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of Ontario



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Mardi
6 décembre 2022

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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 6 December 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 6 décembre 2022

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Good morning. Let us pray.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I move that, pursuant to standing order 50 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 51, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act;

That the order of the House referring the bill to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be discharged and the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That when the order for third reading of the bill is called, the Speaker shall immediately put every question necessary to dispose of third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Khanjin has moved government notice of motion number 10. Would she care to lead off the debate?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: We talked about responsible government when we were debating this particular bill, which takes the opposition and the third party members—I recall, when we were debating this bill at second reading, Bill 51, it only lasted three hours and five minutes before it collapsed. So I do want to thank the opposition for supporting this bill, as it's clear that there might be some support there. I think this may demonstrate that we do have support from all parties on these proposed changes. What the changes get at is a process of this Legislature to streamline a few things and really democratize even further this great place that all of us have the great honour of humbly serving our constituents in, this great legislative building, to be part of the Legislative Assembly.

I just want to quickly review the changes that are before us, in case folks have forgotten since the last time we debated this. This legislation, if passed, will further democratize our Parliament by returning responsibility for various matters directly to members. All of us are democratically elected, so that's fairly clear. The legislation proposes an all-party, consensus-based process for the Sergeant-at-Arms, as exists for the Clerk and various officers of the assembly. It also proposes that authority and control for the legislative precinct, with the exception of security-related authority, be transferred to an all-party Board of Internal Economy—again, a board that has members from both parties—very democratic.

It also sets out a duty of the board to provide legislative space for all members who are not ministers to accommodate as many as possible in the precinct, which I know some members spoke very passionately about.

It also transfers human resource authorities for employees of the assembly to the all-party Board of Internal Economy.

Finally, Speaker, it would allow us to appropriately recognize the former Clerks of our assembly by giving the Lieutenant Governor in Council the ability to give them the right to use the title of “Honourable” for life, which I think is very respectful.

Speaking of respect in this Legislature, I just wanted to ask my colleagues—I know it's very early—to join me in a round of applause for everyone who makes this legislative precinct incredible, from our Clerks to our Hansard to our amazing Sergeant-at-Arms, who has done a lot to secure this Legislature and has really moved the pendulum quite quickly. In fact, this week, we saw that even accessibility changes are moving forward as the back has changed. I encourage members to walk back there and see the latest little additions to make this place more accessible. And, of course, the lovely folks who keep the mikes on—because what would a politician be without a live mike? I'm very thankful—and the folks who decided to come join us and view our debates today. And this is the last week for our lovely pages, so thank you for the great work you do. On behalf of everyone in this Legislature, thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today as the House leader for the official opposition to participate in the debate on the time allocation motion on Bill 51, which is the Legislative Assembly Amendment Act.

Speaker, I did want to start with a reflection on the process for these recent changes to the Legislative Assembly Act versus a previous set of changes to the Legislative Assembly Act that were debated in this Legislature. In 2020, we had Bill 167, which introduced a number of changes to the Legislative Assembly Act to help us do the work that people elected us to do. Those changes were provided in advance by the government House leader to the official opposition so that we could have a chance to review the changes, to have a discussion about the changes, to provide input on the changes as to whether we agreed that they would enable more efficient, improved functioning in this Legislature. That was a very different process, Speaker, than what we see with Bill 51.

This is a bill that was introduced last Wednesday and it was debated on Thursday. And today we are discussing a

time allocation motion that would see the bill move immediately to a third reading vote and passage without any opportunity to have a debate at third reading, much less have a discussion of this bill at committee. In many ways, Speaker, it's not a surprise. This is what we have seen time after time from this government. They introduce a bill one day, they start debate the next day, they close off debate the following day, and then they limit the opportunity for the public to provide input on the legislation in the committee process.

We've seen it as well with the standing order changes that this government House leader has introduced. I don't think that there has ever been a government that has changed the standing orders as frequently as this one. The standing orders and the Legislative Assembly Act are two very important pieces that provide the scaffolding for how we conduct ourselves in this place, how we do the business of the people. This government has changed the standing orders 10 times in a period of just four years. That is a stark contrast to the previous Liberal government that had changed the standing orders, I believe it was, four times over a period of 15 years.

Just on its own, changing the standing orders may be required from time to time. As things change, amending the Legislative Assembly Act may be required from time to time. But these tools are here for the use of all members in this place. They are not tools for the government only. They are here to provide the basis for our democracy.

0910

And we know that this government has shown its contempt for democracy. We see that right now with Bill 39. They're rewriting the rules of democracy. They're all of a sudden making it possible for one third of a duly elected council to make decisions, to move ahead with actions that two thirds of council are opposed to.

We saw it with the government's use of the "notwithstanding" clause to introduce legislation to impose collective agreements on CUPE education workers. They knew that it was unconstitutional. They knew that it was contrary to the rights and freedoms that Canadians enjoy, and that's why they chose to proceed using the "notwithstanding" clause. So what we're debating here today, as I said, it just follows the pattern that we have seen from this government.

When you look at the different pieces of legislation that we have dealt with since the election in June, there have been 10 bills that have been debated in this place—sorry; there's been 11 bills. I'm going to put aside Bill 35, the repeal of the government's use of the "notwithstanding" clause to impose collective agreements on CUPE education workers. But of the other 10 bills that we have dealt with, six of those bills began second reading debate the day after they were introduced. And what's the problem with debating a bill the day after it's been introduced? It doesn't provide the time required to do the analysis, to do the due diligence, to get input from stakeholders as to what the impact of the legislation will be.

As I said, six of those bills began second reading debate the day after they were introduced. The remaining four

were tabled on a Thursday and they started debate on the following Monday. So, yes, we had a couple of days there between the tabling of the bill and the debate on the bill, but it was over a weekend. And you know, Speaker, how difficult it is to reach stakeholder organizations over a weekend. And that implies that those stakeholder organizations will have the capacity to do the quick analysis of the legislation that the government is bringing forward and be able to provide meaningful feedback to all members who want to understand what that legislation will mean to the people of this province.

Then, of course, when we have seen debate start, we've seen the government shut down debate on seven of those 10 bills, either through time allocation motions, as we have today, or closures. And the average debate time for the legislation that we have dealt with is two sessional days per bill. I don't think, Speaker, that that is doing justice to the people of this province, who deserve MPPs, deserve representatives who will come to this place and share the challenges that they're experiencing and the solutions that they expect, that they deserve from this government.

Three of the government's 10 bills have bypassed committee altogether. They have gone straight to third reading without any opportunity for the public to come and provide input on the implications of that bill.

And, of course, for the other seven bills that went to committee, the government's track record there has not been anything to be proud of either. We have seen the government use its majority to limit how long the committee is going to hear input, to make arbitrary decisions about where the committee went. We've seen the government use its majority to regularly go in camera during committee, so that MPPs are discussing the process of the committee in closed session, which the public doesn't have access to. The public has no opportunity to watch how MPPs are making decisions about the length of time the committee is going to accept deputations and hear from the people of this province.

We have seen the government routinely ignore deputants who do get an opportunity to appear before the committee. One of the bills that we have dealt with this fall, Bill 39, had 18 witnesses registered to speak to committee members; 14 of those witnesses were opposed to the government's legislation. They very clearly stated their opposition to what the government is doing, and yet the government proceeded to pass that legislation without any amendments whatsoever, and without any regard to the input that was provided to committee members.

On Bill 23, there were two witness deadlines. People followed the rules and met the deadlines that were set for that committee, but when the committee was oversubscribed—because, of course, Bill 23, as you will know, Speaker, has launched an avalanche of emails to our offices. It has launched an avalanche of public outcry over the government's plans to carve up the greenbelt, its claims that they need the greenbelt in order to meet housing targets, when their own housing task force has been very clear that there is enough land in this province

without the greenbelt. Anyway, on Bill 23, not surprisingly, there were more people and organizations that wanted to appear before that committee than the committee had time to hear from, but the government used its majority to block opposition requests to add additional time to hear from concerned citizens.

Then, what we have seen from this government when a bill comes back to the House is further shutting down of time for debate. Yesterday we had a bill that the government moved a closure motion on after only six hours of debate at third reading. I think that that does not provide the kind of debate that the people of Ontario expect to hear on the important matters that are being addressed here in this Legislature.

I mentioned the 10 packages of standing order changes this government has introduced in just a short four-year period, but one of those standing order changes is to allow report stage debate. When a bill is reported back from the committee, comes back to the Legislature for third reading, the government has put in place an option for members to stand and indicate that they would like a debate on the report from the committee. And we've heard the government House leader talk about how he's democratizing this place, he's empowering members, but let's think about what a report stage debate is. It is the debate on a bill that has come back from committee, often without amendments, without the changes deputationists wanted to see, that deputationists pressed for when they appeared before the committee. It's a very limited period: It's 18 minutes—18 minutes that members can rise and indicate they want a debate on a bill that's reported back from committee.

When you have bills like Bill 23, the bill that carves up the greenbelt; when you have bills like Bill 39, the bill that rewrites the rules of democracy to allow one third of council to make decisions on behalf of a municipality—when you have those kinds of bills, and when they are reported back with no amendments, no attempt by the government to address the concerns that were provided to the committee, an 18-minute debate is hardly sufficient to address the concerns that are raised at these committees.

0920

As I mentioned, we had a third reading debate last night where the government moved closure after only six hours, and, of the six bills that have come back to the House for third reading, four of them have been shut down or truncated by the government either through time allocation or closure motions, and we expect that with this bill, Bill 51, which will be voted on when it comes for third reading; Bill 36, which will be voted on later today; and Bill 39.

We've heard the government talk about the way that they have empowered committees, and we know from the experience of sitting on those standing committees that the government has actually put restrictions on the ability of MPPs to participate in committees. I've mentioned already that we now see committees move to go in camera regularly, and we know committees are structured in the same proportion as the parties in the House. That means that, just as the government has a majority here in this Legislature, they also have a majority on every standing committee of the Legislature, and so when a government member

moves a motion to go in camera, to go into closed session, they automatically have the numbers to pass that motion.

We have also seen the government use its majority on committees to block opposition requests to review government appointments to government agencies. We just saw yesterday, I think it was, that a former MPP and a former well-known Conservative staff person were appointed to plum government positions without any opportunity for the committee on government agencies to review those appointments.

We saw the government use its majority to block opposition requests for the committees to meet, during the extended break that we had in September and October, to consider estimates. The government House leader talks about the generosity that he has provided in the changes to the standing orders to allow committee members to request that a committee meet when the House is in recess. Yes, here on this side, we have attempted to use that new ability to request that a committee meet. We did it with estimates and the government said that they weren't interested.

When you consider the change to the estimates process that was included in the most recent set of standing orders changes, I think it was, the change to the estimates process has severely, severely limited the ability of the opposition to review the government's spending plans, to ask those pointed questions of the bureaucrats from the ministries who come before committee to talk about ministry spending plans. This year, because we weren't sitting in September and most of October, we saw a very, very truncated estimates process. Because it has to be wrapped up in November, there was virtually no opportunity to provide the kind of oversight and due diligence that is required of the government's spending plans.

I have to say, with regard to this legislation, although on the surface the changes that are proposed seem straightforward, there are big reservations about why the government didn't come and talk to us first. If they believed so strongly that these changes are necessary to improve the functioning of this Legislature, surely they would have wanted to engage with us to get our input on whether we agree with these changes or not.

The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, when he was speaking to the bill—and he has done an exemplary job, I have to say, as our representative on the Board of Internal Economy. This bill does transfer a lot of authority to the Board of Internal Economy, a lot of responsibility to the Board of Internal Economy that that body did not previously have. The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane pointed out that one of our concerns is the composition of the Board of Internal Economy. So right now, the government says, “Oh, there are safeguards because the Board of Internal Economy operates by consensus, and so putting these new responsibilities under the power of the Board of Internal Economy will ensure that there is consensus decision-making about the hiring and dismissal of Legislative Assembly staff, about the roles and job descriptions of Legislative Assembly staff.” And that may be true, given the current composition of the Board of Internal Economy, but the government can, at the stroke of a pen,

make changes to the composition of the Board of Internal Economy.

When you have seen a government move forward with so many changes—as I said, 10 sets of changes to the standing orders. This is the second set of changes to the Legislative Assembly Act in just three years. So when you see a government that is so quick to rewrite the scaffolding that enables us to do the work in this place, we have concerns. We have concerns that changes to the Board of Internal Economy will be made that will further centralize the power of the government to do whatever they want.

I have a message on behalf of the people of Ontario to this government: Winning an election is not a blank cheque. It is not a mandate for government to do whatever it wants, to run roughshod over the priorities of the people that we represent. We often refer to the carvings on the walls in this place. The government should be looking at the wise owl, because the government's responsibility is to be wise; it is to listen; it is to weigh the feedback that is provided by Ontarians as to what they feel needs to happen in this province to address the concerns that they're facing.

Health care, for example: This government has been completely ineffective on dealing with the health care crisis. All of us continue to hear from people in our communities how concerned, how frightened they are by the state of our health care system. If there's one thing that people expect the government to get right, it is health care. People want to know that if they call an ambulance, an ambulance will come for them; that if their child is running a fever in the middle of the night and has to go to emergency, they won't have to wait hours in a pediatric emergency room to have their child seen by the doctor. People want to know that if they need life-saving surgery, they will be able to have that surgery scheduled in a timely way. People don't have that sense of confidence anymore. They don't have the sense that the government has a handle on the crisis in our health care.

0930

We heard the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health talk about, "Crisis? What crisis?"—as if this is all a fabrication of the official opposition. But this is the reality that people are experiencing in their communities. Our health care system is in a crisis.

Imagine parents when they read the news about the overwhelming of pediatric ICUs. They read about teenagers being moved from pediatric ICU beds into adult ICU beds without the specialized nursing care that they would have received if they had been admitted to a pediatric ICU, because the equipment in adult ICU rooms is different from the equipment in pediatric ICU rooms, and the skills of adult ICU nurses are different from the skills of pediatric ICU nurses. So that is a concern, and yet we have not seen this government put forward any meaningful solutions to help address the health care crisis.

On housing, another huge priority for the people in this province, the government continues to insist that the only way that they are going to be able to meet the housing targets is to build on the greenbelt, but Ontarians have lots of questions about how those changes to the greenbelt came about, and whether there was some knowledge about

those proposed changes in advance. When you look at the developers who took out enormous loans at 21% interest to purchase land that was undevelopable at the time, just weeks prior to the changes proposed to the greenbelt, and then all of a sudden that land that was not available for development suddenly becomes available to development, there are a lot of questions. That speculator who bought that land at a bargain-basement price—because it was in the greenbelt; it was protected—all of a sudden stands to rake in significant profits now that that land is available for development.

So you do have to wonder whether the government is really concerned about addressing the housing crisis or whether they are more interested in providing those windfall profits for people who have connections to the Conservative Party. If they were interested in dealing with the housing crisis in Ontario, we would see the government investing in affordable housing, investing in deeply affordable housing, introducing rent controls so that people aren't economically and financially evicted from their apartments that were built after 2018 because landlords have been allowed to increase the rent to whatever level they want. We have called time after time on this government to expand rent control to include all buildings in this province and not just those built before 2018, because tenants deserve to have security in their homes and not have to fear that they are going to have to move every year because they get a rent increase that is unaffordable.

And so, I have to again say that we don't support this time allocation motion. We have huge reservations about the amendments that are proposed in Bill 51 because of the pattern that we've seen from this government and making further amendments that will further concentrate their power and their ability to rush through whatever legislation they want to see.

With that, Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for London West has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, the vote will be deferred until—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): No, there's no vote. Okay.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're calling in the members. It's a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 0937 to 1007.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Ms. Sattler has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerks.

All those opposed to the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerks.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 0; the nays are 74.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I declare the motion lost.

We will now go to further debate. Ms. Sattler?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm pleased to continue the debate on the motion that is before us today for time allocation on Bill 51, the Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2022.

Now, anybody who is tuning in may wonder: What is a time allocation motion? A time allocation motion is a motion that the government introduces to curtail the normal legislative process to see a bill move through the regular stages that are set out in our standing orders as to how a bill becomes law.

The time allocation motion that the government has brought forward today calls for a very limited two-hour debate on this motion, and then it specifies that when the bill is next called—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Excuse me. Stop the clock for a second.

Can I ask members to just keep it down a little bit, so that we can hear the member speaking. Thank you so much.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The time allocation motion specifies that, when the bill is next called, it will go immediately to a third reading vote without any debate at all. And let's remember that, when the second reading debate on this bill concluded on Thursday, and the bill passed yesterday, we heard the government House leader state that the bill was going to be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. With this time allocation motion, the bill is lifted from the docket of that standing committee and, instead, as I said, will bypass the committee process and go immediately to a third reading vote when it is next brought forward for discussion in this House.

And just to recap what is actually in the bill: The bill makes changes to the Board of Internal Economy. Most of the bill deals with some new responsibilities for the Board of Internal Economy. And again, to anyone who's watching today, they may not know what the Board of Internal Economy is. It is a body that operates on a consensus basis in this House. It includes a member of the government, a member of each of the recognized parties—if there are two recognized parties, because, of course, the Liberals didn't elect enough members to be a recognized party. But if there were two recognized parties, there would be two government members so that it is balanced. The Speaker also participates on that committee as a non-voting member. The structure of the Board of Internal Economy is unique in this Legislature because every other committee of this Legislative Assembly operates in the same proportion as we see in this House, which means that the government has a majority.

So what this bill does: It gives new powers to the Board of Internal Economy. It puts the Board of Internal Economy in charge of appointing or dismissing all employees of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It gives the Board

of Internal Economy the authority to prescribe the duties and the functions of those employees of the Legislature. It gives the Board of Internal Economy the ability to allocate office space. It also states that members have an entitlement to office space—those members who are not part of the executive council or the cabinet. It puts the Board of Internal Economy in charge of the legislative precinct. It also makes some changes to the definition of the legislative precinct. It removes the basement of the Whitney Block, and that does raise a question. When the bill was debated at second reading, there were a number of questions that were asked by members of the official opposition about why that recently renovated basement in the Whitney Block would now be removed from the official definition of the legislative precinct. I have to say, we weren't entirely satisfied by the response that we received from this government.

But it really goes back to what I was saying earlier this morning, Speaker, about the fact that the government, quite suddenly and without notice, tabled this bill to make these significant changes to the Board of Internal Economy, to the definition of the legislative precinct, without any discussion with the official opposition or with the independent members—with any other non-government MPPs. And surely, Speaker, when you are talking about amending legislation that—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I apologize to interrupt the member. It's 10:15, and we are now moving to members' statements.

Debate deemed adjourned.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I'll recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to allow white ribbons to acknowledge the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, 2022.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Is it agreed, by unanimous consent? Agreed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LIBRARY SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Millions of Ontarians rely on local libraries in their daily lives. Libraries are far more than books and computers; they are also a critical lifeline for Ontario's most vulnerable people. Libraries confront many difficult challenges facing Ontarians: mental health, homelessness, equity for Indigenous and racialized communities, newcomer integration, and child and youth poverty.

