

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 8

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 8

2nd Session
42nd Parliament
Thursday
21 October 2021

2^e session
42^e législature
Jeudi
21 octobre 2021

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<https://www.ola.org/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

House Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 21 October 2021 / Jeudi 21 octobre 2021

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Legislative reform

Mr. Michael Parsa	329
Miss Monique Taylor	329
Mr. Gurratan Singh	331
Motion agreed to	332

Private members' public business

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	332
-------------------------------------	-----

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Fred Hall

Mr. Wayne Gates	333
-----------------------	-----

Tannis family

Mr. Jeremy Roberts	333
--------------------------	-----

Road safety

Ms. Doly Begum	333
----------------------	-----

Churchill Meadows Community Centre and Sports Park

Mr. Sheref Sabawy	333
-------------------------	-----

Road safety

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche	334
----------------------------	-----

COVID-19 immunization

Mr. Roman Baber	334
-----------------------	-----

Glamour Gals McMaster

Ms. Donna Skelly	334
------------------------	-----

Optometry services

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens	334
--------------------------------------	-----

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos	335
--------------------------------------	-----

Emma Reinke

Mr. Jeff Yurek	335
----------------------	-----

Visitors

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	335
-------------------------------------	-----

COVID-19 deaths

Mr. John Vanthof	335
------------------------	-----

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

Automotive industry

Mr. John Vanthof	336
Hon. Victor Fedeli	336

Personal support workers

Ms. Doly Begum	336
Mr. Michael Parsa	337

Government accountability

Ms. Catherine Fife	337
Hon. Paul Calandra	337

Red tape reduction

Mr. Jim McDonell	338
Hon. Nina Tangri	338

Indigenous mental health services

Mr. Sol Mamakwa	339
Hon. Christine Elliott	339

Land use planning

Mr. Mike Schreiner	339
Hon. Paul Calandra	339
Hon. Stan Cho	340

Electronic service delivery

Ms. Goldie Ghamari	340
Hon. Kaleed Rasheed	340

Poverty

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown	341
Hon. Paul Calandra	341
Mr. Jeremy Roberts	341

Municipal elections

Ms. Mitzie Hunter	341
Hon. Paul Calandra	341

Red tape reduction

Mr. Randy Pettapiece	342
Hon. Nina Tangri	342

Driver examination centres

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens	343
Hon. Stan Cho	343

COVID-19 immunization

Mr. Roman Baber	343
Hon. Christine Elliott	344

Autism treatment

Mr. Terence Kernaghan	344
Mr. Jeremy Roberts	344

COVID-19 immunization

Mr. John Fraser	345
Hon. Christine Elliott	345

Business of the House

Hon. Paul Calandra	346
--------------------------	-----

Notices of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	346
-------------------------------------	-----

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations in the Education and Healthcare Sectors Act, 2021, Bill 12, Mr. Fraser / Loi de 2021 sur la vaccination obligatoire contre la COVID-19 dans le secteur de l'éducation et celui des soins de santé, projet de loi 12, M. Fraser	
Second reading negatived	346
Private members' public business	
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	346

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Early Years and Child Care Worker Advisory Commission Act, 2021, Bill 25, Ms. Karpoche / Loi de 2021 sur la Commission consultative des préposés aux services pour la petite enfance et la garde d'enfants, projet de loi 25, Mme Karpoche	
First reading agreed to.....	347
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	347

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Optometry services	
Mr. Faisal Hassan.....	347
Optometry services	
Miss Monique Taylor.....	347
Optometry services	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	348
Optometry services	
Mr. Terence Kernaghan	348

Optometry services	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	348
Education funding	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	348
Optometry services	
Mr. Kevin Yarde	348
Automobile insurance	
Mr. Faisal Hassan.....	349
Long-term care	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	349
Affordable housing	
Mr. Terence Kernaghan.....	349
Tenant protection	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	349
Optometry services	
Mr. Terence Kernaghan.....	350

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

COVID-19 immunization	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	350
Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos	352
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	353
Mr. Jeremy Roberts	353
Mr. Gurratan Singh	354
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	355
Vote deferred.....	356

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 21 October 2021

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 21 octobre 2021

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Good morning. We'll begin this morning with a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Let us pray.

Prières.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Mr. Michael Parsa: I move that standing orders 45(b)(v) and 45(e) be deleted and replaced with the following:

“S.O. 45(b)(v) shall be limited to two hours on any day that the afternoon routine is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m.

“S.O. 45(e) After two hours of debate on an opposition day held on a day that the afternoon routine is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m., or at 5:50 p.m. on an opposition day held on a day that the afternoon routine is scheduled to begin at 3 p.m., the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put the question without further debate. If a recorded vote is requested, the division bells shall be limited to 10 minutes. Such vote may not be deferred.”

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Parsa has moved government notice of motion number 3. Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm always happy to take my space here in the Legislature and have a few moments to put a few words on record. Today, it's regarding a motion, as you just heard, from the member opposite regarding routine proceedings and changes to the standing orders that would truncate the time of an opposition day motion to only two hours on a Wednesday.

Where this came from, Speaker, is we typically don't sit till 3 o'clock on Wednesdays. The government had put in some changes to the standing orders previously that changed that to 1 o'clock sittings when they found it necessary, but because of opposition day motions, that would have given the opposition the opportunity to be able to talk much longer about important issues that we brought to the Legislature floor. So, this is a housekeeping matter. Really, it's just fixing a mistake that was put forward by the government previously.

We know that since this House leader has come to the Legislature, he's put in several changes to reflect the way that things happen on the floor in the House of Commons. As we know, he was a previous federal member, and when he came to the provincial Legislature, he thought that he could make the House better by making changes. Well,

unfortunately, we are now having to clean up some of that mistake of not getting it done right the first time.

We've seen them rush through legislation many a time and having to backtrack with pieces of legislation, and now, when the people of Ontario are looking to us for guidance to get us through the pandemic, we find ourselves spending valuable time—very valuable time—in the Legislature correcting the House leader's mistakes.

Now, we have seen in the last few days that the House leader has been given a promotion to the Minister of Legislative Affairs. We're curious if that's going to stop him from making these kinds of errors moving forward. It comes with a big pay raise. He obviously wasn't getting paid enough for the work that he was currently doing running the Legislature floor, so now he needs a new title to be able to go with that role. Hopefully now we will not see these kinds of housekeeping mistakes continue to come to the Legislature floor.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Oh my goodness. Are you serious?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order, please.

Miss Monique Taylor: I understand that the members opposite are touchy on this matter, giving one member of their team a promotion and a raise at the same time that nurses across this province have worked so hard through the pandemic and are looking for their increase to their cost of living, and they've been held to a 1% increase. We see bargaining matters concerning when it comes to bargaining new negotiations for their collective agreements, and they're being told, “No, no, no.” And now we have a new minister created by this government to increase his wages. We know that he's already been—

Ms. Donna Skelly: You know nothing about being a minister.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Member for Flamborough—Glanbrook, come to order.

Miss Monique Taylor: I know the member opposite is upset, but Speaker, she will have her opportunity to be able to get up and speak to this motion, as we all have the right here in the Legislature. She will have her opportunity, and I will look forward to hearing whatever she has to say. But right now, it's my turn to be able to bring our concerns to the floor.

Like I said, there are a lot of important issues that we should be debating here in this House, that we should be talking about. We should be talking about health care; we should be talking about education; we should be talking about the lack of autism services for kids across this province and the shameful job that this government has done creating their new autism program. Those are the

types of things that we should be talking about on the Legislature floor, but instead, we're talking about changes to the standing orders, correcting a mistake that the government had already put forward. They cannot deny that. They put forward legislation to change the standing orders for how Wednesdays are managed. Now we're backtracking, fixing that error and spending valuable time in the Legislature. There can be no dispute about that.

As I said, I'm hoping that the new Minister of Legislative Affairs will be able to get things right going forward, that he will not find the need to rush standing order changes so quickly through this House, that when they put legislation down on the table the first time there will be merit to it, that they will have taken their time and done their homework to see the consequences that could happen from that. Instead, we're spending that time here now fixing that with this motion before us.

I've heard that the new minister will be responsible for legislative affairs and things that happen on the floor. I don't think that's anything different from what currently happens. But I've also heard some things about revamping Queen's Park and the Legislature for repairs that are needed. I haven't heard that, but I'm not on the Board of Internal Economy. But there are several people on the Board of Internal Economy that is currently run by the Speaker of the House. I'm curious also to the fact, does this new minister position mean that they don't trust the work that's already happening at the Board of Internal Economy, that they don't already trust the people who are paid to do this job and the other officials who are already working to ensure that Queen's Park as a whole, not just the chamber floor and not just the legislative business, runs? Is that what this new minister's position is supposed to do? Will he take over the role of the Speaker when it comes to managing the Ontario Legislature? There are some pretty big concerns there, concerns that I personally have, for sure, and speaking to my colleagues, they have the same kinds of concerns.

0910

Is there a lack of faith and trust in the Board of Internal Economy and the Speaker to be able to manage the re-vamping of Queen's Park, if that day becomes necessary? We know that the House of Commons had to revamp and switch locations, and it's an enormous job, but the people who are in that role managed to do so quite efficiently, as we would trust our Board of Internal Economy as well as the Speaker of the House to be able to conduct that role. So why do we need a Minister of Legislative Affairs? What is the basis of that? Is it just for the pay increase? Is that the reason what it's for? I'm not sure, but people across this province are certainly asking that question. They want to know why they are not able get those raises.

We look at different sectors within the province—developmental service workers, mental health workers, PSWs—who have been so grossly underpaid for years and years and years, and not at the fault of just this government; I mean, previous Conservative governments before that, yes, but also in the basis of the Liberals and

how they governed this province and how they under-funded so many sectors within our province, and how we're seeing how the pandemic definitely highlighted the need for our support workers, whether they're personal support workers, whether they're developmental service workers, whether they're mental health workers, the list goes on. I don't want to leave anybody out.

There are so many important people who provide care to our vulnerable communities that we have neglected for years and years and years in this province, and it's time for that to stop. It's time to put the money and the respect and the job security behind those workers, who truly keep our province running and who truly have to do all of the hard work that many of us don't have the ability to do. There are many jobs within being a PSW, a mental health worker and a developmental service worker that is hard work. It's personal work for the person that they're providing that service to. It is probably the most personal stuff that people can have to face in their life. We entrust these people to be able to take on those hard roles and to be able to do those things that I know, personally, I don't have the ability to do. By not respecting them, we cannot retain them.

We see people leaving those sectors and being pulled into other sectors for more money, for job security, for full-time work, something that many people count on. People need full-time jobs. We have PSWs working three part-time jobs to be able to make up the difference of one job. That's unacceptable. Those are the types of things that have to change, not the stuff that we're dealing with today. We need to respect those workers. So if the new minister thinks that he needs a pay raise, well, I hope that he's listening to me and that he knows that these same workers also need pay raises. We've seen inflation go up 4.4%, I think it is: That's a pay cut to everyone. If inflation is going up, that means your wages aren't going near as far.

Are we providing pay increases? Minimum wage is not near enough to be able to afford to live in our communities. We've seen the rent increase. We have rental bidding wars happening in our community. I hear from—and let's just talk about housing, because it really does come down to the fact of money and how people can afford to live in this province. Rentals have gone through the roof. If you see a person on Ontario Works, I think the maximum amount is \$737. You cannot rent a basement cupboard for \$737. We have basement apartments where I've gone to visit some of my constituents. They're dark, damp, probably not legal units, and they're paying over \$1,000, \$1,200 or \$1,300 a month to live in these basements that—most of us have a hard time putting storage in the basement because we're afraid that it will get wet on the floor. We have people living in these conditions. And they're almost the lucky ones, because they actually have a real roof over their head, when we're looking at tent cities popping up across our province and our communities, with people just not being able to access housing. It is such a huge issue and something that all of our communities are seeing. In Hamilton, for sure, we are definitely seeing so many tents, so many people displaced, renoventions.

Big conglomerations are coming in and buying up apartment buildings. We heard yesterday of a seniors' building—they're just buying it up and then they're kicking all those seniors out. Where are they going to go? They can't find a rental to be able to meet their income.

This is the type of stuff that I wish we were debating here on the floor this morning—really talking about the needs of our community, about what politics should be about. It should be about the basis of our community, about our people's needs—making sure that they have water, as I'm sure the member from Kiiwetinoong would agree with, and safe housing, which he would agree with. We have so many real-life issues that put people in vulnerable, precarious positions, and that's not the topic of the day. It's never the topic of the day in this Legislature—to talk about vulnerable people, to put forward real, good legislation without a poison pill stuck in it just so they can jam the opposition on it and say that we voted against their bill. That's what politics has become in the province of Ontario and in Canada and, I'm pretty sure, around the world, but that's not what it's supposed to be about. It's supposed to be about making sure that people have housing, that people have clean water, that people have food in their fridge, that they're able get a decent job, and that we support them through our communities. That's what has been completely lost over the years.

People ask, "How do you do it? How do you go and be a politician?" It's because I cannot give up fighting, because one day, one person is going to hear the right thing and it's going to make a little bit of a difference. Am I going to change the world? No. Am I going to change what happens in my entire city? No. Am I going to change one person's life? Yes, I am, and that's what makes it worth coming here.

