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Tuesday 18 November 2014

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 18 novembre 2014

**Standing Committee on
Social Policy**

Child Care Modernization
Act, 2014

**Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Loi de 2014 sur la modernisation
des services de garde d'enfants

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE

Tuesday 18 November 2014

Mardi 18 novembre 2014

The committee met at 1601 in room 151.

CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Bonjour, tout le monde. Good afternoon, everyone. The Standing Committee on Social Policy will now come to order. We are here for public hearings on Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

For the members of the committee, please note that there are more written submissions that have been photocopied for you and are on your desks. We encourage you to read those.

Each presenter here today will have five minutes to present. After four and a half minutes, I will interrupt you to let you know that you have 30 seconds left, and after five minutes, your microphone is cut off. Then it goes in rotation, with three minutes allotted to each caucus. So there's nine minutes of questions following your five minutes of presentation.

Yesterday, we started the questioning—actually, we started with the PCs, but I think we ended with the last presenter. That means we start again today with the PCs, but it's complete luck, because yesterday we ended with the government—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Well, they're the lucky ones.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Yes, absolutely. I thought you were lucky; you get to go first. No?

Bien entendu, si vous aimeriez faire votre présentation en français, ça nous fait toujours plaisir de vous accommoder et ça nous fait toujours plaisir d'entendre parler français. Il y a l'interprétation simultanée.

There is interpretation available for French to English and English to French.

COALITION OF INDEPENDENT CHILDCARE PROVIDERS OF ONTARIO

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): J'aimerais donc commencer. I'd like to start by inviting Heidi Higgins, co-founder, and Kim LeGallais, member, of the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario. Please come forward.

Ladies, do you feel ready?

Ms. Heidi Higgins: Yes. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Go ahead.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: Good afternoon. My name is Heidi Higgins. I am a co-founder of the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario and I'm here to represent the concerns of our 1,200-plus members and their clients.

I would like to address the issues of oversight, safety and development as these three items seem to be the bedrock upon which the proposed changes to regulated care are made.

I'll speak about safety first. In its bid to deflect attention from its own mishandling of the case of Eva Ravikovich, the ministry has been implying, and as a result, the press and public have been inferring, that all unlicensed care is a risk to the safety of Ontario's children. Comparing unlicensed providers who follow the law with unlicensed providers who break the law is like comparing pharmacists to drug dealers. We may have children in common, but we are not the same.

CICPO has comparative analysis based on numbers provided by both the ministry and the Ontario coroner's office, as well as media reports on all the deaths that have occurred in unlicensed care since 2010. What this government seems to miss when it comes to these deaths is that with the exception of one, the deaths occurred either by illegal acts or in illegal daycares, not in daycares that are in compliance with the current regulations.

Let's look at the truth about safety in regulated care. On the side of regulated unlicensed, we have six deaths

in total, but only one that was determined to be an accident while in the care of an ICP in compliance with regulations. The other five children who passed away were the victims of either illegal daycares, illegal acts or, as in the case of two infants who passed away while sleeping, deaths that were considered to be undetermined.

On the side of licensed, and according to the Ombudsman, who received the information from the Ministry of Education, we have two deaths in licensed care.

The Minister of Education and I had a small debate about these numbers on Friday when we met. She said that the coroner's office noted four deaths in unlicensed and zero in licensed. But when I contacted the coroner's office yesterday to corroborate those numbers, I was told that they were unaware of having made that distinction and pointed out that it's the ministry's job to compile reports of deaths in care, not the coroner's.

Furthermore, the minister is under the misguided notion that the coroner's office flags deaths occurring in child care, when in fact the coroner's office is waiting for legislation to provide them with the definition of "care" so they can undertake that policy. So, how is it possible for the coroner to make that kind of distinction when they don't even have a classification?

In short, we have two deaths in a licensed population of 293,000 children and one death in a regulated population of 349,000. So which is safer?

With regard to serious injury reports, the following data comes from the Ministry of Education: From September 1, 2013, to August 31, 2014, there were 559 serious injury reports in unlicensed care and 585 in licensed care. Again, which is safer?

With regard to the matter of oversight, it is very clear this government cannot address this issue in this bill or any other. As CICPO has stated again and again, one cannot oversee what one does not know exists. This bill has no more power to locate illegal daycares than the current Day Nurseries Act has. While the bill will allow the government to fine illegal providers up to a quarter of a million dollars, it is still relying on public reports of non-compliance in order to find them. So the ministry's claim of Bill 10 providing oversight is a red herring meant to have the public believe that this government can actually prevent illegal daycares from operating.

These proposed changes to the numbers and ratios in ICP care will do nothing to improve safety. It is simply putting unnecessary restrictions on legal daycares that have a history of safety and compliance. While the ministry heralds Bill 10 as a panacea, it cannot provide oversight and will likely decrease safety in the child care sector as it will drive some operators underground.

Regarding the argument being made that these proposed changes will benefit children as they will provide an optimum developmental environment, it must be pointed out that these ratios are not required by licensed centres. In fact, the new proposed ratios for licensed centres is one provider to three children, zero to one year of age; one provider to five children, one to two years of age; and one provider per eight children, two to four

years of age. One wonders how a child's requirements for optimum development change, depending on whether or not the government has issued a licence to the operator. If it's a matter of safety, unlicensed caregivers are just as capable of removing five children from a burning building as a licensed operator.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: In conclusion, the Ministry of Education can insist that Bill 10 will improve safety and oversight in child care without any negative impact on accessibility or affordability, but the numbers say otherwise. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thank you so much. Will it be Mr. Dunlop?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Yes. Thank you very much. Thank you, Heidi, for being here today.

Heidi, a couple of questions: First of all, can you give us sort of a Coles Notes version on how you calculate the loss of around 140,000 daycare spaces? Second of all, I wanted to know, just while you're answering—the province puts about a billion dollars a year into daycare. Could you tell us how much money independent daycare operators receive of that \$1 billion?

Ms. Heidi Higgins: Children who are in the care of independent child care providers receive zero of that money, because we are not authorized to take care of subsidized children. So we get no funding from the government, and our clients don't get any funding from the government.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: So it makes sense to put you out of business, then, eh? Okay.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: Pardon me?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It makes a lot of sense to put you out of business.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: With regard to the numbers, it's really simple math. We're doing the same thing that the ministry is doing. The ministry is suggesting that with allowing a provider an extra child, if they're licensed, going from five to six children, their math is that that is going to equal 6,000 extra spaces. They're not accounting for the fact that maybe not all providers can find the extra space, and they probably can't, because most agency providers are having a hard time filling their spaces now, because of full-day learning and the two-under-two ratio. It's very difficult to find full-time children with a two-under-two ratio restriction, with the advent of full-day kindergarten.

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So we just did basic math. The Ministry of Education gave us the percentages themselves: 20% of 1.8 million children is approximately 350,000 children. If we divide that by five, because that's the cap on the number of children a provider can care for, we have 70,000 providers. If we multiply that by two, because we're averaging a loss here—just as the ministry is averaging 6,000 more licensed spaces, we're averaging the loss. We're saying that with the inclusion of the provider's own children plus the restriction of two under two, there's going to be

an average loss of two spaces per provider, and that equals 140,000.

There's no real data to prove anything, even as far as the ministry is concerned, in terms of the number of ICPs out there. Nobody has concrete numbers on that. We're making an estimation.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Just quite quickly, then: The Ombudsman, if you took his numbers, would have adjusted this to be about 186,000 lost spaces.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: That's correct. He is saying that over 800,000 children are in ICP care, and we're going with the 350,000—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: So you're being far more conservative.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: We're being very conservative.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: So it's over 140,000 child care spaces the Liberals are about to kill?

Ms. Heidi Higgins: Yes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much for coming in today. The sentiment expressed by a number of independent home providers has been that they would like to be licensed, but they would not like to be licensed through an agency. Does an option of having governments directly license providers and setting standards for ratios and training appeal to the people you are representing?

Ms. Heidi Higgins: Absolutely—100% absolutely.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: When we talk about the ratios then, if you're licensed, you would have ratios that you would have to respond to.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: Our recommendation would be to lift those ratios from agency providers too for the exact reason that we are trying to prevent this from being implemented: because with full-day kindergarten, agency providers cannot fill their spaces either. That is why agencies are seeing a loss in their home daycare providers. Their providers are leaving agencies because of the cost associated with being with agencies and the fact that they cannot fill their spaces because of the restrictions. They're leaving the agencies and becoming independent providers.

If the government is going to do anything in order to level the playing field, what they should be doing is lifting the restrictions on agency providers and making it a five-under-10 cap, as it is right now with regulated providers.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So the only ratio that you think is valid is five children under 10? What if you had five under two?

Ms. Heidi Higgins: Again, I think that question has been asked again and again in this room—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: —and the answer is going to be the same. It depends on the individual, the individual's

capabilities, the individual's comfort level, the parents who choose that provider. Personally, I have only ever met one provider who cared for more than three children under the age of two. Most providers will do a couple of one, two and three. But with the small amount of space that we have between 24 months and 48 months, let's say, there are just not enough children to fill three spaces. There's not enough of a population to fill three spaces.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: If I can just add as well, there's a big developmental difference as well. Taking five 12-month-olds is very different from taking five 18- to-24-month-olds. Last year, I had four children under two in my care. They were all walking. They were all independent. There's no issue—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: It was great having that age grouping together.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: How many children do you have in total in your care?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Currently, I have five. They're all two and three years old at this point.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Do you have any children of your own that you look after as well?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: My own children are 10, 15 and 19. So—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: They don't count; I agree.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: They don't count now.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: The 10-year-old will, though.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I don't have further questions.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: The 10-year-old will if this bill goes into effect, yes.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: That's right.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Timing was perfect. To the Liberals: Mrs. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much for your presentation today. I just wanted to point out that none of us has ever said that being in unlicensed care is unsafe. I've had a child in care since 1986 continuously—got 24 hours—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Chair.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I am continuing this. It means that I have still got a child in licensed care.

I think there have been some numbers being bandied about that 70,000 providers, five children each, results in a loss of 140,000 daycare spaces, but I just want to point out that it's very difficult to come up with those numbers, because nobody really knows. Those are estimates.

When we're talking about numbers, I'm just not sure if you're aware that other provinces within Canada already have legislation in place. Eight of the 13 actually do include the provider's children, and five do not. Our Ombudsman has asked us to step up to the plate to make sure that kids in care are safe, and he has asked us to update the Day Nurseries Act from 1946.

Do you not, then, agree that safety is utmost in the province and that we need to take a stance and update the act?

Ms. Heidi Higgins: That question is an implication that it's not safe now, and that's what we're responding to. What this ministry and this government are implying is that it's not currently safe, yet the data doesn't prove that it is not safe. There is no safety issue with the current regulations. That's number one.

You're correct that there are other provinces that do include children, but there are also other provinces that do not.

With regard to the numbers of losses, I have just 12 providers here—a list of 12 providers; that totals 69 children—and they're looking at 39 to 44 of those spaces being lost as a result of this bill.

People are not making these numbers up. They are actually doing the math. They're looking at the children's ages and what they will have to do when this bill passes. It's not hyperbole.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I realize that. I also know that 12 providers is your own area, but there are other areas of the province—numbers that we've heard bandied about through other submissions that we were hearing yesterday. So I appreciate that it's hard to nail down these things.

In terms of the Ombudsman—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: —he is the one who is calling the four deaths in unlicensed care, and he has asked us to step up to the plate again to ensure that safety is of the utmost, and part of that is looking at numbers of children who are being cared for. There's a lot of data to support two children under two in the provider's home. Do you want to make just a last comment—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: Yes, I would very much—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): No, sorry. Sorry.

Ms. Heidi Higgins: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): All the time allotted has been used. I thank you, Mrs. Higgins and Mrs. LeGallais.

PARKS AND RECREATION ONTARIO

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now call upon Diane English, director, research, policy and communications, with Parks and Recreation Ontario, to please come forward.

Ms. Diane English: Good afternoon. My name is Diane English, and I'm the director of research, policy and communications for Parks and Recreation Ontario, known as PRO.

PRO is a non-profit association. We have over 5,200 members in municipal and non-profit recreation, health and health promotion, education, the private sector and many students. Our members provide recreation facilities and services to more than 85% of Ontario's residents.

PRO is a leader in quality assurance standards for sport and recreation programs, through the High Five

standard. High Five is Canada's quality standard for children's sport and recreation, established by PRO. It is delivered in 11 provinces and territories in both official languages.

High Five provides organizations with a quality assurance framework that includes policies for risk management that meet or exceed many of the standards within legislation for licensed care. It also offers training for program leaders in the principles of healthy child development. High Five has been recognized by the federal, provincial and territorial ministers as a key quality standard for after-school programs.

PRO is very grateful for the opportunity to present to the committee today on the important legislation before us. Modernizing Ontario's child care system is a vital undertaking that requires collaboration between many stakeholders and both legislative and systemic change that will benefit children, families and communities across the province.

PRO has been working with the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs and municipalities to ensure that recreation is recognized as a strong and integral part of the child care continuum and that any new legislation and regulation support the delivery of quality recreation programs for children—more specifically, for children aged six to 12.

PRO has provided written comments to the committee today. I've also brought copies, and I've submitted them online as well. PRO's comments focus specifically on those sections of Bill 10 directly related to the provision of recreation.

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Child care experts, recreation professionals and educators have all recognized that after-school hours are critical for children's physical activity, for reducing sedentary behaviour and for establishing healthy living routines. New studies report that children may get up to 30% of their daily physical activity between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Being active in the after-school time period also appears to positively influence physical activity during the rest of the day. Simply put, recreation programs meet the developmental needs of children, and there's ample evidence of the multitude of benefits that recreation provides for mental and physical well-being. The Ontario government, through its after-school initiative, has also invested significantly in increasing access to quality after-school recreation-based programs.

Parks and Recreation Ontario congratulates the government for recognizing recreation and skill-building programs within the proposed legislation and by using a broad definition for this. This definition will allow for more comprehensive regulations that will ensure high-quality recreation-based programs are delivered, using the best evidence and industry standards, such as the High Five quality assurance standard.

This new legislation also affords us the opportunity to create a clear and consistent approach to managing both licensed care and programs provided through authorized recreation organizations. The legislation should be as clear as possible, so PRO supports the recommendation

made by the YMCA in relation to the role of service managers. To ensure service managers are required to explicitly consult all the key stakeholders in the development of child care and early years programs and service plans for a particular area, we believe there should be an addition to part VI, section 51(4), and that is provided in our brief and also in the brief provided by the YMCA. It's a very small amendment suggested.

PRO encourages the government to continue to recognize the importance of recreation programs in the before- and after-school time period and to ensure that legislation and regulation enable and support quality programs.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Diane English: We also encourage you to continue to engage with recreation providers and the stakeholders in our sector so that families have access to high-quality programs run by authorized recreation providers.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. We'll go to the NDP. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Diane, for coming today and presenting. The amendment that you're putting forward for part IV, section 51: If that amendment was not passed, what will the consequences be?

Ms. Diane English: We would hope that in guidelines for consolidated service managers, it is explicit; that would be our second option. The first option is to be as clear as possible within the legislation itself. We know that consolidated service managers have a fantastic set of guidelines that they use now, and those guidelines currently recognize High Five as a standard for subsidized places. We know that although the whole system is undergoing change, we would like to see it in the legislation, recognizing, though, that there may be an opportunity within regulation or within those CSM guidelines.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: We had a child care provider here yesterday who was very concerned about recreation programs. Is there a competition at this point between parks and rec providers or Boys and Girls Clubs on one side and child care on the other?

Ms. Diane English: We see exactly the opposite. We see fantastic collaboration going on. An example would be a Boys and Girls Club that would have a licence-provided program in one room and a recreation-based program in another room. They are responding to the need in their community and they have partnerships, perhaps with a school, to provide some other programs. So we see a lot of complementary work going on. We stress the need for the clear and consistent approach, though, so that municipal recreation and non-profit recreation are held to the same standard.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: What's the difference between the programs that your member providers would put in place in a school and those that would be put in place by a licensed child care agency?

Ms. Diane English: A lot will have to do with the need in an area. Often our programs do use an ECE as well as a recreation provider. They use an ECE because they would have to if they are licensed. Then a lot will

have to do with age grouping. If it's a small community where they've got a diverse age range, they may say, "An ECE is our best choice"—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Diane English: —“but we would want to have a recreation provider if we're really dealing with that six- to 12.”

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. On the Liberal side: Mrs. Mangat, go ahead.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Diane, for your presentation. As the director of PRO, can you share with the members of the committee: For how long did the government start consulting with stakeholders like yours?

Ms. Diane English: The process began with the discussion paper that was published. I'm sorry, I can't remember the—

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Just a rough idea.

Ms. Diane English: It's been a two-year process.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Two years.

Ms. Diane English: Yes.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Okay. Thank you. So I'm sure you must be hearing some concerns from your community. Can you share with us what types of concerns you are hearing and your organization was hearing? Also, can you tell us: How does this proposed bill address those concerns?

Ms. Diane English: The amendment that is suggested simply strengthens what is already there and makes it clear. The concerns that we are hearing from our providers remain to be a clear and consistent approach. If I may take a moment to turn back the clock to the legislation that exists now, it's very confusing and not applied consistently across the recreation sector. Our members are hearing now that they must be licensed, when in the past they have not had to be, because O.Reg 797 does not reflect what has happened in the past 15 years in recreation in terms of improved quality program delivery.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Yesterday I heard from some other presenters that safety is paramount. Did you hear that too? Is that a concern?

Ms. Diane English: Risk management is always top of mind for recreation providers. That's why in the High Five standard we actually don't recommend ratios, because we want them to conduct risk management analysis that is going to meet their needs. You have different risk requirements if it's a ropes course with eight- to 12-year-olds, versus a free-play ball program in a gymnasium.

The process that recreational organizations would use would be an approach to risk management that looks at the whole program.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: You said earlier that there should be some kind of consistency. When you say that, do you mean that there are major differences between the

licensed and unlicensed sectors? That's what you're talking about?

Ms. Diane English: We are talking about for authorized recreation providers. This legislation provides us a great opportunity to really define that clearly, to improve the quality overall through regulation.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mr. Dunlop?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much for attending today. A couple of quick questions or comments: The changes you'd like to see made—I haven't read through the details of your submission yet, but are you saying that these are details that you'd like to see in the legislation, amendments to the bill, or is it changes in regulation that you'd like to see?

Ms. Diane English: It's a very small amendment that inserts a phrase. I'll just read it: "In developing the plan, the service manager shall consult with school boards"—insertion—"child care providers, third-party providers of before- and after-school services, and other prescribed persons or entities, in accordance with the regulations, and those persons or entities shall co-operate with the service manager for that purpose."

It speaks to the intent of the bill, which was to ensure that there is better coordination and to ensure that there is consistent quality.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay. I thank you for that, because your comments are along the same lines as the Boys and Girls Clubs, who were here yesterday.