I want to highlight three priorities that the Toronto Public Library, the Ontario Library Association and the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries are calling on the government to act on:

(1) Implementation of a sustainable funding model for public libraries on First Nations reserves, to ensure that these important local hubs are fully funded and viable.

(2) Increased investments in mental health and addiction crisis intervention services available to the community. Public libraries recognize that they are places of refuge for the homeless, and staff need training so they can provide support in an empathetic and equitable way.

(3) The creation of an Ontario digital public library. By leveraging the province's significant purchasing power, libraries will be able to provide all Ontarians access to a common core set of high-quality e-learning and online resources.

Speaker, I know first-hand the value of public libraries. When I came to Canada, my local public library, the Parkdale library, was my go-to place. I borrowed books, but I also worked on my university applications and accessed many resources that helped a new immigrant like me get settled. This helped me get to where I am today.

Investing in public libraries means giving everyone a chance to succeed.

HOLIDAY MESSAGES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Every year, my family and I join the people of Oxford in celebrating the festive season. We can't help but feel the excitement and the cheer. Recently, I got to see that glee as I joined my constituents in the Santa Claus parades in Ingersoll, Tillsonburg and Woodstock. I saw thousands of smiling families getting into the Christmas spirit.

This is also a time to spend with family and friends. Even though it's cold outside, the joy of eating good food and sitting around the fireplace with the people we love warms our hearts and homes.

Perhaps most importantly, the Christmas season is also a time to help those who are less fortunate. Oxford has always been a community that helps those in need, and it's during Christmas where it really shows. Not everyone has a family to celebrate with or a place to call home, so the people of Oxford are stepping up to provide shelters and emergency housing. There are local food banks and free hot meals for those who cannot afford to put a Christmas meal on their table, and there are toy drives for parents who can't afford to purchase gifts for their children.

Madam Speaker, I wish a merry Christmas and a happy new year to everyone in Oxford and all of Ontario.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Today marks the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. On December 6, 1989, 14 young women were killed at the École Polytechnique in Montreal. The shooter entered a mechanical engineering classroom, separated the men from

the women, and opened fire on the women. These 14 promising young students were murdered in an act of violent misogyny.

Today, as we pause and remember 33 years later, violence against women and girls remains the most widespread and pervasive human rights violation in Canada and worldwide, affecting an estimated one in three women.

In Ottawa this year, six women and one 15-year-old girl have been murdered. All of these murders involved allegations of intimate partner violence, stalking or obsession. This is consistent with a Statistics Canada report that revealed seven out of 10 female homicide victims last year were killed by spouses, partners or family members.

The report from the Renfrew county inquest into femicides that took place in 2015 included a recommendation to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. Sadly, the government has yet to follow through on this and the other recommendations in the report.

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We have a problem. We need to act now. We cannot lose any more of our mothers and sisters and daughters and friends. The Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women and similar organizations across this province are all working towards the same goal: eliminating gender-based violence. But they can't do this work alone. We all need to work together to end violence against women so that no more women in this country need to die simply for being women.

MARISSA PAPACONSTANTINO

Mr. David Smith: Today, it gives me the distinct pleasure to rise in the House and to welcome to Queen's Park two-time Paralympian and Canadian record holder Marissa Papaconstantinou, along with her parents, Bill and Kathy, and boyfriend, Justyn.

Marissa was born and raised in the riding of Scarborough Centre and trained at Scarborough's Phoenix track club. She was born without a right foot but, at the age of 12, she fell in love with track after being fitted for her first running prosthetic blade at the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, for whom she is currently a proud ambassador.

Marissa represented our country at numerous international competitions, including the 2016 summer Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro at the tender age of 16. Despite tough losses and injuries earlier in her career, her resilience, focus and hard work helped her qualify for the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo, where she won a bronze medal in the women's T64 100-metre race with a personal best and Canadian record of 13.07 seconds. In addition, she also set the Canadian record with a 27.08 second run in the 200-metre event.

Marissa, I am very proud of what you have accomplished thus far. I'm eager and hopeful to look into the future of all the great things you still have to come. Thank you very much for being here, and I look forward to meeting you at the end of—

Applause.

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

VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I rise today on the Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women to bring attention to the serial murders of four First Nations women in Winnipeg. Last week, the Winnipeg Police Service announced charges against an alleged serial killer for the murders of Morgan Harris; Mercedes Myran; and another loved one—we don't know her name—who has been given the name Buffalo Woman; and earlier, Rebecca Contois.

I stand in solidarity with the families in Manitoba who are grieving the loss of their loved ones and with those who continue to search for their relatives, the many missing women and girls across Ontario, across Canada. Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people have the fundamental right to life and the right to be safe. Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people are not safe in their everyday lives.

We know that the persistent and the deliberate human rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind these staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people. And we must address the hate, the genocide that continues to put the safety of Indigenous women at risk.

Morgan, Mercedes, Rebecca, Buffalo Woman—remember their names.

CHICKEN FARMERS OF ONTARIO

Ms. Donna Skelly: I would like to take this time to talk about the generosity and compassion of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario in their efforts to feed people who are less fortunate.

Last week, I had a conversation with Murray Opsteen, the chair of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario. We talked about their CFO Cares program and its ongoing partnerships to tackle hunger in our communities. Murray also happens to be a chicken farmer in my riding of Flamborough–Glanbrook.

CFO Cares supports various not-for-profit initiatives and organizations that provide food relief to people who need it. It includes organizations such as Feed Ontario and the United Way. The CFO assists farmers who want to donate fresh chicken to food banks within their communities. To date, nearly 600 chicken farmers have participated, with donations of 300 chickens each.

Anyone familiar with food banks, either by volunteering or donating, knows that protein, especially meat protein, is one of the most sought-after items. CFO's annual donation target is to provide over a million fresh chicken meals.

These donations from our chicken farmers epitomize what it means to be good citizens. These farmers are making a huge contribution to feeding people who are facing financial challenges, and for that, I want to say thank you.

HEALTH CARE HOLIDAY MESSAGES

Mr. Adil Shamji: I want to acknowledge the challenges and hardships my constituents in Don Valley East have endured over the past year. Health care has become more difficult than ever before, with fewer family doctors, longer wait times, and cancelled surgeries. The growing spectre of privatization, which has made it more difficult to seek medical attention via virtual care, is the first of many examples of how this government hasn't delivered for my constituents or for patients. Virtual care must be equitable and accessible, but as designed, it reveals the government's profiteering agenda.

Make no mistake about it: Privatization is like a drop of poison in a well, and it contaminates the entire water supply.

Another problem: Our environment and greenbelt are under attack by Bill 23. We all need housing, but it needs to be safe and sustainable. It mustn't raise taxes for the benefit of developers. Bill 23 will lead to the same kind of uncontrolled, runaway development that is being proposed in my riding along Wynford Drive—13 high-rise condos in that tiny space, and no community input? My constituents must be consulted and amendments made, and runaway legislation like Bill 23 must be fixed.

But there are things to look forward to. On December 13, Ismailis around the world will celebrate the birthday of their spiritual leader and one of the world's foremost champions of pluralism and community service, His Highness the Aga Khan. To the Ismaili community and His Highness, I wish to say happy birthday and Salgirah Khushiali Mubarak.

To the constituents of Don Valley East and the people of Ontario, I wish to share my very best wishes, from my family to yours, for happy holidays, a merry Christmas and a joyous new year.

To the members of Ontario's Jewish community, I wish you a happy and healthy Hanukkah, and I join you in celebrating the miracle of Jewish resilience in the face of oppression. Eat some latkes for me.

TWINNING OF VAUGHAN AND BAGUIO HOLIDAY MESSAGES

Ms. Laura Smith: Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, I had the pleasure of attending the 25th anniversary of the twinning of the city of Vaughan with the sister city of Baguio, Philippines, hosted by the Filipino-Canadian Association of Vaughan, also known as FCAV, in my riding of Thornhill. This event was an important milestone for the Filipino community and FCAV, who have been promoting the objectives of the friendship agreement between Vaughan and Baguio City, strengthening the cultural, social, educational and economic opportunities between the two cities since 1997.

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Baguio City, known as the summer capital of the Philippines, is a major hub for education, with there being eight universities and colleges.

To honour the twinning celebration, the Philippine delegation arrived in Vaughan, led by Vice-Mayor Faustino Olowan and Councillor Fred Bagbagen, and officially accompanied by Orontes Castro, consul general of the Republic of Philippines in Toronto. The representatives for FCAV and Baguio City attended at Niagara University, also located in our riding, to sign a letter of intent to increase higher education, co-operation and commemoration of the 25th anniversary.

Erlinda Insigne, who is the president of FCAV, has been a resident of Thornhill for over 35 years and someone who has been instrumental in keeping this relationship strong between the two cities. I am proud to have such a diverse riding with individuals such as Erlinda, along with the Honourable Orontes Castro, constantly looking to help others strive, and we look forward to honouring Erlinda next year when she celebrates 30 years as president with FCAV.

Mr. Speaker, on one of the last days of the Legislature before the break, I wish to extend everyone a very warm-hearted holidays. Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, or Maligayang Pasko.

ONTARIO STAYCATION TAX CREDIT

Ms. Laurie Scott: ‘Twas weeks before new year’s
And all through the home
Was last-minute planning
Booking fun on smartphones

But this family, you see
Planned closer to home
A staycation, they called it
The whole province to roam

“What’s this?” Said the mother
As she googled hotels
“A tax credit for our stay!
“It also covers motels!”

That’s 20% off
Your bed to lay,
Just make sure your trip
is before New Year’s Day.

So don’t spend those bucks
On a pricey air flight
Come up to the Highlands
Spend the day and the night!

Some fun at Sir Sam’s
The local ski club
Then relax with a tottie
In a LEGAL hot tub

There’s bakeries and breweries
With real country charm
Or try something different
Like an alpaca farm

The places! The flavours!
Bring all of your friends
There’s so much to savour
The fun never ends.

Ice skating, ice fishing,
Ice cream or ice wine
So many choices
For such a great time

ON Minden, ON Millbrook
ON Haliburton too, ON Kinmount
ON Woodville, all Ontario too
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all

Enjoy the tax credit WE sent your way,
A little something extra for your holiday.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required and, therefore, the afternoon routine on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, shall commence at 1 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us in the Speaker’s gallery today some special guests who are the grandparents of today’s page captain, Isabella Casselman. Lynn and Boyd Bell are here from the township of Guelph/Eramosa, and also Isabella’s aunt Alice Bell. Welcome to Queen’s Park. We’re delighted to have you here.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I would like to introduce a couple of visitors I have here from my constit staff, Jacqueline Bayley and Hannah Jones, as well as a friend of mine, Cameron Field. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I’d like to introduce our placement student Kaela Tenn. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: It’s my real pleasure to welcome and introduce my staff who are here for the first time at Queen’s Park: Nada Radi, from my constit office; and David Nightingale, who’s been working with me as my legislative assistant for the last few months. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Brian Riddell: I’d like to welcome my staff, wherever they may be in this great hall: Grace Camara, Melissa Young, Ana Maria Ruiz and Carol-Ann Breton. Thank you for coming today.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I have a large number of people to welcome here today into the Legislature. I have my entire campaign team here with me today. I want to introduce to the chamber Stephanie Nakitsas, Mosheh Herdsman,

Hannia Cheng, Kowrika Suntharalingam, Shirven Rezvani, Amy Lester, Angela Bae, Laura Nguyen, Bruno Marchese, Lorei De Los Reyes, Ashley Da Silva, Lourdes David, Greg Denton, and my partner Jordan Berger. Thank you all so much for all you've done—oh, and one last person, my campaign director, who just became a new Canadian citizen this morning, Dave Clark.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to welcome my constituency staff here today: Saroj Gandhi and Upasna Kumar.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to introduce my constituency staff, the mother of C.J. Carson, Sally; and the mother of Madeline Chatten, Julie.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'd also like to take the opportunity to welcome to Queen's Park my constituency staff: Idan Yacobovitch, Kevin Carter and John Mace.

Mr. David Smith: I rise today to recognize proud parents Bill and Kathy Papaconstantinou—it's the first time they are coming here with their daughter, Marissa—and also my executive assistant, Omar Farhat, for being in the chamber this morning.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: It is a great pleasure to introduce three members of my constituency staff from the great riding of Durham. From our Bowmanville office, we have Patricia Martinolich, Suzanne Prescott and Doug Ellis.

Ms. Donna Skelly: It is my pleasure to introduce for the very first time to Queen's Park my constituency staff: Shelly Cameron and Brooke Campbell. Welcome.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Joining us today from my constituency office is Destiny Stewart. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Laura Smith: It's with great pleasure I announce the presence of the Honourable Orontes Castro, consul general for the Philippines in Toronto, who is just above me to the left, Eusebio Aquintey, Shirley Aquintey, Antonio Insigne, Erlinda Insigne, Lolita Oabel, and my very amazing legislative assistant Sheldon James, constituency assistant Delia Marquez and executive assistant Daniela Tabachnik.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to introduce, from my constituency office, the hard-working staff: Monica, John and Heather are here with us today, and my legislative assistant from the office here, Thomas. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Well, thank you. I think that was meant for the Treasury Board minister, but I'll take it, Speaker.

I want to introduce Josie, Teresa, Daniil, Andy and Riley, who are here from my King–Vaughan office. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for all that you do.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I want to take the opportunity to welcome my executive assistant from Thunder Bay, Patricia Maxwell. She's served with me for 17 years in my role as a mayor. Welcome, Pat.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I'd like to introduce Dan Arcari and Julie Sutton-Yardley from my constituency office in Burlington. Thank you for all of your hard work, and welcome to Queen's Park.

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Ms. Christine Hogarth: I'd also like to introduce my staff. It's their first time at Queen's Park: Camila Budylowski and Nabeel Ranmall. Welcome to Queen's Park. Enjoy your day.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: I'd like to welcome my staff: Sam McDonell, Josee Seguin and John Cameron. Sam is the nephew of Jim McDonell. He's working in my office. We're lucky to have you here.

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to welcome, from my constituency office, a proud member of Tuscarora Nation, Samuel Anderson, and also Julie Barnard, my constituency assistants.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I would like to welcome members from my constituency office: Anthony Goncalves, Punar Sidhu, Manpreet Kaler and Arsheen Parmar.

As well, I would like to introduce the family of our parliamentary page, Serena Joseph: Surean Joseph, Venetta Joseph, Tarnya Joseph, Travin Joseph, Tharsika Puvendran, Thalika Camilus and Premila Anjalini Pilavendan. Thank you for being with us today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): If there are no objections, I'd like to continue the introduction of visitors.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to welcome today Food and Beverage Ontario. They're hosting a reception immediately following question period in rooms 228 and 230.

I'd also like to recognize and welcome the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association. The chair, Charles Stevens, is here from Newcastle. He's a proud graduate of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. He's joined by his board members Jan VanderHout and his son, Daniel; Shawn Brenn from Waterdown; Mike Chromczak from Tillsonburg—Jan is from Waterdown as well; as well as their executive director, Alison Robertson, and Gordon Stock.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature my excellent staff: Thomas DeGroot and Chad Crew. Welcome, and enjoy the day.

Mr. Mike Harris: I would like to welcome Colin D'Mello to the media gallery this morning.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: To my wonderful and hard-working constituency staff, Michael Zwiep and Marietta Linde, who are joining us today: Thank you for being here.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I'd like to introduce members of my constituency office that are here today: Elizabeth Pike, Mandeep Dhaliwal, Harjit Sandila, Sukhjot Pannu and Tanjot Gill.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I'd like to welcome members of Brampton Centre, my constit staff: Amani Malik and Kadijah Dabreo. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue à mon équipe, qui m'aide à représenter les gens de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell: Stephany Tessier, Ashley Bennett et Chase McRae. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I'd like to welcome my staff at the constit office: Amanda McFarlane, Jason Leung as well as Nicole Wang. Thank you, and welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Brian Riddell: I would just like to welcome Grace Camara and Melissa Young up there. I don't know where the other two are, but there they are.

Hon. Parm Gill: I just want to take a moment to welcome a couple of members of our team from the Milton office: We've got Kiren Dhah and Megan Saliba. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Mr. Speaker, as you've probably noticed by now, there are over 100 members of the PC caucus staff present today. On behalf of the entire PC caucus, welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Good morning. It's good to see everyone here. I'd just like to welcome everyone. As a First Nations person, as the First Peoples of this country, I'd like to welcome you to our traditional territories. Meegwetch.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'd like to welcome the students and teaching staff of Sprucecourt Public School, located in historic Cabbagetown in Toronto Centre. It also happens to be my very first public school when I arrived in Canada and the place where I learned to speak English.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member for Ottawa–Vanier may have a point of order.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am seeking unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond to the ministerial statement by the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services regarding the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, 2022; and that five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond to the ministerial statement by the Minister of Francophone Affairs regarding the modernization of the French Language Services Act.

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

And I understand she has a second point of order as well.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you for your time, Mr. Speaker. I'm also seeking unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 100(a)(iv), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to speak on second reading of private member's Bill 29 tonight.

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

I understand the member for Toronto–St. Paul's has a point of order as well.

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you, Speaker. If you seek it, you will find that there is unanimous consent for me to say a few words as we remember the victims of the Montreal massacre today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Toronto–St. Paul's is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to say a few words at this time about the Montreal massacre—did I get it correct? Agreed? I heard a no.

QUESTION PERIOD

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, before I put my question, I want to welcome our next leader, Marit Stiles. Marit, we're all confident that you'll do great things as the next leader of the Ontario NDP. Congratulations.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Minister of Health: This week, the Red Cross was called in to support CHEO due to an unprecedented surge of patients. Bringing in the Red Cross should only be a last resort used for unexpected emergency situations. Why didn't this government proactively support and staff children's hospitals in the summer and early fall, when health care workers first sounded the alarm about the crisis in pediatric hospitals?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm going to quote the chief nursing executive at CHEO, who said, "It has been all hands on deck at CHEO this viral season as we have responded to unprecedented volumes due to RSV, the flu and COVID."

It is not lost on our government that, in the last month alone, CHEO has essentially doubled their pediatric ICU unit. It is an incredible amount of work that they've been able to do very quickly. We have now permanently made the investment to ensure that those pediatric beds will stay at CHEO, because we know that that hospital, in particular, because of its large catchment area, has many, many community hospitals that they are serving.

They are doing that with a minimum amount of help from the Red Cross. They are partnering with the Red Cross to return the staff who have been redeployed, and working in those pediatric ICU units to make sure that they can go back to doing their important work.

1050

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the minister: What should have been part of this government's plan all along was a plan to address the root cause of our health care crisis—that's staffing issues. This government can take tangible action right now to retain health care workers. Will the government commit to not appealing Bill 124?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: As the member knows and as the AG has stated, we're reviewing the decision and we intend to appeal it.

But we will speak to the investments that we have made in the health care system. Over the past year alone, we've increased base spending in health care by over \$5.2 billion. That is the largest year-over-year increase in the history of this province. When we look at health human resources across this province, we have put in place the investments to support the hiring of over 14,500 net new nurses. That is unprecedented in the history of this province.

We will continue to make those investments, as we have with two new medical schools that we are announcing in this province, in Brampton and Scarborough, making sure we have new medical staff, more doctors in the north through that.