But when we have to deal with this kind of stuff, when we know that people are vulnerable, that people are hurting in our communities, and then we have to stand here and fix a housekeeping issue because the government was so quick to rush through legislation that really doesn't mean anything to the people—the legislative changes are all about making it easier for the government to pass their legislation. And we've seen them pass some pretty bad legislation. We've seen them rip away municipalities' rights for elections. We've seen ministerial orders being pushed through so they can sell off our green space and give bonuses to their buddies, the developers, to make life better for their buddies. And yet nothing ever happens in this Legislature to talk about vulnerable people. No good bills ever come forward—no increases to Ontario Works, to ODSP. People who are physically disabled and not able to go to work have to live in poverty because they were born with a disability or because they've injured themselves on the job. Do we do anything to help those people? No, we do not. Nothing like that happens here in this Legislature without pulling teeth.

We have so many stakeholders who contact us—and they don't just contact New Democrats. There's no way that they just contact New Democrats; they have to contact the Conservatives too. The Conservative members have to

be hearing these same stories, and yet there are no private members' bills that come forward from Conservative members that talk about poverty, that talk about housing. Their private members' bills typically include declaring a day, and boy, do those private members' bills ever get passed through this Legislature.

0920

I brought forward a private member's bill talking about mental health for people throughout the pandemic—front-line workers, PSWs, nurses, grocery store workers, our people who went to work every single day and had to feel the traumatization of what was happening in our community. We were all sitting at home in our houses on our computers doing the work with the lights on and food in the fridge, and these people were out in our communities dealing every day, being face to face in the community with the pandemic in their face. Many of those folks are traumatized by some of the things that happened to them or some of the things that they've seen. I put forward a private member's bill to ensure that they had mental health services. The government denied it. The same people who are our heroes do not receive the same respect and the same abilities to access those mental health services when they need them. Those are the types of things that we should be talking about, not continuously talking about housekeeping, about fixing mistakes of previous legislation put forward. It's concerning. It's concerning, and I know the people of this province are concerned.

I know people that I talk to on a daily basis bring forward issues to my office, things that we can't even deal with sometimes. Small businesses: We know that small businesses bore the brunt of this pandemic. There were grants. Because we had to push the government to put forward something, they came out with a grant. Some people were accepted; some people weren't. Then they came out with the exact same grant for the exact same people. The exact same people got money when others didn't get anything.

When there were complaints, when there were concerns about those small businesses, we had a liaison with the ministry, all MPPs, to be able to take our concerns there. Well, they shuttered that office. They said, "That's it. We're done taking those complaints and concerns. It's over." Done, not going any further. And those small businesses are still contacting our office, saying, "We need help. We were promised this money. We paid out the money that we had to pay our bills, to try to keep our staff." But they're drowning.

Speaker, I've definitely taken up my time allotted. I hope that we will not see any of these further corrections having to come forward in this manner, taking up valuable time in the Legislature, and I look forward to further debate from members who had a lot to say when I first started speaking. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: The legislative tool of opposition day motions is something that I'm proud to say we've used many times here in the opposition to advance issues

that really matter to folks across the province. One of the major issues that we've talked about that impacted my community of Brampton is around health care. The government's proposal to limit the time of opposition day motions at the same time prevents the opposition from doing our job to its fullest extent, because this legislative tool allows us to push forward in this House those really important matters that are at the top of mind in our province and really impact people.

When I think of what we have put forward in this House already, with regard to Brampton, we put down—I believe it has been two opposition day motions around health care and specifically the health care around the funding of our hospitals. That's something that's been incredibly important, because we know that Brampton has been historically underfunded with respect to our health care. We're a city of over—close to 700,000 now, I want to say. We only have one hospital, and that one hospital is chronically underfunded. Instead of acting on this issue and providing Brampton with the funding that we required, the Conservative government has time and again refused to adequately fund Brampton's health care. We used the tool of an opposition day motion to really push this matter forward multiple times. Despite that, we now see a proposal coming forth from the government in which they are potentially putting this tool with respect to having it have shorter time, and that ultimately is going to impact the opposition's ability to ensure that we can really vocalize the issues that are mattering most across this province.

Health care has been something that is still top of mind in Brampton, because people have this overall feeling, this sense—and it's backed up by the facts—that Brampton is being left behind with our health care funding. We, per capita, receive less funding. We have one hospital for over 700,000 people in our city; we have one hospital that is chronically underfunded. And instead of acting on this issue, the Conservative government put forth an election promise. They used our health care crisis as an election tool. They made an election announcement where they said, "We're building a new hospital in Brampton." We saw in the budget there was no money allocated for it. Instead, when the Conservative Premier came to Brampton to clarify his position, what did we see? He said, "We're going to build this hospital in 2023." The next election is in 2022. This is clearly an election promise.

Brampton is in a crisis. It has been in a crisis. A health care emergency in Brampton was declared before the pandemic, and clearly the pandemic made this health care emergency even worse. But instead of acting on this, the Conservative government is trying to score political points, turn it into an election announcement and not actually act when people are in a desperate, desperate situation in Brampton.

Another opposition day motion that we put forward was with respect to education. Brampton is a robust, amazing city, and if you look at the mean age, it's actually one of the youngest communities in Canada. But despite that, our community doesn't have a university. The impact is that young people and students are actually having to commute

hours every day. They're wasting hours of their day, wasting hours of their life every day in commute, and it costs them more money. The economic impact of being stuck in traffic when they could be contributing back, either having a job or studying or doing all this work—they're just stuck in traffic.

A university in Brampton would be so transformative for our city. We put in an opposition day motion on that matter because the Conservative government cancelled our university. They cancelled our university instead of investing in Brampton, and the impact is that young people no longer have a university in their city—they don't have that hope of a university in their city, because the Conservative government frankly smashed that hope. And instead, once again, they made this elaborate announcement that they're going to bring some sort of funding for a university. What was it again? It was a little bit of money for Ryerson to develop a plan for maybe a university. That's very different than the university that had \$90 million slotted to be built in Brampton.

Opposition day motions are an important legislative tool. We need to make sure that the opposition has as much time as possible to ensure that we can actually use this legislative tool, and I'm hopeful that the government is hearing our words and concerns with respect to opposition day motions.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Parsa has moved government notice of motion number 3, relating to amendments to the standing orders. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Mr. John Vanthof: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): On division. I declare the motion carried on division.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day?

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 10 o'clock.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Just kidding: 10:15.

The House recessed from 0929 to 1015.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnett): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 101(c), changes have been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Ms. Horwath assumes ballot item number 8 and Mr. Vanthof assumes ballot item number 23.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FRED HALL

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to rise today. On Sunday, we were invited to attend the Niagara Falls Fire Department's Line of Duty Death Memorial Ceremony. This year, we are honouring a fallen member of this past year with the laying of a rose by his two daughters. This was the 12th member that they are honouring. I would like to speak about the member today. His name is Fred Hall. Fred was a firefighter in Niagara Falls for 31 years. The ceremony was moving. They honoured Fred, who passed away of an occupational cancer in July 2020.

In January 1985, Fred joined the Niagara Falls Fire Department, a department I can say is one of the finest in all of Ontario. A dedicated family man with two daughters and three grandchildren, Fred worked his way up to platoon chief before his retirement, spending 31 years with the Niagara Falls fire department.

Being a firefighter isn't a regular occupation. You belong to a family, to a group of men and women you love, spend your days with, train with and work with. Fred knew that and stayed with his brothers and sisters even after retirement. In honouring Fred's life and his dedication to our community, we must remember that the death was not an accident; it was the result of the work he did. Every day, men and women that make up our fire departments across Ontario risk their lives to ensure that we as a community are safe. They do that knowing the risks. They answer the call.

I hope today we can all remember Fred. Remember him for what he gave to his family; what he gave to our brothers and sisters, to our community and to the department; and what he gave to all of us. In this case, Fred gave with his life.

TANNIS FAMILY

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: To many in Ottawa, the Tannis name is associated with the wholesale food industry. Tannis Trading, as it was known then, was started by brothers Toefic and George Tannis as a confectionary business in the 1940s. In the early 1970s, tragedy hit the family when both the founding brothers passed, and Toefic's wife, Saood, found herself in charge of a company that was floundering. Families and friends worked together to turn the company around, and it kept growing, creating jobs across Ottawa until they sold it to Sysco foods in 2015.

Meanwhile, George's son Ralph started the institution Fat Albert's subs in 1969, which expanded to include Ralph's sports bar. Not only did Ralph feed many for years, he also helped transform the Snawsuit Fund of Ottawa to what it is today from a modest beginning.

But, Speaker, the legacy of the Tannis family is much greater than providing well-paying jobs for our city. The Tannis family has always answered the call to serve our

community. Among the more notable donations includes contributions to Karen's Place, the Élisabeth Bruyère Foundation, the Perley hospital, St. Patrick's long-term care facility. In fact, Speaker, in total, they have donated well over \$2 million to community causes across Ottawa.

Our city owes a huge thank you to the family for their philanthropic and enterprising spirit. Please join me in recognizing the Tannis family for their support of the city of Ottawa.

1020

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, I would like to take a moment to remember the life of a young girl that our community lost this week. On Tuesday, October 19, Nadia Mozumder, a 17-year-old girl, died after being struck by a vehicle at the intersection of Birchmount and Danforth.

Nadia was a bright and active member of our community here in Scarborough. She attended Birchmount Park Collegiate Institute, not too far from where she lost her life. Nadia was an ambitious young woman who was passionate about contributing to our community and had big dreams about a future where she could help her family and her neighbours.

Our community is devastated; they are devastated from this incredible loss. Those who knew Nadia saw her potential, and it is heartbreaking to see her being robbed of her future.

Speaker, more than half of all the fatal traffic and pedestrian accidents over the past year have been in Scarborough. In fact, there are multiple intersections in Scarborough Southwest that are known for having recurring collisions, pedestrian impacts and devastating fatalities. Members of our community deserve to be able to walk to school or work, wait for a bus or ride a bike safely without the fear of imminent danger.

This isn't just Scarborough. We have seen multiple deaths this week in Toronto from the same issue. We cannot let this go on. So today, I call on all my colleagues from across the aisle to commit to the concrete policies that ensure we do not lose another life to these senseless and preventable accidents.

CHURCHILL MEADOWS COMMUNITY
CENTRE AND SPORTS PARK

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I am pleased to talk about Mississauga's brand new community centre today. The \$51-million Churchill Meadows Community Centre and Sports Park, a 65,000-square-foot building combined with 55 acres of green space, will support future generations for decades to come in my riding of Mississauga-Erin Mills.

I would like to congratulate Councillor Sue McFadden for her advocacy and support in this endeavour. It is a state-of-the-art facility in the city's west end, and I am glad that Mississauga's infrastructure is being improved, even during the pandemic.

By investing in local projects here in Mississauga and across the province, our government is helping to strengthen our communities and guaranteeing a bright and healthy future for our great province. We are ready to build, Mr. Speaker: ready to build community centres like the \$45-million reconstruction of South Common Centre in my own riding, ready to build highways like the 401, ready to build transit like the Mississauga LRT—ready to build this province.

I am proud of the achievements of this government. We have faced a crisis few administrations have faced, and under the leadership of Premier Ford, we have placed Ontario on the path to recovery.

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Speaker, on Parkside Drive in my riding of Parkdale–High Park, two Torontonians, Valdemar and Fatima Avila, were recently killed in a vehicle collision. Our thoughts are with the Avila family as they grieve these needless deaths.

This week, I joined my community for a vigil to remember their lives and renew our long-standing call for safe streets in our cities. On a road like Parkside—which borders High Park, Toronto’s busiest public park, and a residential neighbourhood with a school nearby—vehicles are regularly documented going in excess of speed limits.

We know that vehicles travel not according to the speed limit, but according to street design. We need a new approach to designing our streets for all modes of transportation, not just cars, so that everyone is safe. That means protected bike lanes, wider sidewalks and more pedestrian crossings.

This is critical infrastructure that will save lives and prevent serious injury. I urge the Ford government to provide additional supports for the infrastructure needed for safe streets implementation by municipalities so that we can achieve Vision Zero.

I also urge the government to adopt the vulnerable road users law that the NDP has proposed so that vulnerable road users like pedestrians, cyclists, road construction workers and emergency responders are protected under the law. We cannot continue to overlook road violence.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Roman Baber: From this seat, I’ve had to articulate thoughts that would have seemed unthinkable a few years ago. I pleaded with the government not to impose emergency orders without a state of emergency or parliamentary oversight. I pleaded not to use the “notwithstanding” clause, the nuclear option, to pass legislation that the courts said could benefit the government’s re-election. I pleaded to preserve the freedom of speech.

But I never dreamt that I would have to urge the Ontario government to de-escalate the fearmongering and chill the dangerous rhetoric, the dangerous attitudes that we’re now hearing on the street, in the stores and in the media against unvaccinated Canadians: that unvaccinated Canadians are

putting the lives of others at risk. All the fear turned into hate. I don’t recognize my country anymore. I don’t recognize some Canadians anymore.

Speaker, the vaccine was never meant to prevent transmission. It doesn’t prevent transmission. See the National Post on July 30. The vaccinated are spreading Delta as quickly as the unvaccinated, according to the CDC. Fauci is quoted multiple times saying the viral load is about the same. The point of the vaccine was to significantly reduce bad outcomes, and thankfully, it does. We should promote the efficacy of the vaccine instead of creating doubt in the efficacy of the vaccine.

