democracy and that's an issue that should be raised. I think that bill should have been called instead of this bill.

I make that point because I think we need to make sure we use our precious time here effectively. We have a limited amount of time and a limited number of bills that can be brought forward, that can be passed, to go through the democratic process, which is something that I support. We need to have hearings. We need to hear from the public. Committee hearings are essential; they're important. They're a vibrant part of our democracy.

That's where the public gets an input on the laws that are made. So to apportion time for all of that, we need to make sure we choose the right priorities. That's why I say, given the redundancies, this wasn't necessarily a priority in my mind, and I don't think it was a priority in the minds of the people when we already know that this issue has been tackled. But that's my issue with that.

That being said, let's talk about some of the differences, some of the issues that aren't covered by the CRTC and are covered by this bill. One of the complaints that I often hear about is, if you create a provision or create a piece of legislation and it gives someone a protection, it gives them a certain right or gives them a certain guarantee, the problem with that often is, where is the enforcement? If you give someone a certain legislated right and they make use of that right, how do we ensure that there aren't any repercussions and how do we ensure that that right is actually enforced?

In this case, there are actually some remedies provided, which I think are a good sign. I'll make the contrast: When we were talking about the caretaker leave for loved ones who are critically ill or injured, one of the complaints about that bill is that that's a great idea if you have a loved one who is critically ill or injured and you want to take time off from work so that you can take care of that person. You might have to take a long period of time off. You want to be able to have your job when you come back and your loved one has been taken care of. That's a great idea, and I've said that in the House; it's a great idea. The problem, though, is, where is the guarantee that if I do take that leave, if I take my time off from work and I take care of my loved one, and after six months I go back to my employment, the employer will actually take me back? What if they have hired someone else in the meantime? Where is the enforcement? In this bill, that issue of enforcement or remedy has actually been addressed in some way, and I'd like to talk about that. I think that is a positive sign and something that is useful.

One of the first areas is that there's a requirement for full disclosure of the costs, of what type of contract you're getting into, what the additional service charges may be; there's a requirement of full disclosure in plain language. So that's an important right they're providing us with. What's the remedy if that's breached or if they're not actually providing the full disclosure? There is a cancellation for nondisclosure: section 11. It provides a remedy. So if you're faced with a situation where you're signing up for a particular wireless company and you sign up for a bill, and then afterwards you look at it and it doesn't clearly state that there's going to be an additional \$100 charge a month for having signed up, and you look through your contract and you don't see that anywhere and you say, "You know what? I'm going to cancel this because that's unfair. I don't want to be paying \$100 extra a month," there's actually a piece of legislation that says that if the disclosure is not there, you can cancel and there are absolutely no fees charged to you for cancelling because of their lack of disclosure.

That's actually a good remedy. That's a step in the right direction. We need to make sure that any time we provide a right to someone as a principle—we give someone a right or a guarantee—there is a sufficient remedy or sanction for the company or the employer or whoever the other party is that doesn't follow through.

1740

In this case, section 11 reads, "A consumer under a wireless agreement may cancel it within one year after entering into the agreement if the agreement does not meet the requirements of subsection 10(1) or if the supplier does not comply with subsection 10(2)."

Again, as a principle, I think this is an important area to look at. If ever there is a right we guarantee to the public, if we guarantee a consumer right, we must also provide a remedy or a sanction. Here, this law does provide that.

The other section which I think is a good point that's not included in the CRTC—so it's not redundant, and it does provide us with some benefit—is section 17 of the bill. It calls for a right of action if no refund. This again is another area where I think we need to look at this type of legislation and employ this principle in other areas of law.

If you send a letter to a company and you say, "I want my refund because you've overcharged me," for whatever you've been charged for, and the company doesn't respond, it doesn't say, "Sure, we'll give you that refund," then you're given a right, a remedy, that you can sue that company for three times the amount you're due. The reason I'm assuming the three times the amount is to provide some incentive. If you're looking at \$100 that you're owed, you may be thinking, "If I go to Small Claims Court over \$100, I might have made close to \$100 working a day. It's really not worth my time to take off a day to fight this case in court to get that \$100 back." But if you're entitled to three times that, \$300, there's a bit of an incentive for the consumer to say, "You know what? Three hundred dollars, that's a little bit more. I could actually take the day off work, fight this case, show that I wasn't given this refund, and it might be worth my while."