Ms. Diane English: Yes. We've been working with the Ys and the Boys and Girls Clubs.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay. I think that we should make these amendments in the actual legislation, as opposed to in regulation, which—we're not sure where it's going to go.

Ms. Diane English: Right. Nor do we.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Lisa, do you have any more comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No. I agree with Garfield. I think that, in order for us to improve the legislation, we must deal with it specifically within the bill, so I think that it would be a commitment that the Conservative caucus would make to you that we would follow this up. I'm glad that you came here, because I think that we were focused a lot on child care—which we should be, because it is modernizing the child care act—but there are a number of unintended consequences, as we speak to many stakeholders like you. So would you agree that there are unintended consequences to the bill?

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Ms. Diane English: We continue to work with the Ministry of Education now to ensure that recreation remains a vital part of the system. Currently, there are about 500,000 children—not all of this in Ontario, but lots; this is my Canadian stat—in programs that have the High Five standard. So that's a lot of kids, thinking that more than two thirds of those are going to be in Ontario.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: And, of course, we brought up the fact yesterday that there are all kinds of children 10

and under in sports like baseball and hockey and lacrosse, etc.

Ms. Diane English: Yes.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: You're just trying to get, really, the clarification around those types of children as well.

Ms. Diane English: Yes, and we would strongly support—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Diane English: —the primary focus as recreation being your swim program, versus the complementary, which is an after-school program where recreation is a complementary part of that program. That is an extremely important part of the bill that will help with clarity and consistency.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay. Thank you very much.

Ms. Diane English: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL SOCIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now call Petra Wolfbeiss, director of policy and public affairs at the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association.

Are you ready?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: I'm ready.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Go ahead.

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Petra Wolfbeiss. I am the director of policy and public affairs for the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

OMSSA represents the 47 consolidated municipal service managers and district social services administration boards who fund, manage and deliver child care and early years programs across Ontario. Our members represent local governments from every region across the province.

OMSSA and its members are pleased that Bill 10 confirms CMSMs and DSSABs as the service system managers of child care and early years programs and services and that the bill commits to integration of human services at the local level.

Bill 10 recognizes the important role of local government and municipalities in working with children and families in the communities where they live. It also affirms OMSSA's contention that working at the local level to integrate services and connect needs to available resources and services is the most effective approach.

As service system managers for child care and the early years, CMSMs and DSSABs will play an important role both in implementing the bill, if passed, as well as in modernizing Ontario's child care and early years system. Given this role, we assume that OMSSA and its members will work as partners in the regulation development process and all aspects and considerations of implementation.

To support the successful implementation of the legislation, it will be important that new requirements are enforceable, measurable and implementable. This includes ensuring that CMSMs and DSSABs do not assume risk, liability or costs under this legislation or its regulations.

What this means is that as CMSMs and DSSABs assume the service system manager role, they will be provided the time, tools and resources to fulfill all the obligations and expectations included therein. This includes in the areas of service planning, training and increased administrative requirements that may result from working with providers.

OMSSA members have identified a number of areas where clarification and appropriate resources to fulfill obligations are needed. It's not an exhaustive list, but it includes ratios and grouping.

Bill 10 includes new flexibility for agencies and service providers to meet community need. This includes home child care providers. To support this, the government must ensure capital funding is available to accommodate changes that may be required.

Home care providers can now have up to 12 children in their care. With municipal funding attached to home care providers, OMSSA, CMSMs and DSSABs want assurance that appropriate oversight and monitoring will be in place to ensure children are safe and well cared for.

In terms of the service system management role, municipalities and DSSABs must be provided the authority, tools and resources required to fulfill this obligation.

Overall, the bill is a good step towards integration, but it is not complete. Ontario Early Years Centres, and parent and family centres: How do they fit? What is the vision, and how will these services and systems be integrated?

Section 56 identifies the obligations of coordinating and planning for local child care and for assessing economic viability of the same local programs.

Section 62 identifies CMSMs' and DSSABs' role in identifying and commenting on licensing.

Section 16 includes the duty to report if there are any children at risk.

Finally, section 51 requires that service managers shall consult with school boards and other prescribed entities.

To support and promote coordination of funding and seamless access to services, the service system manager role must be reflected and utilized across all government ministries. For coordination to happen on the ground, it must happen across government.

Appropriate resources must be provided to CMSMs and DSSABs for staffing and administrative costs, to carry out expanded obligations and current unfunded mandates.

As mentioned, all obligations or requirements must be enforceable and must protect against increased risk and liability to municipal governments and DSSABs.

For the service system manager role to be effective, CMSMs and DSSABs must have the authority to align planning and administrative practices with all partners.

This includes aligning with municipal and DSSAB planning and budgeting processes.

Bill 10 is silent on special needs.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: CMSMs and DSSABs need to understand how the special needs strategy aligns with their current funding obligations.

Finally, as the government moves forward on the provincial interests and provincial policy statement, it needs to be something that CMSMs and DSSABs are able to respond to and implement and fund. The current system is underfunded, and we must make sure not to exacerbate these current pressures.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. I believe it's going to start with Mrs. Hoggarth. Go ahead.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you very much for your presentation. I just wanted to make sure that I've got this right. You have been consulted, off and on, since the fall of 2013 on this bill?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: Yes.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I just wanted to ask: What are your concerns with child care in the community, and how does this bill address them, as far as you're concerned?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: From our perspective, as a provincial organization that represents municipal government, our key concerns are access and the ability for families and children to have spaces and spots to go into, and that there's not enough funding to accommodate that.

Under the bill, in terms of the concerns that we have directly, one of the things that our members have identified is home child care changing in ratios and groupings, and how there will be monitoring enforcement of that. Municipalities do have fee subsidies attached to children who are in this care, and we have to insure against any potential risk and liability.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Okay. Do you think safety concerns are addressed through this bill too?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: Certainly, it's a significant improvement from what has been. I think that if the bill does move forward and works with municipalities and key partners, these issues will be strongly addressed.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Crack.

Mr. Grant Crack: You indicate that it's a good step forward, but it's not yet complete. You talk about the Ontario Early Years Centre, and the parent and family centres, and how they fit and what the vision is. Could you maybe elaborate on how you see how they would fit and how they could be integrated?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: Sure. The bill speaks about the service system manager role—and I did a lot of editing on my submission, so I didn't get to all of it—about using the CMSM/DSSAB role in terms of coordinating a seamless system of services and integrating human services. In order to do that, all of the key services that are on the ground, that parents and children and families interact with, need to be part of the planning system.

As I mentioned, the bill does not speak to special needs, because there's a separate strategy going on, as well as the current Ontario Early Years Centres and Parenting and Family Literacy Centres. So it's not clear, because families do access that. There is oversight in them from the CMSMs and DSSABs to different degrees—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: —so it's not clear how those will fit into a coordinated or an integrated system. It's a question.

Mr. Grant Crack: Okay, so it's not clear. Do you have any suggestions?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: We need to have discussions in terms—because the government is also moving forward on Best Start and family and children centres. There is still work that I think has to roll out, so we're not sure what it means. I think you have to work with your municipal partners and your CMSMs and DSSABs to plan forward, to really understand what an integrated system looks like.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mrs. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have some knowledge—in my former life, I was an optometrist. The kids in foster care—we all know that there's a shortage of foster homes. There are rules sort of similar to what this legislation is addressing in terms of how many of your own children you can have and how many foster children you can have of certain ages.

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We're hearing—and the numbers speak for themselves—that this is going to cut down on child care spots. We're all raising concerns that there aren't enough child care spots, so why would we be doing anything to limit child care spots?

The whole point is supposed to be about safety, and without enforcement we all know that there is no safety. What happens is, we get a call from the police and we start an investigation. That doesn't make anything safer.

Is your organization suggesting getting involved in monitoring, perhaps? That's why I'm bringing up foster care, because there are social workers who are in charge of each foster home—groups of them. They'll have maybe 30 or 50 foster homes that they're in charge of in, say, the GTA. They monitor, they visit, those homes every month. That's kind of what's missing from all of this: There's no effort being made to have specific people—six inspectors for the whole province. They're not going to get to each place until the workers have retired. Are you suggesting maybe a plan where organizations such as yours, for your demographic area, would hire specific people to monitor?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: I will speak on behalf of our members on this. Specifically to foster care: It's not under municipal purview or our members' purview. Because of the fiscal pressures at the local level, our members are suggesting that current oversight and

licensing stay with the province. There is not the fiscal capacity at the local level to contract with other agencies or partners to do that type of work. I know, certainly for some of our members, it's something that they would like to have a role in because of their system, but they don't have the fiscal capacity to do that.

Mrs. Gila Martow: So in your meetings with the government, have they suggested providing you with the funding to monitor?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: Licensing? No, we haven't discussed that.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Would you agree that what's missing from all of this is the oversight and who's going to pay for oversight?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: That is an element of the bill that obviously requires some greater attention.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I don't know if there's anything that Garfield wants to add.

In terms of monitoring, is there anything specific that you can suggest to us in 30 seconds that you're concerned with in terms of safety in child care in the province?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: Certainly, there have been events that have transpired that have been of concern to everybody. Municipal governments' order of governance: Some of our members are in the business of direct delivery—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. I would ask Mr. Tabuns.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Okay, sorry.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Chair. Thank you very much for making this presentation today. I have a few questions that flow from what you've presented to us.

Talking about new flexibility for agencies and service providers, you say the government must ensure that capital funding is available to accommodate changes. Could you tell me precisely which changes you're referring to?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: I think some of the groupings and the ratios—one of our members specifically, the city of Ottawa, has identified this: that in order to accommodate some of the age groupings, there will have to be changes to the actual centres, which will cost money in order to be up to speed with whatever the regulations will prescribe. If there are those impacts at the local level at centres, there needs to be funding to accommodate that. Municipalities and DSSABs do not have that luxury.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: That makes sense; thank you.

Second question: You note the potential for home care providers having up to 12 children.

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: Yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And you say that we need assurance that appropriate oversight and monitoring will be in place.

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: Yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I, personally, have difficulty with 12 children and two providers. What sort of expense are you thinking about, or resources needed, to monitor this?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: The feedback, in consulting with our members, has been that there is concern around that number. They see it not necessarily as child care but more as a broader grouping and not one that's consistent with child care. Because of those numbers, they have identified concern that there could be some safety issues and that there be steps to make sure that appropriate monitoring and enforcement of safety and other regulations are put in place. It's not something that our members are suggesting they do themselves.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. My third question is about clarity on special needs and the provincial strategy on special needs. We noticed as well, when we went through the bill, that it didn't seem to be addressed, although in an archaic way the Day Nurseries Act spoke to it. Can you tell us what we need in this bill to actually ensure that these issues and these people's needs are dealt with?

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: Well, having those people's needs dealt with and our members' role in terms of the services and planning are two different things.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Petra Wolfbeiss: Because of their funding responsibility, there needs to be some clarity in terms of how the strategy aligns with our members' responsibility to have an integrated and coordinated system of services. In terms of the broader special needs and addressing the needs, that's something that I feel is a little bit outside of the bill right now. But from our service manager perspective, we need to understand how all the pieces fit together, if we have this role, and it's not clear.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

MS. KIM LEGALLAIS

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now ask back, actually, Ms. Kim LeGallais to come to the front. Welcome back.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Thank you. It's my turn.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Ready?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Go.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Thank you for the chance to speak today on Bill 10. My name is Kim LeGallais, and I am co-founder of CICPO, but I speak to you today as an independent child care provider.

It is my firm belief that the proposals in Bill 10 regarding ratios are going to put many providers out of work, create an increase in women seeking employment and having to find care for their own children, create an increased demand for child care spaces that will simply not exist, and do nothing to achieve its mission of improving safety and oversight. The intent of this bill is a good one, but its method falls far short.

I have been a home daycare provider for over 15 years. I began with an agency, as I felt it would provide more comfort to parents to know I was being monitored monthly. What I found was that the monitoring was often

more of a social visit that sometimes didn't even involve stepping inside my home. The parents who are in my home twice a day every day have been my monitoring and accountability.

In terms of ratios: I left the agency when I had an opportunity to take two 12-month-olds but couldn't because my own child was not quite two yet; he was 22, not 24, months. The agency ratios were not then and are not now realistic in light of the needs of today's families in Ontario. The current rule of five under 10, not including our own children, works and should even apply to agency providers.

Here are a few questions home child care providers are commonly asked:

"How can you possibly look after five children safely when I can hardly look after my one or two?" I can because it's what I do for 10 hours a day or more, five days a week, for over 15 years. I have a routine and expectations within my daycare home, and the kids know them. The dynamic between the child and their daycare provider is not the same as between that same child and their parent. I can get five toddlers dressed in snowsuits in 15 minutes flat. It takes the same time for a parent to get their one dressed. It's not because I do anything special; it is just a different dynamic. I would not be able to do the job of a surgeon or a judge or an MPP. Just because I couldn't do the job doesn't mean it can't be done and done well. This is what we do, and we have the education and experience that allows us to do it to the best of our ability. The assumption that we can't is based on opinion, not fact.

"How can you possibly get five children to safety in an emergency?" Any way I can. You would be surprised how many children I can carry when I need to. There are no deaths that have occurred as a result of fires or emergencies that a provider could not get their children out of in time. We do what we need to do in any given emergency situation. This concern is also based on opinion, not fact.

"Why shouldn't you have to follow the same rules as agency providers?" You're right. We should all follow the same rules. Mr. Marin reports that, "Licensed child care operations must follow health, safety, and programming rules and are subject to regular inspections. This has resulted in a disincentive to licensing and led to an increase in ... unlicensed caregivers."

I wholeheartedly disagree. The problem is not in following rules or being subject to inspections. We as compliant ICPs welcome those things. The problem is that the current rules for agency providers don't work across the entire sector. With children not coming into care until 12 months old and leaving for full-time school as early as three years eight months, we have a small window for full-time clients. There is no way to annually refill three spaces with children over two and under four. Every call I get is for 12-month-olds. In the last month and a half, I've had seven requests for care, and they were all 12 months old. Yes, we should all follow the same rules, but there is zero data to suggest that the

regulations we currently follow are unsafe or detrimental to care. Again, it is opinion, not fact, that says we can't safely look after five children under 10, including our own.

It has been said of the deaths in unlicensed care that one death is too many, and I agree: One is too many. However, there have been two deaths in licensed care, and no one heard a thing. Are those deaths unimportant somehow because they occurred in licensed care, less deserving of the huge amount of media attention that Eva Ravikovich's death got—a death that occurred not in an unlicensed home daycare, but in an illegal daycare centre?

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According to statistics collected from the Ombudsman's report and coroners' reports on deaths and injuries of children in Ontario, children are actually safer, statistically speaking, in ICP care than anywhere else. The real issue is not with the ratios; it is with the oversight, which will, in fact, worsen with this bill as it is.

In summary, I ask that you leave the ratios as five under 10, not including our own, and apply them to agency providers as well. I ask that you continue to define a child as under 10, not the proposed 13. I also ask that you allow independent providers to be individually licensed—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Kim LeGallais:—giving us access to taking in subsidized clients and providing the tracking that the ministry needs in order to truly have the oversight that is needed. This will weed out the illegals.

Lastly, I must add that approximately 40 people speaking for five minutes each over two days is not enough time to get a full picture of how this bill will impact the entire province of Ontario. If it's still possible, please consider travelling these hearings. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you, Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much, Kim, for your comments today.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Thank you.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Believe me, we wanted to travel this bill a lot across the province. We thought it was that important. As you know, it's been time-allocated, and it will probably all end by next Tuesday night. We'll go into third reading, and that's nothing but a kangaroo court, that part of it.

I was curious. In your time as an operator, an independent care provider, have you ever had any kind of an issue, or do you have any colleagues who you work with or who are maybe in your association or in your community—have you had any problems at all with any kind of injury or safety to do with any of the children?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Outside of the bumps and scrapes and that kind of stuff, none to my knowledge. My worst incident in over 15 years was a child requiring three stitches because she got a little too eager with her scooter and she fell. But no, none to my knowledge.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I guess the other thing I wanted to point out—because a couple of the government members have already today asked questions to the deputants and mentioned, “Have you had any consultation” like last year or whatever. I'm asking you, as someone who has been in business for a number of years, has anyone consulted you on Bill 10 or asked you to participate in any way on Bill 10 or the bill that preceded this bill?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: No, not until we became much more heavily involved and formed our coalition and became a lot more vocal. Prior to that, I found out through CCPRN and some of their providers when it was still Bill 143.

This is the other thing, too: If there was a licensing system and we were able to be tracked, we would be able to be made aware of any kinds of changes and therefore consulted as stakeholders.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: So you have no problem with having any kind of a licence?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Absolutely not, and most of us welcome it.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay. Do you have any problem with someone coming to inspect or monitor?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: No.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Because I'm still trying to figure who the inspection and the monitoring is going to be. I'm going to try to find that out at these hearings. I heard today that the Ministry of Education is cutting \$500 million out of its budgets in the next three years, so I'm not really sure where more new money is going to be found to monitor and closely look at your oversight.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: My thought on that—I don't know the numbers and the ins and outs, but the several million or billion dollars that are being put into child care: There's a whole sector of child care that is not getting access to any of that funding. In my perspective—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Kim LeGallais:—you have a structure that's already in place. You have all of these ICPs who are willing to be licensed and monitored. If some of that money could go into creating that kind of system, that seems to make sense to me.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay. Thank you very much, Chair.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you, Mr. Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Kim, for taking the time to come here.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Thank you.

Mr. John Vanthof: You're the co-founder of the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Yes.

Mr. John Vanthof: When was this coalition created?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: In July.

Mr. John Vanthof: Was it created specifically to address what you felt was a lack of consultation?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: It was specifically created to raise awareness and education in the beginning, because there were many parents and providers, and there are still many parents and providers, who have no idea what Bill 10 is, what it's going to mean for them. So our original mission was to campaign and to educate and raise awareness.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would agree with you that there are—my riding is six hours north of here. We did a bit of an informal tour, and there are quite a few child care providers who are kind of in the dark about these issues, rightly or wrongly. I heard you say something about how you don't think this has been consulted widely enough. Would you, in your position, think that it would be more beneficial for the government to hear from a wider variety of people in this field?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Absolutely. We've even heard over yesterday, and we'll hear more today. It's not just ICPs that are being impacted greatly. It's the Montessori schools; it's different agencies, Boys and Girls Clubs and whatnot. I think it's such a vast issue that it affects almost every family across the province. Forty people over two days just is not enough, in my opinion.

Mr. John Vanthof: In your presentation, you mentioned something about the high turnover because of the very small age gap.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: The small window, yes.

Mr. John Vanthof: Could you expand on that a bit? I found it interesting. You have a lot of 12-month-olds?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: That's the only request I get, and that's the only request most parents get. When I started doing daycare over 15 years ago, full-day mat leave was not across the board—I think my first little one came in at six months old—and it was half-day kindergarten, so kids were with me for many, many years, pretty much until they didn't require care anymore and they were in school full days.