The members opposite have voted against each of those measures, have voted against every single increase to health care spending. On this side of the House and with our members opposite, we will continue to make sure we make those investments—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, they can say whatever they want; they're failing. We've got a crisis. They didn't prepare for it. We're seeing the consequences of this government's inaction in our hospitals every day.

Yesterday it was a family in eastern Ontario who struggled to find a hospital that could accept them for labour and delivery. First they tried their local hospital, but the birthing centre was closed due to staffing shortages. The next hospital they tried didn't have room, so finally they returned to their local hospital. That situation should never have happened. The mom, Kendra, said this afterward: "I'm just afraid ... that health care will fail me again, fail [my son]."

What does the minister have to say to parents like Kendra who are scared for the future of our health care system?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: What I will say to the people of Ontario is that we are fixing a health care system that was woefully ignored by the previous Liberal government. The former Premier, Kathleen Wynne, admitted publicly that she should not have cut those 50 doctor spaces as they did to assist in their health care crisis.

We are making the investments. Already we're seeing additional health human resources in our communities—over 12,000 new health human resources who are working out in our communities, in our hospitals, in our long-term-care homes. We're continuing to do that work by increasing residency spots, by increasing access, ensuring that young people who want to choose a career in health care have those options. In many cases, nurses and PSWs in particular are getting that opportunity with assistance financially from our government.

We'll make the investments. We'll continue to do the work. But frankly, we were left with a system that had been ignored for far too long.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, through you to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: In May 2021, one month after the Premier promised the people of Ontario, "I'm not touching the greenbelt," a company controlled by Silvio De Gasperis took out a \$100-million loan at 21% interest to buy 106 acres of greenbelt farmland in Vaughan. This was an unusually risky loan for an undevelopable

property, but less risky if Mr. De Gasperis had reason to believe the land would soon be made available for development.

Did the minister or any other government official discuss proposals to develop these greenbelt lands with Mr. De Gasperis or any of his associates or lobbyists prior to November 4? Yes or no?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think the minister has answered that on a number of occasions. I think, again, what it comes down to, time and time again, is that the NDP just refuse—with the help of the Liberals, quite frankly—to see the challenges that we have in the province of Ontario, the challenges that we are fixing.

Of course, there is a housing crisis in the province of Ontario, ostensibly because of the policies that were brought on by the Liberals, supported by the NDP. Colleagues will remember all of those years that the NDP propped up the Liberals to ensure that the dream of home ownership that so many of us have fought for our entire lives, our parents fought for. Under both the Liberals and the NDP, that is a dream that has vanished in the province of Ontario, but because of this Premier, because of this Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Conservatives on both sides of the House, you know what? We're bringing back that dream. We're making sure that we're putting in place policies that will allow people to prosper in the province of Ontario, like generations before us, and we only wish that they would get on board.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: Again to the minister: According to the Toronto Star, the Narwhal and the Globe and Mail, a company associated with private equity firm Orca Equity purchased greenbelt farmland at 12045 McCowan Road in Stouffville on September 10, 2021. Two months later, the ministry issued a minister's zoning order for this address to enable a subdivision, despite the fact that it was surrounded by greenbelt farmland.

Did the minister, or any other government official, discuss proposals to develop these greenbelt lands with any representatives of Orca Equity or their development partners prior to November 4? Yes or no?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, I think the minister has answered it.

I love that the member brought up Stouffville. Stouffville is my hometown, Mr. Speaker. Of course, it is a vibrant, beautiful community. Those who were in Stouffville on the weekend would have had the benefit of one of the most beautiful Santa Claus parades that we have had in the province of Ontario.

As the people lined the streets on both sides of Stouffville, they shouted encouragement to make sure we continued on. Do you know what they said, Mr. Speaker? "Bring more people to Stouffville." That's what they wanted because they all had what we all fight for: the dream of home ownership. We talked about this just yesterday.

I challenge any one of them to get up in their place and say it—say it with me: home ownership. Home ownership is not a bad word. It's something that generations of Ontarians and Canadians have fought for. You're against it. We want it, and we will fight to make sure that all Ontarians share in that dream—

Interjections.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I guess Santa came early this year.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Toronto—St. Paul's will come to order. The Minister of Energy will come to order.

Restart the clock. The member for Niagara Centre, final supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Back to the minister: According to the CBC, the Toronto Star and the Narwhal, a company controlled by the chair of the Wyview Group acquired three greenbelt properties along Highway 48 in Markham in March, October and December 2021. Flato Developments also appears to be involved with the development of these rural properties.

The minister also seems to have a curious interest in these particular properties. On November 4, he added them inside Markham's urban boundaries when he amended York region's official plan. Did the minister, or any other government official, discuss proposals to develop these lands with any representative or associate of Wyview or Flato prior to November 4? Yes or no?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think we've answered that on a number of occasions, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I'm glad he keeps talking about Stouffville. He keeps talking about Markham and Stouffville. I guess the member of Parliament must be doing something right in Markham—Stouffville, so I thank you for continuously bringing that up for me.

Listen, there is a number of homebuilders who are working throughout southern Ontario to bring the dream of home ownership to the people of the province of Ontario. As I said yesterday, when my parents came to this country, all of them were living in one home in the member for Scarborough Southwest's riding, on Dentonia Park just off the Danforth—six of them. And do you know what they wanted? They wanted a home: the dream of home ownership. The oldest left, then the second-oldest left and, within 10 years, each and every one of those brothers and one sister had their own home. It is why they left Italy: to make a better life for all of the kids they had after that.

And that's all the people of this province want. They want the opportunity to succeed like their parents before them. The only time we lost that is when the Liberals, propped up by the NDP, took that dream away from the people of the province of Ontario. This Premier has brought that back, and we're on the move again.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MPP Jill Andrew: My question is to the Premier. Today, we honour the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, exactly 33 years to the day since 14 women were murdered at the hands of violent misogyny in Montreal. This was not an isolated event. Since 1990, over 980—Speaker, likely far more—have been lost to femicide in Ontario alone.

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This year, the Renfrew county inquest recommendations were published, following a years-long investigation into the violent, hate-fuelled murder of three women in 2015: Anastasia Kuzyk, Nathalie Warmerdam and Carol Culleton. From the government, Speaker, it's been a lot of crickets.

My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier explain to these women's families why the government hasn't yet acted on any of these recommendations?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: First, I want to acknowledge the loss of all the women who have been murdered or killed across this province. There will be an opportunity this afternoon at 3 o'clock for each group to be able to say—several minutes on this topic, and I think this is an extremely important topic.

All women deserve safety and security, and our government is continuously, constantly working to make the lives of women safer and to provide that security, and for all Ontarians to live free of violence and fear.

We're working to prevent and address violence against women in all forms, and we've made the investments to back this up. Words alone, as the member across the way has stated, aren't enough. That's exactly why we're making the investments that are necessary to change this.

We've launched programs. We've passed legislation aimed at ending violence, and we will continue to do this important work because it matters to all of us. It should matter to society. It should matter to every Ontarian, and we'll continue to do this.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

MPP Jill Andrew: Speaker, there's no new funding in the fall economic statement on gender-based violence.

Back to the Premier: Femicide is both a predictable and preventable crime. But this doesn't happen through words; it happens through action. We are seeing a massive uptick in gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, all while the gap between the need for resources and resources available grows wider and wider each year.

The urgency to act is grave. We cannot wait for another massacre like what happened in Montreal or Renfrew, or anywhere else for that matter, to realize what we should have done.

My question is to the Premier. The government has the opportunity to do what's right. Will the Premier finally respond to the Renfrew recommendations with a meaningful plan of action and budget to implement them now?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a serious question.

As I've said many times in this House, everyone has a right to feel safe in their own homes and their own communities. The violence is completely unacceptable. Gender-based violence is a crime.

But we are moving forward. I want to speak for just a second about the Ontario Police College, where we are introducing new training for recruits. This is something our government takes seriously. Everyone has a right to be safe in their own homes and their own communities.

SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Speaker, Canada recently hosted its first International Swimming Federation World Cup event in more than 20 years in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park. We welcomed more than 450 athletes from 40 countries as they competed at the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre.

I know I can speak on behalf of our entire province in extending our support, admiration and well wishes for this successful event; however, some of our most talented athletes might not have the opportunity to compete internationally in events like this due to financial constraints.

Ontario is a global leader in athletic performance and we must continue supporting our competitors as they represent our province and country.

Speaker, can the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport please share with the House what assistance our government is offering to help our athletes as they represent us on the world stage?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: I'd like to thank the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park, and yes I can.

Our government is investing more than \$6.3 million through the Quest for Gold program to support high-performance athletes. This program benefits performance in a high level and provides financial support for training, equipment, facilities and access to top-level coaches—those facilities, again, that they can work and train in. Every young person in this province should have the opportunity to compete at a high level, just like they should have an opportunity to someday buy a home.

We want all our kids to have the opportunity to play, whether it's through our Jumpstart program or on a bigger stage with Quest for Gold. It's a privilege to be able to represent Ontario and this country on the national and international stage, and we want those opportunities to be available.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Minister, for the response. Supporting Ontario's athletes shows the world that when it comes to sports, we are among the best places to train, compete and play. Ontario has long been a leading destination for major sports and entertainment events. I appreciate that we are investing in our local

talent, and hosting events like the International Swimming Federation World Cup, which draws athletes, families and fans to our province from across the world.

Can the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport please elaborate on what our government is doing to support national and international sports events that take place in Ontario?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Again, thanks for the great question. The Ontario Sport Hosting Program brings major summer and winter sporting events to the province, such as the FINA Swimming World Cup championships, supported by us to the tune of \$300,000.

We are providing nearly \$900,000 to support 14 national and international sport events in 16 host cities across Ontario this year and next, building legacies in communities and building young people and the communities along with it. These events will contribute more than \$17 million to communities across Ontario and feature more than 4,600 athletes. Applications are now open, so I would encourage Indigenous communities, not-for-profit organizations and municipalities to go ahead and submit proposals by January 9. Together, we are making Ontario a destination to train, to live and to host. No one does it better than Ontario.

PUBLIC SAFETY

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My question is to the Premier. Crystal Quartz, a drag platformer living in Guelph, has seen a spike in violent threats against drag artists. She's being threatened by a hate group who has promised to disrupt her performance and give her audience "a show they'll never forget." Crystal is now forced to call the local police and hire private security for private events at restaurants such as Boston Pizza and Kelseys.

Will this government take on bigots who threaten drag performers and their audiences with hate and threats of violence?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: This is a very serious topic, and it's important that we address hate in all of its forms. We're seeing the rise of hate as it relates to religion, gender—all sorts of different ways of describing it. It's something this government takes very seriously. It's something that we're investing in to make sure that we have the supports for those who are the victims and it's something that we're making sure goes to the front of everything that we do to make sure that we have people in safe communities and the kind of communities that they want to live in.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Back to the Premier: Words are not enough. Yesterday, Crystal shared her personal reflection with me:

"Kids' eyes light up... I'm this big pretty princess. Parents tell me that the whole week afterwards, it's all their kids talk about.

“I go into ... communities that don’t have safe paces to create them.”

Crystal’s upcoming performance this Sunday is a brunch performance. It has already faced additional and escalating threats. What exactly is the Premier doing to protect Ontario’s drag community, their audience as well as the businesses that host these events?

Hon. Doug Downey: It’s important that we have the resources available for anybody who feels vulnerable, whether it be before or after a potential incident. We have training at every level. We have training for those who operate in victims’ services, we have training for those who are judiciary and we have training for the police officers as they go through the early stages of their careers.

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Resources are available. If people are not feeling comfortable, then they can reach out. And I note, in particular, we can chat offline or after question period, if you wish, about the resources that are available, because it is important, Mr. Speaker. We’re talking about our friends and our families and our children and our parents. We want to make sure that everybody is comfortable in Ontario.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Nuclear power represents a critical component of our province’s energy production capabilities now and in the future. Ontario is a global leader when it comes to nuclear power and in producing new and innovative energy technology.

We’ve heard our government and the Minister of Energy tout the potential for small modular nuclear reactors to assist us in generating clean and reliable electricity to power Ontario and our growing economy. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Energy please tell us more about what the next steps are in advancing SMR technology here in Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: What a thrill it was for me to be in the member’s riding—the clean-energy capital of Canada—in the Durham region along with the Premier on Friday morning to announce that construction is beginning on Canada’s first grid-scale small modular reactor.

You know, the member’s hair was blowing in the wind, and we were all jealous about that—or at least I was. But this was an historic moment for our province—construction under way on a 300-megawatt small modular reactor. Well, what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? A 300-megawatt small modular reactor is enough to power a city the size of London.

Our plan is not to build just one on the site at Darlington, but potentially four. That’s 1,200-plus megawatts that will add to our clean—and I emphasize clean—reliable, affordable electricity grid in the province of Ontario.

We have an incredible team at OPG that’s going to be building that BWRX-300, and, Mr. Speaker, the world is watching what’s happening in Canada’s clean-energy capital.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you to the minister for his answer. To quote that old song from the 1960s: “The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind,” I guess.

With global businesses looking to expand in jurisdictions with clean and cost-effective electricity, small modular reactors will help us as we compete and attract more game-changing investments here at home. SMRs, Mr. Speaker, have the potential to drive job creation, economic growth and export opportunities, which will allow Ontario to leverage its highly skilled nuclear industry and workforce.

However, members from across the aisle continue to say no and oppose the advancement of new nuclear technology. Mr. Speaker, therefore, can the Minister of Energy provide further details on how our government supports this critical endeavour?

Hon. Todd Smith: Speaker, this is a tremendous opportunity for our province, and it’s a tremendous opportunity for our country. I don’t understand why members opposite would be opposed to this kind of technology—a first of its kind—that is going to allow us to create good jobs in our supply chain here in Ontario.

Already, 76,000 people work in our nuclear supply chain across the country. Almost all of them—about 65,000—right here in Ontario. This is a tremendous export opportunity for Ontario and for Canada.

The small modular reactor, as I say: The world is watching, and the world really is watching this project. Countries over in Europe and around the world are looking for energy autonomy, energy security, and this is the flexible form of electricity generation that’s clean that the world is looking for.

It confounds me, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite aren’t standing and applauding the work that is happening in Canada’s clean-energy capital with OPG in the Durham region. Stand with us and push for this project to be the success that it’s going to be.

DIAGNOSTIC AND LABORATORY SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé.

Linda Luyt from Sudbury is an endometrial cancer survivor. She requires annual PAP tests by her oncology team. She had her test on October 18. Usually, it takes between three and six weeks for the results to come in. But when she called her doctor last week, she was told that it now takes six months for the results to come in.

Minister, is six months an acceptable amount of time for a cancer patient to wait for a diagnostic test result?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The member opposite is highlighting exactly why our government is making the commitments and making the investments in the health care system. We are hiring and training additional health human resources, whether those are lab technicians, personal support workers, nurses, doctors. We’re making those

investments because we saw that we did not have sufficient capacity.

The health care system was ignored for far too long. We're making those investments now. We are seeing some very good work out in the field, in the community. We're seeing the increased numbers of nurses and PSWs who are working in the system—over 12,000 more than pre-pandemic. We'll continue to get the job done, and we'll make those investments so that we don't have long wait times for things like diagnostic testing.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: When cancer patients have to wait six months for test results, it often means more intensive, more expensive treatment and an increased risk of harm.

Ontario lab services are now dominated by LifeLabs, a private, for-profit company. In my riding, LifeLabs offers terrible customer service. They let frail, elderly people wait outside in minus-20 weather. They have minimum staffing. They have minimum hours of operation and huge delays for test results.

Does the minister agree that privatization of our lab services made our lab services worse?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I have to respectfully ask the member opposite if she read the first half of her question before she filled out the second.

You are talking about how we need to increase capacity. We are doing that. As a government, we are ensuring that all partners have the ability to expand and continue to offer services in our community, and we will do that with all of our partners. We are not going to freeze out individuals and organizations that can be part of the solution.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: On November 25, 15 top architectural firms and urban planners wrote an open letter to the Premier—I hope he read it—showing how Bill 23 will not help people achieve the dream of affordable home ownership that this government says it will.

The letter says, “It will inhibit the construction of affordable housing...; dismantle regional planning and urban design considerations; undermine ... environmental protection...; and limit public participation in how we build our communities ...”—for example—“by reducing the affordable housing requirement in inclusionary zoning from 20% to” just “5%.” It will reduce fees that cities use to pay for housing inspections. None of that sounds good for Ontarians.

The Premier's own housing task force did not say we need to swap land in the greenbelt to get housing built.

So, my question to the Premier: Who is telling him that paving over the greenbelt is the solution to the housing crisis? And are they the same people who will stand to profit from this decision?

Hon. Doug Ford: I find it so rich and so ironic, hearing from the Liberals that changed the greenbelt 17 times. You should do your homework. You froze housing.

We have 300,000 people coming to Ontario every single year. I see the young people there. I see people up here that are renting. Do you know what their goal is in life? Their goal is to own a home. It's supply and demand, Mr. Speaker.

But I can tell you, the last people we should be listening to is the previous government that destroyed housing, that just voted against every housing bill that we've had. You destroyed housing—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The Premier will please take his seat. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South will come to order. The Minister of Energy will come to order. The member for Carleton will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South, come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary question.

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Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you to the Premier for that passionate response. We can all agree that we need more homes for Ontarians. However, it appears—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member will take her seat.

I'd ask the government members not to interrupt another member who has the floor with loud applause such that I can't hear the member who has the floor.

Please restart the clock. The member can continue.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you, Speaker. We can all agree that we need more homes for Ontarians. However, it appears that private land developers and at least some members of this Conservative government are the only ones who think paving over farmland and the greenbelt is the solution. Thousands of people have signed petitions. Thousands in Don Valley West have written to me and other MPPs and joined rallies through one of over 30 respected environmental, social justice, housing and agricultural organizations. Municipalities oppose Bill 23 because it threatens affordable housing, it threatens the environment and makes land speculators richer.

My question again to the Premier: Why is this government ignoring the advice from experts and trying to convince Ontarians that this bill is for the people when in fact people can see that it's all about helping the Premier's friends?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we've got a housing plan. Here's what we're fighting for—and the Premier is right. We've got young people, both in front of me and behind me in the galleries. A recent report released from the charitable organization Generation Squeeze, a 56-page report—and this is something I want everyone to listen to because this is what we're fighting for. This is the crux of the issue: “In order for

millennials to buy a home in the province, the report says average home prices need to drop by \$530,000, more than 60% of the market value last year, for them to afford a mortgage that covers 80% of the value....

“It takes 22 years of full-time work for the typical young person to save a 20 [per cent] down payment on an average priced home,” the report reads,” which is 17 years longer than when we were their age.

Speaker, this is the fight. This is what we’re fighting for: to make sure that young people realize the dream of home ownership. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we’re going to get it done.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Kevin Holland: Farmers in northern Ontario contribute over \$200 million annually to our provincial economy. Unfortunately, the previous Liberal government refused to acknowledge the important potential that northern agriculture could offer. Across the north, a vast tract of fertile land stretches between the Cochrane district and the Quebec border known as the Great Clay Belt. This area represents an untapped agricultural and economic opportunity for our farmers in the north and our entire province.