An additional problem is that in the bill, if you're going to go to court and you're going to take on a cell-phone company, there have to be some other protections. As my colleague from Trinity-Spadina said, if you have a consumer on one side and you have a wireless provider on the other, you're going to have a significant difference in terms of access to justice. If you're a wireless provider and you have very deep pockets, you can hire significant lawyers to protect your interests. If you're a consumer, you may not have the same knowledge of the law. You may not be as comfortable going to court. So I think what needs to be added in addition—the remedy is there, but there should be some clarity on the onus. If you're suggesting that a company hasn't provided you with a refund, the onus should be on the company to prove that they've done everything they needed to do so that the consumer isn't in a tough position where they have to

prove their case. I think the burden of proof should be shifted in this circumstance to provide some greater protection to the consumer, particularly when we know there's a great imbalance between the consumer and the provider. That's an additional suggestion that I make: If we want to make the remedy stronger, it should have some provision for a shifting of the burden of proof or some ability so that an everyday person could actually do that.

I think this was brought up by my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, the idea that if we want to be a good advocate for the consumer and ensure that consumers are receiving the services they require or they deserve, then in the area of wireless services, one big complaint that's been received, I'm sure, from a number of people from rural communities is that they don't have wireless coverage, or their wireless coverage isn't very good.

We've seen in many developing nations that wireless technology is often the best way of addressing a lack of infrastructure. What I mean by that is that if you live in a community where there may not be significant cables for wireless Internet, there may not be—there are places where they are still using dial-up, and dial-up is something I don't think many people know about, where you literally use your phone line, and your computer dials up to the Internet and makes a funny sound before it connects. That's how they access the Internet. Dial-ups nowadays are so slow that you can't really load up any meaningful websites. You can't actually access information with dial-up technology, and many people in rural communities are still using dial-up.

Like I said before, the Internet is no longer a luxury. It's not something simply for entertainment; it's a necessity. It's a way of levelling the field for knowledge. It's a way of providing for access to information. It's often a way that people use to access resources like government services—renewing plates. Many services are now provided online, much easier and with less hassle, but if you don't have access to it, how can you make use of this benefit?

As advocates for consumers, what I'd like to see is increased cellphone towers or increased coverage in rural communities and northern communities. That's a way of addressing two problems at once: (1), people who want that wireless service for emergency reasons, for communication with their friends and family; and (2) as a way to address the fact that there isn't the infrastructure to set up high-speed Internet. If you have a strong wireless network, there are comparable speeds available now, with the new networks and the new technology out there. You can actually get similar speeds through wireless coverage that you can receive through other forms of high-speed Internet. It's a way of providing, again, a meaningful benefit to people. It's not addressed in this bill, but it's something that's real.

Some of the things, again: We need lower costs. That's something that we're lacking strongly in Ontario. The costs for wireless services are far too high. We're

paying some of the highest rates in the entire world here in Canada. Our rates need to come down, particularly when it comes to data, given that data is now an essential resource. If that's all true, then we need to provide greater coverage in rural and northern communities. They don't have the coverage that they need, and I think now that it's a necessity as opposed to a luxury, that's something that we should look at, and that's something that this bill should have provided for—some way of ensuring that there is greater coverage in those rural areas.

Just as a way of providing some background in terms of the high costs and what the differences are, the New America Foundation's Open Technology Initiative, which was on October 14, 2010, talked about the situation and compared the prices we're paying and some of the costs that other people are paying around the world. They looked at cellphone charges over the past five years. It was a study commissioned by the New America Foundation's Open Technology Initiative, and the conclusion was that we're still paying some of the highest rates for cellphone and wireless services in the world. They looked at one quite compelling difference—this is, again, from 2010, when the report was released. The average price that Canadians were paying in 2010, using the same dollar figures, for a voice, texting and data plan was \$67.50 a month. If we contrast that with other countries, Hong Kong averages for a similar service of voice, texting and data, \$13.50; in India, it's \$12.90. That's a significant difference. When we talk about how expensive our rates are here in Canada, we think they might be a little bit more, but this is well over 200% different in terms of the charges. This is a significant difference, and it's a serious barrier.

Imagine folks who are in positions where they're barely making ends meet. They're living below the poverty line, and they need to access the Internet. They need to communicate with people for jobs; for making sure, if they submitted a resumé, they get a call back. Having a phone line is no longer a luxury, it's a necessity. That's how people communicate with one another. If the rates are so much higher here in Ontario and in Canada, we are doing quite a big disservice to people who are unable to afford these high rates, particularly given the contrasts.