Now it's very limited. You have full-year mat leave, so 12 months is the earliest most of them start. Then they're starting school at three years and eight months, at the earliest, depending on where their birthday falls. I don't do before-and-after care, because it's not worth it for me to hold a full-time spot for a child who's only there for an hour a day. That takes up a full spot. There are providers who do, but personally, I do not.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mr. John Vanthof: My last: How do people approach you for daycare? Is it word of mouth?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: It's some word of mouth. I also have a website and I advertise on daycare there, and there are different Facebook pages in my community.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you very much for coming. I really appreciate it.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. On the Liberal side: Mrs. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Kim. Thank you for being here. My understanding is that I heard you say that

we are hearing only 40 people who are travelling here. I think we are still receiving submissions.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: You're getting a lot of submissions, I'm sure. Yes.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: We have received these ones, and we are still receiving emails. My understanding is that Minister Sandals traveled to Ottawa to meet with you folks.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: She did, yes.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: She did. Right?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Yes.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Correct? Thank you so very much. We are still receiving emails, as I said earlier.

I would like to make a point that this government has done more for education than the Tories. We are very proud of our record when it comes to child care and education.

What you are saying is that you don't agree with the Ombudsman's recommendations. He called for the modernization of the child care act. You don't agree with his sentiment?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: I didn't say that, actually. I do agree that it needs to be updated—

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: You do agree.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: It needs to be updated and it needs to be amended, no doubt. What is being proposed, I think, is not going to work.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Why?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: In terms of the ratios—

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Can you share with us why it wouldn't—

Ms. Kim LeGallais: For all the reasons that I explained: the ages that they come into care, the ages that they leave care to go to school. That's a big one. The ratios are just not feasible for any independent provider to sustain her business.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Do you think that it wouldn't enhance safety?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: No. There are no statistics to show that having five children under 10—for the compliant, independent providers who are following the current rules that we are required to follow under the Day Nurseries Act, there's no data to show that that is unsafe.

The deaths that have occurred have occurred in illegal daycares, ones that were not complying with the rules that they are currently supposed to follow. If they aren't following them now, they're not going to follow the new regulations, which is why we're requesting to be licensed individually, so that there can be that greater oversight and monitoring that happens, and you can know where we are and how many children we have and whether we are current on all our safety checks.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: So in your opinion, what should be the ratio and grouping?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: It should remain as is: five under 10, including our own children. If we really want to throw something on there, we can say no more than one under one, because I think that's reasonable, and put in a

cap. Put in a cap of children, so you can have no more than eight children, including your own—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: —if you really want to put a number and a restriction on it.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: So do you think that the safety of the children and the well-being of the children is not important to you? That's what you're saying?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: No, that's absolutely not what I'm saying. I'm saying there's no data to support that the ratios that we currently follow are unsafe. I believe absolutely that the safety of children is important—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mrs. Hoggarth is trying to get a word in.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Do you have any data to share with the committee?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: I'm sorry?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Have you any data?

Ms. Kim LeGallais: I'm telling you there is no data. There is no data to show that five under 10 is unsafe.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): And the three minutes is over. I'm so sorry.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: That's okay.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you very much for your presentation.

Ms. Kim LeGallais: Thank you.

1700

MS. JULIA DEWING

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now call Ms. Julia Dewing.

Ms. Julia Dewing: I have a presentation, and we'll be ready in a minute.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): No problem. You wave to me when you're ready.

Ready? Go ahead.

Ms. Julia Dewing: Good afternoon, and thank you for having me present to you on Bill 10. I hope to bring to you a different point of view, because I'm speaking to you as both a mother and as a future daycare provider, so I'd like to tell you my story.

I studied to achieve a bachelor of science and then a master's, and I gained a promising, \$60,000-per-year, very flexible, stress-free, and enjoyable position as an environmental planner. However, in the past year, I decided to not return to my career following my maternity leave. I'm walking away from that career to enter a completely different world which, for some, would mean only very little pay, longer hours and more tiring labour, but to me, this new world means raising my daughter and creating a loving day family to raise along with her.

My husband and I purchased a home that would allow for a bright, main-floor daycare space. I took various courses and workshops in order to learn how to run a safe and lawful independent home daycare. I have now signed on two families to begin care with us in the new year. Everything is all set, except for the fact that if this bill

passes without amendments, I will have to let go of one of these families and only take one child into my care.

In the six weeks that I have been advertising my brand new home daycare, I've had 15 requests for interviews for care, for 15 infants all under the age of 15 months, with an average age of 12 months. I have not had a single request for care for a child over the age of two.

Having only one child would cause me to run my program for pay of approximately \$4.20 an hour. My family and I cannot afford to do this. Even with my two daycare families—which I couldn't keep, according to Bill 10—I would still be working for less than minimum wage. Only should I choose to grow and add a third family would I surpass minimum wage. But I would again be restricted by Bill 10, as children under two, specifically around 12 months of age, due to the typical length of parental leave, are the main group of children requiring care.

As a parent-to-be, I contacted numerous centres, who all told me that they only began taking children at the age of 18 months. It is already difficult to place 12-month-old children under the current regulations.

Those centres that do take children under 18 months have incredibly long waiting lists and charge a premium rate of \$70 per day in my area. These are the types of rates that will have to be charged by ICPs, making daycare even less affordable for parents, if this clause is not dropped.

Under current regulations, the provider-to-child ratio is roughly 1 to 3 for infants under the age of 18 months in centres, which is the same ratio that I would be providing but which would be illegal for me under Bill 10.

Further, rather than harmonizing child care across the sectors, this bill would cause a greater divide by proposing to increase ratios from 1 to 3 to 1 to 5 for one- to two-year-old children in centres.

Why is it that in my home, I cannot care for three one- to two-year-old children; however, in a centre, five would be cared for, in a group size of 15 children to three adults? How is that safer?

As I would not be allowed to use even the smallest of these ratios, I'm wondering if you could help me decide which child I should let go.

Of the 113 recommendations in the Ombudsman report, there's not a single recommendation about age ratios. The clause about no more than two under two needs to be eliminated and, further, we need to create a registry and a licensing system that is not controlled by a third party but rather allows each ICP to be licensed individually.

Enter our homes, inspect us, and provide fair, uniform regulation for all. If you, as the government, are truly attempting to make child care safer, you know that this is what you have to do. You cannot claim that this bill, devoid of any additional oversight or significant investments in inspection personnel, will make child care safer. You cannot claim that those currently breaking the law will stop doing so because of a few wording changes on paper that they may not even be aware of.

There are great examples that can be learned from, such as the system in British Columbia, which offers direct licensing, different ratios for different scenarios and, most importantly, the vast public consultation they used to arrive at the solution.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Julia Dewing: That is how you create regulations that work for everyone. Please also note my scenario being legal along with 14 other scenarios.

If you pass this bill without its due amendments, you're taking away my parental choice to raise my daughter and every other parent in Ontario's parental choice of where to place their child in care.

Thank you for your time.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you so much. We'll start with Mr. Vanthof.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you very much, Julia, for coming to the committee and presenting.

Ms. Julia Dewing: It's my pleasure.

Mr. John Vanthof: If I may ask: Do you live in an urban setting or a country setting?

Ms. Julia Dewing: Yes. I live in Ottawa, in the city, just outside of the centre of the city.

Mr. John Vanthof: Okay. In your experience, would you think that child care—how do I put this? Would you think that the conditions would be different in the country or in urban centres? Basically, would the government have a better view of the issues facing child care if they actually looked at all parts of Ontario instead of just one part of Ontario?

Ms. Julia Dewing: Absolutely. For your first part, child care wouldn't necessarily change between urban and rural centres. You have the same amount of children coming in.

But for the second part of your question, rural centres are actually going to be affected the most by this, if people are being forced into going with agencies. There are absolutely no agencies to go with in many rural areas, and those people will have no choice other than to close down. And to put those children in care, people will have to travel up to 45 minutes to an hour to bring their child into care, rather than going to someone who might be down the street who might be more available to them.

So rural providers will be highly affected by this and definitely should have been consulted and had more of an opportunity to come in and speak.

Mr. John Vanthof: The reason I'm asking this is because I come from a very rural place and we used child care; I had a farm. If there's a lack of child care due to any type of changes in regulation, it will actually put a lot of farm kids at risk. That's why I'm asking these questions. I would like to make sure that the government has actually taken that into account.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You should let your own caucus know that, too.

Mr. John Vanthof: But it's an issue that has to be looked at. So, as far as the third party regulation, from

my take from your questions, you have no qualms with regulation itself?

Ms. Julia Dewing: Absolutely not. If there was a direct licensing from the government that you could apply for and achieve and you had to achieve certain characteristics in order to achieve the licence, and then you would be inspected every month, yearly or whatever it is that was decided upon with a bigger group of people, hopefully—I can't see any provider having an issue with that.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds. You're good?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Crack?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you for coming. Is it Ms. Dewing?

Ms. Julia Dewing: Dewing, yes.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you; very good. So, you mentioned on slide 10 about the Ombudsman report and the number of recommendations that he made. I'm sure you're aware there's probably, I believe, 35 of his recommendations that are in Bill 10. You also make a comment after that the clause for two under two needs to be eliminated. I just wanted to share some information. I don't know that you had that with you.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association and the National Resource Centre for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education suggest no more than a maximum of two under the age of two. So, as a government, we take a look at these different associations that review these types of situations across, obviously, all of North America. I just wanted to make a point that our government takes those types of recommendations very, very seriously.

Could you just elaborate a little bit on why you think it needs to be eliminated?

Ms. Julia Dewing: Absolutely. So, for a few of your points—first, you mentioned the Ombudsman report and—was it 34, I think you mentioned—

Mr. Grant Crack: Thirty-five.

Ms. Julia Dewing: Thirty-five—if I may comment on that first?

Mr. Grant Crack: Sure.

Ms. Julia Dewing: The Ombudsman report was meant to address illegal daycare to begin with. Heidi Higgins has met with the Ombudsman. He has said himself that you cannot fix one problem by creating more problems, and he didn't actually comment on ratios in the report itself. He didn't make any recommendations regarding ratios or say that there were any problems with them.

So it's wonderful that some of the recommendations are being addressed, but if they're not all being addressed—35 out of 113—there's definitely more that are not being addressed.

1710

He made many recommendations. There's one here. He said we should "continue to pursue amendments introducing more safety controls such as criminal refer-

ence checks for child care providers. It is also too early to close the door on other options such as developing a comprehensive voluntary or mandatory registry, extending the licensing scheme to informal caregivers and/or establishing universal standards....”

There are many recommendations in there that definitely may work—to say that this bill is well written, but there are many more—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Julia Dewing: —that I would say go towards that it’s not.

If you want me to continue with your question for the two under two?

Mr. Grant Crack: Yes, please.

Ms. Julia Dewing: To that, if all of these agencies are saying that two under two is unsafe, I do not understand how the bill is recommending that the ratios increase in centres to five under two. If I personally can’t take care of three kids under two, but someone in a centre can take care of five under two, and then there’s 15 children—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. It will come around.

Mrs. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: There’s a lot of repetition from people making presentations—and thank you for your great presentation. What I keep wondering about is: Why is such a preference being given to these big centres when we’re all aware that a lot of small towns exist where there are no big centres and there will never be any big centres?

As my colleague mentioned, in rural settings, what are parents going to do if they can’t find something accessible? They’re not going to drive two hours to bring their kid to daycare and drive back two hours to do the chores. They’re just going to bring the kid into the barn and they’re going to plunk the kid down in the hay and sort of hope that the dog is keeping an eye on the kid. There is no daycare for the kid, and it’s going to go back to the old days. They’re going to put them in a caboose and carry their kid around in one of those handkerchief slings and do the farm chores.

I think it’s naive to think that people cannot take care of two infants. There are plenty of women I know who have had triplets, and with fertility treatments, we’re seeing more of that. Is this government suggesting that these women aren’t able to care for their kids? We’ve all seen the videos on Facebook about people with quadruplets. They have special tables; they have a special system; they have child-proofed their basements and their kitchens. It’s not like walking into a restaurant with four infants. It’s in a house where you’re set up for that.

My question to you is: Why do you think the government is doing this?

Ms. Julia Dewing: I personally believe that there’s an attempt to right the wrongs that have been done, and those are the deaths that have occurred, which were highly unfortunate. However, we know why they have occurred, generally. It was the lack of oversight. It was the

lack of response to what was an example of four complaints against a particular house and not going to look into it, and then a death occurred there. I think this is an attempt to remedy that, but it’s not being done properly, and instead of rectifying the problem, it’s going to cause many, many more issues.

Mrs. Gila Martow: To me, the next step after this bill is to license parents—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Julia Dewing: We actually discussed that.

Mrs. Gila Martow: —because there are injuries in people’s homes as well. In fact, a lot of times, the daycares are safer and they’re more childproof than people’s own homes.

I want to thank you again. What I want to suggest, without putting words in your mouth, is that I feel there is an effort to move children. They’ve lost children to the full-day senior kindergarten program. The large daycare centres are suffering because of it. They’re asking the government, “Find us some kids to take care of,” and they said, “You know what we’ll do? We’ll shut down the home daycares, and here are some kids.” Bingo.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

MS. BECKY KURZ

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now call Ms. Becky Kurz to please come forward.

Interjections.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Are you ready?

Interjections.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Point of order.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Point of order.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I think Mr. Dunlop, the MPP, needs to withdraw something.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): This is not a point of order.

I would call on you to please start your presentation.

Ms. Becky Kurz: Good evening. My name is Becky Kurz, and I’d like to thank you for the opportunity for me to come to speak on Bill 10. Today, I’ll speak in two perspectives: as a parent and also as an independent care provider.

As a parent, I found it difficult to find part-time daycare for my daughter, who was nine months old at the time. I visited licensed facilities and home daycares. Home daycare was my first choice.

My daughter’s independent daycare provider far exceeded my expectations. All the children were similar in age, plus the provider’s three children were very small, although she did hire help. Never once did I question my child’s safety. I now have three children, ages nine, seven and four. Since then, we have chosen many informal and independent child care settings where my children have thrived and continuously been loved.

I opened my own part-time daycare in September 2007. These are some of the 28 children and one employee I've had the privilege of working with, and I consider them part of my family. I keep in touch with each and every one of these families. My former employee went on to obtain her ECE and now works in the school system.

I run a safe, educational and fun program with lots of love. My daycare families choose my daycare because we are the right fit for each other. I don't have to do daycare as I am still a part-time accredited music therapist. However, this is what I choose to do. This is what I love to do.

I'm going to speak on three points of concern for me in the bill, which are: including the provider's children under the age of six in the total number of children; no more than two under the age of two; and licensing.

Every death is tragic, and every child needs a safe environment. However, statistically speaking, children in independent care are safer than in regulated care, especially when you consider the independent care is estimated to be higher than regulated child care. Since 2007, there has been the one confirmed death of Allison Tucker, who passed away in a law-abiding independent daycare, and it was deemed accidental. In the same period of time, two children died while in regulated care, as stated in the Ombudsman's report. Independent child care should not be lumped together with illegal daycares, because they are just that: illegal.

With FDK, many regulated caregivers and centres are finding it difficult to fill their over two spots which make their businesses viable. It will inevitably affect independent providers if Bill 10 passes with the no-more-than-two-under-the-age-of-two clause.

This year, I will lose four of my older daycare children as they will be moving on to new adventures. My remaining child is under the age of two. Almost all children coming into care are around 12 months old. How do I fill my remaining spots? With two children in care, and after expenses, I can no longer viably sustain my business and I will be forced to close or else raise my rates.

For parents, it limits these essential spots, leaving them at a premium, and further limits availability for parents of multiples. If there are not enough daycare spaces, parents will be forced to remain at home rather than rejoin the workforce. Because of FDK, a provider's children over three years eight months should not be included as they will be in school full-time. A cap of eight total children under the age of 10, including the provider's children, may be incorporated as this is in line with six other provinces in Canada.

I believe that all home daycares should be individually licensed for a reasonable fee—less than \$500 per year. Currently in Ontario, no home daycare is licensed. The agency holds the licence and subcontracts the daycare provider for thousands of dollars each year. In BC, the provider can obtain a licence directly through the government's health group and must adhere to certain standards. Annual fees may vary, but can be as little as \$50 per year.

In conclusion, please amend the two-under-two clause and the inclusion of the provider's own children under the age of six. I implore you to allow daycare providers to be individually licensed for a reasonable fee. This will allow for an increase in subsidy spaces. Have unscheduled inspections. Make first aid and CPR mandatory. This will give oversight and increase safety—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Becky Kurz: —because the whereabouts of daycares in Ontario will be known and the ministry can inspect without having to rely upon a complaint before being able to shut down a substandard daycare. Most of all, it will allow for loving and safe daycares to continue to provide our essential service for the children in Ontario.

I love my job. I love my daycare families. Please make changes to this bill to improve safety while allowing daycare providers to continue to do what we love to do. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. We go to Mrs. McGarry.

1720

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you so much for your presentation, Becky, and your pictures. That's probably the best part of our day. I appreciate the passion.

Ms. Becky Kurz: They're the best part of my day.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: They certainly are. As a parent of many children, I'm delighted to hear your focus on safety.

I've got several questions for you. I just wanted to let you be aware that the Ombudsman has called on the province to take urgent action to protect children in unlicensed daycares, and part of Bill 10 is going to address that. Do you have any further comment about whether you feel this bill does or does not address the Ombudsman's concern?

Ms. Becky Kurz: I think that unless you have some kind of licensing system in place, for a reasonable fee—individually licensed—it's not going to address the safety concerns.

In fact, the Ombudsman met with Heidi Higgins yesterday. He was directly asked if he recommended reducing the ages and numbers in child care for ICPs, and he's not recommending this. He in fact stated that he was sympathetic to our concerns and that the government is not supposed to fix one problem only to create another. He also has offered his support to ICPs.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I noticed that your children's ages right now are seven, nine and four.

Ms. Becky Kurz: Yes.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: If your children are not included in it, except for the four-year-old, will that change your numbers as an independent provider? Under the way that Bill 10 reads now, just one of your children would be included.

Ms. Becky Kurz: Yes, my one child will be included, but as it stands right now, I will be losing four of my older daycare children. I will have one child left who is

under the age of two. If I can only get a 12-month-old or a 15-month-old or a 20-month-old in my care, that means I will have two children. So, yes, it will affect my business.

I've been in business for eight years. I'm very passionate about what I do. I love my kids. But this essentially will shut me down.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Is it partly that the kids are now at junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten, from a few years ago? Through this transition period, if this bill goes through and takes longer to get through—let's say there was another year's grace to sort of get through some of this transition, now that all kids are in full-day kindergarten—would that make a difference to your business?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Becky Kurz: I guess my question would be: Would the JK kids get older? The fact of the matter is that what sustains our business right now—I used to be able to have four- and five-year-olds who came after school, and I could make my business work through that, but when four- and five-year-olds are now in school, my clientele has dropped to 3.8 years and less.

The Vice-Chair (Mme France Gélinas): Thank you.

Ms. Becky Kurz: If there's a significant change—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: To Mrs. MacLeod.