Our agri-food sector in the north needs assurance that our government is committed to that growth. Speaker, can the fantastic Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs please share with the House what actions our government is taking to support northern agriculture?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. Just last year, I visited his particular area and was impressed with the agricultural presence that that particular region of northern Ontario has, and just this past week, I spent time in Timmins with the amazing Minister of Mines. His passion and his commitment to the agri-food sector in northern Ontario is not only infectious, but it’s inspired as well.

Through our Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, we have invested \$300,000 in a thoughtful strategy that embraces ideas coming from the city of Timmins and the municipality of Black River–Matheson, as well as our farming communities. That thoughtful approach is taking a look at how we can further develop our lands in northern Ontario into primary production, and it’s through leadership like the Commerce Management Group and the Abitibi Institute that we’re exploring more opportunities. We met with Frank, who’s been milking cows since 1958. We met with Karen in regenerative farming, Eric in urban farming and Ed, a 1,600-acre cash cropper in northern Ontario.

There’s so much more to talk about, and I can’t wait for my supplemental.

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

Mr. Kevin Holland: Thank you to the minister for her response. With ongoing geopolitical tensions impacting worldwide food supply chains, we must ensure we are

harnessing all opportunities for agricultural growth in our province.

Northern Ontario represents a significant region that could supply Ontario and the world with abundant agricultural products. In particular, the north’s clay belt region represents a jurisdiction that could increase farm and food production capabilities for the agri-business sector, benefiting all Ontario.

Speaker, once again my question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. What further action is our government taking to help cement agriculture as a pillar of the northern economy?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: That’s a really good question, because the Minister of Mines very eloquently made a fact known this past week when we were in Timmins. The economy in northern Ontario actually has a trifecta: mines, forestry as well as agriculture.

Our government, since elected, has invested in 250 northern projects totalling \$4.1 million. I also want to give a nod and share my appreciation to the Minister of Northern Development, who has supported over 300 projects worth \$55 million of investment in agriculture and food production.

We’re bridging that community in northern Ontario to new technologies and new innovations that will see more arable land in northern Ontario that outsizes Manitoba into production.

It’s working, because in talking about potatoes, I learned from OFVGA just yesterday that they’re looking to increase potato production and seed potato production. We’re increasing the number of cars on the Ontario Northland bringing grains down to southern Ontario. Everywhere, every point in Ontario, is going to be proud of the agricultural production.

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My question is to the Premier. Food bank use has hit a record high under the Ford government. The London Food Bank reports that over 20,000 Londoners can’t afford food this year. Will the government listen to Feed Ontario, double social assistance rates, tackle precarious work, build social housing, and finally crack down on price gouging in the grocery aisle?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. Mr. Speaker, there’s no question that many are hurting in this province and in this country with a higher price of groceries, among many other things. That’s why our colleagues in Ottawa across all party lines have struck a parliamentary committee to look at food prices right across the province, and that work is happening now.

But now that we’re talking about the federal government, you know what they could do to help with the cost of everything across Canada? They could lower the carbon tax. This Premier and this government took action back in March to lower gas prices at the pump by reducing the gas

tax for fuel and for gas, and then extended it for another year, starting January 1, to provide relief to the many people in Ontario who are struggling with day-to-day costs.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question? The member for St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Back to the Premier: Today, food banks across Niagara are hosting a press conference raising red flags. They need help. Month over month, up to 10% of St. Catharines's population has used a food bank, while usage has doubled since last year. Why? Low wage jobs, high rent and social assistance rates, all while grocery stores are gouging families.

Speaker, will this government provide cost-of-living help to families so they do not have to keep turning to the food banks, and review policies that are contributing to driving more people to food banks?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you again for these very important questions about the cost of living and many of the prices that people are feeling, not only at the grocery store but at the pumps and rent and the high cost through interest rates.

That's why we've taken action. That's why we started taking action this spring. That's why we moved to reduce gas taxes. That's why we removed the tolls on the 412 and 418. That's why we rebated the licence plate stickers.

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But we didn't stop there, Speaker. We increased the minimum wage. We lowered the tax rebate, so Ontarians pay some of the lowest income taxes for low-income workers across the country. But we didn't stop there, Mr. Speaker, with the Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement for 200,000 seniors. But we didn't stop there; we helped people on Ontario disability by increasing it by 5% and indexing it to inflation. Why did you vote no every single time for every single measure?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair.

COST OF LIVING

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Speaker, as we approach the holiday season and the final weeks of the year, it is particularly concerning that the Feed Ontario Hunger Report shows skyrocketing food bank use, including a 64% increase in first-time visits. Overall, 587,103 adults and children accessed a food bank in Ontario between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022. That's an increase of 15%, and just this week, Canadian food experts projected food prices will rise 5% to 7% in the first half of 2023.

So it's clear that things are not getting easier for families. While the Premier and his government admit that stubborn inflation and a lack of affordable housing are impacting Ontarians, there is inaction in leaving the province's most vulnerable out in the cold, and they are hungry.

Speaker, my question to the Premier: With the Christmas holiday fast approaching and the price of groceries for a family of four going up by over \$1,000, what is the

government's plan to address these rising costs? And—like so many families in my riding of Scarborough—Guildwood—why is it that this government is letting families depend on food banks so heavily?

Hon. Doug Ford: I know Scarborough very well, from top to bottom, from east to west, north to south. I just want to remind the people of this province: You were one of the ministers, and your whole gang there—you lost 300,000 jobs. I spoke to the auto sector with my friend Vic Fedeli here, and they chased jobs out of the province.

Let me remind everyone: As we stand today, in four years, there are 500,000 more people working today than when we took office. Mr. Speaker, there are 380,000 jobs available as we sit right here. You can go anywhere down any street in the province and find gainful employment.

As the Minister of Finance said, we dropped the gas prices for the supply chain by 10 cents. We need the federal government to drop their 11 cents and put meaningful, meaningful relief to the taxpayers of this province. They refuse to—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Please make your comments through the Chair.

Supplementary question.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I'm very glad that the Premier mentioned working. The impact of the affordability crisis is widespread, and the fact is that this government under-spent on our most vulnerable residents throughout the pandemic. Shamefully, this includes those with disabilities. For many on ODSP and OW, the post-budget income support level is still not enough to cover rent, food and transportation, so that they can have healthy, healthy meals.

Last week, I met with residents in my riding of Scarborough—Guildwood after they reached out to me for help, and what I heard, Speaker, was heartbreaking. Kamala told me that while there was a 5% increase for ODSP, it does not come close to a livable income when she faces soaring inflation and when rates were frozen for so long, since 2018.

Theresa explained to me that her main source of stress each month is getting groceries, because the rate increase doesn't apply to OW recipients. In fact, she told me that she spends hours lining up at the food bank to make ends meet. She pointed out that many OW recipients are people with disabilities trying to access ODSP and forced to live on \$733 a month.

Speaker, will the government preserve the \$100 work-related benefit and will they provide a similar rate increase for people on OW, as they have done for ODSP?

Hon. Doug Ford: Speaker, on ODSP—remember, under the Liberals they didn't increase it at all. We've increased it 5%, Mr. Speaker—5% to help the most vulnerable people in our society.

As for transit, Mr. Speaker, the member from Scarborough voted down the Scarborough subway over and over again. Through our great Minister of Transportation, we're building the largest transit plan in North America—\$30 billion. We're bringing transit to the people of Scarborough.

We're making sure that people who are on Ontario Works have an opportunity to go out there and get a great job, to make themselves feel great and also put money into their pockets. That's what we're doing. As they just absolutely destroyed the economy, we're growing the economy. We saw gains of 22,000 full-time jobs just last month and again the previous month. We're growing Ontario. We're getting it done for the people here.

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of Finance. With rising costs due to global inflation, many people in my riding of Oxford, particularly low-income seniors, are concerned. High food prices affect household budgets and can restrict people from being able to purchase the items they need. The impact of rising prices is felt first and hardest by the most vulnerable, including low-income families, workers and seniors. In those challenging times, the government must provide additional relief for the cost of living and prioritize help for those who need it the most.

Can the Minister of Finance explain how our government will ensure financial support for seniors and those most in need?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the hard-working member from Oxford for that question. In fact, wasn't there a good announcement yesterday in Ingersoll, in the member's riding, creating good jobs and bigger paycheques in his riding? So congratulations to your hard work, not to mention the Minister of Economic Development and the Premier as well.

Look, it's a very important question for over 200,000 seniors on fixed incomes. It's really important that we provide support in this environment where inflation—we haven't seen inflation like this in 40 years, not since I was a wee kid. What we did to help those 200,000 people out was to double the Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement—

Interjection.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: The Minister for Seniors likes it.

We've increased it from \$166 to \$1,992 per year this year. This is providing necessary and important relief to the many seniors who helped build this province.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you to the minister for that response. It's reassuring to hear that our government is implementing informed and targeted measures to help support our senior population.

That said, the issue of affordability is not exclusive to low-income seniors alone. Across the province, all Ontarians expect to see initiatives that help make life more affordable.

Speaker, can the Minister of Finance please tell the House what other ways our government plans to support the people of Ontario during this period of economic uncertainty?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you again to the member from Oxford for another good question.

Mr. Speaker, I was at the seniors' Poinsettia Tea event at the Pickering recreation centre on Sunday, actually—

Interjection.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Yes, and the minister has been there.

It was great to have people out again, great to see the many seniors in our community get together. That's why we're helping many of the seniors and many people, not just in Durham but right across the province.

We took off the tolls on the 412 and the 418. We expanded the Low-income Workers Tax Credit so there would be more money in their pockets in this environment. We're proposing, as I mentioned earlier, in the fall economic statement, to extend the gas and fuel tax cut for next year, and one I'm extremely proud of is that we increased the earning exemption for people on the Ontario Disability Support Program from \$200 to \$1,000 for those who can and want to work so that they can have more money in their pockets.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Two weeks ago, I shared with the government that about 1,000 tenants in my riding are facing major rent increases—some as high as 14%—all because the Premier made unlimited rent increases legal for new buildings in 2018. I have introduced a bill to extend rent control protections to all tenants in the province.

Will the Premier give tenants the stability they need and protect them from rent gouging by passing the Rent Control for All Tenants Act?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: The fall economic statement in 2018 targeted a rent control piece for one purpose and one purpose only, and that was to incent new, purpose-built rental construction in the province.

1140

What happened, Speaker? Last year, in 2021, we had the highest level of purpose-built rental construction since the early 1990s.

In addition, during the pandemic, the government did a number of things, working very closely with the Attorney General. We froze evictions to ensure that at the height of the pandemic our most vulnerable had a safe, secure place to call home.

Speaker, I don't want to couch my words. Make no mistake, the government is not going to go back to the times when there was no purpose-built rental construction in Ontario. We want to build upon the success of that 2018 amendment to ensure that there is an incentive to build more purpose-built rentals.

In the supplementary, I'll talk about other measures that this member and her party voted against.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary, the member for Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Back to the minister: Last week, residents of Sunnysdale housing complex in Waterloo were notified of a 5.5% rent increase happening on January 1. SpiceCart, the owner of Sunnysdale, received an exemption from the Landlord and Tenant Board to raise tenants' rents over 2.5%. Many Sunnysdale residents live on fixed incomes and are vulnerable, and quite a few are new refugees to our region. Given the lack of affordable housing options in the region, this is a cruel thing to do.

Why does this government refuse to bring in stronger rent control protections, which would protect tenants of Sunnysdale and renter households across the province?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, the member knows I'm not going to comment on a case that was before the Landlord and Tenant Board. It's a tribunal and it's impartial, and there's no role for me to respond for that.

But what I will say is, over and over again, every time this government places a policy on the table, whether it be through regulation or legislation, that member and New Democrats vote against it. Whether it be the 2018 initiative that resulted in a record amount of purpose-built rental being constructed, whether it be Bill 184, the Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act, they voted against it. And even in Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act—one of the best incentives is that DC exemption for family-sized rental accommodation, 25%. Again, every time the government puts forward an incentive to build more rental accommodation, that member and the NDP vote against it—every single, solitary time.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Under the previous Liberal government, Ontario's emergency management system was not up to date. Stockpiles of personal protective equipment were depleted or expired when they were critically needed. The province was left with the serious challenge of finding new PPE when worldwide production shortages occurred. This was unacceptable. My constituents in Richmond Hill were very concerned.

Our government must ensure that Ontario is never again placed in a situation where critical supplies of personal protective equipment must be sourced from other jurisdictions.

Can the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery please update the House on what action our government is taking to safeguard our access to critical PPE supplies?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: I thank the great member for Richmond Hill for her question and the great work she is doing in her community.

Speaker, under the leadership of Premier Ford, this government remains laser-focused when it comes to the health and safety of Ontarians, and this is why we have built a robust PPE stockpile to protect front-line and other critical workers, while ensuring our province is ready for any future emergencies.

We have shipped over 700 million pieces of PPE since the start of the pandemic, and we have procured and distributed over 157 million rapid antigen tests, over 97,000 HEPA filter units. And thanks to the Premier and this great Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, I'm proud to say that 93% of the forecast PPE procurement for the next 18 months will be with Ontario or Canadian-based manufacturers.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I am relieved. Thank you, Minister, for all the actions that you've taken for us. As we move forward, it is encouraging to know about our government's actions which will be providing Ontario with a dependable supply of personal protective equipment.

While our PPE stockpile remains a critical part of our government's plan to stay open, we know that a whole-of-government approach will be required to address any future needs that could arise. Can the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery please elaborate on how the government is strengthening our emergency response planning?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: I thank the member for her supplementary question. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we learned that it is important to keep our stockpile of PPE and critical supplies stable so we are able to respond to surges associated with extraordinary events while balancing the changing needs within the sector. While my ministry has typically overseen our province's pandemic supply chain procurement, we continue to provide the necessary supports to the ministries—for example, the Ministries of Education, Colleges and Universities, Health, Long-Term Care, and other ministries—to support them in the great job they are doing to keep our students and vulnerable Ontarians safe and feeling protected.

Speaker, our government will continue its data-driven approach, ensuring we avoid the mistakes made by the previous governments and are well prepared in the future. All of this will further help us to ensure our province stays open and continues to—

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

NORTHERN HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier. The Auditor General revealed last week that \$158 million was diverted from highway improvements on Highway 17 and Highway 11 in northern Ontario. I want to know why.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Well, the Ministry of Transportation was very clear that the projects that were identified in the Auditor General's report as deferred have actually all moved forward, either in the planning stages or due diligence stages or the construction stages. The member opposite knows very well that our government

has been committed to road safety and construction in northern Ontario.

We're moving forward the twinning of Highway 17 between the Manitoba border and Kenora. We've been working on building 14 new rest stops and rehabilitating 10 rest stops to make sure that we can provide safety for our drivers as they're going along our northern roads. And we're moving forward with an innovative new highway pilot called the "2+1" project—a project that came from the Northern Transportation Task Force and was recommended by people who live and drive in the north and who take road safety there so seriously.

We are very proud of the record that we have on keeping our northern roads safe and on rehabilitating and building our highways there, and we're going to continue to do that.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: Shortchanging the north has some serious outcomes, and unfortunately, what we see in the media in the north is another fatality—another family that has lost a loved one. And this is something that myself as the member for Algoma–Manitoulin, I don't want to get used to seeing in our papers.

I want to see improvements to our highways. I want to see this investment of \$158 million return to those highways in northern Ontario. I want to see safe roads. I want to see the member from Mushkegowuk's bill actually supported by this government, to bring the highway services down to the eight-hour standard, to make our roads safer on our highways in northern Ontario. That's what I want to see on our highways.

I'm asking this government: Are you prepared to make the investments that were initiated for northern Ontario return so that we could have safe highways, as everybody else deserves in this province?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Well, the member opposite knows that we are investing over \$600 million in our highways in the north, and as I just mentioned, that all the projects identified in the Auditor General's report as deferred are actually all moving forward.

Our government is committed to building in the north, and we're committed to road safety in the north. That's why we brought forward a completely new standard for highway and winter maintenance, a 12-hours-to-bare-pavement standard, the best and highest standard anywhere in Canada. We have made significant investments in equipment, we're bringing innovative, new solutions to keeping our roads safe, and we're going to continue to work to find the best standards and to do the best we can by the people in the north.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Barrie–Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I just wanted to ask the Legislature to join me to welcome Denis Mainville from Royal Canadian Legion Branch 547 in Belle Ewart. Welcome, Denis. Thank you for your service.

DEFERRED VOTES

PROGRESS ON THE PLAN TO BUILD ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LA PROGRESSION DU PLAN POUR BÂTIR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 36, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1151 to 1156.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On December 5, 2022, Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved third reading of Bill 36, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

On December 5, 2022, Mr. McGregor moved that the question be now put.

All those in favour of Mr. McGregor's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Gill, Parm	Pirie, George
Babikian, Aris	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Quinn, Nolan
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Rae, Matthew
Barnes, Patrice	Harris, Mike	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Holland, Kevin	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Sylvia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Jones, Trevor	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Ke, Vincent	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Kerzner, Michael S.	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Laura
Dixon, Jess	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Dowie, Andrew	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	McNaughton, Monte	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
Fullerton, Merrilee	Parsa, Michael	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	Yakabuski, John
Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to Mr. McGregor's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Hsu, Ted	Shamji, Adil
Bell, Jessica	Hunter, Mitzie	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stiles, Marit

Bowman, Stephanie	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanhof, John
Collard, Lucille	Mantha, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra	
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	

Bowman, Stephanie	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanhof, John
Collard, Lucille	Mantha, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra	
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 74; the nays are 31.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Bethlenfalvy has moved third reading of Bill 36, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1201 to 1202.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On December 5, 2022, Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved third reading of Bill 36, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 74; the nays are 31.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1205 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to introduce two family members who have surprised me with a visit today, cousins of mine from Gogama—one is living in Timmins; her name is Carole Duguay, and my cousin Keith Jalbert.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HERITAGE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CULTURAL POLICY

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Meghan Stenson): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 39, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités et à édicter la Loi de 2022 abrogeant la Loi sur la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed?

There appear to be 12 members standing. We are now going to have an immediate report-stage debate on the motion.

Twelve members having stood in their places, we will now have a 30-minute report-stage debate, as I said earlier, on the motion for the adoption of the report on the bill, pursuant to standing order 38(b). In this debate, each recognized party is allotted 12 minutes, and the independent members are allotted a total of six minutes.

Further debate?

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Gill, Parm	Pirie, George
Babikian, Aris	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Quinn, Nolan
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Rae, Matthew
Barnes, Patrice	Harris, Mike	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Holland, Kevin	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Sylvia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Jones, Trevor	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Ke, Vincent	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Kerzner, Michael S.	Skelly, Donna
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Laura
Dixon, Jess	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Dowie, Andrew	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	McNaughton, Monte	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
Fullerton, Merrilee	Parsa, Michael	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	Yakabuski, John
Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Hsu, Ted	Shamji, Adil
Bell, Jessica	Hunter, Mitzie	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourguin, Guy	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stiles, Marit

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm very concerned about Bill 39, and we did vote against it returning to committee. The reason why we are so concerned about Bill 39 is because it consolidates political power in the hands of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Premier at the expense of everyone else—you, I, the citizens of Toronto, Ottawa, Peel and more. It is a fundamentally concerning bill.