But please, don’t create classes and suggest that one class of Canadians is risking the lives of other Canadians because of their medical status. It incites fear. It incites hate. It’s dangerous and unbecoming. It’s false. And it’s disgusting. Stop this hate, please. Cool down the fear-mongering. Cool down the rhetoric. Oppose and dispel the proposition that anyone is risking anyone’s lives. Remember, we are Canadians.

GLAMOUR GALS MCMASTER

Ms. Donna Skelly: I want to take the opportunity this morning to talk about the incredible connections a group of young volunteers from McMaster University in Hamilton are making with residents in assisted living facilities. The group is called Glamour Gals McMaster. What they do is provide complimentary beauty makeovers, hairstyling and manicures to women in seniors homes.

McMaster has the only Glamour Gals chapter in Canada. It was started a couple of years ago by Lizmarie and Stacey Correia. The sisters wanted to do something to give back to the community and they immediately thought of their grandmother who has dementia and is living in Caroline Place assisted living home in Hamilton. So these determined young women blended their interests in beauty and seniors and began the Glamour Gals chapter.

Lizmarie says the residents are thrilled and call them their “little glamour girls.” They have lengthy conversations with the residents, and the seniors feel appreciated and valued. And the pandemic didn’t stop the students from connecting with the seniors. When they couldn’t visit the homes, the students began writing letters to residents in a number of long-term care homes in the city, and some started a pen pal relationship.

I want to commend Lizmarie and Stacey and all the volunteers at McMaster who are using makeovers to make the lives of seniors a little brighter.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: One out of every five people in Niagara is over 65 years of age. COVID-19 has been hardest on our older adult population over the age of 65, which is something we could not control. And yet today I stand in this chamber to point out an issue affecting residents over the age of 65, and it is something we can

control. It's about OHIP support for eye care and eye tests. This is because eye care is health care, and ignoring this point hurts every senior in Ontario, especially senior communities like ours in Niagara.

Mr. Premier, it is shameful. You have not sat down to negotiate eye care, and seniors over the age of 65 are paying the price. Ontario pays the lowest rate for eye care in the country. Yes, this funding shortfall started with the Liberal government. However, it could end with the Conservative government. You could do the right thing today. Every day my office gets calls from seniors who are worried about losing their vision and being turned away, because the Premier wants to save a buck. Well, Speaker, do you know who is paying the price for that? Yes, it's our seniors.

I have made a commitment to my constituents to continue to pressure this government to do the right thing. That's what I will continue to do. So today, I stand to deliver a letter imploring you to sit down and negotiate eye care so our seniors can get the care they do deserve.

1030

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW I

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Today I would like to honour His Most Divine All-Holiness Bartholomew I, archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome, Ecumenical Patriarch and the spiritual leader of the world's almost 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide.

On October 22, 2021, His Holiness marks the 30th anniversary of his election as archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, the longest serving patriarch in the history of the See of Constantinople, the First Throne of the Orthodox church.

A visionary leader and bridge builder, the Ecumenical Patriarch has increased co-operation within the Orthodox community and promoted dialogue and peace among all religions. He is also known for promoting religious freedom, human rights and combatting human trafficking.

His work on environmental justice has earned him the title "the Green Patriarch."

Time Magazine has named him as one of the most influential people in the world.

He speaks six languages—Greek, English, French, German, Italian and Turkish—and is also fluent in classical Greek and Latin.

Ontario has a strong and vibrant Orthodox Christian community, including the patriarch's representative in Canada, His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios.

On behalf of all members of the Legislature, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to His All-Holiness on his historic anniversary and on his 30-year worldwide ministry.

EMMA REINKE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: With strong family support and an entire community behind her, 23-year-old Emma Reinke

made all of St. Thomas proud this past summer at the Tokyo Paralympic Games.

Emma is a member of the Canadian women's goalball team, the official sport for blind and low-vision players. They are all blindfolded and throw a heavy ball with a bell inside down the court to score—and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that ball is really, really heavy.

Emma was introduced to the sport of goalball in grade 9 and showed incredible natural talent. At age 18, she made the national team. She has travelled the world representing Canada over the past five years and helped bring home numerous medals for her country.

Emma was a fierce competitor in Tokyo, scoring eight times in four games, but unfortunately, the team was eliminated early. She, though, had a wonderful experience at her first Paralympics and is looking forward to her future.

I joined community members just recently in September to welcome Emma home. From there, she is headed off to Brazil for the world qualifier. She is expected to be a fixture on the world stage for years to come, so I look forward to her next Olympic games.

Mr. Speaker, St. Thomas, Elgin county and the province of Ontario are incredibly proud of Emma, who has represented St. Thomas on the world stage. We just can't wait to see what's next down her line. Congratulations, Emma.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that page Sujay Surya from the riding of Oakville North—Burlington is today's page captain, and we have with us today at Queen's Park his mother, Shubha Narasimhan, and his grandfather Gattadahalli Suryanarayana.

Page Zada Wallace from the riding of Toronto—Danforth is also today's page captain, and we have with us today her father, Ross Wallace.

Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We're delighted to have you here.

COVID-19 DEATHS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Timiskaming—Cochrane has a point of order.

Mr. John Vanthof: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent for the House to observe a moment of silence for the 52 Ontarians who have succumbed to COVID-19 over the past 14 days.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Timiskaming—Cochrane is seeking the unanimous consent of the House for a moment's silence to remember the 52 Ontarians who have succumbed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days. Agreed? Agreed. Members will please rise.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Members may take their seats.

QUESTION PERIOD

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. John Vanthof: My first question is to the Premier. Auto workers deserve better leadership than what this government is giving them. Auto workers of Unifor Local 444 at Stellantis heard the company will be eliminating 1,800 jobs and the entire second shift at their plant. This devastating news for Windsor comes just a year and a half after the community already lost the third shift and the 1,500 jobs that go with it.

And so far, the Premier has done little. What is the Premier doing today to fight to get those jobs back to Windsor?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member for the question. When this news came—and of course we were disappointed to learn of Stellantis’s decision. But when this news came, the Premier immediately was in Windsor. We met with Unifor. We met with Stellantis. I met with Jerry Dias on the phone twice, and our message is the same: We want Stellantis to accelerate the \$1.5-billion commitment that they made into the EV sector.

That commitment was reaffirmed by Stellantis. The Ford commitment is there. The General Motors commitment is there. We’ve seen \$6 billion in the last 12 months of new vehicle production announced for the province of Ontario. That’s because we put the Driving Prosperity program, our auto plan, into play more than two years ago and it is unfolding exactly as the plan should be.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Back to the Premier: What we know the government has done so far in the EV sector is they’ve ripped out charging stations, they’ve cancelled electric vehicle rebates, and actually, at one point they even changed the wiring code for new houses so you didn’t have to have the option of putting a charging station in.

The Premier did nothing when 1,500 jobs were lost and he said nothing this week to reassure auto workers and their families that he’s got their backs. When is the Premier going to be there for auto workers in Windsor and fight to keep their good jobs in this province?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: As I said, the Premier was in Windsor this week meeting with the union. We did meet with Stellantis. But I can tell you what we have done over the last year and over the last two years is we’ve developed our Driving Prosperity plan. This plan was put in place to reduce the cost of doing business in Ontario by \$7 billion.

Now, yes, we understand the NDP voted against every single component in the Driving Prosperity plan, our plan for the auto sector. They voted no when we put all of the dollars into the budget. We have an investment that we announced in Ford. It will be the largest electric vehicle facility. We have seen General Motors make their an-

nouncement of Oshawa and their electric vehicle announcement for Ingersoll. We have seen Stellantis make their \$1.5-billion announcement for Windsor, which they have now reaffirmed. All of that is because we have lowered the cost of doing business in Ontario by \$7 billion, something that party said no to and voted against every one of those initiatives.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Our province needs a government who will fight for the auto jobs we have and fight for new jobs in zero-emissions vehicles of the future. We don’t have that right now. We need a Premier who will fight for a new auto strategy, build quality zero-emissions vehicles and expand parts manufacturing and not sit idly by while 1,800 jobs are lost. We need a real auto sector strategy that builds these vehicles here in Ontario, not overseas.

1040

When will this government put together a plan to fight for Windsor instead of walking away from thousands of good-paying jobs that families need?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Actually, Speaker, the member, instead of voting against our initiative, should have read Driving Prosperity—it’s the plan that brought the Stellantis expansion. It’s the plan that brought the General Motors expansion. It’s the plan that brought the Ford expansion—\$6 billion in investments. That’s the largest investment in the auto sector in the history of Ontario, and it happened almost within a 30-day period.

They also voted against—maybe they don’t even remember—OVIN, the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network that puts \$56 million into the parts makers in Ontario all along the 401 corridor and up the highway.

They voted against O-AMP. That’s a \$10-million Ontario Automotive Modernization Program. I don’t think they even know any of those names, or they’d understand we have Driving Prosperity. We have a plan. We have a plan from critical minerals through to battery production through to the three automakers that have made their announcements. Read the plan. It’s been out there for two years.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Ms. Doly Begum: My question is to the Premier. Personal support workers have been on the front lines caring for our most vulnerable seniors throughout this pandemic. They are the health care heroes that all of us in this House have rightfully applauded for over a year and a half. They witnessed and worked through the horrors of the long-term care system first-hand without the support they needed. They often did not have the right PPE, yet they have not received a permanent pay increase. In fact, the temporary pandemic pay bump is set to expire on October 31 with no further plans.

My question is, will the Premier commit to providing a permanent raise for PSWs today?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, the parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I thank my colleague across for the question. Our government is incredibly grateful for the contributions of Ontario's health care workers and the critical role that they've played throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, providing patients and Ontarians with timely, safe and equitable access to high-quality care.

Mr. Speaker, the bill that my colleague is referring to is designated to protect those public sector jobs and those vital, front-line services which are essential in our fight against COVID-19. This is a fair, consistent and time-limited approach that will enable us to be able to protect those front-line workers and the jobs that Ontarians rely on.

It's important to note that Ontario's public sector employees will still be able to receive salary increases for seniority, performance and increased qualifications. Protecting those front-line services, the front-line sector jobs—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. And the supplementary?

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, I'm not sure if the member understood my question. Time is of the essence. Every few months, PSWs in this province have to wait and see if their pay will change, if the temporary pay increase will continue. Ontario's front-line heroes do not deserve to live with such uncertainty about their livelihood. If the government intends to give PSWs a permanent pay increase, they should announce it now. Will the government finally say yes to a permanent pay increase to Ontario's PSWs?

Mr. Michael Parsa: Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. Our government has great consideration for the important work that's carried out by front-line workers and all public sector workers. We value everything they do on behalf of all Ontarians. That's why Ontario is proud of the temporary pandemic pay we provided—generous support that was provided during the global pandemic. Eligible employees receive payments for work performed on behalf of Ontarians. Ontario supported the critical work of nearly 430,000 eligible front-line employees, working for approximately 4,000 employers.

As I said from the beginning, we value the work that these front-line workers are providing for us. We've stood by them every step of the way and we'll continue standing by them.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: Those thousands of workers are calling on the government for some certainty right now. It is time for bold action.

After more than a year and a half of this pandemic, we continue to face a huge shortage in PSW recruitment. Part of that shortage is because the work is hard, the hours are long, the pay is insufficient and the jobs are not full-time. As we enter this phase of Ontario's recovery, especially in the health care sector, it is time for the Premier to take bold

action—something we have yet to see from this Premier and this government—to get PSWs full-time, better-paying jobs.

So, again, will the Premier finally say yes to PSWs and announce today a permanent wage increase?

Mr. Michael Parsa: Again, I thank the member for the question.

Mr. Speaker, we are eternally grateful to all front-line workers for the work that they have done for Ontarians. The role that they have played throughout the pandemic is something that we value greatly—to provide that equitable access to high-quality care that Ontarians rely on, as I've said—which is why we provided the support for our front-line workers. It was something that Ontario is very proud of, the pandemic pay program we provided. It was generous support that was provided during the global pandemic to show our appreciation for the work that they're doing on the front lines every single day. As I've said previously and will continue to say, we value and appreciate them and will stand with them every step of the way, today and long after this pandemic.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier.

Ontario's front-line workers are struggling under a wage freeze. These are the people who cared for our loved ones and kept us safe during the worst days of this pandemic. They feel disrespected, and they are right. Every day, they watch this government devalue their hard work.

But on Monday, we learned that one person will be taking home a lot more money during this pandemic, and that is the newly created Minister of Legislative Affairs. Ministerial roles come with a 42.3% pay bump. The Premier's office says it's about "leading our legislative agenda." But isn't that part of the House leader's job right now?

These front-line workers deserve to hear from the Premier why their government House leader deserves a massive raise—

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Because he's a fine cabinet minister. That's why.

Ms. Catherine Fife: —and front-line health care workers only get 1%.

And if you're offended, just imagine how nurses feel in this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

To reply, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the honourable member.

As was highlighted by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board, of course we have a tremendous amount of respect for those individuals who have fought so hard to give Ontario a North America-leading response to the COVID-19 crisis. We're very proud of them.

With respect to the new role I fulfill, she might want to ask the person sitting right next to her, because he was informed that it would include the rehabilitation of the legislative precinct. It's an important opportunity for us to restore this place. As the Speaker will know, there is a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done, and the coordination of those efforts across different bureaucracies was proving to be a bit of an impediment to doing that.

Ultimately, what the Premier has asked me to do is to ensure that parliamentarians themselves, through the Speaker, through the Clerks, are the people who will be responsible for the upgrade of this place. I'm proud to have—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain will come to order.