The Vice-Chair (Mme France Gélinas): Mrs. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much, Becky. It's great that you travelled all the way here. As you are aware, the Ontario Progressive Conservatives demanded that we have province-wide hearings. I think it would have been good to actually travel this bill to Ottawa, so that many of you who have made it up from Ottawa and Lanark wouldn't have had to spend money of your own to come here to present to your Legislature. But anyway, we are here—the Liberals didn't listen—and I want to say thank you.

You picked up on a point about the Ombudsman; I've asked a lot of questions on this in the Legislature, as you're aware. In one of the responses to me, the Minister of Education effectively called independent child care operators illegal. I met with the Ombudsman. He happens to live in Nepean–Carleton—fancy that—just around the corner from my constituency office, so I invited him in. We were talking about Bill 8, which I'm the Treasury Board critic for, so we were having a conversation.

Toward the end of the meeting, I said to André, "Listen, why is the minister calling these independent child care operators illegal? She's suggesting that that's from you."

He said, "They're not illegal. I've never suggested that. In fact," he said, "I've never suggested, not once, that we should eliminate independent child care operators."

You know what the interesting thing is and, I think, the hypocrisy of all this too, Becky? What bothers me the

most is the number of government members, and even some from the third party, who will talk about the need for a universal child care system; they're doing it right now in the Legislature. But at the same time, do you know what they say—a lot of them? They do just what I do. They have an independent child care operator who looks after their children. We heard that, of course, last week when we were in front of the Minister of Government Services—sorry, the House leader—when we were in front of his office. Remember that? He, too—it's just the hypocrisy of the whole thing.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Is there a question?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You know, I'm allowed to use my time for what I want to use my time for. That would be something that these new members for the Liberals would learn if they paid attention instead of just getting notes from the staff.

But one of the things I'd like to know from you, Becky, is if that was your view as well from the Ombudsman—that, again, he doesn't think that you're illegal, and he also doesn't think that we should eliminate you—and finally, if you also think it's hypocritical for those in the government who are trying to eliminate you while at the same time using your services. Please, I'd love to hear your response.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): In 30 seconds or less.

Ms. Becky Kurz: Okay. I heard from one person over on this side today saying that they used independent daycare. I've heard from Liz Sandals that she has used independent daycare, and from Yasir that he has used independent daycare. I believe I heard from one other person, but unfortunately I can't put a face or a name to it right at this point. We are not illegal.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mr. Vanthof?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you very much for coming, Becky. Our party doesn't always agree with the Tories, but one thing we do agree on is that this bill should have been travelled so that more people could have actually had input.

But I did hear you say—and I think that that has also been a theme here—that you're not against regulation.

Ms. Becky Kurz: No.

Mr. John Vanthof: And what I heard you say is that if this bill could have some useful amendments—one would be that independent operators could be individually licensed. Right? Could you tell us what difference that would make again, and just expand on that, please?

Ms. Becky Kurz: Right now, as it stands in Ontario, you are actually not licensed. The agency holds the licence. I think in my report that I gave to you guys, there is a sample. Based on an agency charging \$40 a day, the provider, at 30%, would only receive \$28 per child per day. That's actually a cost of, if you look at five children in care, over \$15,000. If you look at six children in care, that's over \$18,000.

I believe that we can take from the BC model, where you can be individually licensed through the government

for a nominal fee—I've heard varying cases, but for as little as \$50 per year. You can have inspections; you can make sure that these daycares are known and you can find these daycares. You can't close down what you can't find. You can't increase the safety of a daycare unless you can find it.

Mr. John Vanthof: So with what you've seen from this bill—and you've shown your obvious level of interest by coming and making a presentation—this bill won't help find the truly illegal daycares?

Ms. Becky Kurz: No.

Mr. John Vanthof: Okay. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. I would like to thank you, Ms. Kurz. Nice pictures.

MS. LISA MacDONALD

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I'll call Lisa MacDonald.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Can I have the tea and the water here?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Oh, absolutely.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Welcome to Queen's Park. Are you ready?

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Thank you. I'm ready.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Go ahead.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Thanks. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to speak with regard to Bill 10. I'm a registered early childhood educator from Ottawa. I'm the mother of three children, aged seven, three and one year.

I'm a proud independent child care provider. I currently provide care to five children, including my own. Four of them are three years old. Due to their closeness in age, they have become, as they say, best friends. Next September, they will be off to full-day kindergarten. A new group comprised of infants would normally replace them, because that is where the need lies.

I am also a proud member of CICPO. I fully support their recommendations for five children under 10, not including our own. I spoke to four licensing agencies in my area. They all agreed that the vast majority of requests are for care of one-year-olds. I learned that the proposed addition of a sixth child is not a guarantee. They authorize the provider to take on the sixth child based on the size of your home and their own evaluation.

1730

Agency providers receive a government bonus every three months. I have been told it is normally equal to one week's pay. That is a large commitment of financial resources to providers affiliated with agencies.

I believe an investment is needed to oversee independent child care providers. Please consider individual direct licensing. I conducted a small, informal survey, and ICPs were willing to pay, on average, \$150 per year for a licence. Perhaps the ministry could reinvest this fee to offset the cost of inspections. We welcome licensing and

oversight. The vast majority of us are competent and passionate, and follow regulations. The current regulations are not the issue. The issue is illegal home daycares. I believe that the section of the bill that requires providers to disclose they are "unlicensed" should be amended to "independent," due to the fact that we are unable to obtain a licence. We want a licence. Please give us that opportunity.

I believe that many parents are unaware of how this bill could impact their chosen child care arrangements. Even if their child is currently in a licensed child care centre, proposed ratio changes will ultimately mean that their child will receive less attention. If proposed regulation changes are not amended for all providers across the board, all children and providers will suffer the consequences.

At minimum, this bill should establish a registry. I fully support the framework laid out by the CCPRN. It removes all liability from the Ministry of Education and places responsibility on parents for monitoring their own daycare arrangements. Standards would be met. Inspections would be done. This would provide a real oversight.

According to a report by Martha Friendly in 2012, the cost for infant care in Ontario is \$12,000. The purpose of Bill 10 is to align with the needs of today's families. Ontario families need affordable infant care. Parents shouldn't be faced with competition for expensive infant spaces when they're returning to the workforce.

Each day, I work with parents with whom I have a close relationship. They rely on me to meet the needs of their child while they work. They have to know that their child is safe and well cared for, and I take that responsibility very seriously. Your constituents are made up of families, so ultimately, you strive to meet their needs as well.

What they don't need is for their provider to terminate their child's care that they rely so heavily upon. What they don't need is for their child care costs to increase. Parents must be able to provide for their children, and eliminating spaces and driving up the cost of child care is counterproductive of the intended purpose of this bill.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. We go to Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much, Lisa, for your passion on this bill. You gave us a great presentation—

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Thank you.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: —and we're starting to see a number of these come forward. I've got to tell you that I've got, like, 300 letters now from people like yourself across the province.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: There are a lot of women.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: We are hoping that the bill can either be amended or the regulations will actually include people like yourselves and include what you've actually said here today. We know it has been time-allocated; there has been some rush put on the bill. That's why people from all over Ontario have tried to rush down here

to make their comments, sort of overnight. We know that they've even time-allocated clause-by-clause, so it's all going to be finished by next Tuesday night.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: I know. It's very fast.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: That's kind of a tragedy, when you think that all parts of the province need child care—

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: They do.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: —and everything has been centralized on University Avenue and not the opportunity—

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: That's true.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Do you think—

Interjections.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'll ask the question when I want, okay? I can make a few comments, okay?

The reality is, there are literally thousands and thousands of jobs that are going to be impacted by this. Lisa, I'm wondering: As you look around the province with your colleagues, how many people do you know who will actually shut down their operation?

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: I actually have a statistic for that. The CCPRN conducted a survey of 800 ICPs, okay? Seventy-three per cent said they would have to terminate a space. This is a big deal. They're letting go a family, a family they have close ties with. They're telling those parents, "I'm sorry. I can't take your child anymore." That is devastating to the provider, it's devastating to the child, and it's devastating to the parents. Okay? So 82% would have to raise rates; 58% would have to look for alternative employment. Women with two-plus children—51% would have to look for care of their own children.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: That answered the question?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Yes.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Okay.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Lisa or Gila?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I think that we're setting ourselves back a great deal. We had a national discussion on this in 2006—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —and I think the province decided where to go. I really feel we're having this beer-and-popcorn debate, where the Liberals think they should take away our choice in child care. What's your thought on that?

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Parents deserve the choice, okay? Parents are not being forced to go with ICPs; they're choosing ICPs. There is the licensed centre model, there is the agency model and there are independents. It's a personal choice. It's a personal choice that we, as citizens, have, and—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mr. Vanthof?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Chair, and thank you very much, Lisa, for making your presentation. It was a good one. It is a good one.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Thank you.

Mr. John Vanthof: We have heard over and over that independent child care operators aren't against regulation—

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: No.

Mr. John Vanthof: —and you want to be inspected and licensed.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: We do.

Mr. John Vanthof: And, at this point, you're not able to be.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Right.

Mr. John Vanthof: So this legislation—it could be amended to make it better.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: It absolutely could.

Mr. John Vanthof: You have suggested some amendments to make it better.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Yes.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's why you're here.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Absolutely. Let's improve this.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd just like to put it on the record that we also voted not to time-allocate this bill and to bring it across the province to get more input like what is coming from people like you, and—

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: There is still some time to—

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd really like to commend you for coming and advocating so well for something you obviously love. Thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you, Ms. MacDonald. I would like to call Felix Bednarski—

Interjections.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Oh, sorry. I did that yesterday, too, but I did it to them. So now we're equal.

I think it's Ms. Hoggarth.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Yes, it is.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Sorry. Go ahead.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you. Thank you for your enthusiastic presentation. I can tell that you are very fervent about and concerned about the people, the young children, who you look after, and I appreciate that, being an educator.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Thank you.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I would just like to say that we do not want to have to license everything. I am surprised that people are asking to be licensed, because usually governments get the opposite view from people. We believe in giving parents the choice, and many of us—you are correct—in this room have gone that route, if we could.

The Ombudsman said that "Ontario parents and children have waited long enough" for reform and modernized child care in Ontario. Do you agree with this statement?

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Sorry. Can you repeat that?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: The Ombudsman said, "Ontario parents and children have waited long enough" for reform and modernized child care in Ontario. Do you agree with this statement?

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Well, I guess it depends on how—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Since 1946.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Pardon?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Since 1946.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Oh, yes. Yes. I mean, absolutely. The time has come—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Oh. Okay.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You have more time. You can keep going.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: I have more time?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): You could finish answering her question.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Yes. Her question—I think it depends on your definition. What is your definition?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: She doesn't know.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: I just want to know what your definition—you're speaking about the Ombudsman, so I'm just wondering what your definition is of the reform. What exactly are you referring to as far as the reform?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Well, in regard to putting in clauses that have to do with the safety of children. I know that, as an educator, I see daycare providers coming to the back of my kindergarten, and they have eight, 10, 12 children with them going back to their homes—to look after them at the end of the day. I don't think that's safe. I think we need to put provisions in place so that does not happen. I do agree that the people who are looking after those children are well intentioned, but accidents do happen when you have that many children.

1740

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Well, I think a lot of people have already spoken to the track record on safety. Independent care—we've already been through this, okay? I agree with you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Everyone wants safety—everyone.

Can I?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: There's still time.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Finish your thought.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: Okay. Everyone wants safety, for sure. We all agree on that. It's just: How are we going to do it? The Ombudsman, as we've said, supports us. He supports ICPs. I don't want illegal daycares. I don't want children to get hurt.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Now we have reached the end of the time.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: All right.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Ms. MacDonald. You did very well.

Ms. Lisa MacDonald: That's great. Thank you.

HUMBERSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would call on Felix Bednarski, the principal of Humberside Montessori School, to please come forward. Are you ready?

Mr. Felix Bednarski: Yes, I am.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Please start.

Mr. Felix Bednarski: Hello. My name is Felix Bednarski. I am the principal and co-founder of Humberside Montessori School. I am the past president and a current board member of the Montessori Society of Canada. I am also a board member of the Association Montessori Internationale, or AMI, Canada, and a past board member of AMI Holland. Thank you for allowing me to speak and to express my concerns with sections of Bill 10. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you more about our work with children and how Bill 10 could have a potential negative impact on our school.

This legislation has been made urgent in response to the deaths of children in illegal home daycare settings. This objective is commendable, and you have our complete support for that intent. However, we are concerned that the bill, as written, will not be reflective of the holistic view of child development inherent in an AMI Montessori approach and will have a negative impact on AMI programs in Ontario. We know that we can find a common-ground solution that will both respect the principles of Montessori pedagogy and enable the government to provide access to safe and effective programs in Ontario.

I am the co-founder, along with my wife, Amalia Galle, of Humberside Montessori School in Toronto. The school was established in August 1987. We started with two staff members and 12 children.

As a result of our work, in 1995 the school received a certificate of recognition from AMI, founded by Dr. Maria Montessori. We have been enjoining the guidance of AMI up to this day. The AMI certificate has been serving more than as a reflection of our work: Our school became a role model for other schools. Parents have been actively seeking out our school. Over the years, the school grew to accommodate children from two and a half years to 14 years, with 325 students and 40 staff members.

To meet the pedagogical requirements for Montessori programs and to continue to be accredited by AMI, the school has to put into practice some of the basic fundamentals that must come as complete:

- three-year age-mixed groups;
- large class sizes;
- one teacher and one assistant;
- a full set of Montessori materials;
- a three-hour uninterrupted work cycle; and
- a program consistent with Montessori pedagogy.

Three-year age-mixed groups require that children of three ages mix from the age of two and a half to six years old and work together in one class. The mixed-age group creates a social dynamic that fosters pro-social behav-

your—children helping children. Young children of two and a half to three years old look up to five- or six-year-old children as mentors and role models. They listen when the older children explain something, show them how to do something or state a limit of the classroom. The older child has grown in confidence and abilities after being in the class for three years and takes on this responsibility with ease. The mixed ages provide variety in social interactions with children of different ages, as in a family or social community.

This approach has been in practice for more than 100 years in Montessori schools all over the world. The benefits of three-year age-mixed groups will only continue when children are admitted to Montessori primary classes at the age of two and a half years, which Bill 10 would prevent us from doing. This point alone will fundamentally alter the way we are working with children within Montessori environments.

As Montessori schools offer academic, educational programs, they do not belong in a category with child care centres or nursery schools. Our concern lies in schedule 1, part I, purposes and interpretation, sections 6 and 8 as defined. As currently written, we are concerned that Bill 10 will have unintended consequences on the implementation of Montessori pedagogy. We therefore respectfully urge this committee to provide clarity on these exemptions and ask that AMI accreditation be formally recognized in the language of Bill 10.

We would like to ask all members of the social policy committee—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Felix Bednarski: —to exempt Montessori schools that adhere to a traditional Montessori pedagogy, such as schools accredited by AMI, from the application of the Day Nurseries Act or, if Bill 10 is enacted, the Child Care and Early Years Act.

We would also like to ask you to please consider amending the definition of “private school” in Bill 10, section 6, by allowing private accredited schools to permit children who are two and a half years old and older.

If I may, I would like to leave you with a copy of—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. The questions will start.

The Clerk has informed me that we will be called for a vote. Therefore, we probably won’t have the full nine minutes. If it’s the agreement of the group, I would give two minutes to each group; is this okay?

Mr. Vanthof, your two minutes start.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you very much for coming and presenting. Since we don’t have much time—and I’m really glad you came. If the bill isn’t amended—because the bill is going to pass. We’re in a time allocation, a majority government. The bill is going to pass. If it’s not amended, what will the impact be on the Montessori system?

Mr. Felix Bednarski: I’m concerned about how the Montessori pedagogy could function. I just explained one element in my presentation, about the three-year age-

mixed group. Montessori won’t be able to function, the program won’t be able to function, all the beautiful things that I just described—how the younger children are looking to the older children, how the older children become the leaders and develop the skills—those elements are not going to function. So I’m very much concerned, if there would be no amendments, about the impact the bill is going to have on AMI Montessori accredited schools.

Mr. John Vanthof: So your system will be fundamentally changed or damaged, or could it be?

Mr. Felix Bednarski: It won’t be able to function.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mr. Crack.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you for representing the Montessori schools. I think we’ve had close to five or six, and I think we’ve asked the same question: What are the unintended consequences? We did receive a response today from one of the previous presenters, but I haven’t got a response yet—when you talk about the concern lying in schedule 1, part I, purposes and interpretation, could you just elaborate on that particular concept?

Mr. Felix Bednarski: Yes. Section 6—actually, it’s in the definition section. Section 6 talks about the definition of “private school.” A private school won’t be allowed to have children younger than 3.8 or four; either we’re talking about September or December.

I explained earlier that it’s fundamentally Montessori to have younger children starting with us. That’s the section that I was referring to. If an amendment could be made to allow for private accredited Montessori schools to accept children of the age of two and a half and up rather than from four and up.

Mr. Grant Crack: Any other questions from the—

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: One. I have a comment.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mrs. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I think we are open to submissions, recommendations. That is the point of having a public hearing. Until Friday, you can submit your recommendations, and then we will go through clause-by-clause next week. Thank you.

Mr. Felix Bednarski: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Just a point of clarification: Deputants have till tonight to submit written submissions and you have till Thursday, noon, to submit your amendments.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): For members.

Mrs. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Hi. Thank you for your submission. I think that’s what’s missing from this debate: that people are hearing “two-year-olds, two-and-a-half-year-olds, 3.8-year-olds,” and they’re picturing little babies in a high chair.

As somebody who had four kids who, at two and a half, went to preschool, went in a carpool—they went to

day camp at two and a half years old. Three of my kids went to overnight camp when they six years old. They went off on the bus, and they didn't miss me. It's kind of insulting.

I think that this is why we need to hear from Montessori schools—and I'm so glad that you came—that if you could please explain to the people here what two-and-a-half-year-olds are capable of. Because I think that there are just too many people around this table who don't understand that two-and-a-half-year-olds can go to school; they don't have to just be in a babysitting environment.

Mr. Felix Bednarski: Thank you very much for this question. I brought this book over here. If you have an opportunity, please go through it. This is the journey of a child from the age of two and a half to the age of 14. The children in that environment—we're asking about the age of two and a half because this is something that's coming from the discovery of Dr. Montessori. The child is capable of starting, and so many interesting things, that we really don't give credit to the child.

If I may take a few seconds, because yesterday I heard one of the members asking if there will be at least a child present over here. So I have a short testimonial from a student, Ella Sutarno, who went from the age of two and a half or three and she finished at the age of 14. She described her experience in a few sentences, if I may read:

“The biggest contribution Montessori has made to my life? It is my life. I've been going to school at Humber-side Montessori for 11 years now, which is practically my whole life, learning the Montessori teachings instead of public or private school teachings, and seeing a whole different way of learning. I learned how to bake bread myself when I was four. Who gets to do that at four? Who gets to make a volcano explode at six years old? Who gets to run a business at 11? Who gets to dissect a pig at 12? Montessori has taught me not only the basic things for school, but also has prepared me for what I will encounter in high school.”