Bill 39 has nothing to do with solving the housing affordability crisis and helping people find a home that meets their needs.

If this government was serious about addressing the housing affordability crisis, we would have seen rent go down over the last four and a half years—but it hasn't; it has gone up.

If this government was serious about addressing the housing affordability crisis, we would see housing prices go down and be more affordable for first-time homebuyers—but they haven't; they've gone up.

If this government was serious about addressing the housing affordability crisis, we'd see a plan to address homelessness—but we haven't.

The Auditor General said you had no plan in 2021. Now 2022 has come by, and you still don't have a plan. The homelessness crisis has gotten worse and worse and worse.

No, this bill is about helping the Premier's wealthy developer friends. That's what this bill is about. This bill is about bulldozing local decision-making power so the Premier can wield more raw power. It is an affront to democracy.

I'm going to explain the bill to you. It's a very short bill—three short sections. They're all bad.

The first schedule, schedule 1, City of Toronto Act: Apparently, the mayor of Toronto asked for this in secret after Bill 3 was introduced, probably before the election on October 24—and this government gave them the power, which is really abhorrent. The power you gave them is extremely disturbing because it flies in the face of representative democracy and everything that we hold dear about democracy. It allows Mayor Tory to introduce and pass legislation with just one third of city council support—eight votes. That takes away power from every-day citizens. It takes away power from city councillors. It means that we will create and pass legislation which is not as good as it should be, because it will not go through the deliberative process, the discussion that needs to happen in order to create good legislation. It is a shame.

Schedule 2 is also terrible. It's the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act.

Interjection: Shame.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Shame.

This schedule eliminates laws and gives the green light for the Ontario government to pave over a large section of class 1 farmland.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's unbelievable.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Unbelievable—thousands of acres.

Report after report after report that is coming out in the media is telling a very disturbing story, and the story is this: A large chunk of this land is owned by some of the PC Party's wealthiest, highest donors.

Ms. Catherine Fife: No.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes, the wealthiest, highest donors.

When you look at the alignment between what is being carved out of the greenbelt and given the green light for development, and you align that with the amount of land that the De Gasperis family owns, it is—maybe it could be a coincidence, but it really does look like collusion. That's what it really looks like. And it's being handed over. What this looks like—or what it could look like—is that this family bought this land, very cheap, that was protected with easements to remain as farmland permanently, and then, maybe, they were the only ones who were given the heads-up that this land was going to be green-lighted for development, giving them the opportunity to make untold profit, because they're then given permission to sell off and develop this land. That's what it looks like.

What is so disturbing is that this government loves to wrap themselves in the flag and say, "We're doing this to solve the housing affordability crisis," but the government's own Housing Affordability Task Force was very, very clear; the government's own Housing Affordability Task Force says access to land is not the reason why we have a housing supply shortage and why we have a housing affordability crisis. That is not the issue here. The real issue is, what can we do with the land that is already zoned for development? That is the real conversation we should be having here—instead of paving over precious greenbelt land and farmland. It is extremely concerning.

The final part of the bill, schedule 3, is also short but terrible. There are two parts to it. One, the government has decided that democratically decided regional chairs are not so important, and in fact, it's going to be the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing who gets to hand-pick the regional chairs for Niagara, Peel and York. That's an absolute consolidation of power. The second thing I find so concerning is that, in the second part of schedule 3, this government gives themselves the authority to extend strong-mayor powers to any municipality they want through regulation. That is extremely concerning. It says it right here: Any mayor that they want, just through regulation, can have the power to pass budgets with just one third support of city councillors.

Interjection.

1510

Ms. Jessica Bell: Exactly. They have the authority to politicize bureaucrats by having the authority to hand-pick the heads of departments instead of having a more collaborative, non-partisan process to decide who these public servants are going to be. And any municipality—any mayor now also gets the authority not just to veto a piece of legislation but also to introduce legislation and get it passed with just one third.

This government, in short, in schedule 3, is giving themselves the permission to introduce minority rule in any municipality they want, whenever they want, just through regulation; it doesn't have to come back through the Legislature. That is an assault to democracy. It is a shame.

I'm not the only one who's concerned about this bill. We went to committee. We got 20 minutes of the minister's time, with some questions on the first day. And then

on the second day, we had just 18 people speak. You sped it through so fast. There are over 14 million people in Ontario. You're rewriting how democracy works in this province, and you gave just 18 people the opportunity to speak—it's really shocking—but speak they did, and the written submissions that we received and the comments that we received in committee, overwhelmingly, expressed horror at what this government was doing. We had CCLA. We had former mayors. We had thousands of citizens. We had the Anglican Diocese of Toronto. We had the Canadian Environmental Law Association. We had Ecology Ottawa. We had David Miller, Friends of Kensington Market, the Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations, the Federation of South Toronto Residents' Associations, Friends of the Golden Horseshoe, David Crombie, John Sewell, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, AMO.

And I know you have all had hundreds, thousands of emails into your inbox about Bill 23 and its sister bill, Bill 39, over the last few weeks. I get those emails too.

You've had thousands of people, cumulatively, protest at your offices. It's December. It's cold. And yes, they're still coming out because they're so concerned about this bill. It is very concerning.

I want to read some of the comments that people expressed.

AMO represents 444 municipalities. They did a survey of Bill 3, which is an extension of strong mayors—Bill 3 and Bill 39 are very related. It's almost like you forgot, like John Tory called you up and said, "Hold on, what about this," and you said, "Oh, yes, you're right. We'll do Bill 39 too. Thank you. Oh, and that? Okay. We'll make another bill." AMO—77% of mayors are opposed to strong-mayor powers. Who asked for this bill, aside from John Tory? And 90%-plus of councillors are opposed to strong-mayor powers. Then, when it comes to Bill 39—they haven't done a survey yet, because this bill got rushed through so quickly, they haven't had time—the AMO board is unanimously opposed to this bill. They reached consensus. Yet, still you proceed. No amendments, ram it through committee—"good, good, good." It's not good. And your arguments keep changing all the time, so I know you're hearing it from your constituents, too—they don't think it's good either. When you guys start changing your message, it means that something is not going so well—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to remind the member to make her comments through the Chair.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm going to have the opportunity to do another 20 minutes on this bill, so I'm going to conclude by saying a few things.

This is a disastrous bill. It is a terrible, terrible, terrible bill, and it's got nothing to do with solving the housing affordability crisis.

If this government was serious about solving the housing affordability crisis, you would bring in better rent controls so Ontarians out there living in new homes aren't faced with a 15% rent increase come this Christmas, come January 1; this government would actually address the homelessness crisis and the mental health crisis, and build

affordable housing and supportive housing to meet the need—not some scattershot approach that maybe you're doing, plan-less.

Have a plan. Implement it. People need homes. Homes are for people.

This bill has nothing to do with providing homes to people; it's got everything to do with consolidating power to help yourselves.

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

Hon. Michael Parsa: It's always an honour to rise in this House and represent the wonderful people of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, who have given me an opportunity to be here and to represent them.

Speaker, before I go any further, I want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for his relentless work when it comes to solving the housing crisis in the province that we're facing. Let's go back to four and a half years ago, when our government was elected. All along the way, it's this minister, under the leadership of this Premier, who has been talking about the housing crisis in our province. Every single measure that we have put forward, the opposition has voted against. They will come in here and talk about housing; they'll vote against housing. They will come in here and talk about affordable housing; they will vote against affordable housing. They'll talk about the need to have more housing; they'll vote against the supply of housing in the province of Ontario. It doesn't matter what you put forward—you can clearly see the difference between us.

That's why, after the last election, the people of Ontario increased the number of seats for this government and gave us a bigger mandate to come back here and solve the crisis that we're facing because of 15 years of inaction by the previous government. And it's important to note and it's important to remind the people of Ontario that it was the NDP that held the balance of power for three of those years. They could have made housing a priority for the people of this province, but did they, colleagues? They didn't. They let the people of this province down.

Every single time, when you stand in this House and talk about the priority of housing, I want to ask my honourable colleagues, where were you when you had the opportunity? Where was this anger and outrage when you could have held the previous government to account? You could have made them—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind the minister now to make his comments through the Chair, please.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. That's all through you to my honourable colleagues across. And I want to remind them again, through you, of course, at every occasion, that the population of Ontario is going to grow by two million people in the next 10 years—coupled with the recent decision by the federal government to bring more new Canadians, which I welcome, which all of us welcome here.

Mr. Speaker, my family immigrated here, to this country. You've heard the government House leader, with passion, talk about what housing means to a new Canadian when they come in. We come with hopes and aspirations, with dreams. All come here to this country with a dream

of having the opportunity, through working hard, to own a home one day. That was my family—all along the way, my parents both worked very hard, and finally, after many, many, many years, they had the opportunity to buy a small home, and as a result, we were then given that opportunity.

The system, the previous government and, by extension, the opposition now have absolutely let down the people of this province—not only now, but future generations. If we don't do something about it now, imagine what it's going to be. If you think it's bad now, think about what it's going to be like five years and 10 years from now.

That is why we said to Ontarians—we're transparent with Ontarians. We told them housing is a priority of this government. We talked about it during the campaign, in the last provincial election. We said to Ontarians, "We're not going to let you down. We're going to do everything we can. We're going to work with all levels of government, with partners." Gone are the days when people are pitted against one another and nothing gets done. Under this government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, we're going to collaborate with everyone. We're going to work with local municipalities, we're going to work with the federal government, we're going to work with non-profits, we're going to work with the private sector to build more homes all across the province so that we don't let any Ontarians down. That is a promise that we made, and of course we're going to keep it.

Through one initiative that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has put forward, we are looking at a minimum of 50,000 homes being added to the province. Of course, we're going to be looking at that. We're going to look at any way to increase housing.

1520

Mr. Speaker, there's a balance. Our strong stance when it comes to protecting the environment—you've seen it. We're the leader in the country. Unlike what the opposition thinks, there's a balance to everything. You can do more than one thing. And that's what we're doing. That's what the Premier has asked us to do. We have two ministers responsible for housing in this province of Ontario. Why? Because the Premier sees a need. It's a priority for us to make sure that we get the job done for every single Ontarian in this province.

I do want to talk about one thing: Colleagues, there is a procedure—all of you are familiar; we just got the report back—where, after we debate a bill, this then goes to committee. All along you've heard it—during question period, outside of here. Every opportunity that the members of the opposition have gotten, they have criticized this bill. Right? Correct me if I'm wrong. And yet, colleagues, when it came to committee, how many amendments do you think the NDP put forward?

Interjections.

Hon. Michael Parsa: No. No.

I can tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, that's what the NDP will do—the NDP will come in and will—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Brantford—Brant, come to order. The Minister of Labour, come to order. The member for Waterloo, come to order.

The Associate Minister of Housing has the floor.

Hon. Michael Parsa: Thank you very much, Speaker. Partly, it's my fault, because I like to engage with my colleagues on all sides to make sure that—that's what a debate is to me.

You cannot have it both ways. You can't come in here and talk about housing but vote against it. You can't say housing is a priority for you but then put no solutions forward. That's what the NDP will do all along the way.

On this side of the House, we've been clear. We said we're pro-housing. We want to build more homes. We want to make sure we don't let down the people of this province.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Spadina—Fort York, come to order.

Hon. Michael Parsa: Mr. Speaker, I know some of my colleagues in the opposition are upset right now because they're looking at us getting good things done for the people of this province, and I don't know why they're not supporting us when it comes to doing so. This—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Member for Toronto—St. Paul's, come to order.

The Associate Minister of Housing can continue.

Hon. Michael Parsa: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to the number of people in this province, right now, we are seeing study after study, and we are being told—and we know this already. If you look at the last municipal election, every single candidate who was running for office heard the same thing: Housing is a huge priority for Ontarians.

If my colleagues across had actually listened in the last provincial elections, they wouldn't be shrinking in the corner across right now. That's the difference between a party that actually listens to the people and actually finds solutions for the people of this province and parties that don't. That's the difference between us and the opposition. We're looking at bold solutions. We said we were going to take action. We weren't going to sit on our hands and let this crisis get worse and worse over time—and it will. As I said at the beginning, it is going to get worse. If you don't do anything about the problem—we found out in the last 15 years—it is going to get worse.

So we have put forward solutions, whether it was the first bill that we put forward—which had many solutions that would not only expedite approval processing times but that provided a lot of protection for tenants as well. You've heard my honourable colleagues across talk about protection for tenants. Colleagues, do you think they voted for that bill that actually provided a ton of protection for tenants? No. They voted against that bill.

We know that what we put forward, we know that the great work of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, under the leadership of Premier Ford, and every member of this caucus—we know it's working.

Through the bills that we have put forward, in 2021, we saw a record number of housing starts in our province, over 100,000 housing starts in our province. Just to put that in perspective again, the last time we had this many housing starts was back in 1987. And it's important to note

that of the 100,000-plus we're talking about, 13,000 of them were purpose-built rental units. That is so important to talk about. Why is that so important? Because that 13,000 was a record number; the last time we had this many was back in 1991.

Interjections.

Hon. Michael Parsa: Yes, he deserves a great round of applause for his work.

So the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has been clear, the Premier has been clear—every member of this caucus has been clear with Ontarians that, yes, housing is a priority for us.

This is why, through the bills that we've put forward, we've talked about making units more affordable for Ontarians. Mr. Speaker, a single-family home in the GTA adds a cost of about \$116,900 to an average home in the GTA—you tell me if that's affordable; \$100,000 for a condominium in Toronto. Those fees are staggering, which is why more and more people in this province are not able to afford homes. And we've already seen that there are municipalities that are talking about further increasing those charges on the people, at a time when life is unaffordable, at a time when we are lowering the cost of living on all fronts. You saw the Minister of Finance, through the fall economic statement, putting measures to reduce the cost of living for Ontarians. At a time when we need to make life more affordable, we cannot look at a major purchase for a family, the largest purchase a family will ever make—you cannot make that more expensive. You have to look at ways to make life more affordable. So that means—looking at the bills that we've put forward—discount units, remove fees to make units more affordable for Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, you have seen leadership under this Premier, you have seen leadership under the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, for four and a half years. I am proud to be part of this government.

My message to every single Ontarian is, I know they let you down, I know they supported them; we won't. We have your back. You will have the dream of home ownership within reach—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Further debate?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Where to start with this horrendous bill? I will start with addressing my counterpart across the way, with his mention of building housing. We're all there on building housing. Let's do it now—shovels in the ground, as you like to say. You say this bill is bold; I would say it's timid. Housing: three units per site—come on, do four. Look at surface parking. There should be no surface parking in downtown Toronto. Like Manhattan, do parking underground. Build up the avenues. Look at our own provincial lands. Why aren't we looking at LCBO sites? Build them up—working with churches, looking in our own backyards. Actually be bold and build housing. This bill will not build housing.

You're always looking at building housing in the wrong places. You're looking at farmlands when you know darned well, in the city of Toronto, there are—we have a

letter from a bunch of planners. I'm sure you memorized this letter from 50 planning professionals based in Ontario and across the country with extensive leadership and experience—one, our own former chief planner, Paul Bedford, for the city of Toronto. He has huge credibility and a great reputation. There are 700,000 units in the pipeline in Toronto. That's almost half of your 1.5-million housing goal. So why not be looking at urban centres, existing neighbourhoods? Why go into the farmland? You have heard repeatedly from other groups—especially the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, representing 38,000 farmers. They're saying that class 1 farmland is instrumental—only 5% of Ontario's landscape is arable land. The Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve is the only agricultural preserve in Ontario. Why would we go in there when we have other places to go for housing? It's ridiculous. Give their letter a read. They talk about how instrumental it is for farmers; 1,600 farmers will be affected directly by this. You've seen the letters.

The process was horrific. Again, it was a day and a half—not even; half the day was for the minister. We heard from Parks Canada. Indigenous communities were not engaged. In a time of truth and reconciliation, why are we not walking the talk; why are we not doing better?

I'm sharing the time with my independent member down here, so I will be quick.

You've all received umpteen emails. You've seen the rallies. You are reading the tea leaves wrong on this. You have woken up every Ontarian. You cannot go into the greenbelt—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm sorry to interrupt the member. I'm going to remind her to make her comments through the Chair.

She has the floor.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I just have such an affection for my colleagues over there.

This is the wrong bill. This is the wrong place to build housing.

I'm passing the time over to my colleague.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, let's be clear with the people of Ontario what we're debating with Bill 39. We are debating turning over centuries of democratic principles. That's what's at stake right now—the democratic principle of majority rule. We all know Winston Churchill's famous quote that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others that have been tried; well, I guess the government wants to try another form of government called “minority rule” at city councils. That's what's at stake right here.

I used to think Conservatives were about conserving things. They're certainly not about conserving democratic institutions and democratic principles. They're certainly not conserving class 1 and 2 farmland in the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

We don't need to get rid of democracy and democratic principles to build housing, to restore the dream of home ownership. We don't need to pave over the farmland that feeds us and dismantle environmental protections to build

the housing people need that's affordable in the communities where they want to live.

The government's own Housing Affordability Task Force, hand-picked by the Premier, didn't put forward things I always support, but they put forward a number of solutions that the government is actually not even bringing forward. The task force never said, "Open the greenbelt for development." They never said, "Get rid of the triple protections on the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve." And they never said, "Overturn democratic rule in this province."

A couple of things they did talk about, in Bills 44 and 45, were getting rid of exclusionary zoning, so we can bring in gentle density—so if the government truly wants to restore home ownership, why don't we pass Bill 44, which I've put forward, which puts forward the housing task force recommendations on how to do gentle density? And while we're at it, let's pass Bill 45, which shows how we can bring in mid-rise development across this province, so we can actually build homes that people can afford, close to where they work, in communities where they want to live, without paving over the farmland that feeds us and contributes \$50 billion to the province's economy. We can do it without undermining democracy like Bill 39 does.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have for this debate.

The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy reports the following bill without amendment:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022.

Mr. Thanigasalam has moved the adoption of the report. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1534 to 1539.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Pirie, George
Babikian, Aris	Harris, Mike	Quinn, Nolan
Bailey, Robert	Hogarth, Christine	Rae, Matthew
Barnes, Patrice	Holland, Kevin	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bouma, Will	Jones, Trevor	Sabawy, Sheref
Bressee, Ric	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Byers, Rick	Ke, Vincent	Sarrazin, Stéphanie
Calandra, Paul	Khanjin, Andrea	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Cho, Stan	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Clark, Steve	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Coe, Lorne	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Laura
Crawford, Stephen	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Surma, Kinga
Dixon, Jess	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Dowie, Andrew	McGregor, Graham	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Thompson, Lisa M.
Flack, Rob	Mulrone, Caroline	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.

Fullerton, Merrilee	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wai, Daisy
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pang, Billy	Williams, Charmaine A.
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	Yakabuski, John
Gill, Parm	Piccini, David	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Pierre, Natalie	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Hunter, Mitzi	Shamji, Adil
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bowman, Stephanie	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Collard, Lucille	Mantha, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	
Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra	

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 67; the nays are 25.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: As many of you know, December 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. On this day, we honour and remember the 14 women who were killed and the 13 individuals who were injured at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal 33 years ago by a gunman. This horrible, hate-filled attack is etched forever in our memory as an example of the violence that 27 victims suffered on that terrible day. Today is also a day we remember the countless other women and girls who are victims and survivors of gender-based violence.