The supplementary question.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would respectfully suggest that this government needs to get their priorities straight. You just described the role that the Speaker has. That is his job, to oversee this precinct. Do you know who needs help in this province? Not parliamentarians. The people of this province need an affordable housing strategy. PSWs need a permanent raise. Nurses should not be held at 1% on their salary.

This government stubbornly refused to make the necessary investments in health care and education and long-term care, which is why Ontario has seen the longest and harshest lockdown in Canada.

Now a 42.3%—just over \$49,300—raise goes to the House leader to do what he already had responsibility for. Ontarians are owed an explanation as to why the current House leader needs this pay increase and what he will be delivering for the average family, for front-line workers, for PSWs.

People in Ontario want to know: What tangible change will this pay increase to the House leader give them, the people we serve?

1050

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I just mentioned, the ultimate responsibility that the Premier has asked me to do is make sure that parliamentarians are the focus of the rehabilitation of the precinct.

Speaker, you will appreciate that you, in your role, are not able to access funds in order to ensure that the precinct can be renovated in a proper way. That has to be done through government. You will also appreciate that the Office of the Speaker is not subject to the freedom-of-information act, nor is the office of the government House leader. This new position will ensure that that happens.

But ultimately, Mr. Speaker, what the Premier has asked me to do is ensure that we have a process that can begin the decant, the rehabilitation of the precinct and make sure that members themselves have the ability to decide how this place is renovated and brought back to the centre of democracy in the province of Ontario. I am very proud to have the opportunity to do that.

We will continue on doing all of the other important things that we have done across this province that, quite frankly, the member has voted against every single time.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

Mr. Jim McDonell: My question is to the Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. Speaker, regulations are often put in place as a protective measure, keeping people safe. This is so very important in many sectors, but many regulations don't get updated to reflect change.

Sometimes, due to a lack of modernization, old regulations stay on the books that cause a lot of burden for people trying to access basic services of the province. We saw this when our government provided restaurants the ability to allow dogs on their patios. This is also a further proof point of why cutting red tape is so important.

Can the Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction explain to this House, and to my constituents, some of the changes that will have a positive impact for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for that very important question. Speaker, the member is correct that regulations are often brought in for very good reasons when originally created. But regulations can become outdated, especially as society progresses, including technology. This is why it is so important for government to make changes to laws and regulations that no longer serve its purpose.

For example, through the incredible work of our Deputy Premier, we are proposing changes to update the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act that would modernize this critical piece of legislation and allow for more updated radiation technology in our hospitals, bringing them further into the 21st century.

Speaker, there are numerous other examples that I'm happy to expand on when we get the opportunity to debate our red tape legislation. I strongly believe cutting red tape is so important for Ontario's businesses and for the everyday citizens of Ontario.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Minister, for that response. Speaker, I agree with the minister that updating laws and regulations to match improved technology is vital in all sectors. It is also important for government to make adjustments based on the needs to society, and right now, Ontario has a skills shortage on top of the need to build capital infrastructure, such as homes. There are also countless approvals and assessments that are repetitive, slowing down the building of much-needed infrastructure in this province. We need to make it simpler to get the approvals needed while maintaining protections for the people of Ontario and our environment.

Through you, Speaker, will the minister promise to work with other ministries to find ways to speed up the building of infrastructure in our province?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you again for the question. Speaker, I can confidently tell the member that, yes, I will continue to work with my colleagues like the Minister of Labour, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister

of Municipal Affairs and Housing to build the very important infrastructure right across our province.

In our red tape package, we are making important changes that will support our government's efforts to get individuals into the skilled trades through our Second Career program. We are proposing changes that will speed up the planning process at city council. We're proposing changes that will allow limited licensed engineers to provide reports, advice, and certification required under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Speaker, our government knows that there has been an incredible shortage of building the necessary infrastructure. The Del Duca Liberals failed to build—they absolutely failed to build—but our government will make the necessary changes that will make a positive impact for the people of Ontario.

INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: My question is to the Premier. In Kiiwetinoong and First Nations served by the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, there were 562 deaths by suicide in the past 35 years—that is, since 1986—in a population of 30,000 people. In 2019, the rate of suicide in Canada was eight per 100,000 people. The suicide rate among First Nations people is 24 per 100,000 people. That is three times higher, and in Kiiwetinoong it is much higher. This year we've had multiple youths die by suicide in Eabametoong, Webequie, Wunnumin Lake and Poplar Hill First Nations.

The mental health crisis that exists across the north of Ontario is not letting up. What is Ontario doing to ensure our youth have the mental health supports they need?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you to the member for this important question. We know that we are losing far too many young people in particular from suicide as a result of their mental health concerns and some addiction concerns, and that this is particularly critical in many First Nations communities. That's why we have pledged and are investing over \$3.8 billion in additional funding for mental health and addiction services over the next 10 years. These are the federal funds that have been matched by the provincial funds. We are particularly concentrating on First Nations communities.

This is something the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions has been working on steadily since he began this job, because he understands that it is important to work with communities to develop systems and ways of helping these young people in ways that are culturally appropriate and significant. That work is going to continue.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Back to the Premier: Mental health should have a no-wrong-door approach to access those services. It is not right to use the excuse that Ontario

has no jurisdiction for improving First Nations mental health services. Jordan's Principle ensures all First Nations children, no matter where they live, can access the services and the supports they need when they need them.

Speaker, the current resourcing for mental health supports is completely inadequate. What is the Premier doing to help when First Nations in Ontario declare emergencies in response to these suicide epidemics?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Health to respond.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Let me assure the member, through you, Mr. Speaker, that the province of Ontario certainly accepts responsibility to assist young people in particular and anyone with a mental health and addictions challenge. There is no reliance on the federal government. We have taken action on our own with our Roadmap to Wellness, our guide to mental health and addiction supports for people across Ontario.

We recently announced an additional \$147 million to immediately expand access to the provincial mental health and addictions system for individuals and families in order to address some of the issues that people have faced specifically through the pandemic. In addition to that, our government has also invested money to increase the funding to all provincial children's mental health facilities by 5% so that they can hire more people in order to support more young people, and that certainly includes all First Nations service providers as well.

We take this very seriously and we look forward to working with our First Nations partners and colleagues in this to make sure that everyone in Ontario who needs access to mental health and addiction services will receive them.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Premier. COVID has highlighted how essential local supply chains are, especially when it comes to PPE, vaccines and food security. I hope the Premier can agree with me that local food supply is vital for Ontario. Yet according to the OFA, Ontario is losing 175 acres of farmland every day. That's five family farms a week.

1100

Losing farmland threatens our ability to feed ourselves. It threatens the 870,000 people working in the sector and the sector's \$50-billion contribution to our economy. Speaker, we simply cannot afford to continue to pave over our precious farmland.

Will the Premier commit today to permanently protecting Ontario's prime farmland?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply? The government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: As we have done right from the beginning—it has always actually been the Conservative government in the province of Ontario that has protected the interests of our farmers. We know how important agriculture is to the economy of the province of Ontario.

When you talk about the things that the member has talked about, be it the Oak Ridges moraine—it was a Progressive Conservative government that brought in the Oak Ridges moraine. It was a Conservative government in Ottawa that brought in the protections for the Rouge national park, which, despite the objections of the Green Party, protected class 1 farmland across a massive stretch of York region and Durham. The position of the Green Party was to reforest that class 1 farmland. A Conservative government said, “No, we’re going to protect farmers and we’re going to make sure that they can have that farmland be productive for generations to come.”

We understand how important agriculture is to the province of Ontario in all parts of the province, and we—

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: What the government doesn’t understand and what the Premier especially doesn’t understand is that supercharging sprawl and building highways to pave over paradise, to build a linear parking lot and pave over thousands and thousands of acres of prime farmland threatens our jobs, our economy, our food security and our efforts to reduce climate pollution.

Highway 413 alone will unleash 17.4 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions between now and 2050. That’s more pollution than the city of Toronto produced in 2018. It will cause up to \$1.4 billion in cumulative damages from air pollution alone. All this damage for what? To save people 30 seconds.

Speaker, will the Premier say yes to jobs, yes to fiscal responsibility, yes to reducing pollution, yes to local food and farmers and say no to the damage caused by Highway 413?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Stan Cho: I appreciate the passion of the member opposite. He mentioned a number of factors: the economy, local supply chains, the environment—all issues we take very seriously here.

Speaker, when it comes to the environment, we have to remember that it was the Liberals who paved over the greenbelt—330 hectares, in fact—and it was 100 hectares of farmland and green spaces and wetlands that we lost under that government. This government believes in doing something differently. That’s why I’m appreciative that Minister Clark expanded the greenbelt here.

When it comes to our local supply chain, we need to get those farmers’ food to the tables, to the merchants who actually sell them. That’s why we need to expand for the future.

Speaker, to the member opposite: Today, Ontario has a population of nearly 15 million. In 30 years, the greater Golden Horseshoe alone will have a population of 15 million. We need to look forward to make sure we invest in highways and get people off the roads, because the member will know that a third of greenhouse gas emissions actually comes from cars.

So let’s make sure we get these people moving. Let’s make sure we build the infrastructure that we need—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The next question.

ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, as you know, it is Small Business Week here in Ontario, where we recognize and acknowledge the significant contributions that Ontario small businesses make to our communities and our economy.

I want to thank Ontario’s small business sector, especially the one in my riding of Carleton, for their commitment to working through these extraordinary circumstances.

Could the Associate Minister of Digital Government please explain how our government is supporting Ontario businesses to navigate the rollout of the enhanced vaccine certificate with the official QR code and the Verify Ontario app?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: I would like to thank the member for Carleton for the question and the great work she is doing in her community, and acknowledge all of the hard-working small businesses that make Ontario great.

Businesses have faced significant challenges over the past 18 months. It’s why we are doing everything we can to provide them the stability they need and deserve.

Our government has provided a free verification app called Verify Ontario that supports businesses with an easy and efficient verification process. It is helping to protect our hard-fought progress, help avoid future lock-downs, and will do that while protecting people’s privacy.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, since last Friday, almost four million people have downloaded the Ministry of Health’s official QR code, and the Verify Ontario app for businesses has more than 930,000 downloads. And so far, over 1.1 million—

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I would like to thank the minister for his response and for his work to develop a free tool, the Verify Ontario app, for businesses and organizations to meet their needs. Ontario businesses continue to show leadership in our fight against COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, to the Associate Minister of Digital Government: How has the government made the Verify Ontario app serve the needs of businesses?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the member for the question. The Verify Ontario app has been made available in advance of the October 22 deadline to ensure businesses have sufficient time to download the app to become familiar with it.

To design this app, we consulted with small, medium and large businesses, restaurants, sports and cultural institutions and venues of all sizes across all sectors and regions of Ontario.

I am happy to report that Verify Ontario remains the top free app on both the Apple App and Google Play stores days after launch. It has beat out other provincial scanning apps and even TikTok.

Finally, releasing our code as an open source has been a huge success. I've had people reach out to me from across the country praising our approach, and the online response has been tremendous.

POVERTY

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My question is for the Premier. Food banks across Ontario have seen their use skyrocket. Seniors, families, students, people who have never before had to access food banks are having to use them regularly.

One of the main reasons they're having to use them is because their rent has gone through the roof. Many of them are people with jobs, and many are paying 80% and upwards of their income in rent.

Speaker, people are suffering, and charity is not the answer.

I want to know, what concrete steps—concrete steps—is the government taking to ensure that people can afford to eat and make rent in this province?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I'm actually not sure where the member has been for the last three years. We set out immediately to bring down the cost for the people of the province of Ontario. We knew how expensive life was for people. It is one of the reasons why we moved immediately to bring down the cost of hydro for people. It's one of the reasons why we moved immediately to reduce taxes for the lowest income earners across the province. It's one of the reasons why we've worked so hard to bring down WSIB premiums for our small job creators. It is also one of the reasons why we have moved so quickly with transit-oriented communities so that we could build homes closer to where people were working or getting on transit to get to jobs. It is one of the reasons why the Minister of Labour has been working so hard to modify and make it easier for people to get into high-paying skilled jobs, which was a complete and colossal failure of the Liberal government, like on so many other issues.

I'm not sure where the member has been for the last three years, but I would be happy to combine—

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Well, given the way that poverty and homelessness are in absolute crisis as never before in this province, whatever they've been doing is clearly not nearly enough. I am begging this government to pay attention to all the work that has been done on how the pandemic has affected racialized and immigrant communities in particular.

Habon Ali is an OLIP intern in the Legislature right here, right now, whose master's thesis demonstrates the devastating effect that the pandemic has had on Somali young people and their families. I would urge the Premier and his government to read it. I'm sure she would be happy to autograph a copy for him.

Seniors across the province are going hungry. People with disabilities—listen to this: People with disabilities, on the verge of homelessness, are taking their own lives rather than try to live on the streets with a disability, because you can't do it. Small towns are watching families lose their homes and having to resort to shelters.

1110

Once again, what concrete steps is the government taking to ensure everyone in this province can eat, stay housed and pay their bills?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And to respond, the member for Ottawa West–Nepean.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Our government, throughout this pandemic, has been committed to supporting some of our most vulnerable through these incredibly challenging times. We have invested more than \$1 billion in our Social Services Relief Fund throughout COVID-19. This fund provides direct funding for individuals in financial crisis, as well as funding for municipalities and social service providers like food banks to ensure that critical services continue for their clients.