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you for presenting; you did very well.

I thank everybody for coming here and for your presentations.

The bell you hear is because all of us have been called for a vote in the House. This meeting will recess. We will start again at 6:30. Please be here at 6:30 sharp.

Mr. Felix Bednarski: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): You're very welcome.

The committee recessed from 1752 to 1832.

COALITION OF INDEPENDENT
CHILDCARE PROVIDERS OF ONTARIO,
OTTAWA CHAPTER

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Welcome back, everyone. Everybody knows that we're here to follow up on the public hearings for Bill 10. The session

starts with five-minute presentations by the deputants, followed by three-minute question-and-answer periods by each of the three parties. Thirty seconds before the end, I will let you know that you have 30 seconds left.

The first person I would like to call is Velvet LeClair from the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario, the Ottawa chapter. Welcome to Queen's Park. Are you ready?

Ms. Velvet LeClair: Yes, I am.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Please start.

Ms. Velvet LeClair: Thank you for inviting me to share my experiences and opinions. My name is Velvet LeClair and I'm an early childhood educator from Ottawa. I graduated in 2001 and I worked in daycare for 13 years before opening my home daycare last year. I chose to work with children because I am fascinated with human development and I wanted a career that I would enjoy.

You claim that Bill 10 is going to modernize child care and improve safety. This bill, as presently drafted, means that I will be taking a \$4-an-hour pay cut, and I cannot afford another child until my son turns six. It will also put many other home daycare businesses out of business and will change the market. I worry that Bill 10 will entrench the corporate child care centre takeover in Ontario.

I've been working in non-profit centres, corporate centres and businesses that operate both child care centres and licensing agencies. Usually, I changed jobs each year because I lost respect for my employers and I couldn't handle witnessing how some of the children were being treated. Many of my co-workers would burn out because of low wages, no paid sick leave, no health benefits and bad management.

After 13 years of licensed child care, the only business model that I could ever endorse is unionized parent co-operatives. Their financial records are transparent, and parents and staff make all the decisions together. The teams of teachers have a positive work dynamic because everyone is valued, compensated and treated equally. This is reflected in how they perform on the job and how children are treated.

After I had my son, I decided to open a home daycare. I quickly came to the realization that licensing agencies are intent on exploiting their workers, just like so many of the daycares I had left. Parents pay the licensing agencies, who take between 20% to 35% before paying the caregiver. The caregivers do not get paid for holidays or sick days, but the parents still get billed. Although some of these agencies are classified as non-profit, they are intent on making a profit off of the backs of their caregivers.

I took over 80 hours of business training through the Child Care Providers Resource Network. Many of the people I met were in various stages of running their business, and they changed my perspective on what quality child care actually is. Home daycares are extended families. We can focus on individuality, and the children develop intimate relationships with each other because

the groups are smaller. We are compensated fairly and valued by the families we serve.

Growing up in a home daycare is what is best for healthy child development, not institutionalized child care centres.

My concern about for-profit corporate child care centres is that they operate businesses that are relentless about increasing profits. The meals they provide consist of powdered milk and canned food. The children are unstimulated and bored from lack of activities. Staff members only earn minimum wage and are sent home if children are absent. You should ask me more about these companies later.

With all that being said, I do support the sections of Bill 10 that include Montessori, religious and private schools into the legislative framework. However, if Bill 10 is about improving safety, you should not be omitting summer camps, recreational programs and other forms of child care programs from following regulations.

Full-day learning had a huge ripple effect on the licensed child care centre. Anyone running a kindergarten or school-age program was either going to have to close or find a way to provide services to younger age groups. Your government didn't hire enough inspectors to keep up with those changes, which led to a child dying and a lawsuit against your government.

The recent provincial Ombudsman's report on unlicensed child care noted that in my city of Ottawa, 60% of licensed daycares were operating with an expired licence. The ministry couldn't keep up with demand. If your goal is to improve the quality and safety of child care and that is the reason for Bill 10, then hire more inspectors to meet your existing mandate before placing punitive restrictions on lawful, non-agency independent child care providers.

The Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario will continue to oppose your legislation. We are considering and preparing for a province-wide strike in the event that you do not amend Bill 10 to address our concerns. As the debate continues on how to create a national child care program, I urge you to reflect on the implications of this bill. We hope to work together to include home daycare as a critical part of the child care infrastructure.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thank you. The first caucus to ask questions will be Mr. Crack.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you for coming this evening. I appreciate you also coming from Ottawa.

You did mention the national child care program. I just want to make a comment to you and ask you what your opinion is on the fact that both the Liberals and the Conservatives supported a motion a little less than an hour ago supporting a national child care program—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Point of order: We didn't; it was the NDP.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Point of order well taken. It was the NDP and the Liberals.

Mr. Grant Crack: What did I say?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: You said the Conservatives did.

Mr. Grant Crack: Oh, I'm sorry. The NDP and the Liberals—I stand corrected—supported a motion for a national child care program, and yet the Conservatives chose not to. What is your opinion on that when we hear repeatedly that they think they're the protectors of child care across Ontario, yet they don't support working families that would actually be out there supporting a business such as yours?

Ms. Velvet LeClair: I do support a national child care program. I hope that home daycares will be included in that planning and in the whole program that is going to be happening. I also hope that it's not going to be leading to a corporate child care sector takeover. There are two businesses that are being traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange right now and I'm deeply concerned by both of those businesses.

Mr. Grant Crack: Okay, thank you—

Ms. Velvet LeClair: And I think that you should also be concerned about those businesses as part of this national child care campaign.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you. I believe we are.

You talked about some of the other child care providers and you wanted to speak more about it. You had indicated, "Please ask me about it," so I'm asking you if you wanted to elaborate on that.

Ms. Velvet LeClair: Child care providers in licensed daycare centres?

Mr. Grant Crack: Yes, I believe that's what you were referring to.

Ms. Velvet LeClair: Yes. The wages are low. There are so many corporate—even some of the non-profit agencies just don't run their businesses honestly. It leads to the children being treated poorly.

I think that child care needs a complete overhaul. I don't think that Bill 10 is necessarily going to do that.

1840

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Grant Crack: Okay, that's fine. Could you please explain why you believe you would be taking a \$4-per-hour pay cut, as you had referred to it?

Ms. Velvet LeClair: Because I would be asking one family to leave, and what they pay me equals out to \$4 an hour. So having one child leave would result in a pay decrease for myself.

Mr. Grant Crack: So are you of the opinion that you wouldn't be able to fill another—

Ms. Velvet LeClair: I have my own child. I have a three-and-a-half-year-old son—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G  linas): Thank you. To Mr. Dunlop or Mrs. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Hi. Thank you very much. We've been hearing from so many people and I find it shocking that some people in the room still can't understand that if you put restrictions on how many children can be in the daycare, that that cuts into the earning potential of that daycare.

In terms of a national child care program, it's just like a national health care program. We've seen cuts to health

care in the last 10 years under this government. We're not seeing additional things being covered. Money doesn't grow on trees; we all know that. If money is being wasted on the MaRS fiasco, the gas plants scandals or on high electricity costs in the province, then there isn't money to subsidize daycare.

We'd all love to see daycare right now. There is a tax deduction per child under specific ages, and the federal government is actually expanding that. I'm sure that you give receipts, I'm sure you have a legitimate business, and your clients are able to make the proper deductions and, with that expansion, they'll be able to make more deductions once that comes into effect.

My question to you is what I've asked a lot of people who have come to speak to us in the last two days, and that is: Why do you think that there are—I feel that this is an attack, I don't know how you feel, on home daycare. Why do you feel that this government is trying to move children from home daycare settings that parents want into large centres? You described that a couple of them are less than desirable and probably a lot of them are less than desirable. Why do you think they're trying to move kids into large centres?

Ms. Velvet LeClair: Because of the national child care campaign and the unions that are supporting it. Also, I think the government has been lobbied by for-profit child care centres. Even before full-day learning was announced, I was an executive member of my union, and that was the word we were hearing—that corporate child care lobbyists were coming to meet with the Liberal government, and now we have all these daycare changes. So I'm concerned that all these changes are about letting a corporate company come in and take over the market when the home daycares are—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I don't want to be somebody who bursts the bubble, but I think when you say that you support a national daycare system, you'd support a national daycare system that supports home care for children and choice for parents and that doesn't restrict parents who are looking for a spot for a 12-month-old child so that there's only spots available for three-year-olds and there are no spots available for one-year-olds. I don't have time for a question, but I would want to remind you that it doesn't work out to—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you very much for coming in and presenting this evening.

You have concerns about for-profit child care?

Ms. Velvet LeClair: Yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Can you tell me what they are?

Ms. Velvet LeClair: It's very misleading for parents. They don't know what they're getting. I've worked in multiple daycare centres where the infants move up to the toddler program three months before the parents know that they've moved up, so the parents are still paying an infant rate even though their toddler has moved into

another spot. The meals are poor. The treatment of the staff—you only make minimum wage, no sick leave, no benefits whatsoever. Usually one person in the program makes 50 cents more than the other workers, so there's a really negative work dynamic with the staff. Everybody is trying to fight for that 50-cent raise and become the head teacher.

There are so many things happening in corporate daycare. It's also happening in non-profit too. That's why I can only endorse unionized parent co-operatives. Parent co-operatives are a lot like home daycares. You work closely with the parents—they're on the board of directors—and everything is transparent.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So you think we should be supporting the expansion of co-operative, unionized daycare centres?

Ms. Velvet LeClair: Yes, and only that. But I think that we should be protecting home daycares first and foremost, when it comes to this bill.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: One of the things that I've had people say earlier this week, when they've sat in the chair you've sat in, is that they would hope that all home child cares could be licensed. What do you feel about that?

Ms. Velvet LeClair: Yes, I'd like to have a licence. I wouldn't like to be associated with a licensing agency in any way, even if the proposed idea is a fee-for-service model. I don't think that that is a solution.

I think that the government needs to invest some money in hiring more inspectors, not just the six that you just recently hired. I think that the government should be taking over the licensing system in Ontario, and just remove the licensing agencies completely.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: What do you think the criteria should be for home providers? If they're going to be licensed, should they have an ECE? Should they have police checks? Should they have—

Ms. Velvet LeClair: I think the police record check. I don't think an ECE diploma is necessarily—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Velvet LeClair: It's an asset, but I don't think it's a requirement. Police record checks, CPR, an inspection of your home to make sure it's safe. There should be support and resources for home daycare providers.

I think that this Child Care Providers Resource Network—if there were organizations like that all over the province, I think that they could take over a better system than the licensing agencies. They provide a lot of training—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you for coming. Thank you for your presentation, Mrs. LeClair.

MS. JILLIAN HENDERSON

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now call Mrs. Jillian Henderson. Are you ready, Mrs. Henderson?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Please begin.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: My name is Jillian Henderson. This is my colleague Katherine Glover.

The proposed two-under-two rule in Bill 10 will force me to close my home daycare in the Halton region. I have been running a successful daycare in Burlington for five years. I have over 20 years of experience working with children. I have a master's and PhD work in environmental planning and education. I have CPR, first aid, wilderness first aid, food safety, fire safety training, and over 20 weeks of training through our Halton association. I've taken too many professional development workshops to list. I am well qualified to do my job, and I did everything right.

What I do, as an independent home child care provider, is to give the very best I can every day. I work a 10-hour day with a small break during their nap time, if I'm lucky. It is difficult to take days off. I have no paid vacation and no benefits at all. I spend my day cutting up food into small pieces, giving hugs, sleep training, playing games, going for walks, doing crafts, singing songs, and reading stories, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Most of the children I care for are with me for 50 hours a week. They become like family, and their families become like family. I go to their birthday parties. I problem-solve with parents to figure out whether it's their teeth or an illness today, to find out what they're allergic to, whether they need additional help with speech or not. I am a team member in raising their child. We work together toward developing empathy, kindness and generosity.

I'm one of the lucky ones because I love my job. My job has value that goes far beyond the economic, social and gender issues this bill has stirred up. My job has purpose, and I did everything right.

Parents seek me out by word of mouth. I'm the neighbourhood provider. I have 23 families on my wait-list for the first half of 2015 alone. Parents in Burlington choose me, as a home provider, as their first choice.

However, I'm not alone in Halton. We are a well-qualified and dedicated community of over 200 women, and we did everything right. Many, like myself, are planning to close their doors if Bill 10 is passed. With the proposed two-under-two rule, we simply won't be able to offer the quality programming for which we are known, even if we significantly raise our prices.

Gapping spaces, waiting until a child currently in care turns two, is lost income, but more significantly, it prevents me from having daycare spaces available for parents who need and want them. Daycare spaces for one- to two-year-olds are already extremely hard to find in Halton, and the two-under-two will make this even worse.

In five years of operating a daycare, all of my little ones have come to me at a year old, when their parents' leave is over. I work only with children aged one to three and a half, when they head off to school. That's just over

a two-year span, and the government is proposing to take away one of those years for three of my five spaces.

1850

It is common for several of my little people to head off to school at one time. Those spaces are always filled with families seeking home care for a one-year-old. Because of this, I routinely have more than two children under two, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

More importantly, the parents wouldn't have it any other way. They actively seek my program because I don't take the older children, and their child would be with children similar in age and development to theirs. It works for all of us: provider, parent and child.

I did everything right and will be punished by this government simply for operating a legal daycare that followed all the rules. Bill 10 will prevent daycares like mine from operating, but even more alarming is that it will prevent daycares like mine from ever opening. If the two-under-two rule is passed, then by the end of 2015, we will have lost a minimum of 300 quality daycare spaces in home environments in Burlington alone.

I am urging the government to remove the two-under-two age restriction in Bill 10 for providers. With the two-under-two rule, I would no longer be able to offer any daycare spaces in a place that already has long wait-lists for centre and home care, incredibly high daycare fees and one of the longest waits for subsidy spaces in the province.

The current rules work. They have been working for decades. What didn't work is a government that didn't do their job in shutting down an illegal daycare centre operating out of a person's home.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: This government did something wrong. The illegal daycare that went far over their numbers did something wrong. I did nothing wrong, and yet my daycare is the one being shut down.

I urge the government to make amendments to Bill 10 that will protect and value the independent home child care providers of Ontario. Bill 10 won't make anything safer or anything better. It will make daycare spaces harder to find and prices more expensive.

I speak for home providers in Ontario who couldn't have their voices heard during consultation. We did everything right.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thank you. Mr. Dunlop.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much. That was a very good presentation. I really appreciate your comments. I think you hit all the key points—exactly how we feel on this side of the House.

But I'm wondering, for people like yourself across Ontario—I mean, you must have colleagues in other communities, and friends you've met through different organizations. What percentage of people do you think actually know these hearings are taking place?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: If they're not on social media—I mean, we would have no idea, but by social

media, there are hundreds of people who are aware but aren't able to contribute. Like I said, if they're not on social media, then they would have no idea that this is going on.

But more concerning than the providers not knowing is that the parents don't know this is going on. If the providers aren't speaking to their parents and telling them, "Hey, you may not have a spot, come January, come September, whenever this goes through," it's going to severely impact the parents in their choices of where they can go with their children.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you. A second question, on enforcement: First of all, would you agree to be on any kind of a registry?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Absolutely.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Of course, would you agree to licensing?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Licensing, as long as it's not through a third party, for-profit agent. Even the not-for-profits in my area aren't overly helpful.

I have two options to license in my area: Today's Family and Wee Watch. Wee Watch, when I spoke to them, would charge the parent \$45 and pay me \$22.80, so even the incentive of the sixth child—if I took that sixth child, licensing through them, I'd be having six children for what I currently make now with three children. So there is absolutely zero incentive for me to ever license with anyone in my area.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: But I'm not talking about a licence given by somebody locally. I'm talking about a licence that would be—

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Through the government? Absolutely, yes. If the government was directly inspecting me and directly responsible for the licensing, absolutely.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I want to make it clear: Through all these discussions, that's what I plan on: a government licensing system.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Yes, or some sort of registry where the provider inputs all their data onto a site, something like Daycare Bear. I don't know if you're familiar with that site. It has all the providers' information on it. That's how the parents find us. Some 90% of my clients come to me through that website. It lists everything about me: my hours, my credentials, all of that stuff.

The inspectors could have access to that, and when they show up at the inspection, they will say, "Hey, you've listed that you have CPR. You've listed that you have fire safety training. Can I see that information?"

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: That's the kind of registry that we would like to see, where we put our own information in and then an inspector comes to make sure that everything is going well in the house.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: That's fine. Thank you, Chair.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Ms. Henderson, for coming here this evening and speaking to us. You said you currently look after three children at a time?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: I look after five children. I often have more than two under two.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And do you have children of your own as well?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: I do. I have three school-aged children. I'd like to speak to that a little bit, if I can.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Be my guest.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: I have multiples; I have twins. Finding daycare spaces for two infants in a centre near me was \$1,700 per child, so having a twins in a centre is obviously prohibitively expensive. I also have a child with special needs; my son has special needs. I didn't see provisions for that anywhere in the bill. The licensed agency near me automatically counts a child with special needs as two spaces, which I think is discriminatory. That's another reason I wouldn't go with the licensed agencies.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. And you talk to other home care providers.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Absolutely.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: What's the average number of children that they have?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Well, we can only have five. Most I know have at least three or four. Most try to operate at five, just to be able to offer quality programming and to have their spaces filled on a continual basis.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And does that include children of their own who are under school age?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: It depends on the provider and what they feel they can handle. That's one of the things that's an issue for me in the bill with the two under two. It's preventing a provider from taking more than two kids under two, yet it makes no mention of a provider having discretion to take children with special needs.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: That's a good point.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: For those having special needs, I have to discuss with the parent whether I would be capable of taking them, but then I'm not afforded that same dynamic with a parent to figure out whether I would be able to take more than two under two.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: For the other providers that you're familiar with, is it fairly common for them to have more than three children under the age of two?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: I would say it depends on the provider, but yes, I think it's fairly common for them to have more than three. Right now, I have four under two; three of them are over 18 months. One is 13 months, and the other three are closer to two.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I don't have further questions. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Ms. Hoggarth.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you very much for your submission. I can see you are very fervent about what you are saying, and I understand that you probably love those children like you do your own.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Absolutely.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Did you know that there will be a transition period before this bill comes into effect in order for the changes to be made? And I wondered if you have made a submission on the government website, since it has been up there since 2012.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: I've made all kinds of submissions. Do you mean in regard to Bill 10?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Yes.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: I have made submissions to the committee and to my MPPs, the Halton MPP and the Burlington MPP. I've made multiple attempts to contact them—never heard from them, never had a reply.