It is our solemn duty to learn from the past, continue to support survivors of violence and acknowledge the names and the memory of women and girls who have tragically had their lives cut short.

Speaker, if I may, I would like to read the names of the women who died on that terrible day in Montreal:

- Geneviève Bergeron, age 21;
- Hélène Colgan, age 23;
- Nathalie Croteau, age 23;
- Barbara Daigneault, age 22;
- Anne-Marie Edward, age 21;
- Maud Haviernick, age 29;
- Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz, age 31;

- Maryse Laganière, age 25;
- Maryse Leclair, age 23;
- Anne-Marie Lemay, age 22;
- Sonia Pelletier, age 28;
- Michèle Richard, age 21;
- Annie St-Arneault, age 23;
- Annie Turcotte, age 20.

On that terrible day, 14 young women who were experiencing some of the best years of their lives lost everything because they were women. As I read those names, I am struck by how much potential each one of these young women had. Their lives were only just beginning. They had achievements waiting for them, memories to be made, people to connect with and, undoubtedly, so much more to experience in life.

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women is a time to mourn this loss of life and a time to restate our commitment to ending gender-based violence. Our government has zero tolerance for violence against women and girls. We believe that all Ontarians have the right to live freely, safely and in peace. Sadly, the majority of Canadians know someone who has been abused. The statistics are staggering: One in three Canadian women will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. Women are three times more likely to be stalked and three and a half times more likely to be victims of intimate partner violence. Approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.

Speaker, as Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, a physician and a mother, these statistics are deeply concerning. That is why we are working with community partners to prevent violence against women and ensure that survivors have the supports that they need. We're also working with all levels of government, and we were pleased to endorse the first National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence last month.

Words are not enough. We are investing millions in programming to address the root causes of this violence and implementing innovative programming to support recovery. For example, last year we invested \$11 million in violence prevention initiatives and nearly \$200 million in services and supports for survivors of violence. This investment provides critical services such as crisis lines, sexual assault centres and emergency shelters for women and their children.

It also funds programs across the province that connect women who have experienced violence with a wide range of wraparound supports to help them heal and rebuild their lives. These supports include safety planning, counselling, mental health services, supportive housing and culturally responsive healing programs.

We're also investing in additional community supports specifically for victims and survivors of human trafficking through our five-year, \$307-million anti-human trafficking strategy. Many of these programs are focused on children and youth, as they are at increased risk of being targeted, lured, groomed and manipulated by traffickers due to their young age and vulnerability.

1550

We are now in the third year of our strategy to combat human trafficking and child sexual exploitation, and we

will continue to use every tool we can to reach these girls before offenders have the opportunity to exploit them.

It is also critical that we work to support culturally responsive interventions and solutions to human trafficking and broader issues of violence against Indigenous women. Indigenous women are three times more likely to experience violent victimization than non-Indigenous women, and they are two and a half times more likely to experience spousal violence. Indigenous women and girls also experience increased vulnerabilities to being targeted by human traffickers and being trafficked. In response to this, we are investing \$96 million in community organizations that support victims and survivors of trafficking through our anti-human trafficking strategy—including programs designed by and for Indigenous people. We are also investing \$80 million this year in the Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy, which supports a continuum of Indigenous-designed-and-delivered holistic programs. These programs focus on reducing family violence and violence against Indigenous women and children, as well as improving Indigenous healing, health and wellness.

This work is so important in our elimination of gender-based violence, and we will not stop until every woman and girl can live without fear.

We must continue to have open and honest conversations about violence against women, and encourage survivors to bring their stories forward as they feel safe doing so. And we must continue to educate boys and girls, men and women, about what a healthy, equal and non-violent relationship looks like.

I ask all members of this House to join me in honouring the women whose lives have been cut short by violence, and to commit to creating safer communities and a better future for all women and girls.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Chers collègues, je suis heureuse de m'adresser à vous aujourd'hui pour annoncer que nous avons franchi une étape importante pour l'avancement des services en français dans notre province.

Il y a un an, le 9 décembre 2021, les modifications proposées à la Loi sur les services en français recevaient la sanction royale après avoir été adoptées dans cette enceinte.

Telle que mise de l'avant par notre gouvernement, la modernisation de cette loi phare représente un jalon important dans l'histoire de l'Ontario. Pour la première fois en 35 ans, la loi a été amendée de manière significative pour répondre aux besoins et aspirations de la communauté francophone.

Comme le disait si bien le père des Jeux olympiques modernes, Pierre de Coubertin : « Chaque difficulté rencontrée doit être l'occasion d'un nouveau progrès. »

La livraison des services à la communauté francophone présentait auparavant une préoccupation majeure, puisque le fardeau de trouver une offre convenable reposait sur les épaules des utilisatrices et des utilisateurs.

Durant les consultations publiques sur les services en français qui se sont déroulées à l'été de 2021, la mise en

oeuvre de l'offre active revêtait une importance primordiale pour les intervenants qui se sont exprimés durant cet exercice. Nous avons donc procédé à un changement de paradigme important, et il s'agit là d'une avancée historique.

En plus de veiller à la responsabilisation accrue des ministères, des agences gouvernementales et des organismes tiers en matière de prestation de services en français, cette loi modernisée fait de l'offre active la pierre angulaire de l'accès à des services en français de qualité.

Alors que nous soulignons le premier anniversaire de sa promulgation, je suis heureuse d'annoncer que nous avons maintenant créé un règlement portant spécifiquement sur l'offre active. L'offre active de services en français incombe désormais aux fournisseurs. Ce nouveau règlement prévoit donc l'établissement de neuf mesures précises, visant à ce que les organismes devant offrir des services au nom du gouvernement soient proactifs. Les Ontariennes et les Ontariens qui souhaitent en bénéficier sauront dès le début de leur démarche que ceux-ci sont disponibles. Le service en français sera assuré, du début à la fin du processus.

Tous les ministères, les agences dont la majorité des membres du conseil d'administration sont nommés par le Conseil des ministres, les institutions relevant de l'Assemblée législative, les organismes désignés et les tierces parties mandatées contractuellement pour offrir des services au nom du gouvernement y seront assujettis. La date butoir pour la mise en place de ce calendrier s'échelonnait entre le 1^{er} avril et le 1^{er} octobre 2023. L'Ontario est désormais l'une des juridictions canadiennes possédant le cadre législatif le plus étoffé au niveau de l'offre active des services en français.

La modernisation de la loi s'inscrit dans une démarche stratégique pangouvernementale selon laquelle l'offre de services en français passe par l'accès accru à une main-d'oeuvre francophone et bilingue, et par la mise en oeuvre de modèles de prestation intégrés, bien adaptés aux besoins d'une communauté qui fait vibrer ses accents aux quatre coins de la province.

Les travaux de notre gouvernement pour la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français, ainsi que nos efforts soutenus pour soutenir le développement culturel et économique de la francophonie, témoignent de notre engagement envers la vitalité et l'épanouissement de la francophonie ontarienne.

Je remercie donc l'ensemble de mes collègues, ainsi que les membres de cette Assemblée, pour leur appui et leur engagement. Je suis très fière du travail que nous avons accompli ensemble, en collaboration avec les acteurs du milieu, pour répondre aux demandes de longue date de la francophonie ontarienne.

La volonté de notre gouvernement est claire et sans ambages : qu'ils soient d'ici ou d'ailleurs, toutes celles et tous ceux qui contribuent au développement de la francophonie ontarienne, à sa richesse culturelle et à son essor économique, méritent d'évoluer dans des conditions propices à leur réussite.

Madame la Présidente, chers collègues et membres de l'Assemblée, merci de votre attention.

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

MPP Jill Andrew: Today I stand in honour of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The key word here is "action." To truly honour the 14 women murdered means to act so that it doesn't happen again, because, sadly, this massacre was not an isolated moment in time. Since 1990, there have been at least 980 femicides in our province alone.

This past May, four Indigenous women were viciously murdered as an act of femicide. We must remember their names too: Rebecca Contois, Mercedes Myran, Morgan Beatrice Harris, and the one who elders named Buffalo Woman. Each of these women had their full lives in front of them and they should still be living today. But because of violent misogyny, racism and colonialism, they are not.

Gender-based violence, including femicide, is a national epidemic. Let's start by naming exactly what it is. Despite being a national epidemic, the province still has a role to play. The government's endorsement of the national action plan on violence against women is not enough. It is more words or empty signals when there's no action backing it up.

1600

Earlier this year, the Renfrew county inquest was published in response to the femicide of three women in Renfrew county, with 86 total recommendations; 68 of these are under the province's mandate. These 68 have yet to be answered to with any plan of action and, importantly, budget to implement them. These include establishing an independent intimate partner violence commission, a survivors' advocate so survivors and their families and communities have a voice at the table; ensuring an annualized funding model is applied across the sector so each dollar can be spent on community care, not administration and reporting; and developing a plan for real, affordable, second-stage housing so that shelters aren't the only housing available. These are just a few of the many at hand for this government that they continually fail to answer to.

I also want to note that this is too often framed as a women's issue. This is as much a women's issue as a men's issue. I want to thank the organization Counterpoint, in St. Paul's, for recognizing this and putting in the work there with their counselling and educational programs dedicated for men's learning specifically. Prevention does not happen without men's work too.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response?

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Guy Bourgouin: J'ai écouté attentivement l'allocation de la ministre. L'offre active, c'est bien, mais je peux vous dire que quand ils ont fait les changements, la communauté francophone est restée sur son appétit. Trop souvent, on voit dans l'offre active que les paroles sont bien, mais des fois le service n'est pas là.

Je vois aussi que quand on parle de la communauté franco-ontarienne, on parle de l'Université de Sudbury. La communauté, ça fait longtemps qu'elle demande d'avoir un réseau. Je sais que le gouvernement travaille attentivement avec l'université pour faire avancer le dossier. Je sais aussi que la communauté, la coalition de Sudbury, demande à la ministre ou au ministère de faire un compte rendu, parce que je pense que la communauté a besoin de savoir où on est rendu dans ce dossier-là. Pourquoi? C'est important pour la communauté. La communauté demande le transfert des cours de la Laurentienne à l'Université de Sudbury, parce que la communauté a perdu confiance en la Laurentienne.

On voit aussi que si on a appris quelque chose pendant la pandémie—s'il y a de quoi qu'on aurait dû apprendre, que le gouvernement aurait dû apprendre—c'est de mettre des unités de santé publique, des services de santé publique assujettis à la Loi sur les services en français. Pourquoi ne le sont-ils pas? Ils devraient l'être. Ça fait partie, je pense, d'un bon système de santé.

Une des grosses demandes—on sait que le commissaire fait un très bon travail. Mais la communauté demande toujours de ravoir son commissaire indépendant. Je pense qu'on a travaillé dur pour l'avoir. Pour une raison quelconque, ce gouvernement a voulu le retirer. Je pense que, notre communauté, on mérite notre commissaire.

Mais aussi, une chose dont on entend souvent parler le gouvernement, c'est que c'est important aussi de parler des organismes à but non lucratif. C'est eux autres qui gardent notre langue. C'est eux autres qui gardent notre culture. On parle des AFO de ce monde. On parle de tous ces organismes à but non lucratif. On a besoin de les subventionner. Ils ont de l'argent du fédéral. La province devrait faire beaucoup mieux que ce qu'on fait là, car ils sauvent notre langue et notre culture.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to advise that in keeping with the spirit of the standing orders, we have reduced our speaking time to five minutes as a group.

Madame la Présidente, j'apprécie vraiment que le gouvernement fasse des efforts pour changer l'opinion qu'ont les francophones de ce gouvernement quand on parle d'appui à nos communautés francophones. Mais les francophones n'ont pas oublié les coupures dévastatrices de ce gouvernement dans les services francophones. Et malgré certaines mesures avancées par le gouvernement depuis, nous n'avons toujours pas rattrapé le retard.

Je vais donc aujourd'hui présenter un récit qui vise à apporter un peu plus de compréhension sur les défis de la communauté franco-ontarienne. C'est important parce que les francophones à travers la province se sentent laissés pour compte.

Les conseils scolaires ont un grand déficit au niveau des infrastructures scolaires, qui ne répondent pas aux besoins des familles désirant faire instruire leurs enfants en français. Les inscriptions dans les écoles francophones augmentent à un rythme plus élevé que dans les écoles anglophones; pourtant, les investissements en infrastructure ne reflètent pas cette réalité.

L'impact réel est que des parents francophones font le choix difficile d'inscrire leurs enfants dans une école anglophone plutôt que de les envoyer dans un système francophone sous-financé.

Ce phénomène se produit aussi en région alors que les parents choisissent une école anglophone qui est à proximité plutôt que d'imposer à leurs enfants un long trajet en autobus pour se rendre à la seule école francophone du coin.

La croissance de la demande pour l'éducation française nécessite plus de travailleurs francophones en éducation. Les efforts pour adresser la grave pénurie de main-d'œuvre ne sont malheureusement pas suffisants, parce que les recommandations fournies par le groupe de travail que le gouvernement a mis lui-même sur pied ne sont tout simplement pas mises en oeuvre.

Comme l'éducation est la racine de notre société, c'est là où l'on devrait investir le plus si l'on veut pouvoir combler les besoins en main-d'œuvre francophone dans toutes les sphères de notre société—en éducation, oui, mais aussi en santé et dans les services juridiques, entre autres.

Tous ces enjeux d'accès à des services essentiels qui peuvent être pris pour acquis pour le reste de la population sont des questions non seulement qui compliquent la vie des Franco-Ontariens, mais qui leur causent souvent des préjudices irréparables.

J'encourage donc le gouvernement à continuer et ouvrir encore plus le dialogue avec la communauté francophone pour mieux comprendre comment agir afin que les Franco-Ontariens ne se sentent pas laissés pour compte. Je suis à votre disponibilité pour faciliter cet engagement.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response?

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Today I rise as well to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. On this day, we recognize the ongoing violence against women in all parts of Canada. We reflect on and honour the lives lost to gender-based violence and femicide.

It's been 33 years since the devastating shooting at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal. As a young woman myself, I remember that event well and the feeling that it was an assault against all women, that these young women, these aspiring engineers, were shot or killed only because they were women.

There were 13 young women injured and 14 young women dead. I thank the minister for naming those murdered. As long as we name them, they will be remembered.

This tragic loss of life is one that changed their families forever. It changed Canada forever, and it serves as a constant reminder of the continued existence of violent misogyny in our country.

As stated by the other members, women from Indigenous, BIPOC and LGBTQ2S+ communities are more likely to face gender-based violence than other women in Canada. It's important that we bring our focus to these

realities and the many crises that continue to exist, including the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit plus people.

Just last week, a man was arrested for the murder of four Indigenous women in Manitoba, also named here earlier: Morgan Beatrice Harris, Mercedes Myran, Rebecca Contois and one who remains unnamed.

We can and must do more. I ask this government to update Ontarians on the status of the recommendations for change proposed in the Renfrew county inquest six months ago following the gender-based murders of three Ontario women: Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam. I call on the federal government to work to include femicide in the Criminal Code as one important step of many more necessary to end gender-based violence in Canada.

We must take an intersectional approach to addressing these acts of harm against women, especially as we become more aware that gender-based violence is not limited to traditional gender identities.

As MPP for Don Valley West, I'm committed to doing my part to eliminate gender-based violence in Ontario and Canada, and I know the rest of the House is as well.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I move that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet during the winter 2022-23 adjournment of the House at the call of the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Ms. Khanjin has moved that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet during the winter 2022-23 adjournment of the House at the call of the Chair.

1610

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?
Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is entitled "Develop an Ontario Dementia Strategy.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it currently takes far too long for people in Ontario to get an official dementia diagnosis, with patients often waiting years to complete testing;

"Whereas early diagnosis saves lives and more than half of patients suspected of having dementia in Ontario never get a full diagnosis;

"Whereas a PET scan test approved in 2017 that can be used for detecting the disease early is still not covered under OHIP;

"Whereas the Alzheimer Society projects that one million Canadians will be caregivers for people with dementia, with families pitching in about 1.4 billion hours of care per year by 2050;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to develop and commit to an Ontario dementia strategy."

It is my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Max.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is entitled "Implement the Renfrew County Inquest to End Femicide in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas since 2015, the same year of the tragic femicides of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew county, there have been at least 273 women killed in acts of femicide in Ontario;

"Whereas the Renfrew county inquest was published in June 2022 outlining 86 recommendations, 68 of which are under provincial jurisdiction, in order to respond to and prevent intimate partner violence and femicide;

"Whereas the provincial government has yet to respond to the Renfrew county inquest recommendations in any meaningful way;

"Whereas Black women, Indigenous women, racialized women, trans women and non-binary folks, unhoused women, women with disabilities, and women living in rural or remote communities are at a greater risk of femicide due to systemic discrimination and structural inequities that make accessing resources far more difficult;

"Whereas femicide is an epidemic;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to respond and report publicly on the findings of the Renfrew county inquest with specific and timely plans of action and accompanying budget to support implementation of the report's recommendations to eliminate intimate partner violence in Ontario."

I wholeheartedly support this petition, I've affixed my signature and I will hand it to Grace.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Adil Shamji: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a basic principle of health care is that it must be patient-centred instead of profit-centred; and

"Whereas the introduction of profit in health care has consistently led to poorer health outcomes in Canada and around the world; and

"Whereas the introduction of profits and privatized health care creates a division between those who can afford it and those who cannot;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact the following measures:

“(1) Recommit to honouring and defending the Canada Health Act;

“(2) Guarantee that health care in Ontario will not be privatized;

“(3) Ensure that in every case, health care system decisions are patient-centred and not profit-centred;

“(4) Commit to solve the challenges in our health care system through public and not-for-profit initiatives.”

I support this petition. I am signing it and am pleased to hand it to page Yusuf.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Lise Vaugeois: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are over 900,000 Ontarians who are forced to rely on social assistance;

“Whereas Doug Ford’s Conservatives promised to raise Ontario Disability Support Program ... rates by only 5%, and have provided no additional support for those who receive Ontario Works...;

“Whereas inflation is at a 40-year high and people on fixed incomes are forced to make sacrifices every day just to survive;

“Whereas both ODSP and OW recipients live in legislated deep poverty, a meager \$58 increase to ODSP and no additional support for OW recipients will do virtually nothing to improve the lives of people living on social assistance;

“Therefore, we the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately double social assistance rates, so that people can live dignified, healthy lives.”