Furthermore, as part of Ontario's effort to support children, youth and families through this challenging time, we also provided \$8 million in funding for Feed Ontario.

We're going to continue to be there for vulnerable Ontarians throughout this pandemic, Speaker, and afterwards, we are going to continue our important work to get our economy going, creating more high-paying jobs here in the province of Ontario. Ontarians know who they can trust to get that job done.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Premier. This is Local Government Week. Last year, the government revoked the right for municipalities to hold their elections under a ranked-ballot system. With a ranked-ballot election, if your first choice does not win, your second choice still counts. Ranked-ballot elections pull in more diverse candidates and give racialized and female candidates a better chance for electoral success. The city of London successfully held a ranked ballot election and elected their first Black woman city councillor. The cities of Toronto, Kingston and Cambridge were all on their way to institute ranked ballots in their 2022 elections.

Speaker, does the Premier believe that Ontarians should have elected representatives that resemble the diverse population they represent? It needs to be local choice for local elections, not the Premier's choice for local elections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And to respond, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, does the Premier believe that the people that are elected to the chamber should reflect the community? Well, I am looking right now at the Associate Minister of Digital Government. I am sitting next to an Italian Canadian Minister of Education. The government House leader is an Italian Canadian

immigrant member. The member for Willowdale is the son of an immigrant who worked so hard to get here. There's an Iranian immigrant and a South Korean immigrant over there, and the President of the Treasury Board, who is a Sikh immigrant. The member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill is from an immigrant family.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on, but I suspect the member might want to reflect on a question like that again. This is the most deeply diverse caucus that has ever been elected to this place and we're very proud of that.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for York Centre will come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary question.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I think the member just demonstrated why a ranked-ballot system is sorely needed, because we need to progress beyond where we think we are. Ranked-ballot elections force candidates to respect each other, to respect their opponents and not to have that partisan bickering that has become—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Come on.

Restart the clock. I apologize to the member for Scarborough–Guildwood for interrupting.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Speaker. It really does force individuals to respect each other and to find common ground instead of attacking their opponents.

I remember the Premier stated, when he revoked the local municipal choice for ranked ballots, that it was good enough in 1867 and it's good enough for us now. But in 1867, it wasn't good enough. It wasn't good enough for women, it wasn't good enough for Indigenous people, it wasn't good enough for Black people—all of whom earned the franchise to vote only in the last 100 years. So it is well past time for us to progress beyond an 1867 system.

My question back to this minister, Speaker, is, why is it that a ranked choice ballot is good enough to elect even your own leader, who has become the Premier? Why is it not good enough for the municipalities, to have that choice to select their leader as well?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Look, I know this is one of the old chestnuts that the Liberals bring out every election, Mr. Speaker. We heard it when I was a staffer here in 2003: The Liberals were going to change how we elected members of Parliament. That, of course, never happened—in part because the people of the province of Ontario thoroughly rejected the proposals that were brought forward by the Liberals.

We then heard it federally in a promise: 2015 was the last time, under a Liberal government, that first-past-the-post would be used. Well, how did that work out, colleagues? It didn't.

The member talks about partisan bickering. I am elected here as a Progressive Conservative. I am passionate about the things I believe in. I am passionate about

lowering taxes. I am passionate about education. I'm passionate about making health care and long-term care better. I am passionate and frustrated at the fact that inflation has gone up, and I want to make it easier for people to live in the province of Ontario, and more affordable for the people of the province of Ontario.

I'm not elected here to sit as a bump on a log and shake hands across the floor constantly. I'm here to fight for what I believe in and what the people of the province of Ontario believe in. If that means bickering every once in a while, so be it, because that's what the people of the province have sent us here to do: to fight hard on their behalf.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction.

As has been mentioned in the House, Speaker, this week it has been an honour to celebrate Small Business Week in the province. In my own riding of Perth–Wellington, I have had the opportunity to visit many small businesses and hear first-hand of their experience. In fact, in the town of Minto alone, I went to five ribbon-cutting ceremonies of new businesses just in the past couple of months.

But one thing I've heard in particular is the need to make government more accessible and easier to interact with. There seems to be a lot of duplication in reporting, forms and more that take entrepreneurs away from doing the work they need to expand their businesses.

Can the Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction let business owners across the province know how she is working to help them focus on their businesses and not time-consuming paperwork?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the member from Perth–Wellington for that important question.

Speaker, currently far too many regulatory requirements in Ontario are inefficient, inflexible, out of date or duplicated at the federal or municipal levels. It's hard to start a business, expand your current one or simply get through the day when you must first complete outdated paper forms or prove that the same requirements have been fulfilled multiple times. This slows down innovation, slows down business owners and slows down the people of Ontario, who may need to access government services.

Since we formed government, we have made it a priority to get rid of these costly and unhelpful regulations and burdens that are slowing down businesses and people across the province. We will continue to do the necessary work, as with our current red tape package, as we continue to make life simpler for the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you to the minister for that response.

I am happy to hear that the minister is making burden reduction and cutting red tape a priority, and I know businesses are thrilled too. But for the average person, it's sometimes hard to understand exactly what cutting red

tape means or what making changes actually does. We talk about modernizing government and making common-sense changes in different sectors, but what does that really mean?

Can the minister give examples of initiatives being done to help small businesses and constituents in my riding and explain why cutting red tape is so important?

1120

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you again to the member from Perth–Wellington for that question, but I also want to thank the member for his advocacy for small businesses in his riding, especially during Small Business Week.

Cutting red tape means government is removing needless regulatory requirements that are impeding our social and economic progress. Many of these changes are common-sense changes that have positive impacts for both the people of Ontario and businesses across the province: common-sense changes like allowing 24/7 truck deliveries to retailers, restaurants and distribution centres; changes like introducing online sticker renewals for heavy commercial vehicles, for buses, school buses and farm vehicles.

Speaker, there is much we have done and much more we are doing. We're always looking for more ways to make life easier for the people and businesses of Ontario. It's what we are committed to doing and what we will continue to do.

DRIVER EXAMINATION CENTRES

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: This question is to the Premier. It was a positive step to see a temporary DriveTest centre open in Niagara, but on Monday, day one that bookings opened, the appointments filled up in Niagara in 15 minutes. That's right, 15 minutes.

Margaret Murphy, a resident in St. Catharines, has been trying to get her two daughters drive tests for years. It's clear the backlog is so serious that she found that Niagara's temporary DriveTest centre booked up in minutes. What's worse? Madison, her daughter, an emergency room nurse, is trying to get her G licence, but Niagara won't be offering G tests. That's right, not now. This Niagara nurse is out of luck now, which is not good enough.

Premier, it is clear there is a staffing problem, and we haven't done enough. Will you commit to green-lighting more staff so that the Niagara temporary DriveTest centre can add more appointments, including tests for G licences, and properly staff these centres?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Stan Cho: It is important to highlight the backlog when it comes to drive tests. This pandemic has been hard on everybody, and that of course includes those who are trying to get their drive tests done.

That's why, in June, our ministry introduced an aggressive plan to commit an investment of \$16 million to tackle the very backlog that this member is referencing for these in-vehicle passenger road tests. As part of this plan, we

opened temporary test facilities and we hired an additional 251 examiners to offer those road tests with extended hours on weekdays and weekends and on holidays.

Just recently, we opened three additional temporary road facilities. The member references one in Niagara Falls. This additional allocation of resources is specifically meant to tackle that very backlog, and we will get through that backlog and return to the normal times of volume very soon.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: If 250 new hires have not made a dent in this problem, then your government obviously has not done enough to fix the problem.

Back to the Premier: We all want this backlog to be cleared shortly so that things will return to normal for drivers. The very simple problems remind me of the experience our seniors had when booking their vaccines. It's déjà vu: unclear directions, long lineups that led you to a booking system that never had appointments in the first place.

Margaret is desperate for her children to continue to drive so they can get to work. Logging on to the site can result in 45-minute wait times. What was the result? There were no appointments in the first place. We need to properly staff these centres, but if the government refuses to increase staffing, then at least fix the booking system so that Margaret won't waste her time.

Premier, will you direct the private company that runs DriveTest centres in Ontario to fix their booking system gaps and direct the ministry to hire more staff today, clearing this backlog?

Hon. Stan Cho: I understand Margaret's frustration here, but I need to remind all members of this House and Margaret that these 19 months have been difficult for everybody. They have impacted every aspect of life, and of course that includes our DriveTest centres and the backlog that has come along with this very difficult time period. That's exactly why I mentioned the \$16 million allocated to fixing that backlog. I encourage the members opposite to work with our government to get through these types of challenges together.

It wasn't that long ago that the member opposite who mentions vaccination rates was criticizing how this government was rolling it out. Now, thanks to our health minister, we are at 87% on first dose and 83% on second dose of vaccinations, leading the world, Speaker.

We will get through this backlog, and we will return to the road to prosperity very soon.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Roman Baber: To the Minister of Health: The United Healthcare Workers of Ontario is a group of over 3,000 health care workers, mostly nurses. Yesterday, they wrote a letter to the Premier outlining grave concerns with the unintended consequences of vaccine mandates. The letter cited already-existing shortages within the system. In London, the ICU recently closed an entire bay due to

shortage of staff. Ottawa's regional trauma centre is periodically unable to admit patients. Guelph's labour and delivery unit is often closed due to shortage of nurses. The letter cites the Premier's conference of last Friday, in which he acknowledged that 15% of Ontario's health care workers remain unvaccinated, putting the magnitude of potential staff losses in the tens of thousands.

My question to the Minister of Health: Will she respond to the letter from the United Healthcare Workers of Ontario and will she block the termination of tens of thousands of Ontario health care workers, or is she ready and willing to oversee the collapse of Ontario's health care system?

Hon. Christine Elliott: What I can say to the member is that we encourage everyone in Ontario who is medically able to receive the vaccine to do so. That is the best way that we can protect ourselves, our families, our communities, our health care system, keeping our schools open, opening up our economy.

The reality is that the vast majority of health care workers, as you're discussing, have received the vaccine. There are still some people who are vaccine-hesitant for a number of reasons, and there are other people who are anti-vax, in any event.

But you're right: When we consider the results of a mass vaccination policy, we have to consider how many people will not receive the vaccines and what the job losses will be associated with that. That is why the Premier has written to hospitals, to health care providers to obtain their views on whether they feel that with their staff, they will have numbers leaving in such quantities that they won't be able to carry on their operations.

So we—

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

Mr. Roman Baber: Speaker, we all agree that vaccination is a choice. And choice shouldn't result in the collapse of Ontario's health care system. This is not an ideological argument or a hypothetical scenario. Ontario lives are at risk, not because someone didn't get the vaccine, but because we'll have to shut down beds and wards and cancel surgeries.

The letter says that in Toronto, elective surgeries are being cancelled because there is not enough staff to sterilize the equipment fast enough. In central Ontario, a cardiac critical care unit is operating with just over half of the required nursing staff.

Instead of fearmongering, instead of the disgusting proposition that someone who is unvaccinated is putting lives at risk—it is this government, it is these mandates that are putting lives at risk.

Back to the minister: Will she defend the Ontario health care system by preventing the firing of thousands of Ontario health care workers? Yes or no?

Interjection: Get the vaccine.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, in actual fact, people who are unvaccinated are putting others at risk. We understand that even people who are vaccinated can still

have COVID-19 transmitted to them by somebody who is unvaccinated. Somebody who is unvaccinated is at least eight times more likely to be hospitalized than somebody who is vaccinated. Somebody who is 65 and older is at least 25 times more likely to end up in hospital, to end up in ICU. So we are encouraging everyone who is able to do so to receive this vaccine. That is important for the health and safety of all Ontarians. Health care workers understand that.

We are currently collating the responses that we have received from the hospitals and health care organizations to understand what the job losses might be for people who choose to be unvaccinated if we have a mandatory vaccination policy. That's a very important consideration and something that we have to weigh in the balance, because there are some parts of rural and northern Ontario where there may be some concerns. It is an issue, and we are dealing with it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The next question—
Mr. Roman Baber: Point of order.

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

The member for London North Centre.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Families of children with autism are more worried than ever after the government admitted they won't have a fully functioning Ontario Autism Program until 2022. Meanwhile, the wait-list has grown by 83%, and all families hear from this government are broken promises, after four long years of delay.

My constituent Jillian loves her son Elias with her whole heart. His profound diagnosis means he needs help with most aspects of daily life and is non-verbal. Without government support, Jillian tells me she can't afford for her son to miss early intervention over a political decision.

This government has not learned from the Liberal failures like age caps and cutting families off from service. This government has made the Liberal disaster much, much worse.

1130

It's time for the government to stop playing politics with autism services. When will this government invest in a comprehensive, needs-based program so that children like Elias can get the services they need now?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa West–Nepean and parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you to the member opposite for asking this important question and for sharing Elias's story. It is because of children like Elias that our government has doubled the Ontario autism budget from \$300 million to \$600 million.

We are also in the process of implementing our new Ontario Autism Program, a program designed by the community, for the community. There are going to be multiple pillars to this new strategy, and many of them are

already under way. We already have in place foundational family services that are offered to provide parent coaching and immediate support to parents upon learning of a diagnosis of one of their children. We have early years intervention coming online as we speak, at providers across the province. We have a new stream coming online shortly on urgent response, and we already have children coming into our new core services program.