What was your original question again?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I just asked if you knew that there would be a transition period.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: As far as a phase-in period—yes, but what I'm concerned about is the long-term viability of daycare. I might be able to finagle it for a few months, to have those spaces filled. But long term, like I said originally, most of my kids come to me at one year old. That's the age that parents are looking for. We might be able to stretch it out over a year or two to stay in business, but long term, I will not be able to sustain my daycare with the two-under-two rule.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: The purpose of these hearings is to hear what you have to say, and there also is a way for you to put in amendments.

Would you please tell her when they have to be in by?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Actually, MPPs have to put in amendments—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Oh, sorry.

The Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): —but you can suggest to your MPP any amendments you would like.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: It's been done. I've done that. I've sent in what my suggestions would be.

I would just like to add one final comment to make sure that we are addressing children with special needs in this bill. They have been completely left out. Having them count as two spaces or even three spaces for a provider is discriminatory, as I said.

A lot more work needs to be done on this bill to make sure that we're valuing home daycare in Ontario.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Ms. McMahon, you have 30 seconds.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hi. Thanks for coming. Nice to meet you.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Nice to meet you—finally.

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Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Yes, I'll speak with you after.

A quick question for you: no objection to being licensed? You don't have any issue with that?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Through the government? No, I have no issue with that.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Okay. So let's talk options here.

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Sure.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Let's just blue-sky it for a moment, okay? Just indulge me, would you? If it was not through the government, but there were other ways in which you could be licensed and wouldn't have to pay \$22.50 per child, what might that look like? And if we don't have time today, could we have an offline conversation or a contribution with a view to an amendment about what that might look like?

Ms. Jillian Henderson: Absolutely, yes.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Because that's what this conversation needs to be about.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Good idea, because your three minutes are over.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Merci.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I thank you very much, Mrs. Henderson, for coming tonight.

BRIGHTPATH EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PATHWAY GROUP

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would call Mary Ann Curran, the chief executive officer of BrightPath Early Learning. You're ready?

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: I'm ready.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Please begin.

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to be here tonight to speak to you about Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act. I know that it is a late sitting for the committee, so I'll make my remarks short to allow the committee to continue its important work.

As was mentioned, my name is Mary Ann Curran. Since 2012, I have been the CEO of BrightPath Kids, Canada's largest providers of private, centre-based early learning and child care. With me is Allan Rewak of Pathway Group. He and his colleagues are supporting us in better understanding Bill 10.

BrightPath was founded in 2010, and since that time, it has grown to include 14 Ontario centres, with 52 centres across the nation. Each location, upon joining our family, is upgraded to improve the security, safety and developmental needs of the children we care for. We also custom-build facilities to provide the best environments, indoors and out, to suit the needs of child development and care.

I'm proud to say that families have responded well to our service, and each day, thousands of parents trust us to care for their children in a safe and nurturing environment conducive to learning and developing. This is a responsibility I take very seriously as a CEO and as a mother.

It's for that reason I am here tonight. In the last two years, we have seen significant challenges in the unlicensed child care sector in Ontario, including the deaths of four children. This is clearly not tolerable, and I ap-

plaud the Ontario government for bringing forward Bill 10 to better protect our children. We at BrightPath support those things that make our kids safer.

That being said, I do want to note that there are many high-quality home-based providers who exist currently in the unlicensed sphere. As we transition into a more regulated sector, I would encourage the committee and the government to work with these providers to ensure that they are supported in better understanding the advantages of moving towards licensed care.

Beyond this, I think it should be noted that the bill does go beyond home-based care and will have impact on regulated, centre-based providers such as ourselves. To be clear, while we support the bill in general, there is a key point I would encourage the committee, and indeed the government, to consider as it conducts its important work.

As you know, the legislation has the effect of increasing the role of local system managers in the licensing and in the fine-levying process. While we are not opposed to these measures, I would like to stress that this process and any appeal mechanism must be clear, fair, consistent and transparent. By creating due process for the expanded scope under the act, you will support our municipal managers in developing a common and consistent understanding of their obligations; you'll support our providers, particularly those who operate in multiple service areas; and, most importantly, you'll support Ontario families.

That being said, it's my understanding and expectation that much of this will be addressed in detail in regulations. For many licensed centre-based providers such as ourselves, this is a vital aspect in getting the implementation of Bill 10 right. We are eager to work with our ministry partners in this important work.

In closing this evening, I'd again like to thank the committee for the opportunity to be here in support of this bill. It's an important step forward in making our children safer. However, we must also ensure that the details are fully defined in the regulations to ensure that the impact on the ground is as it was intended: to make kids more secure and to improve the quality of care.

As I am sure all members of the committee are aware, there remains a great deal of fear in the child care community around any additional changes to the sector. As I see it, the best way to overcome this is to work together to develop a clearly defined set of regulations under this act which will support the transition to greater protection and oversight while being governed by fair and transparent rules and consistent application.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: Thank you again. I would be pleased to take any questions, should members of the committee have them.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): We will start with Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Ms. Curran, thank you for coming in this evening.

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Your centres are all licensed.

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: All of them.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Are you subject to inspection by the ministry or the local system manager on a regular basis?

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: Absolutely.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Do you have to pay for that inspection?

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: No, we don't pay for the inspection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Do you have to pay for your licence?

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: We don't pay for a licence, no.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. The question of ratios: We've had some concern about the idea that a licensed home care could have six children as opposed to five. You work with groups of children all the time.

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: Right.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Do you think it makes sense to raise that threshold to six for a licensed home care provider?

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: I have to admit that I don't have a point of view about whether or not it's the right thing to increase or decrease the ratios, especially in the home care market, in which I don't exist.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. I think I've got the answers I need. Thank you for your help. I appreciate it.

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Dhillon?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you very much for appearing before the committee this evening.

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: Thank you.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Can you tell us how Bill 10 aligns with your organization's mandate? And briefly, can you tell us about some of the child care concerns in your community and how Bill 10 impacts some of those concerns?

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: I think it's incumbent and imperative on the sector itself to provide for the safety of children. I believe that increased licensing, increased regulation and increased oversight in the child care sector keeps children safer.

I don't believe that parents are always equipped to necessarily ask all the right questions. They're not necessarily informed, as they set out to look for child care for that first child who's approaching one year old, for example.

I think that, generally speaking, having a sector that has got the appropriate oversight mechanisms to ensure that children are kept safe is in the best interest of our communities and in the best interest of the sector.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mrs. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Mary Ann, for being here. In your presentation, you spoke about the unlicensed sector. Can you share with the members of the

committee the major differences between the licensed and unlicensed sectors?

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: I think it goes to what I just said: It's oversight. I can't sit here and say—and I would not say—that all unlicensed providers are bad at what they're doing. But I do believe that licensing and oversight provides consistency, and it provides safeguards for the safety of children so that we know that there is a minimum standard to which all child care providers are being held.

Mr. Amrit Mangat: So in your opinion, what kinds of safeguards does Bill 10 provide?

Mr. Allan Rewak: If I may, Bill 10 takes many steps in providing expanded oversight in both the home care and, indeed, the centre-based sectors by involving our municipal partners in a greater degree. For the committee's benefit—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Allan Rewak: —some of you may be familiar with me in my alternative role, but I was a past employee of BrightPath. From my experience there, I can clearly say that licensing, and Bill 10's expanded scope of licensing, will simply make every aspect of child care safer.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mrs. Martow?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Licensing, to most people, sounds like oversight, because they assume that there's going to be inspectors inspecting the licensed daycare centres, either in homes or schools or community centres. But we're hearing that there are only plans to have six inspectors with this bill. I would suggest that we need six inspectors per riding, or per neighbourhood. Just licensing and collecting fees—we all know that's not enough. We're seeing that in other sectors, as well.

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What would you recommend is needed? If you feel that there needs to be oversight, that it's not enough to just have a registry or a licensing system, how many inspectors do you feel the province would have to implement to safely monitor all of these centres?

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: I can't say how many there should be, but I'll tell you that I believe in a model that says absolutely that oversight and inspections go along with licensing. Having said that, I think there is a model that I have seen work in other environments whereby successful completion of licensing on a certain frequency reduces the frequency at which you must be licensed.

I would anticipate that, again in its implementation phase, which I understand is yet to be worked through—I can imagine that, in the early phases of the implementation of this, there would be more licensing officers, and over time, as there was confidence that the child care providers were reaching that minimum standard and beyond, the resources in that respect could probably be pulled back. I know that we perhaps have some of our centres inspected far more often than they need to be.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Right, and you are doing your own inspections.

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: That's right.

Mrs. Gila Martow: And the problem is, what we're hearing is that there is going to be very little inspection and hardly any inspectors. Six inspectors is ridiculous.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Point of order: There are already 66 inspectors, and there will be six new ones.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Six new inspectors with this bill.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): That's not a point of order.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I don't know what she's talking about.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Keep on, Mrs. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you. Six new inspectors, with all of this legislation and time and money and effort that's being put into it, is not sufficient. We all agree on that, I believe. My question to you is: What would you see as the point to only implementing six inspectors with all this new legislation?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Mary Ann Curran: Sure.

Mr. Allan Rewak: If I may speak to that, that is really the purview of government in determining the appropriate amount of inspectors. We simply don't have the knowledge base to determine or recommend to the province, for the entire system, what they should do, or the number of employees. The more inspections, the better; the more oversight, the better. And any support that we could offer to the ministry in that work, we'll provide.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you, and thank you, Ms. Curran.

CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES, ONTARIO

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now invite Fred Hahn, the Ontario president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, as well as Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam, chair of the CUPE social services committee. Please come forward.

Good evening, both of you. Are you ready?

Mr. Fred Hahn: We are. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Please begin.

Mr. Fred Hahn: Good evening, everyone. I'm Fred Hahn, the president of CUPE Ontario. CUPE has 240,000 members in communities all across the province, and we're proud to represent close to 4,000 who work in child care centres. One of them, Athina Basiliadis, is actually with me here today, not Carrie Lynn. Athina came along instead to highlight some of our concerns as a front-line worker. We are also proud to represent thousands of early childhood educators in school boards across the province who are providing excellent care and play-based learning to four- and five-year-olds in our schools.

We support the increased oversight and regulation that Bill 10 places on unlicensed home daycare, the need for which was brought into focus by the recent child deaths in our province and underscored by a report by the Ontario Ombudsman, André Marin. But let me be clear: From our view, these changes are not a substitute for what we really need in our province, which is a universal, not-for-profit, publicly funded child care system.

CUPE's vision, like the vision of so many child care advocates, is of a progressive child care system. It's a more expansive vision than this legislation, of a fully public, not-for-profit, integrated and comprehensive early learning and child care system for all children ages zero to 12.

Bill 10 doesn't reach this visionary goal. It does little to strengthen or build on non-profit public child care centres. It does nothing to keep municipal child care centres open. It does nothing to create extra quality child care spaces. And it does nothing to expand the extended day programs provided by schools, as originally recommended in the Pascal report on early learning.

We need legislation that includes a labour market strategy that recognizes the central role of the child care workforce and the need for the high-quality early learning and care that come from that workforce. We know there's a link between child care quality and well-compensated and respected staff. We know that good wages, benefits, access to a pension, full-time hours, job security and ongoing training are all key components of attracting and retaining skilled, knowledgeable and professional staff, and that that kind of sound, long-term labour force strategy for the sector needs to be developed in consultation with unions representing workers. It's essential to ensure that there are real quality early childhood education and child care programs for all families across the province.

While we support what Bill 10 does in closing some of the gaps in unlicensed child care providers, I'd encourage you to build on that work, to think bigger and more expansively, to plan for a more fully integrated system of early learning and child care.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight, but I want to turn things over to Athina, who will address a significant shortfall that we see in the legislation.

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: Good evening. My name is Athina Basiliadis, and I am an early childhood educator at the Glebe Parents' Day Care centre in Ottawa.

I'd like to speak with you today about quality child care. One thing that I know for sure, as an educator, is that staff-to-child ratios and low group sizes are one of the most important components of quality. The proposal to increase the ratio of children that licensed home daycares can care for—up to six from the current five—is going in the opposite direction of quality. I know how much energy, attention and care that infants, toddlers, preschoolers and all children need to learn, to play and to be safe. I am concerned that this would be compromised by the increased ratios.

Our programs also need to be accessible to children with special needs. Do these revised ratios allow for this? Are these the conditions that allow for full participation of children with special needs, or do they actually increase the barriers? I believe increased ratios will make our child care system less accessible to children with special needs.

When we look for the best way to grow our child care system, because we are actually concerned about quality, we should look at the research. Non-profit and public regulated child care centres consistently come out on top, yet there is only space in these best-practice environments for one in five children under the age of five.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: Let's grow the quantity and the quality of our child care system. Let's commit to only licensed public and non-profit child care.

At this point, we need to think about priorities and we need to make important choices. Do we choose quality? Do we choose increased ratios? Do we choose care that allows companies to profit off the care of our children? Do we foster an accessible system?

The priorities and choices that I know I would make as an educator are about quality, and all of these words are key. I believe we need a child care system that is universal, accessible, high-quality, publicly funded, not-for-profit and public—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: You're welcome. Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mrs. Mangat?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): No? Okay.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It's okay. I can go ahead.

Thank you, Athina, for your presentation.

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: You're welcome.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: You spoke about universal child care, right? But I hope you understand that universal child care falls under the purview of the federal government, not under the provincial government.

Our government is doing its best—and we have made investments, ever since we came into office, in education and child care.

I'm sure you're aware that the Ombudsman stated that the second necessary change is the new legislation, the long-awaited Child Care Modernization Act, replacing the Day Nurseries Act of 1946. The Ombudsman himself said the legislation is extremely outdated and needs to be replaced. Further, he said the province should take urgent action to protect children in unlicensed daycare.

What you are saying is that you don't agree with the Ombudsman's sentiment. Do you agree or no?

Mr. Fred Hahn: No, that's not what we're saying at all. We're glad that Bill 10 focuses on the gaps that are in the unlicensed home child care system.

What we're concerned about is the small scope that it actually—when we're talking about what we need for

child care in the province, we believe that the provincial government has the ability to do more. In fact, other provinces and other regions have—the province of Quebec, for example, has a universal system that is across the whole province, available to all folks across the region. So it is something the province can do.

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We're glad that there's increased regulation and focus on the unlicensed home child care sector, but this legislation also changes ratios in a way that we think is in the wrong direction, and all of the research actually says it would be in the wrong direction in relation to children.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Okay. I'm sure you are aware of it, that we are proposing amendments, and that is why next week we will be doing clause-by-clause hearings. Again, I'm saying that you spoke about a universal child care system. I'm sure you're aware that the federal government has cut that Kelowna Accord, which recommended that universal child care system. So it doesn't fall under this government's purview.

Mr. Fred Hahn: We think that it could.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Fred Hahn: In fact, there are examples where it has happened in other parts of the country.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Which countries? Can you name some?

Mr. Fred Hahn: In Quebec in Canada. They have a provincial system there.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: But that's different. Quebec is different, you know. You should agree about that, right? They have their own Constitution—own everything—and they didn't support that confederation as well. So we cannot compare Ontario with Quebec.

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: Can I just say something?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Yes.

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: We're hoping that we can envision something that's better. When we talk about quality, the research and the data show that we can do something better. The economic impact—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mr. Dunlop?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thanks, Fred. Thanks very much for being here tonight and for your presentation.

Although we in the official opposition don't always agree with exactly what you're saying, we do agree that there should be amendments made here. However, we've listened to a number of deputations here and have literally hundreds and hundreds of letters that have come in from independent child care providers in the province who have no problem being licensed, and they have no problem being part of a registry.

On top of that, we've heard from parents who love their children in those small setting organizations in a home. I can tell you right now, there's no way I can agree to take that choice away from parents in the province of Ontario. I want to be up front with you and positive about that right now. I think parental choice plays an important

point in any child care system in the province. So I'd like to ask you and your assistant there if you—

Mrs. Gila Martow: Athina.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Athina. Sorry. There are so many people here today. Fred, there are not a lot of guys here. How do you feel about parental choice?

Mr. Fred Hahn: Well, look, I was raised in rural Ontario. The issue of parental choice is an interesting one, because there wasn't really a choice. There was only home daycare that people were afforded.

It goes back to what we are trying to suggest here: If there was actually a broader vision, a more expansive attempt to try to provide real child care choices for people, we believe that most parents would want their children to be in the highest-quality child care setting possible. Those choices aren't available in some communities. We're well aware of that.

We also are proud to represent folks who are in not-for-profit community-based centres with parent boards and co-operatives. We understand that that's an important part of this, too. But we have a system that has grown up piecemeal because the importance of child care—not just of families and to children, to our economy, to all of us—has never been fully appreciated. We think that now is an opportunity, when we're looking not just at a regulatory framework, but to think about: What do we really need? What would best advantage all of our communities? What is the best model?

When you look at all of the research that has been done here, around the world—our research with children, with families, in different models—it's quite clear that the very best system is a public system that is universal and accessible to people and that recognizes that profit is not something that we make on our children. It's something that's important to be made in the economy but not off the backs of our kids.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm just going to very quickly point out that I think that in rural Ontario especially we couldn't support anything but home daycare in a lot of communities. I don't know of any data that shows that only one model works. I think that we're an inclusive society here. We're a diverse society here. We want to see everybody's needs being met. I think to try to pigeon-hole everybody—we are hearing about kids with special needs—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

Mrs. Gila Martow: —who need to be in smaller centres. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Chair. Fred and Athina, thank you for coming this evening.

My first question is about the ratio of one caregiver to six children. I've heard many people speak before this committee in the last few days saying that 1 to 6 is an entirely acceptable ratio. What do you see as the difficulties with that?

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: I've actually had the opportunity to be a home visitor in a licensed child care setting.

I witnessed at each visit the struggles that home providers have with a varied age group of children. It's incredible, the work that they do.

Adding an additional child to their day brings up concerns for me as far as safety goes. We talked about inclusion and children with special needs being cared for. I think it limits those abilities for us to go in and provide the resources that we need.

Instead of pitting us against each other, home child care versus group care, we should look at ways to grow the system so that we have true options and choices.

If a parent can't afford a daycare space, that's not really an option. It is what it is. It's not their choice; it's their reality. What we're doing is, it's primarily women who are disadvantaged who are needing to make an extra \$20 a day, and we're putting another child in their care, at the expense of the children and the families that we are looking to service. That's my feeling on that.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You've got a note here. One of your recommendations is that child care operators be prohibited from charging parents fees for being placed on a wait-list for child care spaces. Is this, in fact, an issue?

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: It is an issue. I think there are people who won't go on a list because they can't afford that fee. If you're talking about accessibility, it's not accessible to you if you can't afford it. I think it's fairly simple.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Is this a very common practice?

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: I think it is a fairly common practice. I work in a parent-staff co-op, and it was suggested by one of the parents because she had seen this fee being charged in Ottawa and various locations. Yes, I think it is fairly common.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The proposal to have two licensed providers with 12 children: I'm assuming that you do not support that.

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: No, we do not.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Can you expand on why?

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: For a number of reasons. I don't think that the physical space in home settings to house 12 children, in most cases, would be to the benefit of the children and safety and quality.