I support this petition, will sign it and give it to Alex to submit.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition titled “Ontario Dementia Strategy.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it currently takes on average 18 months for people in Ontario to get an official dementia diagnosis, with some patients often waiting years to complete diagnostic testing;

“Whereas more than half of patients suspected of having dementia in Ontario never get a full diagnosis; research confirms that early diagnosis saves lives and reduces care-partner stress;

“Whereas a PET scan test approved in Ontario in 2017 which can be key to detecting Alzheimer’s early, is still not covered under OHIP in 2022;

“Whereas the Ontario government must work together with the federal government to prepare for the approval and rollout of future disease-modifying therapies and research;

“Whereas the Alzheimer Society projects that one million Canadians will be caregivers for people with dementia, with families providing approximately 1.4 billion hours of care per year by 2050;

“Whereas research findings show that Ontario will spend \$27.8 billion between 2023 and 2043 on alternate-level-of-care (ALC) and long-term-care (LTC) costs associated with people living with dementia;

“Whereas the government must follow through with its commitment to ensure Ontario’s health care system has the capacity to meet the current and future needs of people living with dementia and their care partners;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to develop, commit and fund a comprehensive Ontario dementia strategy.”

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Jessica Bell: This petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly for a meaningful climate action plan.

“Whereas our planet is undergoing significant warming with adverse consequences for health, for agriculture, for infrastructure and our children’s future;

“Whereas the costs of inaction are severe, such as extreme weather events causing flooding and drought;

“Whereas Canada has signed the Paris accord which commits us to acting to keep temperature rise under 1.5 degrees ...;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to develop GHC reduction targets based on science that will meet our Paris commitment, an action plan to meet those targets and annual reporting on progress on meeting the targets....”

I fully support this petition, and I’ll be giving it to page Grace.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This petition is entitled, “Implement the Renfrew County Inquest to End Femicide in Ontario.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas since 2015, the same year of the tragic femicides of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew county, there have been at least 273 women killed in acts of femicide in Ontario;

“Whereas the Renfrew county inquest was published in June 2022 outlining 86 recommendations, 68 of which are under provincial jurisdiction, in order to respond to and prevent intimate partner violence and femicide;

“Whereas the provincial government has yet to respond to the Renfrew county inquest recommendations in any meaningful way;

“Whereas Black women, Indigenous women, racialized women, trans women and non-binary folks, unhoused women, women with disabilities, and women living in

rural or remote communities are at a greater risk of femicide due to systemic discrimination and structural inequities that make accessing resources far more difficult;

“Whereas femicide is an epidemic;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to respond and report publicly on the findings of the Renfrew county inquest with specific and timely plans of action and accompanying budget to support implementation of the report’s recommendations to eliminate intimate partner violence in Ontario.”

I support this petition, will be signing it and giving it to page Alex to return to the table.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Karen Barnes from Chelmsford in my riding for these petitions.

“Health Care: Not for Sale....

“Whereas Ontarians get health care based on their needs, not their ability to pay;

“Whereas the Ford government wants to privatize our health care system;

“Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of our public hospitals and will download costs to patients;

1620

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to privatize Ontario’s health care system, and fix the crisis in health care by:

“—repealing Bill 124 to help recruit, retain, return and respect health care workers with better pay and better working conditions;

“—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario;

“—incentivizing health care professionals to choose to live and work in northern Ontario.”

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

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the good people of Huron Shores and Bruce Mines, the cattlemen’s association and the farmers who are there. The petition is entitled “Protect the Greenbelt.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 23 is the Ford government’s latest attempt to remove protected land from the greenbelt, allowing developers to bulldoze and pave over 7,000 acres of farmland in the greenbelt;

“Whereas Ontario is already losing 319.6 acres of farmland and green space daily to development;

“Whereas the government’s Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes without destroying the greenbelt;

“Whereas Ford’s repeated moves to tear up farmland and bulldoze wetlands have never been about housing, but are about making the rich richer;

“Whereas green spaces and farmland are what we rely on to grow our food, support natural habitats and prevent flooding;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately amend Bill 23, stop all plans to further remove protected land from the greenbelt and protect existing farmland in the province by passing the NDP’s Protecting Agricultural Land Act.”

I fully agree with this petition and send it to page Alex to bring down to the Clerk’s table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jill Andrew: This is titled “Petition to Raise Social Assistance Rates.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s social assistance rates are well below Canada’s official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and soon \$1,227 for ODSP;

“Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

“Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens well below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

“Whereas the government of Canada recognized in its CERB program that a basic income of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.”

I absolutely support this petition. We must end legislated poverty. I’m handing it to Grace for tabling.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I’d like to thank Roxanne Tremblay from Garson in my riding for these petitions.

“911 Everywhere in Ontario....

“Whereas when we face an emergency we all know to dial 911 for help; and

“Whereas access to emergency services through 911 is not available in all regions of Ontario but most Ontarians believe that it is; and

“Whereas many Ontarians have discovered that 911 was not available while they faced an emergency; and

“Whereas all Ontarians expect and deserve access to 911 service, throughout our province;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To provide 911 emergency response everywhere in Ontario by land line or cellphone.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to Alex to bring to the Clerk.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition here to stop the elimination of the 69 Warden South bus route.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Toronto Transit Commission’s annual service plan seeks to replace route 69 Warden South by the existing 135 Gerrard and the new 117 Birchmount South operating from Warden Station to Bingham Loop;

“Whereas 69 Warden South is an essential route for the residents of Scarborough, especially residents of Scarborough Southwest;

“Whereas for families, youth, students and seniors, the 69 Warden South is the only way for them to access public services such as the Albert Campbell library and the Warden subway station;

“Whereas many youth and seniors living in Scarborough Southwest have to rely on public transit to access basic necessities such as groceries, pharmacies and health care;

“Whereas the proposed growth plan for Scarborough along Kingston Road requires proper transit planning and accessibility for residents both current and future;

“Whereas the replacement route is longer, inefficient, and eliminate door-to-door service for many, requiring extra walking, and would make many places like the Taylor Memorial library, Birchmount Community Centre, Birchmount Stadium, Scarborough Gardens, grocery stores such as Tasteco, Sun Valley, Red Rose Halal, and many more completely inaccessible by public transit;

“Whereas the average daily ridership on this route is 3,900 people on weekdays and 2,100 people on Saturday, and 1,800 people on Sunday;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the elimination of the 69 Warden South bus route, which is essential to the day-to-day travels and livelihoods of all Scarborough Southwest residents and establishments and call on the Toronto Transit Commission to do a consultation and study that provides the services that the residents of Scarborough need.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 6, 2022, on the motion for time allocation of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act / Projet de loi 51, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I believe, when we left off, the member for London West was speaking. You may resume debate.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: When we left off the debate, I was just recapping some of the measures that are set out in Bill 51. Right now, we’re debating a time allocation motion to move this bill through, immediately, to a third reading vote without a third reading debate.

Basically, what this legislation does is transfer significant responsibility for the oversight of the Legislative Assembly to the Board of Internal Economy from the Speaker’s office. It empowers the Board of Internal Economy to appoint or dismiss employees of the Legislative Assembly. It gives them the responsibility to prescribe the duties and functions of employees of the Legislature. It empowers them to allocate the office space within the legislative precinct—and I should point out here that, although it does include some provisions about how MPPs are prioritized in the allocation of office space, it makes no mention of official opposition or independent MPPs having priority access to office space. It simply says that the members who are not parliamentary assistants shall have priority over the members who are parliamentary assistants.

Other measures included in this bill: It makes the Board of Internal Economy responsible for control of the legislative precinct. It also redefines “legislative precinct” to remove the basement of Whitney Block, and despite repeated questions that we raised during second reading debate, we never got a clear answer from the government as to why that change is being proposed. Finally, it makes the Board of Internal Economy responsible for accessibility plans.

This may be something that is done in other provinces. The big question, I think, for us is, why now? What was broken that the government decided it was so important to bring forward this amendment to the Legislative Assembly Act without any prior consultation or discussion with either the official opposition or—I don’t know about you, Speaker, or if the independent MPPs were consulted on these changes in advance. I can say with certainty that the official opposition was not consulted in any way—and this really contrasts with the last set of amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act that were brought forward in 2020. Bill 167 set out a number of changes. At that time, the government House leader shared some of those proposals with the official opposition in advance so that we could take a look at those proposals and consider whether they were supportable or not. In this case, we got the legislation on a Wednesday, we were debating it on a Thursday, and now, on a Tuesday, we are looking at seeing it move immediately to a final third reading vote tomorrow.

1630

The other provision that’s included in this bill is to transfer the responsibility for appointing or dismissing the Sergeant-at-Arms from the Speaker to the Legislative Assembly. Once again, maybe that makes sense—I don’t know—but the question is, what was so wrong with the process that is currently being used for appointing or removing the Sergeant-at-Arms?

None of those questions that we raised and that we were curious about when we saw this bill have been appropriately and fulsomely addressed by the government.

When I talked about the major responsibilities that this legislation gives to the Board of Internal Economy—one of our concerns is, who is on the Board of Internal Economy? We know that up until 2012, the Board of Internal Economy was a board that had majority government representation. It was only in 2012 that a change was made to structure the Board of Internal Economy as a consensus body. There's a representative from government, and there are representatives from the recognized parties. Currently, there are two members of the Board of Internal Economy—the government House leader and our official whip—and the Speaker is also on that board, as a non-voting member. However, that composition of the Board of Internal Economy is set out in legislation, in the Legislative Assembly Act, which means that we could see further amendments to change the composition of the Board of Internal Economy. This would not be unexpected.

Just today, we got the report of the standing committee on Bill 39, which is part 2 of the government plan to create and then expand strong-mayor powers in the province; they did that in two parts. My colleague spoke to that bill and pointed out the first part of Bill 3, the original strong-mayor bill. Bill 39, the bill that was reported today, just moves that much further in extending those strong-mayor powers. Most troublingly, it also completely undermines our published democratic traditions, the fundamental tenets of representative democracy, by allowing elected municipal councils—right now, in Toronto and Ottawa, but we know the government intends to expand those powers to other municipalities. It allows municipal councils to make decisions on behalf of the people who elected them on the basis of just one third of the members of the council, effectively silencing the two thirds of councillors who may be opposed to this decision that the strong mayor wants to push through with the support of just one third of their members. In a democracy, majority rule has been a fundamental principle of how we function as a democratic system, and the government has decided that that is no longer going to be the case in municipalities across the province and has moved forward with Bill 39.

During the debate, we heard the government House leader say, "Trust us. We wouldn't change the composition of the Board of Internal Economy." Frankly, Ontarians don't have a lot of trust in this government. Ontarians heard the Premier assure them numerous times, repeatedly, that the greenbelt would not be opened, that there would be no carving out of the greenbelt, and yet, despite those repeated public pronouncements, the government brought in a bill, Bill 23, that did just that. It carved out the greenbelt, contrary to those promises, those commitments, that had been made by the Premier. And not only did it carve out the greenbelt, but there are lots of legitimate questions that people are asking about how the decision as to where the boundary is going to be changed was made, because there are wealthy land speculators,

wealthy developers, wealthy donors to the PC Party who are going to be profiting enormously from those changes that were made to the greenbelt. So when we hear the government House leader saying, "Just trust us"—frankly, we don't have that trust.

If the government leader was genuine in his assertions that the changes that are set out in this bill will really improve the functioning of this place and will go further in empowering members, as he likes to claim he has done—if that was really the case, he would have talked to the official opposition, he would have talked to the independent members, saying, "I'm thinking of doing this. What do you think? Do you agree that it would help us work more effectively as a Legislature?" But no, that was not the process that the government House leader chose to follow.

I was reading the Hansard of the debate last Thursday, and there were some interesting comments that were made by the government House leader on those issues. He said, "Now, the member opposite says"—he was referring to my colleague the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane—"Well, they could change the composition of the Board of Internal Economy." If I wanted to do that," said the government House leader, "I'd just simply change the composition of the Board of Internal Economy. I wouldn't need any of this. It would be a heck of a lot easier for me to present a two-line bill changing the Board of Internal Economy to government-majority rule."

As we saw with strong-mayors part 1 and part 2, this could simply be a further centralization of government control—part 1, which is going to be followed by part 2, of changes to the Board of Internal Economy.

Later, the government House leader said this: "But the legislation ensures that, for now, myself and the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane will have a voice at that table"—meaning the Board of Internal Economy—"and will get to decide and help put in place a framework...." His reference stating that the legislation ensures that, for now, that is the case really sounds the alarm for us, because it suggests that just as there was one composition of the Board of Internal Economy that was in place until 2012 and that was changed, it would be very easy for a further change to be made to the Board of Internal Economy to give the government majority control and, therefore, the power over all of the scaffolding of the Legislative Assembly, all of those new provisions that are going to be assigned to the Board of Internal Economy through this act.

This is just simply not something that we are willing to support. We are not going to trust the government House leader, who didn't even have the courtesy to approach us and share some of these ideas with the official opposition in advance. We are certainly not going to be supporting this time allocation motion that is currently being debated, that would see this bill go immediately to a vote when it is next brought before this chamber.

For that reason, Speaker, I now move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The MPP for London West has moved the adjournment of the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

This is a 30-minute bell. I’m calling in the members.

The division bells rang from 1641 to 1711.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Members, please take your seats.

MPP Sattler has moved the adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerks.

All those opposed to the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerks.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 0; the nays are 82.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I declare the motion lost.

Further debate? The member for London West had the floor.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Speaker.

So we’re back to the time allocation motion on Bill 51, the Legislative Assembly Amendment Act. What this time allocation motion does is it takes the bill from where it was sitting at a committee, waiting to receive public input, and it allows the government to call the bill, without any committee input, for—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Order, please. Sorry, stop the clock.

We’re just going to wait a couple of moments. If people need to move, please do that quietly so that we can hear the member speaking. Thank you very much.

The member for London West can continue.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. This time allocation motion enables the government to skip the committee process, to bring this bill forward for a vote on third reading without any debate and then pass it. It is a way of fast-tracking legislation that has been quite typical of this government. Everything about this bill has been typical of this government. It was introduced on a Wednesday. It was called for second reading debate the very next day, and that is something that the government has done routinely throughout this session—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I apologize to interrupt the member.

Pursuant to standing order 50(b), I am required to put the question.

Ms. Khanjin has moved government notice of motion number 10 relating to allocation of time on Bill 51, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

BETTER MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT À AMÉLIORER LA GOUVERNANCE MUNICIPALE

Mr. Clark moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 and to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Repeal Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 39, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités et à édicter la Loi de 2022 abrogeant la Loi sur la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The Minister of Housing can lead off debate.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, it’s a great pleasure for me to lead off debate on third reading of our proposed Better Municipal Governance Act. At the onset of my speech, I want to indicate that I’ll be sharing the government’s time with my colleagues the Associate Minister of Housing and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Housing.

I’m proud to speak about the good work that we know Bill 39 will do if it’s passed. The proposed act is another step towards fulfilling our commitment to get 1.5 million homes built by 2031.

Madam Speaker, it’s great to see you in the chair this afternoon.

I want to start the conversation by reminding members of this House that our government received a very strong mandate when we were re-elected in June. The mandate we had was to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and their budgets. I also want to point out that in achieving that goal, municipal governments continue to play a very large and essential role in helping us fulfill that mandate.

As Ontario’s Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, it’s my job to make sure that municipalities have the tools that they need to get more homes built quickly. That’s exactly what this legislation is going to provide.

At the start, Madam Speaker, I want to talk about the housing crisis. Ontario is a growing and prospering province, and it is indeed the best place in the world to call home. But it’s hard to call Ontario home when you can’t find a home that you can afford. That, unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, is the situation today in our province, where far too many young people are nearly giving up on the dream of home ownership.

The housing supply shortage that we have in Ontario affects all Ontarians, whether you live in rural, urban or suburban Ontario, whether you live in the north, the south, the east or the west. Our government recognizes the scale and the seriousness of the problem, and the need to act without delay to tackle it. As a government, we remain,

and will continue to remain, laser-focused on policies that will get more homes built faster.

Madam Speaker, let's look at some of the highlights of what the government has been able to do so far. We've actually introduced three housing supply action plans: More Homes, More Choice in 2019; More Homes for Everyone, earlier this year, in 2022; and our most recent plan, More Homes Built Faster, which just received royal assent on November 28. In total, over the last four years, our government has introduced over 85 initiatives to build more housing.

That includes our Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, which came into force late last month on November 23. That act brought local government in Ontario firmly into the 21st century, with a recognition that major and fast-growing municipalities like Toronto and Ottawa must have the tools to get housing built. It's built on best practices from other jurisdictions, and it has provided a road map for other parts of Canada as they work to make local government respond to the needs of their constituents. Because, Madam Speaker, we trust Ontarians to elect leaders who will deliver, and we're counting on local elected officials, especially mayors, to help tackle Ontario's housing supply crisis.

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The Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act is a precursor to the bill that we're discussing today, which I will address shortly, but I'm proud to say, now that enough time has passed to see the effects, we have proof that the first housing supply action plan and the related initiatives worked very well. As I've said many, many times in this House, Ontario saw around 100,000 new housing starts in 2021, which was the highest number since 1987 and far, far higher than the 30-year average, which was just 67,500. Even despite economic headwinds, we are expecting to see nearly 100,000 starts this year as well.

So yes, Madam Speaker, we've come a long way, but we know how much more needs to be done if we're going to reach that 1.5 million new homes by 2031. Projections already show that our province is expected to grow by more than two million people by 2031, and approximately 1.5 million of those new residents are expected to settle in the greater Golden Horseshoe. On top of that, we now have the federal government's recently enhanced immigration target of a half a million new residents per year, which will put even more pressure on the housing market.

Now, I want to be very clear on this, Speaker: We are counting on these newcomers. We want to be able to welcome them to Ontario, because they are so very important for our future here in Ontario. We know how critical immigration is for ensuring that Ontario has the workforce it needs, so that our economy can continue to grow and so that the quality of life for all Ontarians continues to improve.

But that means we need to make sure that newcomers to our province are able to find a home—a suitable home, a home that they can afford. At the same time, we have to acknowledge that the same is true for long-time residents of our province. That's why the government has worked

hard and we've taken decisive action to bring the housing supply crisis to an end.

On November 28, our next step in addressing the housing supply crisis, the More Homes Built Faster Act, received royal assent. The legislation supports our third housing supply action plan. This action plan represents, and I've said this many times, our boldest and most transformational plan to date. It cuts through red tape, it eliminates unnecessary costs and it addresses the bottlenecks that are slowing our progress in building the housing that Ontario needs.

It does a number of very positive aspects. It promotes the building of more homes near transit, and it promotes more gentle-density housing. Unlike some of the assertions that the opposition has made in the House today, it uses provincial lands for more attainable homes. It protects new homebuyers. It includes consultations on how to help more renters become homeowners. It has many, many aspects. It's the plan that Ontario needs.

Madam Speaker, we know that if we address the barriers that are causing housing delays, we can help lower the costs of building homes. These barriers include a very complex land use policy that makes it very difficult to access land in urban areas and the lengthy planning approvals for new homes.

I also want to point out that one feature of this plan, which is gentle density, works only in some cases. There are cases such as near major transit hubs where bringing more housing, more jobs, more retail and more public amenities to the area is beneficial for a community. With more housing being built closer to transit, more people can get to and from school and work much faster. I think we can all acknowledge that faster commutes save money. They enable people to spend more time with their families. They make people's lives easier.

Really, Madam Speaker, that bill that just received royal assent has helped us, as well as all the other three housing supply action plans. It really brings us to why we're here today, and why we're here today is to deal with a bill which is our next step, our next piece to ensure that mayors have the tools to get shovels in the ground, and that's the Better Municipal Governance Act, Bill 39. This legislation builds upon our Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, which I talked about a few minutes ago.