There's lots of work yet to be done. We're continuing to implement—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. And the supplementary question.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My question is back to the Premier. The member across the floor talks about funding. Let's talk about the four long years that people are waiting. Let's talk about the fact that funding is still based on age. That is not needs-based by its very definition.

The lack of government support means that parents like Jillian are risking their own financial stability so that kids can get the care they need. Although Jillian received a one-time payment, she's now paying for therapy out of pocket. This is so expensive she was forced to refinance her own home to pay for Elias's services. Jillian tells me, "After the equity from our home is gone, we won't be able to make ends meet and keep our son in essential services ... we spend each day between a rock and are risking our financial future to ensure our son gets the services he needs now." No family should have to make the choice between their home and their kids.

Speaker, when is this government going to stop ignoring the needs of children with autism and stop putting the future of families like Jillian and Elias at risk?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I agree, of course. We want to make sure that our children who are on the wait-list are receiving support. That's why we took action to make sure that those families who had been receiving nothing for years received interim funding. There are over 39,000 families in Ontario that are now receiving some level of support. That is more than four times the number of families that have received support at any other time in Ontario history.

With regard to the funding allocations, I would like to refer the member opposite to page 19 of the Ontario autism panel's report, which recommended these types of funding allocations to ensure as many children and youth as possible could receive support under the new needs-based program funded at \$600 million.

Speaker, we are committed to implementing this report. We are committed to following the recommendations. We're going to have a world-class autism program here in Ontario. The work is under way. We're going to get this done.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. John Fraser: Mandatory universal vaccinations for front-line workers in health care and education are nothing new. We've been doing them for more than half a century here in Ontario, because it protects people. That's why we do it.

The Minister of Long-Term Care understands this, saying that while mandatory vaccinations may impact staffing, "the priority has to be ... the safety of residents and ... the safety of other staff." He also said that while they might lose some staff who are unwilling to be vaccinated, home operators are much more concerned with the staffing implication of an outbreak. The same principle applies in our hospitals, in our schools, in home care and in child care centres. It's about protecting people.

Speaker, through you, will the minister do the right thing today—will the government do the right thing today—and vote in support of Bill 12 and mandatory vaccinations for front-line health care and education workers in Ontario?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: The health and well-being of all Ontarians has always been our government's primary concern and will continue to be so. I understand what the member's concern is for mandatory vaccination, but I understand that all members of his caucus don't feel the same way, that the member for Thunder Bay-Superior North actually indicated that he wanted an exemption for a personal support worker who did not want to be vaccinated. That is not complete support for mandatory vaccination from that side of the House, as I understand it.

However, we are taking the approach that should be taken. We have consulted. The Premier has sent a letter out to all hospitals, to all health care centres to understand what their concerns are—because it's not just a simple question of snapping your fingers and having mandatory vaccination. There is also the concern that we need to have the capacity in our hospitals to care for all of the people who are in our hospitals.

That is what we have received, that information from those hospitals. We're collating it now to understand what their concerns are.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I don't understand why this government continues to drag their feet and dither. Think about all the organizations that have called for this since about the middle of the summer: RAO and Ontario's nurses, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Home Care Ontario, OMA and Ontario's doctors, OHA and Ontario's hospitals, families province-wide. It kind of feels a bit like paid sick days, doesn't it?

The COVID-19 science table has said that vaccine mandates can enhance safety and reduce the risk of staffing disruptions due to COVID-19. Why does this government continue to deny the science? Is the Premier more concerned about his friends in the people's party than he is about the health and safety of Ontarians?

Speaker, through you: Can the Premier justify putting in a vaccine mandate in long-term care to protect people and not doing it in other settings like hospitals, schools, home care and child care?

Hon. Christine Elliott: What our government has done since the beginning of this pandemic has been listening to the science, listening to the evidence, listening to the Chief

Medical Officer of Health and the people who have been advising him, listening to the people at Public Health Ontario and Ontario Health. That is the way we have always acted and the way we will continue to act, because that is in the best interests of Ontarians.

We have continued to do that work. The difference between long-term care and hospitals is that people in long-term care homes have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. There were still outbreaks occurring. That was necessary in order to bring in mandatory vaccination there.

However, we have larger hospitals with larger groups of people working there. We have to consider whether there are going to be many more job losses if too many people refuse vaccination versus if people are unvaccinated, coming into the hospitals and infecting other health care workers and patients.

We are taking a science-based approach to reviewing this. We are reviewing the information that we have received. We are taking this in the step-by-step way that we should be doing in order to make sure that we can protect the health and safety of all Ontarians.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader has informed me that he has a point of order he wishes to make.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In accordance with standing order 59, I would just like to outline the order of business for next week.

On Monday, October 25, in the afternoon will be opposition day number 2.

On Tuesday, October 26, in the morning, we will be debating Bill 13, Supporting People and Businesses Act. In the afternoon, we will return to Bill 13, Supporting People and Businesses Act. And in the evening, it will be PMB ballot item 4, standing in the name of the member for Richmond Hill, not-for-profit sector appreciation week.

On Wednesday, October 27, in the morning, we will resume debate on the throne speech. There will be a ministerial statement by Minister McKenna on children's aid societies and Dress Purple Day. In the afternoon, we will return to Bill 13, Supporting People and Businesses Act. And in the evening, PMB ballot item number 5, for the member for Scarborough Centre. That's to be determined still, what we will be debating.

Thursday, October 28, in the morning, we will again resume the debate on the throne speech; in the afternoon, Bill 13; and in the evening, PMB ballot item number 6, for the member for Guelph, and that is yet to be determined, what the specific bill will be.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Guelph has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the

government House leader concerning Highway 413. This matter will be debated Tuesday following private members' public business.

Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for York Centre has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Health concerning preserving the integrity of Ontario's health care system. This matter will be debated Tuesday following private members' public business.

DEFERRED VOTES

MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINATIONS IN THE EDUCATION AND HEALTHCARE SECTORS ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 SUR LA VACCINATION OBLIGATOIRE CONTRE LA COVID-19 DANS LE SECTEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION ET CELUI DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

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

Bill 12, An Act to enact the Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations in the Education and Healthcare Sectors Act, 2021 / Projet de loi 12, Loi édictant la Loi de 2021 sur la vaccination obligatoire contre la COVID-19 dans le secteur de l'éducation et celui des soins de santé.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We now have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 12, An Act to enact the Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations in the Education and Healthcare Sectors Act, 2021. The bells will now ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes.

I will ask the Clerks to please prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1211.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): The vote was held on the motion for second reading of Bill 12, An Act to enact the Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations in the Education and Healthcare Sectors Act, 2021.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 16; the nays are 34.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): This House will now recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1212 to 1300.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 101(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Ms. Kusendova assumes ballot item number 5 and Miss Mitás assumes ballot item number 10.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

EARLY YEARS AND CHILD
CARE WORKER ADVISORY
COMMISSION ACT, 2021LOI DE 2021
SUR LA COMMISSION
CONSULTATIVE DES PRÉPOSÉS
AUX SERVICES POUR
LA PETITE ENFANCE
ET LA GARDE D'ENFANTS

Ms. Karpoche moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 25, An Act respecting the establishment of an Early Years and Child Care Worker Advisory Commission /
Projet de loi 25, Loi concernant la création de la Commission consultative des préposés aux services pour la petite enfance et la garde d'enfants.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member be interested in briefly explaining her bill?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Despite Ontario's parents paying the highest child care fees in the country, child care in our province is in a state of crisis. Early years and child care workers have long since been overlooked in child care policy-making discussions. The vitally important work of these dedicated people has been historically undervalued, with low pay, poor working conditions and high turnover. They are constantly being asked to do more with less.

These issues have only increased during the pandemic. Early years and child care workers have provided front-line caregiving for children of other essential workers and worked longer hours without ever having received additional supports. They have put their physical and mental health on the line every day to ensure that kids can benefit from the safest, happiest and most educational child care experience possible.

Speaker, we know that there is no recovery without she-covery, and there's no she-covery without child care. I would add that there is no child care without ECEs and child care workers. The workers are the system. Therefore, to foster meaningful solutions that will stabilize and improve Ontario's child care sector, this bill establishes the Early Years and Child Care Worker Advisory Commission, which will include early years and child care workers, as well as organizations that support them, to address these issues, and requires the minister to meet with the commission to discuss their recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm compelled to remind the members to keep their explanations of their bills as brief as possible, ideally reading the explanatory note that accompanies the bill.

PETITIONS

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition here entitled "Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

"Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

"Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

"Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

"Whereas the government's continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

"To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery."

I fully support this petition, and I'll be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Noor to deliver to the table.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to thank Dr. Sheldon Salaba, who is the president of the Ontario Association of Optometrists and has his practice in my riding of Hamilton Mountain. The petition reads: "Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

"Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

"Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

"Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

"Whereas the government's continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

"To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition. I'm going to affix my signature to it and give it to Yamama to bring to the Clerk.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I'd like to thank my constituents in Parkdale–High Park who continue to call and petition to save eye care in Ontario. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only covers an average of 55% of the cost of an OHIP-insured visit, the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists must absorb the other 45% for the over four million services delivered annually under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

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

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my honour to present these petitions on behalf of Dr. Desirée Istifan and the great people of London North Centre. They read:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and
1310

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and deliver it to the Clerks.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm pleased to help deliver these petitions on behalf of the member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only covers an average of 55% of the cost of an OHIP-insured visit, the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists must absorb the other 45% for the over four million services delivered annually under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Noor.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Safe Schools,” and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the” Ontario “government failed to give our schools the support they needed during the pandemic, leading to the longest school closures in Canada;

“Whereas families are burnt out and kids are struggling with their well-being, despite the heroic efforts of teachers and education workers; and

“Whereas we cannot afford another year of disruptions, closures or painful remote and hybrid learning;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in our kids,” in safe schools, “including:

“—a classroom cap of 15;

“—upgrades to ventilation systems....;

“—more classroom supports for kids with special needs;

“—in-school mental health and wellness supports.”

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

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Kevin Yarde: This petition is from Brij Patel, a local optometrist in my riding.

“Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I completely agree with this petition, I will sign it and give it to page Emily.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition entitled “Auto Insurance Gouging.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas some neighbourhoods across the GTA have been unfairly targeted by discriminatory practices in the insurance industry;

“Whereas people in these neighbourhoods are penalized with crushing auto insurance rates because of their postal code;

“Whereas the failure to improve government oversight of the auto insurance industry has left everyday families feeling the squeeze and yearning for relief;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban the practice of postal code discrimination in the GTA when it comes to auto insurance premiums.”

I fully support this petition. I’ll be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Lamees to deliver to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would like to thank Mary Psihogios from Ajax for delivering these petitions to me. It reads as follows:

“Support Bill 153, the Till Death Do Us Part act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are 35,000 people on the wait-list for long-term care; and

“Whereas the median wait time for a long-term-care bed has risen from 99 days in 2011-12 to” over “152 days in 2018-19; and

“Whereas according to Home Care Ontario, the cost of a hospital bed is \$842 a day, while the cost of a long-term-care bed is \$126 a day; and

“Whereas couples should have the right to live together as they age; and

“Whereas Ontario seniors have worked hard to build this province and deserve dignity in care; and

“Whereas Bill 153 amends the Residents’ Bill of Rights in the Long-Term Care Homes Act to provide the resident with the right upon admission to continue to live with their spouse or partner;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Long-Term Care to pass Bill 153 and provide seniors with the right to live together as they age.”

It is my pleasure to affix my signature and give this petition to Noor. We’re not going to give up on this one.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to present this petition on behalf of London ACORN members Nawton Chiles and Anna Badillo. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas for families throughout much of Ontario, owning a home they can afford remains a dream, while renting is painfully expensive;

“Whereas consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have sat idle, while housing costs spiralled out of control, speculators made fortunes, and too many families had to put their hopes on hold;

“Whereas every Ontarian should have access to safe, affordable housing. Whether a family wants to rent or own, live in a house, an apartment, a condominium or a co-op, they should have affordable options;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... to immediately prioritize the repair of Ontario’s social housing stock, commit to building new affordable homes, crack down on housing speculators, and make rentals more affordable through rent controls and updated legislation.”

I fully support this petition, will attach my signature and deliver it to the Clerks.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Bhutika Karpoché: This petition is titled “Real Rent Control Now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the average rent has increased by over 50% in the past 10 years;

“Whereas average monthly rent in Ontario is now over \$2,000; and

“Whereas nearly half of Ontarians pay unaffordable rental housing costs because they spend more than a third of their income on rent;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the” Rent Stabilization Act “to establish:

“—rent control that operates during and between tenancies, so that a new tenant pays the same rent as a former tenant, with allowable annual rent increases calculated by the government of Ontario and based on annual inflation;

“—a public rent registry so tenants can find out what a former tenant paid in rent;

“—access to legal aid for tenants that want to contest an illegal rent hike; and

“—stronger enforcement and tougher penalties for landlords who do not properly maintain a renter’s home.”

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

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to present this petition on behalf of Dr. Greg Millar in the riding of London North Centre. It is titled “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Tanvi to deliver to the Clerks.

1320

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I want to acknowledge that Chemi Lhamo, a constituent from Parkdale–High Park, was recently arrested and detained in Greece for participating in a peaceful protest calling out the Chinese government’s human rights abuses. She was released yesterday, and we look forward to her safe return home.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That’s not a point of order, but we acknowledge the information that has been conveyed.

The member from York Centre has informed me he has a point of order.