Something as simple as one of the providers being ill: What then happens? How do you accommodate those children? Parents are left scrambling.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you, Mr. Hahn. Thank you, Ms. Basiliadis—I'm not sure if I pronounced your last name right.

Ms. Athina Basiliadis: Not bad. That was pretty good.

MS. MICHELLE QUINN

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now like to call Michelle Quinn. Are you ready?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I am ready. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Please begin.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: Good evening. My name is Michelle Quinn, and I'm a mother of three and a member of the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers. I have a bachelor of arts in child and youth studies and a bachelor of education in the primary/junior level. I have been nurturing and educating children in my home for five years now.

I sit here before you tonight telling you that Bill 10 will not do what Minister Sandals has promised it will do. The regulations will not allow for greater safety. It will not increase transparency. It will fall quite short of fulfilling the needs of Ontario families.

Let's start with safety. Minister Sandals refers to the idea that current brain-based research suggests that two under two is safer and better for child development. This is why she's changing the ratios for ICPs to two under two. Yet she contradicts this research within this bill by allowing child care centres to increase the ratio.

I argue that brain-based research is more focused on the quality of care a child receives than on the actual number of children being cared for. Jill Stamm, PhD, says "that attachment ... is perhaps the most critical factor in future development. The quality of your child's first relationships has broader and longer-lasting effects than any other factor in your control." This is the competitive edge that ICPs have on the daycare industry. My daycare children see my face every single weekday. I am their constant.

You might be thinking, "Michelle, a licensed home daycare can do that too." I don't disagree. The problem lies in the current system of licensing, which will stay the same. I will have to agree to work with an agency or a middleman and I will be gaining a business partner who will take a 40% cut before expenses without doing 40% of their share of work. I want to remain independent. I want to be my own boss.

I think Bill 10 infringes on free enterprise and on my ability to provide for my family by being an entrepreneur.

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Members of the coalition of ICPs want the option to be licensed. We have nothing to hide. Therefore, we are asking the ministry for a way to be independently licensed within the bill, to have that written in. Expect us to have current CPR/first aid training and a police check for all adults on the premises. Currently, I offer no less to my families.

Now let's talk about transparency. The Minister of Education implies we are less safe because we are not inspected. I disagree. I am inspected daily. Parents come into my house. They see how many kids I care for and they see me interacting with their children. Who is going to scrutinize my care more thoroughly than the parents?

Now let's talk about meeting the needs of Ontario families. The coalition proposes that 140,000 daycare spots will be lost. That is more than the entire amount of licensed spots Ontario has created in the last 10 years—gone, just like that.

I will lose two daycare spaces if I'm required to count my children in my ratio. Currently, I am making \$11.72

an hour before factoring in my operating costs and taxes. I estimate that after deductions, I am making roughly \$7.45 an hour, which was minimum wage in Ontario in 2005.

If I decided to work with an agency after Bill 10, I could watch four children, plus my own. Before deductions, I estimate I would be making \$9.09 an hour, and after my operating costs, I would be making about \$5.45 an hour, and I would be watching six full-time children during the day, instead of the five I currently am caring for now.

Development is as unique as the individual, and it is clearly understood that children do not hit the same milestones at the same time. By limiting the ability of providers to care for children based on age and not development, we lose out on meaningful opportunities to provide care.

That is the problem with Bill 10: It does not give us the flexibility based on development or on our strength as professionals.

There is no magic switch that makes a child who has passed their 24th month suddenly easier than, say, when they were 20 months or 22 months. Development is a time frame, not a specific event that occurs so many anniversaries after birth.

Including my own children in my ratio will not make my daycare safer, but I will lose the flexibility to take part-time and after-school-care children, and I will lose the full-time space I was going to have in September, when my four-year-old goes to school, all for the sake of an hour.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: Bill 10 is a horrible plan when you consider that Ontario's current daycare costs are the highest in the country. Families are spending more on child care than on university tuition.

I encourage you to listen to ICPs like myself. We are not the enemy. We are the majority of child care in this province. We are the solution to safe, accessible and transparent child care.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thank you so much. You were five minutes, right on.

We now start with Ms. Marlow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Martow.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Martow. Sorry.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I like Marlow, but my name is really Martow.

Restaurants have to be licensed and they have to be inspected, and we have a lot of restaurant inspectors going on in this province—a lot more than 66. There are a lot of independent diners, mom-and-pop restaurants.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: Yes.

Mrs. Gila Martow: You'd agree? I imagine this bill basically telling all those independent restaurants, "You have to be a franchise. You have to decide which franchise you're going to be a part of. You have to pay franchise fees. You have to be supervised by the franchise, and you

have to be cookie-cutter, just the same as all the franchises, because this way we feel comfortable when we go home at night."

These politicians feel comfortable, knowing that your kid is in a daycare where they play with this kind of puzzle, not that kind of puzzle.

I think it's insulting to the parents, that they can't choose a different type of daycare setting for their child. Perhaps there's somebody who has a home that is very good at arts and crafts. Perhaps there's somebody who has a home where they like to play a lot of hockey with the kids outside in their driveway.

We completely lose any individuality. I think that's what really came through in your presentation, and that's what it made me think of.

I really appreciate you coming here. I really don't have any questions for you because, honestly, your presentation was just so bang-on.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: If you would let me speak on what you said—

Mrs. Gila Martow: But I want you to comment on my comparison.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: In my neighbourhood, there is a woman who does homemade pierogies and cabbage rolls. She started off with just a little homemade sign and has grown over the years that I've been in this neighbourhood. I was happy to walk by recently and notice that she has had a health and safety inspection and she has passed.

My question is: If we are concerned about children's safety, why is it, then, that I cannot be allowed in that process? Why can I not have a health and safety inspection in my house? If this woman who sells pierogies can, why can't the people who are caring for children be a part of that process?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Exactly, and hang it outside your door, saying, "I've passed inspection. Open for business." Perfect. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thank you. Mr. Tabuns. I didn't know if Mr. McDonald—Mr. McDonnell—wanted to use the rest.

I have a hard time with names.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: He's disrupting your train of thought. I understand that. He does that to me as well, even though he's a nice guy.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Go ahead, Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Ms. Quinn, thank you for coming in and speaking to us this evening.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: Thank you for having me.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: How many children do you look after?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I have a copy of my schedule. It is quite a complex schedule. I have up to 11 children in my care, but never at the same time. I have three of my own, and I care for no more than eight in total, including my three. Now, that is only, for the most, an hour a day.

Like I said, I have a copy of my schedule, if you'd like to see it. It's a lot of juggling of, you know, "This person is here in the morning; this person is here in the

afternoon.” These people don’t overlap on days, but there are 11 children who get to see my face on a weekly basis.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And your three children are all school-aged children?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: No. I have one school-aged child—he will be six in January—and I have a three-year-old and a 15-month-old.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. You’re busy.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I am busy.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So you have two under five, three under five—

Ms. Michelle Quinn: Three under six.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: —three under six, and you have five other children with you at any given time.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: During the day, I only watch five full-time children. After school hours, then I have up to eight, but they’re all ages five or above. So during the day, I have five kids, including my own.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And how many are under two?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I have two under two.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So for the most part, you would meet that ratio requirement.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I like to comply within the ratios given to license. I think it’s a good guideline, but it gives me the flexibility to care for, let’s say, children who are above that developmental 24-month check.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I assume you’re in touch with other home daycare providers?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I am.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: What’s the average number they have?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: Five.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Including their own children?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: Not including their own—after school hours.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Those are the questions I have, Chair. I’m fine. Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mrs. Hoggarth, please.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Good evening. How are you?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I’m excellent, thank you.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you very much for coming and presenting to us.

I just wanted to make sure that you knew that we are here because we are listening to concerns, and we are looking for you to put suggestions for amendments forward, and I hope you will do that.

In many of the past presentations, there were a number of presenters who said that they brought forth the British Columbia model of daycare providers. I wondered what you thought of that.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I’m sorry. Off the top of my head, I’m not familiar enough with the British Columbia model to speak to it.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Well, in British Columbia, the number of children permitted is two, and it does not include their own children. I wondered—and I wanted to ask this earlier of some of the other providers—why they

thought that British Columbia was much better, as it is far more restrictive than what we are proposing.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I would not agree with the British Columbia model. I think that infringes on my ability to know my own limitations. At any given time, I’m interviewing families as much as they are interviewing me. I don’t just say yes to the first child who calls me; I have a wait-list right now of 15 different individuals looking for care. Every time I go to fill a spot, I’m mindful: Who do I have? What are their needs, and how would this person come and fit? When I have an interview, it’s after hours so that I can give them 100% of my attention. They get my policy and procedure book through email, so that they get a grasp of whether or not I’m a good fit for them before they even walk in my door.

I think I can handle the amount of children I have, and I think that greater restrictions will just mean that we won’t be able to increase accessibility across the province.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: But you are living within our new guidelines now, right?

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Ms. Michelle Quinn: It would cut off my ability to have part-time spaces and after-school-care children.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: So would an amendment about part-time spaces perhaps be a suggestion you would give to the government?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I think we need to consider the amount of after-school-care children, especially in areas where they don’t get it at the school, or, considering we’re not going to include four- and five-year-olds in the legislation, that they have to be provided care within a school board.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Okay.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Ms. McMahon.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Hi. Thank you. You’re very passionate. I like that. It’s very impressive. Thank you for coming.

Ms. Michelle Quinn: Thank you.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I want to ask you about being licensed. How do you feel about that?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I would welcome it if I could remain independent.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Right. What might that look like? If we don’t have time today, could we get some suggestion from you as to what that could look like?

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I would love to give some suggestions, yes.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Yes. We’ve heard from other presenters that they don’t want to pay a fee—

Ms. Michelle Quinn: I would like to do it like a licensed does, where—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you, Ms. Quinn.

MS. EMILY ALLISON

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): I would now call Emily Allison to please come forward. You feel ready?

Ms. Emily Allison: Yes, thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Go ahead.

Ms. Emily Allison: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this committee. My name is Emily Allison and I'm a resident of Bowmanville, Ontario. My husband and I have four school-aged children of our own, and I run a reputable and legal independent home daycare.

My daycare offers five valuable childcare spots to our community that are all full, with a waiting list. I have a clean criminal check, including vulnerable sector. I am CPR- and first-aid-certified. My business has contracts, provides receipts, and is insured.

I continue to invest in my business with the purchase of a five-seat stroller, countless puzzles, toys and books, healthy whole foods, and most recently a new home that accommodates my business with a dedicated main floor space. I'm very serious about my job and I'm very good at it.

When parents interview for a spot in my care, I hear resoundingly that they are searching for a home provider who offers a warm, homey environment for their baby, and not a facility with staff turnover. They want healthy, home-cooked meals. They want someone who can be a second mother to their children and provide the continuity of a single provider every day. It is not unusual for a child to stay in my care for years, and we develop a closely bonded relationship.

These are things that licensed centres can't provide, although centres do fill a necessary need within our communities. But we can't deny that the majority of children are in independent home daycares, and my experience is that parents want independent care.

As a small business owner, Bill 10 will affect my job significantly. It proposes to include my four-year-old son in my ratio, even though he is in full-day kindergarten. This means that I will have to eliminate a spot that is filled with a client I have had in care for two and a half years. CICPO, the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario, of which I'm the regional rep for Durham, conservatively estimates that 140,000 existing spots will be eliminated, as providers all over Ontario are also in my position.

Bill 10 is limiting daycare spaces in other ways too. It proposes to restrict our five daycare spots by implementing a two-under-two rule. Minister Sandals was quoted in the Toronto Star this weekend as saying that, in case of emergency, "The two-under-two model and a maximum of five presumes that you are going to have one under each arm." If safety is truly the concern, then the under-two group should be consistently a ratio of 1 to 2 across the board. When looked at logically, the two-under-two recommendation comes from a time when maternity leaves were much shorter than a year, and it was infants entering care, not toddlers.

Until recently, I had three children under age two in my care, and all were perfectly mobile. I am extremely cognizant of the skill levels of the children that I have in care and take that into account when adding new children to my group. We spend a great deal of time working on self-help and mobility, including having an emergency plan, to ensure that we all have the skill set necessary for a safe and happy group. The Ombudsman report did not specify age restrictions as an aspect of care that needed to change, and that is important to consider.

It has been suggested that providers contract through companies like Kawartha Child Care or Wee Watch. As a conscious business woman, I simply cannot afford to affiliate with an agency. Agencies charge parents higher fees than I charge and they pay their affiliated providers less than I currently make. Kawartha Child Care has their home provider pay chart publicly available so I know I would make roughly \$1,000 less per month than currently. That would hinder my ability to serve high-quality foods and reinvest back into my business, as I do.

Agency-affiliated providers do not make a living; they earn a supplemental income that is significantly less than minimum wage when calculating the hours involved, and it is not a living wage. I wish to write my own contract, set my own pricing, arrange my own programming, and all the other perks of a small business owner. This is why there are approximately 70,000 independent providers across Ontario: because business-savvy providers choose not to be agency-affiliated.

I suggest that the current regulation of five children under 10, not including our own, remain in place with no age restrictions. This regulation of five under 10 should also apply to the agency sector. I believe that the issue is not in safety but in oversight. As an independent home daycare provider I would welcome a registry system so that we are visible and we can prove our CPR training and our criminal record check.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Emily Allison: I am not opposed to inspection. I would support a nominal yearly fee to maintain this model. This bill, as it is currently written, will decrease the number of daycare spots, which will increase the cost of these spots. In essence, this is less care for more money, and that is not the right choice for Ontario's families.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France G elinas): Thank you, Ms. Allison. We will now call upon Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Chair. Ms. Allison, thank you for presenting this evening.

Ms. Emily Allison: Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Much of what you've said, other people have said, and you've been here for a little while, so you've heard it as well. One of the concerns I have when you say that you don't think that there should be ratios in that group of five children under the age of 10 is that there's always the potential for a provider to take on, say, five children under the age of two. Would that worry you?

Ms. Emily Allison: Five children under the age of two?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes.

Ms. Emily Allison: The reality of home daycare is that I've been open for a number of years now, and I've never had five children under the age of two. Like I said, until recently I had three, but the reality is that children come to us staggered. I have one age off into kindergarten and then I have another 12-month-old start. Until recently I had three under 24 months, but one was 23 months, one was 18 months and one was 13 months. In that way, all three were mobile. The 23-month-old and the 15-month-old have completely different skill sets from each other. I just don't think that the reality is that providers are going to be taking five under two.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Would you agree that it would be a good idea to limit the number of children under two in any one provider's care?

Ms. Emily Allison: I support the CICPO recommendation to have five children under the age of 10.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Without a restriction on—

Ms. Emily Allison: Yes, sir.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Ms. McMahon?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Hi, there. Thanks for coming.

Ms. Emily Allison: Thank you.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: A quick question for you: I admire your concern about safety; you're obviously an incredibly committed businesswoman, and you're committed to the children in your care. You have no problem being licensed? That's not an issue?

Ms. Emily Allison: I have no problem being independently licensed. I will not work for an agency such as the ones I've listed in my deputation.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Right. We're hearing that from a lot of people.

Ms. Emily Allison: Absolutely.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: That message is coming along loud and clear. So, if not, what might a system of licensing look like to you?

Ms. Emily Allison: I'm interested in a registry, to be honest, although "licensing" or "registry" are all semantics. I think that if it's municipally or provincially held and provides addresses of providers, perhaps the names and ages of their charges, their CPR check and their criminal reference check—have those bare minimums of safety in place, and perhaps a yearly inspection to confirm numbers. That's a system that I could support, for a nominal fee.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: That's great. That's the kind of feedback that we're looking for. This is very helpful.

I just want to make something else clear too, because we've had this conversation throughout the evening: Licensing doesn't mean that everyone's home has to be the same. I think you understand that. It would require home providers to meet the same safety requirements—

Ms. Emily Allison: Yes.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: But it's not that everybody has to be the same. I think you understand that, right?

Ms. Emily Allison: Yes.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Yes, and this bill doesn't regulate play. We're not trying to regulate play here, right?

Ms. Emily Allison: Absolutely.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I think that has been made clear. Okay. Helpful. Thank you. I really appreciate that.

Ms. Emily Allison: Thank you.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Colleagues? Any more questions on our side?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Crack?

Mr. Grant Crack: No. It's good, thanks.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): No? Okay.

Mr. Grant Crack: Very good. Thank you.

Ms. Emily Allison: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): On the PC side? Mrs. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Hi. Thanks very much for your great presentation. I think that what's coming out loud and clear from you—as well as some of your colleagues, whether or not you know them—is that you want to be independent. That's the bonus.

Ms. Emily Allison: Absolutely.

Mrs. Gila Martow: It's not a lot of money, but you're able to keep an eye on your own kids as well as cut down some of the expenses. You don't have to get dressed too fancy for work, you don't have to travel a long distance, and you don't have to worry about parking, gas and things like that. Every job has its pros and cons.

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We all know that doctors take care of infants, children and women giving birth—nobody suggests that they shouldn't be compensated, so I can't understand why people would think that somebody taking care of children—that it's somehow horrific, that it should be non-profit to take care of children. Well then, you could say that doctors should work also in a non-profit sector, and we certainly don't suggest that.

What I want to make clear—and I want to know if you agree with that. Do you feel that this bill is pushing you to not be independent?

Ms. Emily Allison: Absolutely. I think this bill is pushing us towards the licensed sector as far as affiliating with for-profit agencies and whatnot. Like you said, it's a huge hit to my income. I couldn't afford to give back to my daycare how I do in the form of good foods. I prefer a Montessori-style approach, and that doesn't come cheap. I certainly couldn't afford to be affiliated—

Mrs. Gila Martow: It's a hit to your income, but it's also a hit to your independence.

Ms. Emily Allison: Absolutely.

Mrs. Gila Martow: We've heard that somehow there are studies out there that people list, and they say, "Research shows..." Do you know of any studies that show that large centres are better for the development of children than independent daycares?

Ms. Emily Allison: I don't. I'm sorry.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Because I would beg to differ. I agree with you. I think that independent small daycares probably are better.

Ms. Emily Allison: Yes, absolutely, and having that continuity of one provider instead of staff turnover is something to consider as well, because my children know that when they come Monday to Friday, it's me who's going to be there taking care of them every day.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Yes. Look, I'm not saying that large centres aren't good. In large urban centres, a lot of times large centres work very well for a lot of different reasons, but I think that parents should have the choice. I believe in that.

Ms. Emily Allison: They certainly fill a need, absolutely—

Mrs. Gila Martow: And I think we can't have large urban centres in every rural setting. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you for your comments, Mrs. Allison.

CHILDCARE RESOURCE AND RESEARCH UNIT

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now call Laurie Hatton. Is Laurie here?

Seeing that Laurie is not here, is Martha Friendly here? Martha Friendly from the Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Thank you for coming forward.

Are you ready, Mrs. Friendly?

Ms. Martha Friendly: I will be in a minute.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Go ahead.