That act, along with its associated regulations, gives the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa the ability to drive policy changes. It enables them to select certain municipal department heads, and it empowers them to bring forward budgets. Those changes can help our municipal partners deal with those shared priorities. We've made it clear as a government that increased housing supply is one of those priorities.

Our new proposed legislation, Bill 39, is going to build upon those tools that were in that first bill that I talked about earlier, the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act. It would make further changes to both the Municipal Act and the City of Toronto Act, and if passed, the mayors in the cities of Toronto and Ottawa would have a new tool to move forward on those very narrowly scoped shared

municipal-provincial priorities. I'm going to say this again: priorities like ensuring we get 1.5 million homes built over the next 10 years, by 2031—

Interjections.

Hon. Steve Clark: Exactly—building the supporting infrastructure, which has been a conversation that we've had with our municipal partners over the last several weeks. We need to be able to build the supporting infrastructure for these new homes as well once the mayors propose municipal bylaws that, in their opinion, could help us further those provincial priorities. Again, the provincial priority that's most important for our government, for the associate minister, for the parliamentary assistant and I, is to make sure that we have a plan in place to get those 1.5 million homes built over the next 10 years.

Now, in this case, council could then pass a bylaw if more than one third of the members would vote in favour. Now, Speaker, as a former mayor, I would be the first to acknowledge that these proposals are bold, but I believe that boldness is exactly what Ontario needs to be able to end this housing supply crisis. The proposals in this bill reflect the severity of the housing crisis that Ontarians are facing today and the need to cut through this incredible “not in my backyard” mentality that's in our province. We've got to deal with that “not in my backyard” attitude. I've said many times that I think we've now gone past this NIMBYism, this “not in my backyardism,” and now we're at the situation of BANANAism, where you're actually building absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone.

We've got to stop the BANANAs and stop the NIMBYs, and part of Bill 39 is to ensure that we have those tools available, especially in our two largest cities. We believe that a third of Ontario's growth in that next decade is going to take place in Toronto and Ottawa. We have to stop the fact that construction of much-needed housing in too many municipalities is being held back. We know that the growth is going to come. We know that people are going to move to the GTA. That's why we've empowered the mayors.

1730

Some people in the opposition have expressed opposition. I would hope that they would acknowledge that Mayor Tory, who the Premier and I both agree is a great mayor, received a very strong, democratic and city-wide mandate in the last election. And we believe that we should be able to give him the tool that he needs and he's asked for to get shovels in the ground faster, to work more effectively with the province to increase the supply of housing, and we have every confidence as a government that they will use this power judiciously. And we will, of course, be monitoring how the mayors use this new power, if this bill passes.

Speaker, I've said many, many times, we're taking decisive action to address the housing crisis and we've begun our strong-mayor framework with the two single-tier municipalities in Toronto and Ottawa, and we want to consider how to expand these tools to help more of Ontario's growing municipalities. So as part of Bill 39, the Better Municipal Governance Act, we plan to appoint

provincial facilitators who are going to assess the two-tier regional government structures in Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York. These six regions—they're large, Madam Speaker. They are some of the fastest-growing communities in our province, and all of them desperately need housing supply. The regional assessments by the facilitators are going to help the government determine the best mix of roles and responsibilities between the upper-tier and lower-tier municipalities in these regions, particularly in the context of a strong-mayor system. The goal is to enable these municipalities to get shovels in the ground faster, to help them get the housing they need built quickly to support their growing municipalities.

Another aspect of Bill 39: To help facilitate this regional assessment, the legislation that our government is proposing would also provide me, as minister, the authority to appoint the regional chairs of Niagara, Peel and York. In these three regions out of six, the chair isn't elected by the community. I have already announced the intention—I was very open and transparent—that we felt that the existing regional chairs for the current term of council would be reappointed, if the bill was passed, and we were very honest, open and transparent in the reasons. We felt it was important, as a government, to be able to draw on their knowledge and their experience as they work with the provincially appointed facilitator. So again, we're very open, honest and transparent with our intentions regarding those three chairs. We need to make sure that we have the continuity in those three municipalities that typically appoint their chair. And I want to ensure that, when we have the facilitators in place, that we also have a process that works in all six regions so that we have the best possible framework to expand strong-mayor powers.

As everyone in this chamber knows, Premier Ford has already indicated that the government is looking to expand strong-mayor powers to other municipalities. And my message was very simple the day that we announced our first bill, the strong-mayors act, earlier this year: We're looking for municipalities that are shovel-ready, that are committed to growth and committed to cutting red tape. The reason is, we want to ensure that these enhanced mayoral tools are rolled out in a manner that reflects local priorities and local concerns. We want those municipalities to hit the ground running and get the housing that Ontarians need built without any more delays.

Madam Speaker, our proposed legislation received strong support. You know, I'll just give you one example, and I wish—sorry, I can't say “I wish someone was here” when they're not, but I think people will know who I'm talking about. Niagara Regional Chair Jim Bradley is who I'm going to quote. He said, “I applaud the province for considering all options at their disposal to address this crisis, including exploration of expansion of so-called ‘strong mayor’ powers. As regional chair, I look forward to working with the ... provincial facilitators to find ways to better support our growing population while addressing the housing crisis.”

Madam Speaker, it's partners like Chair Bradley—who have long experience in both municipal and provincial

politics—who will help shape our next steps. Because we know that strong mayors are a critical part of cutting through red tape and delays at the municipal level that so often block new housing. And also because we know that in order to get these changes right, we need to work with engaged and knowledgeable local government officials who can provide stability, continuity and experience during this transition process.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, Ontario is expected to grow by two million people over the next 10 years. Most of this growth is expected to take place in the greater Golden Horseshoe—more than 1.5 million people in 10 years. We don't have enough housing right now for the people who are living here today. We're in a crisis and it's going to get much worse unless the government takes bold actions.

We need both near-term and long-term solutions, and our proposed changes in the Better Municipal Governance Act complement the More Homes Built Faster housing supply action plan. It's going to help us to address the housing crisis by getting 1.5 million homes built by 2031.

We're committed as a government to supporting our municipal partners as they work with us to help increase the housing supply. If we're to be successful, we need to make sure that municipalities have the tools that they need to have those shared provincial-municipal priorities accomplished, and that's exactly what Bill 39 and the province's other supply housing action plan measures are doing.

I'm going to turn the floor over to the associate minister, who is going to continue the conversation around Bill 39, followed by the parliamentary assistant.

Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. It's always great to see you in the chair.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The Associate Minister of Housing to continue the debate.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I'd like to thank my honourable colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for all the great work that he has done, and certainly for sharing his time with me today.

Madam Speaker, I'll be sharing the remainder of the time that I have with the incredible parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who has done amazing work in his role as parliamentary assistant to the minister.

I'm very proud to have the opportunity to stand in the House today and speak to our government's proposed Better Municipal Governance Act.

I want to begin by reiterating that this government was re-elected in June with a clear mandate to build more homes in the province. The reason this government was re-elected is because the people of Ontario have faith in this party and in this Premier to be able to get the job done.

We have been working tirelessly, since we first took office, to resolve the housing crisis brought on by the lack of preparation and the inaction by the previous government. The focus on building more homes is a shared priority among the province and municipalities. It's no secret that the shortage of homes we're experiencing is one

of the biggest issues facing our municipalities. With this shared goal, I'm confident in the successes our collaborative efforts will achieve. We're fighting for the same thing. We're all fixated on getting more shovels in the ground faster, on building more housing for all Ontarians, and on building homes for generations to come. I stand here today in full support of our better municipal governance legislation because it will help us fulfill the promise we made to the people of this province. This is yet another step we're taking to achieve this goal.

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This problem, the lack of available homes, is an issue affecting every single Ontarian. From constituents in my riding to those in every community across this province, every person is feeling the repercussions of this crisis—newcomers entering this province with hopes of achieving the dream of owning a home, young families trying to plant roots and begin their lives. Everyone is trying to achieve the same dream of home ownership. That's why we need to use all the tools and resources available to us to help bring this dream back within reach for all hard-working Ontarians.

When I think about who our government is doing this for, I think of every person I've spoken to and every constituent I've met with. I think about the population of Ontario as a whole and all the people we promised to help one day have a place in our province that they can call home. We were re-elected with a clear mandate to get 1.5 million homes built over the next 10 years, and we will not disappoint.

I've been in this position now for about five months. I've travelled the province and have listened to the people. And throughout my time, and regardless of where I go, whether it's London to Ottawa, Kenora to Windsor, Toronto to Thunder Bay and everywhere in between, one message is clear: It must be all hands on deck to build homes, and we need our municipal partners at the table as well. The experts agree.

For example, the Toronto Region Board of Trade posted on their website earlier this fall that the region's "housing shortage is making our labour shortage worse, creating far-reaching economic consequences." They continued by saying, "When our region is unaffordable, businesses struggle to grow and thrive and it may soon be near impossible to attract net new business and investment." We agree with that. We agree that now is the time to get homes built, and we agree with them as they continue to call on municipal leaders to work with us, to deliver the solutions needed to build more housing across the region.

Another expert opinion is that of Nadia Todorova, executive director of Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario. She recently said, "The housing crisis has been a prominent issue in municipal elections ... and leaders need to do everything possible to ensure the cities can address the shortage." She went on to say, "Key things we know will help reduce wait times and costly delays ... are to speed up the development approvals process." This

concern regarding the lengthy development approvals process is a major focus of this legislation. Our bill will help to streamline approvals at the municipal council level, because we know there's just too much duplication and delay in the system right now. There is a better way to get things done, and that is what we're bringing forward in this legislation.

We know that one third of Ontario's growth over the next decade is expected to happen here in Toronto and in Ottawa. If passed, the Better Municipal Governance Act will add to the powers that our Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act gives to the mayors of the two cities. As the mayors of Ottawa and Toronto begin their terms in office, they will soon have more powers to break the cycle of delays in the municipal approvals process. The Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act was proclaimed to come into force just a few short weeks ago. It empowers Toronto and Ottawa mayors to bring our shared municipal and provincial priorities forward by building a team—a team which will help get shovels in the ground faster for residential housing development and the infrastructure that would support it.

To be specific, the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act makes changes to the City of Toronto Act to empower its mayor. And for Ottawa, changes to the Municipal Act—along with supporting regulation—empower the mayor of Ottawa. Because of the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, the mayors of Ottawa and Toronto now have the ability to appoint a chief administrative officer, as well as the authority to hire certain department heads for their municipalities. They can also establish identified committees, as well as appoint the chairs and vice-chairs of those committees. But remember, they do not have the ability to hire or fire the chief of police, the medical officer of health, the integrity commissioner, the chief building official or others that are described in the legislation. We believe that giving the mayors of Ottawa and Toronto these powers to create and reorganize city departments will help them better address the current needs of their rapidly growing communities.

Speaker, we want to make sure that the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa have the tools they need to get more housing built. Through the legislation we're proposing, we'd have the ability to give them the powers to propose bylaws related to the provincial priorities that we've set out and to pass these bylaws if more than one third of the members of council vote in favour. If passed, the proposed legislation will allow the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to make regulations that put in place the rules for using this new bylaw power. The minister could, for instance, impose limits and conditions or set out procedural rules for proposing a bylaw. I will emphasize here that this bylaw power is a tool that can be used to deliver on our shared provincial and municipal priorities. These priorities will be set out in regulation and would include working towards a target of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years and building the infrastructure to support these new homes, which includes expanding the

footprints of transit-oriented communities so more people can live and work near the convenience of public transit.

Let me place the emphasis again on shared priorities to help remind the House that, on municipal election day this last October 24, housing was the biggest issue many constituents in communities across the province were facing. And yet we know that the bold action we're proposing to address the supply of housing has been met with criticism from some municipal councillors—with some critics going so far as to say that our proposals in this bill are undemocratic.

Here's our perspective: We trust democratically elected officials to use their best judgment, and it is in our best interest to work with local governments to meet our housing goals together.

Toronto mayor John Tory's office has said that he "supports this update to the strong-mayor powers that will only apply to items deemed a provincial priority and that he also deems a Toronto priority."

Speaker, I ask you to please bear in mind that these powers can only be used where, in the mayor's opinion, proposing the bylaw could advance the provincial priorities that will be defined in the regulations. This is all because urgent action is needed to address Ontario's housing crisis. Too many families are already struggling with housing and the rising cost of living, and our proposed changes would provide the democratically elected mayors of Toronto and Ottawa with additional tools to deliver on these shared provincial-municipal priorities. This isn't undemocratic, as the opposition would have you believe. This is about empowering the municipal leaders who are close to their communities.

Yes, as the Minister of Municipal Affairs indicated earlier, these proposals are bold, but they reflect the housing crisis that's facing our province today. As you've heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing say throughout our government's tenure, we need to cut through the NIMBYism and the "build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone" attitudes that are now so pervasive in Ontario. In fact, a spokesman for Toronto mayor John Tory recently said something similar in a statement about the mayor asking for expanded powers. He said that they were needed "to make sure we can get more housing built as quickly as possible, to avoid NIMBYism, and to help make sure this new system works as efficiently as possible."

The C.D. Howe Institute also agrees with our approach. They acknowledge that "every ... homeowner has a financial incentive to have fewer competing homes on the market." This means that when new developments are proposed, there is usually someone who wants to stop it. As a result, if enough residents want to halt it, then the local councillors look for a way to stop the new construction.

This simply cannot be allowed to happen anymore. The status quo is simply not working. We cannot allow a small yet loud minority of NIMBYists to prevent an entire generation from being able to enter the housing market. So we're proposing this addition to the strong-mayor powers

in order to provide some certainty that housing will get built. As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing said, this is why we took decisive action. We did it to provide municipal leaders the tools they need to plan for future population growth and get more homes built faster. And yes, we knew there would be opposition to these proposed actions, but the fact is that we were elected to make tough decisions and to ensure that our fastest-growing communities are supported in both the short term and long term.

1750

Speaker, I hope that critics will remember what I say next. The Better Municipal Governance Act would, if passed, have the same contingencies in place as the first strong-mayors bill did. We have accounted for the possibility of an abuse of power, and we've maintained the existing municipal accountability framework, including rules about conflict of interest. On top of that, heads of council would also be required to provide their rationale when using the proposed new bylaw power. This is all because we have built a strong system of checks and balances into the Strong Mayors, Building Homes legislation. And remember that council members are already, and are still, subject to legislated accountability and transparency rules—and that includes the mayor.

The Strong Mayors, Building Homes legislation also made changes to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act. If you recall, the mayors of Ottawa and Toronto would not be able to use the new powers where financial conflict exists, and they are required to declare any financial interests related to the use of their new powers.

Put simply, we trust elected municipal officials to best reflect the values of the people who democratically elected them. And by extension, we trust those leaders to use these new powers judiciously when it comes to moving our shared priorities forward.

It bears repeating that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will also have the power to set out procedural rules for proposing a bylaw. We will also be monitoring how the mayors use this new power and, if necessary, will step in to set limits and conditions, or to clarify when it can be used.

Empowering the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to work more effectively with the province to increase the supply of housing will help us get the politics out of planning and speed up approval timelines. The mayors in these municipalities are being asked to cut red tape and get more homes built faster so that more families can realize the dream of attainable home ownership.

We've all heard that the way residential housing projects are currently approved in Ontario takes far too long and is way too complex. A big reason for that is because builders need to obtain different levels of approvals, which can take months, if not years. BILD, the Building Industry and Land Development Association, cites that municipal approval timelines range from 10 up to 34 months, with municipal approval timelines in the GTA being among the worst of major municipalities across the country. Study after study has also found that

development approvals and appropriate zoning are often delayed or hindered because of opposition from some members on local municipal councils. Some projects are even abandoned altogether. So even if the project finally gets the go-ahead, the damage has already been done, and it's everyday Ontarians in search of a home who are paying the cost. Ontarians are counting on us to fix that. And as I've said many times here and as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has said, we are simply not going to let them down.

Recently, the federal government announced that Ontario could be home to approximately 300,000 newcomers by 2025; that's over half of the 500,000 federal immigration target. That adds to the urgency of our bill and makes clear why it's so important for us to look at every measure to increase the supply of housing.

Our government promised bold and ambitious action to end the housing supply crisis and to help all Ontarians, including newcomers, find a safe place to call home. While our new More Homes Built Faster Act, which received royal assent last week, addresses many of the barriers that cause housing delays, the changes we're changing in the Better Municipal Governance Act are further steps forward in our mission, because the municipal councils play such a crucial role in determining the housing supply. We believe that our proposed changes will help municipalities better meet the needs of their rapidly growing communities and help to drive increased housing supply in some of Ontario's biggest and fastest-growing municipalities.

I began today by saying that our proposed Better Municipal Governance Act is necessary, timely and, if passed, would be another important step forward in addressing Ontario's undersupply of housing. Giving the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa the enhanced bylaw power that we are proposing would allow them to remove barriers and find solutions for the housing supply shortage in their communities and would make them true partners in addressing the housing crisis.

Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the opportunity, and I would now like to call upon the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to further elaborate on this very necessary piece of proposed legislation. As a former mayor himself, I know that his insights into this legislation will make an important contribution to this debate. When I was in Thunder Bay with the parliamentary assistant, we travelled across his riding and met with many, many residents who were telling us the same thing: They were telling us to keep going. They were telling us that they now have a champion in the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan. And they said, "Thank you to your government for what you're doing. We appreciate it. We now have a strong voice in the government." So I thank him for the great work that he's doing. And I thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for his leadership.

I look forward to the continuation of debate.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The parliamentary assistant to continue debate.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I'd like to thank both the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Associate Minister of Housing for sharing their time with me today, and also for the tremendous leadership they have provided me during my first six months sitting in this great House.

It's my pleasure to rise for the third reading of our government's proposed Better Municipal Governance Act. I'm proud to be speaking on behalf of a government that takes bold, urgent and decisive action on such an important priority as the province's housing supply crisis. Our government has made housing such a priority because we know that too many Ontarians are finding it too hard to find the right home and things are getting even more challenging for them.

This problem cuts across geography and age. It is in the north—where my home riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan is located—it is in the south, the east and the west. It plagues young people and newcomers wanting to put down roots in a community of their choosing, and it impacts seniors wanting to downsize and find a home near family and loved ones. It impacts new home buyers as well as people wanting to rent. It's not just a big-city, urban

problem, but it's a rural and suburban problem as well. I've seen it in my home riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, and I know members on both sides of this House have seen the same. I think you can agree, that's too many people seeing their dreams of home ownership dashed.

The legislation we are speaking to today is one of the many bold actions our government is taking to address the housing supply crisis. I'd like to take a few minutes to remind some members of this House of some previous initiatives we've taken—because this bill builds on dozens of pieces of legislation, regulations and policies introduced by our government over the last four years to help build more housing.

I'd like to point out that our municipal partners have been with us in this journey from the beginning.

In May 2019, our government announced More Homes, More Choice, our first housing supply action plan—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I apologize to the member, but it's now time for private members' public business.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

Report continues in volume B.

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Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
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
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
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

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 Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
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
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

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Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
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
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
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
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
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	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / 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	
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	