Just once again, I have to repeat that in Canada the average is \$67.50; in Hong Kong and India, it's \$13.50 and \$12.90 respectively. It's a significant difference.

Those two examples, obviously, are the most extreme. One might say that perhaps there's a different cost associated with Hong Kong, which has a much larger population, as well as India—and perhaps some issues about the fact that they are developing nations as opposed to developed nations. Comparing the two might not be as fair of a comparison, given population and demographics, so let's look at other countries.

1750

If we compare a post-paid plan in Canada, and this is a monthly fee, about 250 minutes, in Canada the rate is \$38.70. If we compare it to Denmark, which is also a

developed nation, not a very large nation in terms of size or population, Canada, again, was \$38.70 in 2010, average, for a post-paid plan, for about 250 minutes. In Denmark—think about what the difference will be—it's \$17 for a similar amount of time, about 250 minutes, so less than half, and that's also a developed nation with a smaller population, so the economies of scale are similar. In fact, they're favouring Canada and disadvantaging Denmark in terms of economies of scale, and they are still paying less than half of what we're paying. So there is a significant problem here with the cost of cellphone services, and that's an area that we need to definitely address.

Just one other example. If we look at text services, in terms of texting, that's where we're paying even more in terms of comparison of what we're paying here in Ontario and in other countries around the world. For text services, if you look in terms of prices per text, in Canada we're paying over 15 cents per text. In Denmark they're paying three cents per text, and in Sweden, again, four cents per text.

So on every level, from data to voice to texting, this is a significant area where consumers here in Ontario are suffering in that we are paying far too high rates.

Again, I ask this government to look at our priorities. If we're serious about providing good consumer service protection for our residents, then let's look at some of the priorities. The priorities are affordable wireless services—that's a priority. We need to make it affordable. Particularly when it comes to data, we need to make sure that it's something that people can afford.

We also need to make sure that the wireless services are available in rural and northern communities. They already have significant disadvantages that they're facing. Let's not make it, as well, another disadvantage that they don't have access to their wireless services, particularly with data. In fact, this could be a way for us to remedy the infrastructure paucity or the lack of infrastructure, that cellphone towers are much easier to place into rural and northern communities than putting in the framework for high-speed Internet.

When it comes to the priorities of this government, given the fact that we're addressing something that has already been largely addressed by the CRTC, and in fact with more detail and with stronger protection, I question the relevance of this bill and I question our priorities, particularly the priorities of this government. Why is the Liberal government bringing this bill forward and not other bills that are much more relevant and more timely in terms of their necessity? They would show greater respect for the limited and precious time we have here.

I agree with the intent of this bill. I agree with the protection that we need to give consumers, and I don't criticize that. But I do criticize if we have limited time and we have a bill that has already ostensibly been covered by another agency which supersedes us, provides stronger protection and goes further, and this bill provides some small areas which are different, but largely it's redundant. Largely it's been covered, and covered

better, by the CRTC because they actually have the mandate—not because Ontario didn't try, but the CRTC has a broader mandate. They can actually cap fees. They can actually limit the roaming and data charges that people were suffering.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: They said they could coexist.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: They can certainly coexist. That's a great point. They can coexist, but there doesn't need to be the redundancy. There are many areas that have already been covered by something that supersedes us, and if there's already protection in place, we should look at other bills that are covering areas that need to be covered.

Again, I have to take the time to say that the anti-SLAPP legislation that was presented by the Attorney General, something that we called for as the NDP, was a great piece of legislation. It was something that many stakeholders had demanded and asked for, and I was happy to see it finally come through, though I wish it would have come through sooner, when we had asked for it years and years ago in the NDP. But I'm glad it did come forward. That's a bill I'd like to see called by this government.

I issue a challenge to this government: Let's make sure the priorities are in place. Protecting democracy should be one of our highest priorities. It's one of the most prized possessions. It's one of the most valuable things that we cherish here in Ontario and in Canada. The right to dissent, the right to disagree, the right to raise our voice and to organize our communities—that's being threatened by lawsuits which are simply geared at silencing people. They're simply geared at quieting those who wish to raise their voice in their community. Let's bring that bill forward, Mr. Speaker, a bill that would actually provide some protection to the people of Ontario. I hope that the government is listening and paying attention and that that's something that we look at addressing.