Mr. Roman Baber: On a point of order: Earlier during question period, the Minister of Health said that the unvaccinated put lives at risk. I submit that that was an unparliamentary remark contrary to standing order 25.

Respectfully, the suggestion that a group of people is risking the lives of others demonizes that group of people and may have the unintended consequences of inciting hate against such group of people. It is unbecoming of a

minister of the crown, and I ask that she withdraw her unparliamentary remark, or for a clear ruling by the Speaker, if the Speaker rules this point of order out of order. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I don’t find that there’s a valid point of order. Obviously, there was a disagreement during question period over the facts, but no point of order has been established.

Orders of the day? I recognize the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you very much, Speaker. If you seek it, you will find that we have unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Agreed? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Ms. Catherine Fife: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ford government should immediately implement mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for all education, health care, residential and congregate care workers as part of an overall strategy to better protect students, patients, residents, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable populations

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Fife has moved private members’ notice of motion number 4. Pursuant to standing order 101, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Again, I’ll recognize the member from Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is a pleasure to bring this motion to the floor of the Legislature.

I wanted to give some rationale for why now. Many of us will have known that the member from Ottawa South delivered his PMB yesterday, making an argument for mandatory vaccinations in education and hospital sectors. My motion is also inclusive of congregate settings, and there are very good reasons for that.

I also think it’s very important timing for the members of this House to understand that when the Premier was questioned on mandatory vaccinations last week, he made the point of saying that he needed to consult and he needed to listen to the experts. Well, the Ontario science table published its response to the Premier’s request for input on the impacts of enacting a vaccine mandate for hospital workers and other front-line health workers on Tuesday. So we have the most up-to-date information we need to make an informed decision on protecting the people of this province. We have the Premier’s own Ontario science table, which is now officially recommending that the province go ahead with a mandate.

I raised this at the beginning of this debate because yesterday, we heard from the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health that we have to slow down and that we weren’t quite ready to make a decision yet. Well, you

cannot tell the people of this province that you need to keep consulting when you have distinctive and direct recommendations from the Ontario science table and from medical professionals across this province. You have no more excuses.

The Ontario science table goes on to say, “Requiring that hospital workers be vaccinated is an evidence-based policy that protects Ontarians.” Last week, as I said, when the Premier suggested such a mandate would be unwise because the health system is already stretched thin and cannot afford to lose 15% of its staff that remain unvaccinated, the science table made mention that only a fraction of unvaccinated health care workers actually make good on their threat to leave.

I would also let the government members know that creating a mandatory vaccine will accelerate vaccinations, and we all know how important it is for people to get vaccinated. So if you want to do everything that you can to get people vaccinated, creating a mandatory vaccine for the education, health care, residential and congregate care workers as part of an overall strategy is in your best interests and in the best interests of the people of this province.

The science table also noted that many of the workers who are slow to accept vaccines are racialized or rural workers, some of whom have faced discrimination. Those people may be convinced through education and personalized outreach strategies, and that is also part of the goal that we share, Mr. Speaker. People deserve a government that prioritizes health care and education and that listens—please listen to the Ontario health science table and give people some hope that further disruptions and outbreaks will not happen. We are now in the fourth wave of this pandemic, and listen, it has been very difficult. But when you have solutions right in front of you, it is incumbent on you from an ethical and from a moral perspective to act on that best advice.

There are many things the province still has to do to make sure all health care and education workers get a vaccine. We know that getting paid time off to get the vaccine is an issue; we would love to see the government move in that direction. Reaching out to workers in their own language in a culturally relevant way to talk them about their hesitation: This is an important step. Even this week I asked the Minister of Health about medical interpreters. How can you deliver the best medical advice and service if you have a language barrier? This is a good investment in the overall health of people in this province. And the other thing—and, I want to say, I think that we’ve done a very good job in the region of Waterloo on this—is that you take the vaccines right to the people who need them.

As I pointed out at the beginning of my comments, one of the issues that has really gone under the wire—and I did some consultation with our disabilities critic from Ottawa Centre—is that those who are in congregate care settings have really been hurt not only by the pandemic but by the lack of advocacy. They are under the radar. It’s almost like they are second-class citizens. I wanted to bring their voices here to the Legislature.

Maclean’s did an excellent exposé on congregate care settings and they laid out a lot of information that has been largely ignored during this pandemic. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected disabled people in government’s inability to properly respond to this issue. I’m thinking of one place in particular, but there is one or more of these facilities in every one of our ridings. This one, in particular, is Participation House in Markham, Ontario. This put congregate living facilities on the radar of Canadians, and it was long overdue:

“The facility is set up in six pods.... Depending on the needs of each resident, this put each worker into regular contact with many patients and other workers during a single shift.

“When the outbreak was declared, Participation House was plunged into a staffing crisis, as many were also infected with COVID-19, or forced into isolation because they had been exposed to COVID-19. Six residents died”—six vulnerable, immunocompromised residents died because they are so vulnerable. They cannot advocate for themselves. Many times, they are receiving a high level of care. So they require us to come to their defence. They need our voices to represent them.

At the end of this outbreak, “Six residents died and nearly all of the 42 residents were infected with COVID-19, according to York Region Public Health....

“For most of the pandemic, all that has been disclosed publicly about outbreaks in congregate care/group home/congregant other settings is from Public Health Ontario’s regular epidemiological summaries. They report that there have been 918 outbreaks in these facilities with a cumulative 4,941 cases.” But they did not disclose the deaths. “Unlike the daily reporting from long-term care, there was no public, regular disclosure of how many people living in these facilities had died, or outbreak and infection information per type of congregant care setting.”

1330

I want you to remember—and many of you were not here at the time, but in 2016, during the former Wynne government, a report was released by the Ontario Ombudsman that found that the conditions for homes for disabled adults managed by MCCSS were unacceptable. So just as we learned of what was really happening in our for-profit long-term-care homes, the former Liberal government knows full well—we actually all know, the whole province knows, because the Auditor General’s report is very public. They made 60 recommendations, Mr. Speaker. Actually, MCCSS accepted all of these recommendations in principle. Some of these recommendations would shock you—on overmedication, restraints, poor hygiene, a lack of fresh air, a lack of contact with other people. The living conditions, the physical structure of some of these homes would make you cry; it would.

Now we are dealing with another challenge to these settings: One is that there is no accountability and no transparency in what’s happening in these homes; and two, you have immunocompromised folks who have no strong advocate for themselves and you have folks who are not vaccinated in those settings, further putting the health and

the well-being of these vulnerable Ontarians at risk—also putting the health of their fellow workers at stake.

Here we are, five years later, 2021. Not only has little changed by the PC government, but the pandemic has revealed that many of the problems that existed and have long plagued these facilities were actually exacerbated during the pandemic.

We all should know at this point in time that isolation can kill and not having an extra set of eyes on a vulnerable Ontarian leaves them at risk.

I bring this conversation back to the need for vaccinations, because we have a duty of care here, and as I said, we have an ethical and a moral responsibility to act in our schools, in our hospitals. I know the government is going to say that we can't afford to do mandatory vaccinations in these settings, and I will contend and I will argue with you that we cannot afford to not have mandatory vaccines in our hospital settings. Once an outbreak happens in one of those settings, workers who are already working short need to isolate. So you are compounding a problem that exists in these health care settings—congregate settings, our education sector, our hospitals.

Surely, at this point, 18-plus months into the pandemic, in the face of overwhelming evidence from your own science table, which definitely recommends moving forward with mandatory vaccines in these settings to keep workers safe, to keep the residents and the clients and Ontarians safe—how can you stand in your place and argue that this is not needed?

What I will point out is that all of the fearmongering on this particular file around mandatory vaccines in these particular settings has proven to not be true.

I will say to you, the hospitals in my region, the hospitals in the Ottawa region and in Kingston and the Islands, the hospitals in the north have said, “We cannot afford to have unvaccinated people serving vulnerable residents in these particular settings.” The vaccination rates in many of these places is 97%, 98%. If you, as a government, find it in your heart to show this kind of leadership, we will have 100% vaccinations in our settings to keep everybody safe. I implore the government, please act on this.

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

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I am pleased to join the debate today on the motion from my colleague the member for Waterloo. Vaccinations are an important issue for all of us right now as they are our chief tool against the fourth wave of COVID-19 and the Delta variant. Some 87.5% of Ontarians who are eligible for the COVID vaccine have received a first dose and 83.2% have been fully vaccinated—over 22 million doses in all. This includes about 700,000 health care workers who are now fully vaccinated.

Our government is also preparing for the extension of COVID-19 vaccines to children. We're waiting for Health Canada approval and guidance from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization for those under 12 years of age.

I think we can be justly proud that Ontario has among the highest percentage of people vaccinated in the world.

Our government has also led the way in encouraging the uptake of COVID-19 vaccinations for all education, health care, residential and congregate care workers. The goal of this is to better protect patients, residents, clients and staff in higher-risk settings.

Since September 22, the government has taken further steps to keep Ontarians safe. The province has introduced additional measures in public settings to help keep the province open, stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and well-being of all Ontarians. People must now offer proof of vaccination as a new measure to support the reopening of the economy, help increase vaccination rates, and protect individuals in higher-risk indoor settings, with the goal to prevent any more lockdowns.

This requirement also encouraged more people to get vaccinated. The number of Ontarians receiving a first dose jumped by almost 25% over the week prior to the new regulations coming into effect on September 22.

We have also seen many hospitals putting in place mandatory vaccine policies. Our government knows that local health leaders know what is best for their institutions and communities, and we support them making these choices.

The Chief Medical Officer of Health, on August 17, 2021, issued directive 6, which sets out clear direction to public hospitals, home care and community service providers and paramedics to establish vaccination policies. It requires all employers, staff, contractors, volunteers and students to meet certain requirements. First, they must provide evidence of being fully vaccinated or of having a properly documented medical exemption or have attended an approved education session about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination. As well, those who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 must adhere to regular point-of-care antigen testing and must demonstrate the negative results of the test to their employer every seven days at a minimum.

Organizations covered by the directive can apply more stringent measures by removing the educational session and only require either proof of being fully vaccinated or a medical reason for not being fully vaccinated. They can decide what is best for their community and go beyond our requirements.

On September 7, 2021, the Chief Medical Officer of Health put in place similar rules for education. In education, all employees, staff, contractors, volunteers and students who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 must adhere to regular point-of-care antigen testing and must demonstrate the negative result of the test to their employer every seven days.

But we must be careful before extending mandatory vaccination policies. Ontario's doctors and nurses are already stretched to their limits, especially in northern and rural communities, and losing qualified staff has real risks. We have seen that Quebec has delayed the implementation of their vaccine mandate for hospital workers and BC is softening theirs. We need to ensure that any decision on

mandatory vaccinations must not compromise patient safety.

To get the best advice on the issue, the Premier has asked our top experts in the province for their feedback. Our government's top priority has always been protecting the health and safety of Ontarians. We continue to follow the expert advice given to us by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Moore, and other health experts.

1340

We can be proud that Ontario has one of the lowest rates of active cases in Canada, well below the national average. Therefore, if we were going to extend mandatory vaccinations, we need to ensure that it is the best decision to keep people healthy, and base it on the best medical advice. Ontarians expect no less of us.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: As always, I am proud to rise in this House on behalf of the people of Parkdale–High Park to speak about issues that are important to us.

Speaker, people are tired. They are tired of the anxiety they feel when they send their children to school. They are tired of the sense of dread when their child sneezes or coughs, wondering if it might be COVID-19. They are tired of the constant fear of a phone call from their elderly loved ones in long-term-care homes telling them that there has been yet another outbreak. They are tired of always having in the back of their minds the concern that if any health issues happen to them or someone they love, they will have to make the decision as to whether it is riskier to go to the hospital or riskier not to. They are tired of government's half measures that do not go far enough to protect them.

As a society, it is incumbent upon all of us to protect those who are most vulnerable in our communities. That includes children in our schools, patients seeking health care services and those living in long-term care and other congregate care settings. We must protect them.

Ontario already has policies and processes in place for vaccinations in the health and education sectors. Families must submit vaccination records to schools when they register for kindergarten and keep those records up to date. Similarly, health care workers have certain vaccination requirements as well. So this is not new policy, and it helps ensure that as many people as possible in these settings are vaccinated and protected.

Speaker, a policy requiring the COVID-19 vaccine for those in congregate settings, as my colleague from Waterloo has suggested, is consistent with similar policies in place and would be a very important step in finally ending this pandemic. And the experts support it—the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the home care providers' association, the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and more. Even the government's own science table, among others, agreed that requiring the COVID-19 vaccine in congregate settings is an important way to stop the spread of this virus and to provide protection to those who need it most.

The best way to protect those who are most vulnerable is to do so proactively: to recognize potential problems

ahead of time and work in consultation with experts and those communities impacted directly to resolve these problems before they arise.

Last year, in early December, prior to the vaccination rollout in Ontario, I stood in this House and urged the government to address the inevitable vaccine hesitancy. I urged the government to get ahead of disinformation, to work with the experts, with community members and with all of us across political party lines to address it, to clearly communicate to those who are hesitant the benefits of the vaccine while transparently addressing their concerns.

This issue is not a surprise. The World Health Organization identified vaccine hesitancy as one of the top 10 global health threats, and it has been a growing trend in Ontario over the past few years, well before the pandemic, due to disinformation. We all know just how much disinformation is out there. It isn't hard to find disinformation, but it is hard to combat it. The Internet provides an echo chamber of sorts when it comes to this kind of information.