Ms. Martha Friendly: Thank you for having me. I've been a policy researcher in early childhood education and child care since about 1968. Even before I immigrated to Canada, I actually worked on one of the first Head Start evaluations. I'm quite familiar with child care across Canada, and I've worked internationally. I'm primarily a policy researcher.

Since we're having personal comments, I am a parent of two children who are grown up and a grandmother of two under two—twins.

I'm going to try to keep my remarks short so that we can spend some time in questions. I just want to present a summary of what my brief that you have says.

First of all, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit supports the intent and purpose of Bill 10, and we urge the Legislature to pass it. We think it's necessary. We agree that new legislation is a necessary component of a high-quality child care system. In general, we support most of the specific clauses and details.

At the same time, we're concerned that so much of the discussion about Bill 10 has become focused on issues associated with unregulated home child care while there are many other important aspects of child care in Ontario that are actually going unaddressed, and I'm going to talk about those a bit at the end.

We are concerned that there has been considerable misinformation and confusion about the nature of regulation in home child care and how it contributes to

child safety and quality. We think this actually warrants a provincial public education campaign. I can tell you that there's a lot of confusion about the nature of regulation in home child care in particular.

The second part of our brief is that we have a number of specific suggestions for both amendments and additions to the legislation. They're not exhaustive, but some of the examples—and you'll find them in the brief—are that we don't support adding one child to six to a family child care home as a way of incentivizing providers to become licensed. We think there are better incentives because we think that's a worthy goal. One of the incentives—I actually agree with the many providers who have opposed the agency fee. I don't think there should be an agency fee that's being paid by the providers. I think that the province should be funding the agencies who are actually monitoring the regulations for compliance. In the other provinces, by the way, that do use an agency model, the provinces do fund the agencies so that providers don't have to pay a fee. I know there's a big objection to that by providers.

I really want to concentrate on the third part of what I want to say. We argue that this legislation alone is not sufficient for the development and sustainability of the high-quality early childhood education and care system that we really feel Ontario needs. We urge the provincial government to begin a full policy process to develop a robust, comprehensive, modernized policy framework, a plan that lays out the provincial government's vision, rationales, principles, short- and long-term plans, and funding and evaluation mechanisms. We think there should be a real, traditional policy process like a white paper that actually backs this kind of important process.

The policy process really needs to address a lot of the key issues that we're skirting around: What about the high-quality child care workforce, including home child care providers that we need to ensure quality services? How can child care and kindergarten become better integrated? How can child care services become more affordable? We heard about fees, and I agree with that. How can the supply of services be grown to cover more than the present 20% of children now covered? How can the child care market be transformed into a system? These are only a few of the important policy issues that need to be addressed.

I would really look forward to working with the provincial government on such a task. I think it's long overdue. A lot of the issues that people are talking about in the context of this bill are things that can only be addressed in that kind of process.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Martha Friendly: Okay. Well, that's the end of my remarks. I welcome your questions.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you, Ms. Friendly.

We will start with the Liberals. Is it Ms. McMahan?

Ms. Eleanor McMahan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for your presentation. That's quite a long history in the sector.

Ms. Martha Friendly: It is. I've actually been doing this for a long time. I actually really enjoy working on it. It's a very interesting area.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: You started when you were 12.

Ms. Martha Friendly: Yes. It's a good job. It's not exactly a job. It's a job.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Tell me—perhaps it might seem like an obvious question, but what are your thoughts on a national child care plan?

Ms. Martha Friendly: How long do you have? I think we absolutely need a national child care program. I was one of the sponsors of the conference in Winnipeg last week. We presented a vision paper that outlines a number of these issues.

I think what's really important about it is that once that vision develops, it starts becoming clearer what you need to do about some of the issues that I'm quite sympathetic with, that are being raised around here. I think there's a lot of misunderstanding about them. But I think it's only by starting with the vision and seeing how it looks nationally that you can understand how each province would fit into it. So I'm absolutely in favour of it.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: You spoke about issues of affordability.

Ms. Martha Friendly: Absolutely.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Can you elaborate a little bit on that?

Ms. Martha Friendly: Yes. The reason child care is so expensive is that it's labour-intensive. If you pay the people who are doing it a reasonable amount of money and if you have good ratios, it's too expensive for parents to afford. I'm really familiar with the financing. We have a subsidy system, which works somewhat, but it doesn't really work, and we have other money that goes into it, but we really need to revamp the funding in order to allow affordability and quality and accessibility all at the same time. Basically we're expecting parents to pay the cost, and they cannot.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Fair enough. We've talked a lot tonight about licensing and regulation and so on. How do you feel about licensing, and what do you think the path forward might be on that?

Ms. Martha Friendly: In our kind of system, which is quite privatized, you have to have regulation, let's call it. Licensing is just a form of regulation.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Yes.

Ms. Martha Friendly: It's only one part of it. It's not the be-all and end-all. When you have a system that's much more developed, like some of the European systems, they don't license in the same way. They regulate, as we regulate schools, for example. You do it through technical assistance, not through compliance.

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Of course I don't oppose licensing; I'm in favour of it. I think there's a lot of misunderstanding about what you can achieve through licensing. You don't necessarily get high quality. The reason I support the items in the bill,

and I think the Ombudsman said this really clearly, is because you can try to close up some of the loopholes, what he called the most egregious examples, and some of them were pretty egregious, some of the things that were going on—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Martha Friendly: That's what I feel about licensing. It's just one piece of it. It doesn't create a system.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: The number one piece of advice for us as we move forward in the next steps of this, in your view?

Ms. Martha Friendly: I really do think that the terrain is different than it was when this bill was started. I think there is real talk about a national child care program. I think that there's a lot of talk about a vision of not a market but a system, that we can scope out a vision.

I just want to say to the people who were saying—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

Ms. Martha Friendly: Okay.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mrs. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: You'll get a chance to say it to me.

Ms. Martha Friendly: I was going to answer you, actually.

Mrs. Gila Martow: What I feel is that you feel that, and tell me if I'm wrong, that the rug has been kind of swept under your feet. You knew that there needed to be some changes, and I'm not going to discount that. But we heard about all-day kindergarten, and originally all-day kindergarten was supposed to be a seamless day where the kids would be in daycare for a couple of hours, then in all-day kindergarten, and half the day would be play time and there'd be multiple programming. It would solve the problem of parents rushing home in the traffic and missing the chance to take their kid to programming because it would all be part of this seamless day. A lot of parents feel—that's what I hear from them—that the rug has been pulled out from them and that all-day kindergarten has not replaced child care. It's not working for a lot of parents. They still have to put their kids in daycare.

In terms of this system, what do you see in a child care system? Because what I see from this, from hearing from a lot of the deputations from the last two days, is that home daycares are providing a much-needed service to parents. They're doing a great job for kids and families. They're very needed in rural communities. What they see happening is that they're losing control; that the control over their home care centres is being given to big agencies and that somehow they're losing all this control and independence.

Ms. Martha Friendly: There are about 20 important discussions in there.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Sorry, I know. We can meet afterwards.

Ms. Martha Friendly: Just to maybe back up a little bit: First of all, we're actually doing a research project on

rural child care needs. It always comes up. I agree that it's a big need. One of the reasons that it's very hard to do rural child care in Canada under the existing funding arrangements is because it's small-scale. I should have my picture of Norwegian child care north of the Arctic Circle, a little A-frame sitting on the rocks, that doesn't have to worry about how it's going to meet its budget because it has a relatively small number of kids, or it can be a home child care.

The community—I don't necessarily agree with you that it's only in cities that you have child care centres. In fact, if you look at European countries that have funded child care, they tend to have a mixture in the community to accommodate different parents' needs, which I really support.

You raised a question about home child care fulfilling a need, which it absolutely does. Without it—

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Martha Friendly: Yes. It needs to become part of a system so that parents can be assured of safety.

Mrs. Gila Martow: And have you explained this to this government, that we need a system and what that system should look like? Maybe you can put that—I know I have a few pages from you, but is that system in here? Because I would love, Martha, to hear what your vision is for the province.

Ms. Martha Friendly: I'll forward to the committee the conference's background paper. Maybe that would be helpful, and we could start from there.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Okay. And we don't even have to go to Norway.

Ms. Martha Friendly: No. It would be nice, though.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Although it is nice to go to Norway. Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Martha, for being here this evening. I have a lot of questions about your paper so I'll just pick out one or two.

Ms. Martha Friendly: Please.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I wanted to go back to having you complete your thought about why licensing is going to give less than people may think it gives.

Ms. Martha Friendly: I think that people in the field—if you talk to the provincial government people, licensing is expected to provide a floor to protect children's health and safety, essentially. I think people generally agree that you get quality—it's way beyond licensing. I think it's really important for parents to be assured that their children are safe, and I don't doubt that people do a good job. It's just that it's very hard for people to know who does a good job and who doesn't do a good job. I think that that's really a problem.

Licensing is really about things that are fairly basic. When we're talking about early childhood education, it's now in the Ministry of Education, so we're talking about, "What is early childhood education and care?" It's beyond that. I don't mean didactic learning with children sitting at desks; I'm very much oriented to play-based early childhood education. When you see that really well

done, it's nothing like what you're talking about when you say that we need licensing to keep children safe.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. That's useful.

Ms. Martha Friendly: There's stuff written about that, Peter, as well.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You raised the question in your paper about consideration for children with disabilities.

Ms. Martha Friendly: Yes.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It doesn't seem to be addressed in this legislation. Can you enlarge on your concerns?

Ms. Martha Friendly: In fact, we discussed this with the provincial officials at a technical briefing and they agreed that it wasn't, so we just recommended a number of ways that you would write it into the legislation. We're not talking about ratios yet; we're just talking about statements about equity and inclusion as a human rights issue. The things that people were saying about how you manage that probably are within regulation. But it was a real oversight, I think, so I recommended an amendment.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay. This question of charging parents a fee to be on a waiting list—

Ms. Martha Friendly: Good question.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: —it came up with CUPE's presentation. I hadn't heard of this before. How widespread is this?

Ms. Martha Friendly: It's shockingly widespread, and it's not only in Ontario. I can tell you that my daughter and son-in-law put their names on 11 waiting lists, and five of them charged a fee.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thirty seconds.

Ms. Martha Friendly: It's really widespread. I got two emails this week about it, and I actually don't think it should be allowed. I think it's really shocking.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I think you're right.

Ms. Martha Friendly: I didn't know about it until about three years ago. It's quite widespread, not only in Ontario but across the country.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You've already spoken about the problems with 12 children with two providers.

Ms. Martha Friendly: It has been tried in Ontario and it wasn't a success. What really bothered me was that it was in the legislation—which is a serious thing—without any kind of background—whether it's a good idea or it's a bad idea. I'm not in favour of it, but I think there should at least be discussion about things before it's put into legislation. If somebody wants to try it out as a pilot project, it could be done anyway.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you, Ms. Friendly.

MS. LAURIE HATTON

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): I would now call upon Laurie Hatton to please step forward.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): No, she is. She's coming right now.

All set?

Ms. Laurie Hatton: Yes, I am. Thank you for having me, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Laurie Hatton. I'm an independent child care provider and I'm very happy that I have the opportunity to be with you this evening. Although unusual, I'd just like to take a quick moment to pray.

Father, I just thank you for this opportunity to speak and I pray that you will give all the committee members wisdom as they think about all the various things they're heard over the last two days. I pray that whatever amendments are made will be done in the best interest of the children, that you will give me clarity as I speak, and that you will just help me to stay calm and present well. In Jesus's name, amen.

When my daughter was born I did return to work and was working outside the home. I was very grateful for the opportunity to put my daughter in home child care and for the wonderful care that she received at that time.

When she was four years old, I decided to start my own home daycare. That was over 15 years ago—she's 20 and in France and enjoying the world—and I'm very glad that I made that decision. I continue to do child care today.

As I think about Bill 10 and the changes it will make on our province, it really concerns me greatly. One of the major issues is the two-under-the-age-of-two regulation restriction. I don't know how many of you have spoken with daycare providers or understand that, obviously, the maternity leave is 12 months. Most people who have taken a maternity or paternity leave will be returning at about the 12-month mark. Very rarely do we get calls for children who are two or three years of age in our programs. We do, but most of the time it's for 12-month-olds.

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By limiting it to two under the age of two, you are really narrowing down the ability for people to run a home daycare program. It means that people are not going to have choice when it comes to child care. It means that they are going to be having to put their child in a daycare centre as opposed to having a choice that they might want to be in a home.

Many wonderful things have been shared with you over the last two days. I have provided you with a document. As you can see, it has about 16 pages in it so I don't know that I can share anything new, but hopefully there will be some things in there that you haven't considered. It might be some great bedtime reading material for you; who knows?

From talking with people who do home daycare, as well as parents in—I just can't urge you enough to please consider the things that have been shared. By making Bill 10 pass as it's written currently, you will be putting many spots—many spots will be terminated.

I apologize that I'm not eloquent in speaking, and I apologize—I only found out on Friday that I would be speaking here today, so I didn't have the same luxury of time as some of the speakers.

I'm very passionate about Bill 10. That's why I jumped through hoops to get here today. I believe we need to have choice for child care. If people want to be

with an agency, if people want to be in a daycare centre, that's wonderful; they should have that choice. But I believe that for young children especially, home daycare is a wonderful opportunity where people can have a close bond with their provider.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): That's the end of your comments?

Ms. Laurie Hatton: I believe that, really, we need to be looking at the enforcement of the rules more than changing the rules. I believe that when something is not broken, we don't need to fix it.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Now you have 30 seconds. We can start with questions if you want.

Ms. Laurie Hatton: For myself, I did phone an agency to see what it would entail if I was to be licensed. I didn't feel they really offered, for myself, benefit for what I would be paying. For me, it would be 28% of my income, minimum, that I would be paying. I really think we need to have an opportunity as providers to be licensed directly with the government rather than having to pay a third party agency.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mr. Dunlop?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much for coming today, Ms. Hatton. I know you're probably not used to public speaking at these intimidating kinds of meetings, but I think you did a good job.

Ms. Laurie Hatton: Thank you.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: And I think you've made your point clear. We've heard many, many independent child care providers over the last few hours making the same comments that you have made. When we get to clause-by-clause next week, there'll be a number of amendments, and I only hope that we can address some of those concerns that you've brought up, along with the tens of thousands of people represented by the other independent child care providers.

Really, I just want to say, on behalf of the PC caucus—you're the last deputation in the committee hearings. We would have liked to have had these committee hearings in other communities across the province, but that didn't happen. So I want to thank you and I want to thank all of the independent child care providers who have made a special effort to do a really, really good job here. Some of the comments and some of the presentations have been outstanding. I think we owe it to them to make the proper amendments so that we can continue to have independent child care providers provide valuable service in the province of Ontario, probably with a licensing system by the government and probably with a registry. But we don't want you to lose your incomes and we don't want to lose those child care spaces across our province. So we thank you and thank all independent child care providers for their presentations. Thank you.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Do I have a few seconds for a comment?

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): You do.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I always like to make parallels. I know that about myself. What I see this as, you're the

front-line worker, just like a home caregiver for an elderly person—which we all know that we need more money towards that. Instead, what you're being told is that you're going to have to take a cut in salary and that more money will go to administrative costs, because I don't think that there's value in you paying an agency just to be registered, just to be licensed. I agree with you 100% that before we look at having new rules we should enforce the rules that we already have in place.

I want to make one last comment, which is that we all know that kids get a lot of colds. Daycare workers get a lot of colds that they pick up from the kids. I can't imagine that there are more colds being spread in home daycare settings than in big centres. I'm not going to say there are less, but my guess is that there probably are less. That's another reason that we should be taking into consideration, in terms of health care.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Chair. Ms. Hatton, thank you for coming this evening and making your presentation. You've echoed what many others have said in the last two days. I appreciate you taking the time. I know that appearing before a committee can be intimidating—as friendly as we may be, colleagues—so I appreciate your effort. I'd like to thank everyone, actually, who has come out and deputed and sat through these hearings. It has been a very useful education for me and, I think, for my colleagues.

Ms. Laurie Hatton: I do hope that you will take time to read through the document that I provided you with. I don't like to cut down trees. I don't like to waste your time, but I did personally put together that document. I have attended rallies about this. I have spoken to people. I have really tried to let people know we need amendments. I've tried to put in my document, just since Friday—I had started writing a submission prior to that, but I really hope that you will go through this and you will seriously consider some of the things in making the amendments.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you. To Ms. McMahon.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for coming. You know what? You said earlier that you're nervous about speaking—you did great. I want to join my colleagues in thanking you for coming and tell you that you did a marvellous job. It's clear that you care about your business, and so do we, and you care about children, and so do we. So there's a lot that we have in common, and we're starting from that common ground. So thank you for sharing that.

If you could just expand on something, if you don't mind—and it's okay if you can't, but what we're really finding helpful this evening is some advice from you and your colleagues about how we might make these changes in terms of keeping our children safe.

If you were to be licensed—you're fine with that, I'm assuming. You alluded to that earlier. What would that look like, from your perspective?

Ms. Laurie Hatton: I actually feel that home daycare providers can self-regulate very well. I don't believe it's necessary for us to be licensed necessarily in order to do a good job. I don't think the system is broken. I don't know that it necessarily needs to be changed by being with a licensed agency. But if you mean in the sense of being able to be licensed directly with the government, that would be wonderful. We certainly are not opposed to inspections and having people coming in and checking. I have a police check. I have the children's aid society check. The fire and health department have actually inspected my home. So most of the things that would be required for an agency, I've already taken the initiative to do.

I think it's important that people have the opportunity to be licensed too, that people know that their children are being—that the care is being monitored, but not necessarily through a third party agency that is going to take a substantial income and that has a vested interest in what they're doing in the inspections and so forth.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: We've heard that a lot, in terms of protecting your income. What I've been asking people about tonight is really about how we could look at alternative models of care, rather than having you pay an agency, but some other models for licensing that might achieve the same balance and yet avoid you having to pay that kind of fee, which feels onerous, doesn't it?

Ms. Laurie Hatton: I think if there could be some kind of a registry where we could be independently licensed—I don't know the exact terminology for it, but rather than it being through a third party, someone who is doing it as a profit type of thing. From what I've understood in interviewing parents for child care, they don't necessarily feel that the quality of care they would receive through an agency is any better, and, in some cases, is even substandard to the care that they're seeing in a program like mine.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Fifteen seconds.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Okay. Super. Thank you. Again, thanks for coming.

Ms. Laurie Hatton: You're welcome.

The Vice-Chair (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you so much. You are free to go as you wish.

For the members of the committee, I want to remind everybody that the deadline for filing amendments for the bill, that you have to file with the Clerk, is this Thursday at noon. They have to be received by the Clerk by this Thursday at noon. The committee will be adjourning in a few seconds, and we will gather again next Monday at 2 for clause-by-clause consideration.

Thank you so much. Thank you for everyone who has been here with us. I see that some of you have stayed for the two days and have listened to all of it. We certainly appreciate your involvement.

Ça nous a fait extrêmement plaisir de vous souhaiter la bienvenue à Queen's Park.

If there are no more comments, we are adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 2021.

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