The other thing that I'd like to see when it comes to protections for consumer services in the area of wireless: We see that the biggest concern that comes up, and this bill does cover it, is when contracts are unclear and you hope to cancel your contract and you've received a benefit, like a cellphone. You sign up to a contract, and you sign on for three years because you're going to get this shiny new cellphone that otherwise would be \$1,000 but if you sign up for a three-year contract, you can get it for free. You've been given an inducement—which is fine; that's part of doing business—and you sign up for a three-year contract. A year into that contract, you decide, you know what? I'm paying a lot on this contract. I want to go to another company. Another company is providing a great deal. They're giving me unlimited minutes. They're giving me more data. I want to switch over to that company. You ask to cancel, and you're asked to pay more than the phone is even worth just to switch over. Now I understand the company wants to recoup the loss of their phone. That's pretty fair. They've given you this

inducement; they've given you a phone for free. So a company should be able to at least recover the phone cost. But when they're charging in excess of twice the value of the phone, in some circumstances, just to cancel your plan, that seems to be absolutely unfair. That's an area that this bill does address, and that's something that's not necessarily covered by the CRTC with the same degree of detail. That's something I was happy to see. People should be free to switch companies to encourage competition with a view to seeing our rates come down. That's something that was a promising sign.

Another area that was brought up by one of my colleagues from Hamilton was that if you purchase a phone through a cellphone provider and that phone doesn't work, you are still being charged, though, for your wireless services even though your phone doesn't work. That's absolutely unfair. Why should you be charged for a product that doesn't work and for services that need to go through that product? So this bill does include some protection for that. If your phone doesn't work, or your

phone is lost or needs to be repaired, if you notify this wireless provider, they must cease charging you. That was a positive thing that I saw in this bill, and it's something that definitely will help out many people who have been in this circumstance before, where they try to send their phone in for repair. While the phone is being repaired, they're not given a loaner phone, so they're basically being charged for a service they can't receive even if they wanted to because they don't have a phone to receive it with.

I notice, Mr. Speaker, that I think my time has come close to an end. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, if you feel that I should wrap up my discussion at this point and perhaps save my time for another day. I notice you're nodding.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday, September 16, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
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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
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	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 Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
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
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Mike Colle, Kim Craitor
Joe Dickson, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Steven Del Duca, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Mitzie Hunter, Monte McNaughton
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Todd Smith
Jeff Yurek
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Jonah Schein
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Garfield Dunlop, Cindy Forster
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Michael Mantha
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Toby Barrett, Lorenzo Berardinetti
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, Jerry J. Ouellette
Jagmeet Singh
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
Donna H. Cansfield, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Helena Jaczek, Jane McKenna
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Continued from back cover

Provincial parks

Mr. Rick Nicholls.....2897
Hon. David Oraziotti.....2897

Mental health services

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....2897
Hon. Deborah Matthews2898

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

**Financial Accountability Officer Act, 2013, Bill 95,
Mr. Sousa / Loi de 2013 sur le directeur de la
responsabilité financière, projet de loi 95, M. Sousa**
Second reading agreed to2898

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mr. Steven Del Duca.....2899

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

Wes for Youth Online
Mr. Bill Walker2899

Toronto International Film Festival
Ms. Catherine Fife.....2899

Coptic community
Ms. Dipika Damerla.....2899

New Hamburg Fall Fair
Mr. Michael Harris.....2900

Family and Children's Services Niagara
Ms. Cindy Forster2900

Tanya Khan
Mr. Steven Del Duca.....2900

Cultural diversity
Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....2900

Yom Kippur
Mr. Monte Kwinter2901

McNaughton's
Mr. Monte McNaughton2901

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

**Terry Fox Day Act, 2013, Bill 99, Mr. Ouellette / Loi
de 2013 sur la journée Terry Fox, projet de loi 99,
M. Ouellette**
First reading agreed to.....2901
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....2902

MOTIONS

Private members' public business

Hon. John Milloy2902
Motion agreed to2902

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

Toronto International Film Festival

Hon. Michael Chan2902
Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....2903
Mr. Paul Miller.....2903

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Hospital parking fees

Mr. John O'Toole.....2904

Family safety

Mr. Bob Delaney2904

Lyme disease

Mr. Steve Clark2904

Long-term care

Mme France Gélinas2905

Family caregiver leave

Ms. Soo Wong.....2905

Taxation

Ms. Sarah Campbell.....2905

Protection of resources

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn2905

Physiotherapy services

Mr. Steve Clark2906

Replacement workers

Mme France Gélinas2906

Public transit

Ms. Soo Wong.....2906

Physiotherapy services

Mr. John O'Toole.....2906

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /
AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC
ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

**Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2013, Bill 96,
Mr. Qaadri / Loi de 2013 sur la sensibilisation au
radon et la protection contre l'infiltration de ce
gaz, projet de loi 96, M. Qaadri**

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....2907
Mr. John O'Toole.....2909
Mme France Gélinas2909

Ms. Soo Wong.....	2911
Mrs. Jane McKenna	2911
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	2912
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	2913
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	2913
Mr. Shafiq Qadri	2913

Psychological health and safety

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn	2914
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	2916
Mme France Gélinas	2917
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	2918
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2919
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	2920
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	2920
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn	2921

Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act (Construction Labour Mobility), 2013, Bill 80, Mr. MacLaren / Loi de 2013 portant que la justice n'est pas à sens unique (mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre dans l'industrie de la construction), projet de loi 80, M. MacLaren

Mr. Jack MacLaren	2921
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	2923
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	2925
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	2926
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	2926
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	2927
Hon. Glen R. Murray	2927
Mr. John Yakabuski	2928
Mr. Jack MacLaren	2928

Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2013, Bill 96, Mr. Qadri / Loi de 2013 sur la sensibilisation au radon et la protection contre l'infiltration de ce gaz, projet de loi 96, M. Qadri

Second reading agreed to	2929
--------------------------------	------

Psychological health and safety

Motion agreed to	2929
------------------------	------

Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act (Construction Labour Mobility), 2013, Bill 80, Mr. MacLaren / Loi de 2013 portant que la justice n'est pas à sens unique (mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre dans l'industrie de la construction), projet de loi 80, M. MacLaren

Second reading negated.....	2929
-----------------------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Wireless Services Agreements Act, 2013, Bill 60, Ms. MacCharles / Loi de 2013 sur les conventions de services sans fil, projet de loi 60, Mme MacCharles

Mr. Jim McDonell.....	2930
Mr. Rosario Marchese	2935
Mr. Vic Dhillon.....	2936
Mr. John O'Toole.....	2936
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	2936
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	2936
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	2942

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 12 September 2013 / Jeudi 12 septembre 2013

Correction of record

Mr. Ted Arnott 2877

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Employment Standards Amendment Act (Leaves to Help Families), 2013, Bill 21, Mr. Naqvi / Loi de 2013 modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi (congés pour aider les familles), projet de loi 21, M. Naqvi

Mrs. Jane McKenna	2877
Mr. Taras Natyshak	2878
Hon. John Gerretsen	2879
Mr. John O'Toole	2879
Mr. Michael Mantha	2879
Mrs. Jane McKenna	2880
Mme France Gélinas	2880
Mr. Steven Del Duca	2881
Mrs. Julia Munro	2881
Mr. Percy Hatfield	2881
Ms. Soo Wong	2882
Mme France Gélinas	2882
Mr. Rod Jackson	2882
Mr. John Vanthof	2884
Hon. John Gerretsen	2884
Mr. Ted Arnott	2884
Mme France Gélinas	2885
Mr. Rod Jackson	2885
Mr. Michael Mantha	2885
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	2887

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Peter Shurman	2887
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2887
Mr. Steve Clark	2887
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn	2887
Hon. Reza Moridi	2887
Hon. John Gerretsen	2887
Hon. Glen R. Murray	2887
Hon. Michael Gravelle	2887
Mr. Jack MacLaren	2887
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	2887
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	2888

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Public transit

Mr. Tim Hudak	2888
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2888

Public transit

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday	2889
Hon. Glen R. Murray	2889

Government's agenda

Ms. Andrea Horwath	2890
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2890

Government's agenda

Ms. Andrea Horwath	2890
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2890

Construction industry

Mr. Jack MacLaren	2891
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	2891

Public transit

Mr. Rosario Marchese	2892
Hon. Glen R. Murray	2892

Physiotherapy services

Ms. Soo Wong	2893
Hon. Deborah Matthews	2893

Horse racing industry

Mr. Randy Pettapiece	2893
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2893

Child care centres

Mr. Peter Tabuns	2894
Hon. Liz Sandals	2894

Workplace safety

Mr. Steven Del Duca	2894
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	2895

Teachers' collective bargaining

Ms. Lisa MacLeod	2895
Hon. Liz Sandals	2895

Nuisance bears

Mr. John Vanthof	2896
Hon. David Oraziatti	2896

Microbreweries

Ms. Helena Jaczek	2896
Hon. Eric Hoskins	2896

Continued on inside back cover