That is why the moment we knew a COVID-19 vaccine rollout was imminent, the government needed to jump on this, to work with communities and public health experts to come up with a campaign that would compassionately consider exactly how to address, in culturally appropriate ways, people's concerns.

The public health sector has best practices to address this issue. The bottom line is, combatting vaccine hesitancy takes time. It cannot be left to the last minute. Yet that is precisely what this government has done, and their inaction has resulted in many Ontarians still being misinformed. Now we face the necessary task of introducing motions like this one in order to fill the gaps the government has left in vaccine uptake.

As the government dragged their feet, Copernicus Lodge, a long-term-care centre on Roncesvalles in my riding, introduced mandatory vaccinations for all their staff. An unvaccinated staffer tested positive, and soon after, several residents tested positive too. But thankfully, since residents were vaccinated, there were no deaths. They came out of the outbreak, but they do not want to take chances anymore.

We remember how last Christmas in Copernicus Lodge was so difficult for residents, families, staff and our entire community: 84 staff tested positive, 100-plus residents tested positive and 22 residents died within a very short period of time. Families were not allowed to visit loved ones, lives were turned upside down and residents were confined to their rooms nearly every day, with little to no quality of life and in isolation.

Ontario has finally made COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for workers in long-term care, but there has been no movement for other congregate settings. We finally have a chance to end this pandemic, and I want to say to this government: Show some leadership.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I'd like to start by thanking the member for Waterloo for bringing forward this private

member's bill. I know that the member opposite shares the desire of many in this House to ensure that as many Ontarians as possible get vaccinated, so that we can start to get out of this pandemic and get back to what we all want to do, which is enjoying our lives and building a better economic future for our province.

I'd like to start by of course thanking each and every Ontarian out there who has gone out and gotten their vaccine, and to implore those who haven't to please take the time. Vaccines right now are readily available through a variety of different means. Please take the time to go out and get vaccinated. It is a safe and effective way to combat COVID-19. The science speaks for itself.

If I can, Speaker, I'd also just like to speak a little bit personally about what vaccines can mean for families. As many in this chamber know, because I've spoken about it before, my younger brother has special needs. He is one of those individuals who is most vulnerable to COVID-19, and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic I wasn't able to see my brother. Like thousands of Ontario families with loved ones in congregate care settings, we had to stay connected by FaceTime and other means.

Since our vaccine strategy started rolling out—since Ontarians have stepped up to take those jabs—that is now changing. I've now been able, for the past three weeks in a row, to have breakfast or dinner with my brother on Sundays, which is a tradition that we've been doing for years. Being able to get together with him this past Sunday, we went to the Broadway Bar and Grill and we had a mountain of pancakes and scrambled eggs. That's what getting vaccinated has allowed us to do. I want to implore Ontarians to keep doing that so that we can protect our most vulnerable and help all of us get back to the way of life that we all would like to have.

Frankly, Speaker, the numbers are looking incredibly promising. When we look province-wide, we see that 83% of eligible individuals have received two doses of vaccine. That is a phenomenal number. It puts us at one of the highest levels of any jurisdiction across the world. If I can, a special shout-out to my home jurisdiction of Ottawa, where over 86% of eligible individuals have received their vaccines. We are leading the way in Ottawa, although not quite as much as our neighbours in Lanark, who have surpassed the 90% mark. We all need to figure out what's happening in Lanark and replicate that across the province to keep our numbers climbing, because we all need to get to that 90%.

Now, throughout the pandemic we have taken a number of measures through our vaccine strategy to encourage everyone to get it in a timely, ordered process to protect the most vulnerable. We had a priority list that targeted the individuals that needed it most.

1350

I know the member opposite spoke a little bit about our congregate care settings, and she mentioned something that I respectfully would disagree with. She mentioned that individuals in our congregate care with developmental disabilities have not had a strong advocate for them throughout this process. I would contend that our

government has been fighting for them on a regular basis. I have been meeting with representatives of our DS congregate care settings on a biweekly basis throughout the COVID-19 pandemic dealing with targeted issues, whether it's PPE supply, whether it's ensuring that their staff were protected or had access to the daycare that many of our front-line health care heroes had access to. I'm incredibly proud that Ontario became the first jurisdiction in Canada to prioritize individuals with developmental disabilities for the vaccine, a move that got us an A+ mark from a Down syndrome advocacy group nationwide. That is the record that we have on making sure that we're prioritizing those groups, and we're going to continue to do that.

Now, we need to make sure that our last groups are continuing to get vaccinated. That's why we have the last mile strategy, Speaker. We are going in, through mobile clinics, which have delivered 10,000 vaccines to date, to communities that might have been harder to reach. We have social media campaigns running. We have initiatives to bring vaccines into different areas whether community centres, religious institutions or school vaccinations. Since we started that last mile vaccine strategy, we have fully vaccinated over 500,000 more Ontarians than before we started that in August. We're going to continue to work on that, Speaker. This is a record that we can be incredibly proud of as Ontarians, and we're continuing to take further steps to get up towards that 90%, that 95%, that 100% level.

This includes starting to introduce mandatory vaccination policies in some of our settings—in schools, in health care, in our congregate care settings—to make sure that individuals coming into those settings either can prove that they're fully vaccinated, prove that they have a medical exemption or demonstrate that they are negative through a rapid antigen testing program. We have implemented those policies in those settings to provide that additional protection and we're going to continue examining the evidence and consulting with our partners to see what next steps we need to take.

We've seen in our long-term-care settings that we have implemented mandatory vaccination policies after extensive consultations. We see a number of our hospitals using the tools we have given them to begin to implement those policies. We're going to continue working with our partners in a responsible way. We're going to get to 90%.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I want to start off by saying—and it's something that many of my colleagues and friends can all say together—I'm double vaxxed. I'm very proud to say that I'm double vaxxed. It's so important that folks go out and get their vaccine. I was one of the lucky ones: The next day my arm wasn't sore. I know some people might get a small reaction to it. I had no reaction to it. My arm was barely sore the next day, and it was a quick and easy process. I encourage everyone to go out and get your vaccine. It's so important. It's one of the best things we can do to fight and beat COVID-19.

But it's shocking to me how, 18 months into this campaign, we still don't see a clear strategy from the Conservative government on how to fight vaccine hesitancy. We knew, from day one, that vaccine hesitancy would be an issue. It was not a surprise. We knew from the jump that people would be hesitant towards the vaccine. But the fact that the Conservative government has yet to bring in that strategy is problematic. We know that there's no need to debate anymore the efficacy of the vaccine. We know that science supports it across the board. We understand how important it is to get the vaccine. But the fact that the government hasn't come forward and tried to address this hesitancy is problematic, and it often speaks to a general lack of preparedness towards a response to COVID-19 from the Conservative government.

This whole interaction, this whole debate that's going on, feels so much like paid sick days, in which the Conservative government doesn't want to push forward the policy that's actually going to help people out. Even when we talk about people getting their vaccines, we know that paid sick days are a huge part of getting vaccines. We know that there are a lot of people who are not getting their vaccines right now because they just simply don't have the ability to get time off to get their vaccines. But once again, we know that paid sick days are now cancelled by the Conservative government and that people who right well want to get their vaccine are unable to, often because they don't have that ability to take time off work, or if they need a day or two after the vaccine, they don't have a day or two—to know that they have that ability, that support system like paid sick days, and how that would support workers and support people across the board in getting their vaccine.

It's important that we understand that it's incumbent on government to have tough conversations and to make decisions that are going to result in the people who are most vulnerable in our province being protected, to make sure that people in congregate care settings, people in our hospitals, people in our schools—to ensure that our children are protected, people who are in hospitals are protected, people who are seniors, people who are vulnerable or have disabilities are all protected. And that can be ensured by making sure that folks who are interacting with them are vaccinated.

Once again, though, we're in a position where it feels like the government's response towards these issues is really: ready, shoot, aim. It's like everything is being done off the cuff and there's not a proper strategy to it. Ultimately, it results in schools, school boards coming together to ensure they're bringing forth the right policy to protect children, or companies coming together to get folks vaccinated in a proper way or putting together the correct policy to keep workers safe.

Vax-hunters—the fact that when people weren't able to book a vaccine, it came on to a third party to make that happen. That's problematic.

It's problematic that we're not seeing the government come forward with the correct policy to ensure that people who are vulnerable are protected and safe.

I do want to take a moment right now to thank, actually, many of those groups who went above and beyond, who filled gaps that the government, quite frankly, didn't address. We know that cultural communities, many new Canadians, rural Canadians, as has been described, face a higher degree of vaccine hesitancy.

I really want to commend the amazing group of doctors, folks and the whole team behind the South Asian COVID Task Force. I want to take a moment to thank the South Asian COVID Task Force and everyone involved there, who saw that there was a huge gap in the fact that there was a community that wasn't being spoken to with respect to COVID-19. They worked to establish the Embassy Grand vaccination centre, where they were providing vaccinations in a variety of languages, including Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu.

I want to thank Dr. Dashminder Sehdev, Dr. Bajwa, Dr. Priya. Dr. Bajwa and Dr. Priya are both in Brampton. Dr. Dashminder Sehdev is in Hamilton but was very active in all the projects across the province.

I want to give a particularly big, big thank you to Dr. Raj Grewal and Dr. Anju Anand. They are a dynamic duo of doctors who work so hard to ensure that people across cultural communities are getting access to culturally relevant spaces to get their vaccine. They did an amazing service to the community in Brampton. I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart for their amazing service.

I also want to take a moment to thank Guri Pannu, who was an amazing advocate to make sure that folks were getting vaccinated and helped fill this gap.

The government has to take the lead. They have to show leadership and ensure that policy is being brought forward to protect those who are most vulnerable. That's why this motion is coming forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Waterloo, who has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to thank the member from Ottawa West–Nepean for sharing the story of what it meant for your brother, who is in a residential care home, to get vaccinated, and what it means to you. But what I come back to you and say is, why should an unvaccinated worker put that at risk? That is essentially what we're talking about here.

I also want to say that it's interesting what this government pays attention to, because residences for disabled adults weren't even included in Ontario's phase 1 vaccine rollout campaign, even though long-term-care and retirement residences were. And you'll remember this. We asked questions about it. Why were these congregate care settings being left out? That's going to take all of us, and that's why the motion is before you on the floor.

Also, the member from Oakville North–Burlington said if they go forward with a mandatory vaccine then they must have the best medical advice possible. The Ontario science table, your Ontario science table, has recommended mandatory vaccines. You have no leg to stand on if you ignore the Registered Nurses' Association of

Ontario. The Ontario Medical Association has recommended mandatory vaccines in our schools for those who are working in schools with children who are unvaccinated. So why would you not pay attention to the best medical advice?

I just want to say, finally, that the Ontario health science table has said, “Requiring that hospital workers be vaccinated is an evidence-based policy that protects Ontarians.” That is their position. You have said all along you will pay attention to the best medical advice, the best evidence, and by not voting for this motion—this is your second chance this week to vote for it. I implore you, do the right thing, finally, in the fourth stage of this pandemic.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members’ public business has expired.

Ms. Fife has moved private member’s notice of motion number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded division being required, the vote on this item of private members’ public business will be deferred until the next proceeding of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All matters relating to private members’ public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until Monday, October 25, at 10:15 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1402.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, Peter Sibenik,
Meghan Stenson, William Wong
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (IND)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation (Transit-Oriented Communities) / Ministre associé des Transports (Aménagement axé sur les transports en commun)
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteuse générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (NBP)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutilla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Hon. / L'hon. Jane (PC)	Burlington	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (IND)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Associate Minister of Digital Government / Ministre associé délégué de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines, des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises et à la Réduction des formalités administratives
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	
Vacant	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vacant
Teresa J. Armstrong, Toby Barrett
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto
Randy Hillier, Christina Maria Mitas
Judith Monteith-Farrell, Lindsey Park
Michael Parsa, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

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

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Will Bouma
Stephen Crawford, Catherine Fife
Ernie Hardeman, Mitzie Hunter
Logan Kanapathi, Sol Mamakwa
Jeremy Roberts, Dave Smith
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner
Jill Andrew, Robert Bailey
Will Bouma, Guy Bourgouin
Chris Glover, Mike Harris
Logan Kanapathi, Sheref Sabawy
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Gilles Bisson
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Deepak Anand, Aris Babikian
Gilles Bisson, Lorne Coe
Wayne Gates, Robin Martin
Norman Miller, Billy Pang
Amanda Simard, Marit Stiles
John Yakabuski
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lucille Collard
Lucille Collard, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Jim McDonell, Suze Morrison
Randy Pettapiece, Donna Skelly
Gurratan Singh, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

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

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Rima Berns-McGown, Goldie Ghamari
Faisal Hassan, Michael Mantha
Jim McDonell, Sam Oosterhoff
Laurie Scott, Vijay Thanigasalam
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Taras Natyshak
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Jessica Bell, Stephen Blais
Stephen Crawford, Rudy Cuzzetto
France Gélinas, Christine Hogarth
Taras Natyshak, Michael Parsa
Amarjot Sandhu
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

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

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser
Aris Babikian, Lorne Coe
John Fraser, Vincent Ke
Laura Mae Lindo, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Jeremy Roberts
Dave Smith, Daisy Wai
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

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

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Bhutila Karpoche
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Bhutila Karpoche, Natalia Kusendova
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight /
Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations
d'urgence**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Tom Rakocevic
Donna Skelly, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell